

SACS REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

Source: Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation (<http://sacscoc.org/pdf/Resource%20Manual.pdf>)

Standards: Core Requirement 2.7.3, and Comprehensive Standards 3.4.10 and 3.5.1
Requirements are not met, the institution must be placed on sanction. If Core

What is required?

The general education program must:

- a. Have a coherent rationale.
- b. Show breadth of knowledge that is a) sufficient and b) appropriate to our mission.
- c. Include at least one course from each of the following areas: In each area there must be at least one course that does not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a student's particular occupation or profession.

1. Social/behavioral sciences
2. Natural sciences and mathematics
3. Humanities/fine arts (At least one course must be "pure humanities.")

Note: "Courses in basic composition that do not contain a literature component, courses in oral communication, and introductory foreign language courses are skill courses and not pure humanities courses. Therefore, for the purposes of meeting this standard, none of the above may be the one course designated to fulfill the humanities/fine arts requirement in Core Requirement 2.7.3."

- d. Include a minimum of 30 semester hours for the bachelor's degree and 15 semester hours for the associate's degree.

It is important that institutions have criteria for evaluation of courses for inclusion in the general education component of the curriculum. General education courses:

- a. Are generally courses that any student may take.
- b. Must be "college-level."
- c. Comprise "a substantial component of each undergraduate degree."
- d. Support the goals of the general education component.
- e. "Present a breadth of knowledge and reinforce cognitive skills and affective learning opportunities for each student. Therefore, it is important that courses selected by students do not focus on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to that student's occupation or profession."

The Institution must:

- a. Designate in its publication those general education courses that are considered to satisfy the requirement for one "pure" course in each of the three areas.
- b. Validate that the courses designated as pure humanities/fine arts are in accord with CR 2.7.3.
- c. Provide students with written documents describing the pathway from major selection to degree. Students should be able to navigate by themselves, without the assistance of an advisor.
- d. Ensure that all students follow the pathway for selection of general education courses.
- e. Be clear how the general education program applies to transfer students, distance education students, and all programs.

General SACS questions to consider:

- What process is used to ensure that general education courses support the goals of the general education component?
- What criteria does the institution use to assure that the required skill level meets collegiate standards?
- As the GEP is implemented at NC State, are we certain that each major includes at least one course from the three required areas that is open to all students and whose content is not specific to the major or profession?
- How do we designate in our publications those gen ed courses that are "pure humanities/fine arts?" How have we validated that the courses that the institution designates are in accord with CR 2.7.3?
- Do we provide sufficient written guidance to students that clearly shows them the path to completion of their general education requirements and their degree?

Questions specific to NC State's GEP:

- What evaluation criteria does CUE have to ensure that GEP courses are open to any student? When majors specify GE courses because the content is necessary for the major, is it still a GE course, or is it chosen because it is specific to the major?
- What evaluation criteria does CUE have to ensure that courses are not focused on "skills, techniques, and procedures" specific to a student's occupation or profession?
- How do we know that all majors include courses in each of the three areas that are open to all students and have content that is not specific to the major or profession?
- Are we counting English 101, communications courses, or introductory foreign language courses as "pure humanities?"
- In light of 2.7.3, how do we understand the nature of 300 and 400 level courses and their prerequisites in the context of "being available to *any* student?"