

# UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

## GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM and WRITING REQUIREMENT

### The GenEd Program

GenEd is intended in part to serve as a foundation for any major, and also to expose students to areas of knowledge they have not previously encountered. The program aims to go beyond the mastery of specific job-related skills and educate students so that they learn how to learn. The program is based on the premise that change is the dominant characteristic of our times and that the truly useful education stresses intellectual adaptability and the development of those problem-solving abilities, cognitive skills, and learning techniques vital to lifelong learning.

The GenEd program thus sets the pattern for all undergraduate study at UNH. It is designed to emphasize the acquisition and/or improvement of those fundamental skills essential to successful completion of advanced college work, especially the abilities to think critically, to read with discernment, to write effectively, and to understand quantitative data. It aims to acquaint the student with some of the major modes of thought necessary to understand oneself, others, society, and the environment. It seeks to develop a critical appreciation of both the value and the limitations of significant methods in inquiry and analysis.

Just as the word "universe" refers to the totality of all things that exist, a "university" is a gathering of diverse colleges and professional schools, each of which is authorized to confer degrees upon its students. The choice of major is what determines the school or college from which an undergraduate receives a degree (such as the College of Liberal Arts or the School of Health and Human Services); however, a complete university education includes much more. To graduate from the University of New Hampshire, students must experience a full range of study in the multiple disciplines and areas of knowledge that together are called "the university".

Courses carrying GenEd credit help students become functionally literate in many areas of learning. The goals of the program are to:

1. focus upon and stress the acquisition and improvement of basic skills generic to further learning both at the University and throughout one's life - e.g., sophisticated reading, comprehension, library research, critical thinking, scientific reasoning and laboratory research, and effective writing;
2. help students learn to organize and express their thoughts in a variety of disciplines through significant writing experiences
3. deal with the larger issues and ideas of our time with which any university graduate should be familiar
4. balance the content knowledge of a subject with how knowledge is acquired, verified, utilized, and communicated;
5. include perspectives from a diversity of cultural traditions, races, classes, and genders from around the world; and,
6. introduce students to the fundamentals of language, issues, perspectives, and methodologies in particular fields, disciplines, or sub-areas of study;
7. encourage students to understand and to formulate their own interdisciplinary connections;
8. encourage students to explore a variety of disciplines at an early stage in their undergraduate career

The GenEd program as a whole places a special burden on students themselves. Because students must choose from a variety of specific courses from eight GenEd groups, each person must work to uncover the implied interconnections among the various groups and to develop a full understanding of the coherence of his or her program of study. Students should work closely with their advisers in designing and refining their General Education programs. The very best students are those who actively take on this challenge and also use what they learn in their GenEd courses to enhance their work in the major and minor fields of study. A worksheet is provided at the end of this brochure, and a list of currently approved GenEd courses is found in the *Time and Room Schedule*.

## GenEd Requirements

Students must fulfill the following general education requirements:

- Group 1. one course in writing skills, which must be taken during a student's first year;
- Group 2. one course in quantitative reasoning, which must be taken during a student's first year;
- Group 3. three courses in biological science, physical science, or technology, with no more than two courses in any one area;
- Group 4. one course in historical perspectives;
- Group 5. one course in foreign culture;
- Group 6. one course in fine arts;
- Group 7. one course in social science; and,
- Group 8. one course in works of philosophy, literature, and ideas.

GenEd requirements shall not be waived on the basis of special examinations or placement tests, except for the College Board Advanced Placement tests and the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests. The required courses cannot be taken on a pass/fail basis. No single course may be counted in more than one category. Academic departments may or may not permit their own GenEd courses to satisfy GenEd requirements for students majoring in their programs.

### *Group 1: Writing Skills*

"To find the right word," said Albert Camus, "is to penetrate a little farther into the heart of things." Good writing is more than mere grammatical correctness. It is the ability to communicate thought and feeling with

clarity and cogency. It is the effective use of language. It is the basic skill of precise and persuasive description and explanation. It is a mental discipline indispensable to success in college and work. It is a key to intellectual development and adaptability. Not surprisingly, the inability to write well is the most commonly expressed faculty concern about the UNH student body today.

To satisfy Group 1, all students must take ENGL 401. The skills students develop and practice in this course will greatly enhance their work in GenEd categories 4 through 8 and will also assist them in many other courses within the University, but this is only a beginning. Students should expect to build on the foundation that English 401 provides by developing more specialized writing skills within their majors, minors, and other areas of interest.

### *Group 2: Quantitative Reasoning*

Quantitative reasoning refers to the ability to think critically and analytically using abstract formal methods with broad application. Many courses in Group 2 acquaint students with the weaknesses as well as the strengths of numerical evidence, and teach students how to understand and manipulate quantitative data. Moreover, quantitative reasoning is carried on not only with numbers but also with other kinds of formal symbols. whatever the course, it should emphasize higher-level cognitive processes. It should build on the high school experience in order to bring students to a new level of ability in formal reasoning and critical thinking.

Other GenEd course should, wherever relevant, stress quantitative literacy. They, too, should provide training in basic mathematical manipulations and develop the student's ability to use numerical evidence, to test propositions with quantitative information to translate verbal problems into quantitative questions, and to translate numbers into words.

### *Group 3: Science*

The achievement of scientific literacy is a key goal of GenEd. An educated person must be acquainted with the physical and biological worlds, and, in addition, must have a critical appreciation of the ways in which we gain scientific knowledge and understanding. to function successfully in today's world, all people must possess the capacity to

follow scientific developments as they happen. responsible citizens should be able to think in an informed manner about the social and human implications of scientific and technological phenomena. In addition to the Biological and Physical Sciences, Technology is included to develop a critical understanding of the potentials and implications of technology and its impact on individuals and the environment. Such matters as nuclear power and warfare, synthetic fuels, space exploration, genetic engineering, pollution, and the computer revolution confront the average voter. as never before, an understanding of public policies requires a familiarity with science and technology.

Group 3 courses should emphasize the process of science as inquiry: 1) how disciplines uncover and validate knowledge; 2) how phenomena are understood through observation, experimentation, and quantitative analysis; 3) how data are collected, organized, and interpreted; 4) how hypotheses are created, modified, and confirmed; and, 5) how scientific theories and models are constructed. These objectives are best realized through direct involvement in some type of laboratory experience.

#### *Group 4: Historical Perspectives*

"He who is ignorant of what happened before his birth," wrote Cicero, "is always a child." An educated person must have some measure of perspective on the processes of historical change, acquaintance with major historical developments, and understanding of the historical conditions and forces which have shaped the present. To satisfy the Group 4 requirement, students should develop an understanding of the causes of historical change, but will not be expected to learn all of human history. Moreover, the Group 4 requirement does not mandate the study of one area of the world or of one period in history over another. Choices for study could include courses in global, world-regional, or national history. These courses are taught from several different disciplinary perspectives, by faculty in a variety of departments.

In any Group 4 course the student should learn: 1) to identify relevant antecedent developments that shape the present; 2) to understand events in their context and complexity; and, 3) to learn sufficiently the methods of historical inquiry and modes of historical thought.

#### *Group 5: Foreign Culture*

The Foreign Culture requirement is intended to insure that all students gain an informed acquaintance with another culture's beliefs, customs, literature, and values. It is intended to mitigate cultural provincialism and ethnocentrism and to expand the student's range of cultural experiences. Courses in Foreign Culture should stress the diversity of human experience and expose students to the essential and distinctive features that account for the particular ethos or configuration of another culture.

To the greatest extent possible, the Foreign Culture requirement should be satisfied through the study of a foreign language. The study of a foreign language helps one to understand the general structure of language and how language structures human consciousness. It increases one's facility in English, and provides the most direct access to comprehending a foreign culture. It is increasingly vital to men and women in more and more occupations to be able to converse with the counterparts overseas, and knowledge of a foreign language makes travel more pleasant and enriching. To satisfy the requirement, foreign language courses must be at the intermediate level.

#### *Group 6: Fine Arts*

Fine Arts appreciation and understanding enriches the imagination, deepens feelings, refines the sensibilities, provides enhanced awareness of the world in which we live, and opens up an entire range of personal satisfaction and delight that can serve individuals for a lifetime. Without a public that understands and cares about the arts, support ceases, the arts decline, and the quality of life for all diminishes. Moreover, the University has an obligation to preserve our cultural heritage, expose students to its diversity, and foster artistic creation. It can do this best by developing in its students an aesthetic appreciation for some of the more important artistic works and traditions.

All students must complete one course in the Fine Arts. This course must provide the student with an informed acquaintance with modes of artistic expression and develop the ability of the student to understand and appreciate the visual, aural, and performing arts.

#### *Group 7: Social Science*

To understand the challenges of today and tomorrow, people must think critically about the fundamental institutions and concerns of contemporary society. An educated person is aware of the uses and limitations of the basic concepts and techniques of social scientific analysis; can utilize major traditions of thought, theory, and empirical data to understand human behavior and interaction; is familiar with the regularities and differentiations in human thought and actions; and is cognizant of the approaches used to validate propositions concerning those phenomena.

All students are required to complete one course that is specifically intended to acquaint the student with the major modes of social science inquiry. Such courses must develop critical thinking about social issues and introduce the students to the systematic use of data, documentation, experimentation, computation, and observation relevant to particular disciplines. The emphasis must be on methodology and analysis. To the greatest extent possible, such courses must provide firsthand experiences in which the student can use the tools of social scientific inquiry to approach problems and issues of individual or social life in contemporary society.

### *Group 8: Works of Philosophy, Literature, and Ideas*

An educated person is informed about some of the significant human accomplishments in philosophy, literature, and ideas. Knowledge of this kind is gained by reading and interpreting works created by important thinkers. The Group 8 requirement is intended to develop the student's sensitivity to the creative use of language and to various modes of comprehending and articulating the human condition and the nature of the world.

All students must therefore complete one course in Group 8. It must focus on literary or philosophical texts or must stress the thought of influential thinkers. Whatever the subject, a central goal of the course will be to develop the student's ability to read, analyze, and write about original works of philosophy, literature, or ideas.

## WRITING REQUIREMENT

As the cornerstone of any higher education, academic and disciplinary literacy is the concern of the entire faculty and the whole university curriculum. Understanding that literacy is a long-term development process, the university is committed to the following goals for student writing and learning:

- a) Students should use writing as an intellectual process to learn material, to discover, construct, and order meaning;
- b) Students should learn to write effectively in various academic and disciplinary genres for professional and lay audiences;
- c) Students should learn to display competence with the generic features and conventions of academic language.

Students must complete four "Writing Intensive" courses, including English 401 (Freshman Composition), and three additional "writing-intensive" courses, one of which must be in the student's major, and one of which must be at the 600-level or above.

Courses designated as "Writing Intensive" must meet the following guidelines:

- 1) Students in the course should do substantial writing which enhances learning and demonstrates knowledge of the subject or discipline. Writing should be an integral part of the course and should account for a significant part (approximately 50% or more) of the final grade;
- 2) Writing should be assigned in such a manner as to require students to write regularly throughout the course. Major assignments should integrate the process of writing (prewriting, drafting, revision, editing). Students should be able to receive constructive feedback of some kind (peer response, workshop, Writing Center, professor, T.A., etc.) during the drafting/revision process to help improve their writing;
- 3) The course should include both formal (graded) and informal (heuristic) writing. There should be papers written outside of class which are handed in for formal evaluation as well as informal assignments designed to promote learning, such as invention activities, in-class essays, reaction papers, journals, reading summaries, laboratory reports, or other appropriate exercises.

A list of currently approved Writing Intensive courses is found in the *Time and Room Schedule*.

GenEd/Writing Worksheet

General Education Courses:

Group 1: English 401

Group 2: Quantitative Reasoning

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Group 3: Physical Science

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Biological Science

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Technology

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Group 4: Historical Perspectives

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Group 5: Foreign Culture

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Group 6: Fine Arts

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Group 7: Social Science

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Group 8: Philosophy, Literature, Ideas

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Writing Intensive Courses:

1. English 401

2.\* One course in the major:

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3.\* One course at the 600-level or above:

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4. One additional writing-intensive course:

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\*All students must take four writing-intensive courses.  
The requirement for one course in the major and one course at the 600-level or above may be satisfied by a single course, in which case you may select any writing-intensive course as your third writing-intensive course.