

**Office of the President
California State University, Chico**



Executive Memorandum 21-023

September 3, 2021

From: Gayle E. Hutchinson, President

Subject: General Education Program, Supersedes EM 18-005, EM 19-021, EM 21-002

Upon the recommendation of the Academic Senate and the concurrence of the Provost, I approve the General Education Program, effective immediately.

Policy Title:	EM 21-023 General Education Program
Contact:	Curriculum Advisory Board
Supersedes:	EM 18-005, EM 19-021, EM 21-002
Revision:	
Enabling Legislation or Executive Order:	

MISSION

The General Education (GE) program at Chico State prepares students for continual learning and application of knowledge to career as well as personal life. It equitably provides for all students the education necessary for success as a civically and globally engaged individual and as a lifelong learner.

STRATEGY

Chico State students acquire a strong foundation in critical thinking, written and oral communication and the arts and science through inquiry about and engagement with the social and natural worlds we inhabit. This is achieved through study, reflection, synthesis, and action related to knowledge from varied historical, cultural, scientific, social, and political perspectives. In combination with the major field of study, GE completes the breadth of university education.

The GE Program incorporates and fosters active and intentional engagement with the values of:

Intellectual Curiosity – Asking questions, seeking answers, contemplating, and pursuing investigations with intellectual rigor, while making connections between cognitive and personal development, both inside and outside traditional instructional settings.

Civic Engagement – Participating in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually enriching and beneficial to our various local, regional, national, and international communities.

Sustainability - Being an engaged member of society informed by a systems approach to balancing environmental responsibility, social justice, economic feasibility, and cultural diversity.

Diversity – Understanding the intersectionalities and complexities of differences among people, such as those based on race, ethnicity, ability, age, class, culture, gender identity and expression, political affiliation, regional and national origin, religion, and sexuality.

Creativity – Cultivating artistic expression, imaginative and divergent ideas, interdisciplinary connections, and a willingness to take intellectual risks, contextualizing innovation within the larger history of ideas.

Global Engagement – Using cultural knowledge and linguistics skills to understand and successfully engage with global cultures both professionally and personally and to contribute as responsible global citizens.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Program Learning Outcomes for the GE program flow from the recognition that certain essential intellectual and practical skills rest at the foundation of a high-quality GE program. These include effective written and oral communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning skills.

- **Oral Communication:** Demonstrates the ability to speak publicly in both formal and informal contexts in order to increase knowledge, foster understanding, or promote change in the listener's attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.
- **Written Communication:** Demonstrates the ability to develop and communicate well-reasoned ideas effectively in a variety of written genres appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- **Critical Thinking:** Demonstrates the ability to assess the relevance and strength of claims in written texts, visual media and other forms of discourse.
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Demonstrates knowledge of and applies mathematical or statistical methods to describe, analyze, and solve problems in context.

- **Information Literacy:** Demonstrates the abilities to recognize when there is a need for information; to identify, locate, and evaluate information; and to effectively, responsibly, and ethically use and share information for the question at hand.

The mix of approved GE courses shall fully cover these five areas. These PLOs shall be assessed on a regular basis, using validated instruments, rubrics, and benchmarks, so that all PLOs are assessed within a five-year period.

ORGANIZATION OF CURRICULUM

The Curricular Organization of GE adheres to the articulated values, LEAP learning outcomes, and curricular requirements of Executive Order 1100 and thus ensures transferability, but is defined more explicitly in this document to create a unique experience consistent with the Mission and Values of CSU, Chico. All GE courses must clearly identify one or more of the GE Values listed above, and at least on GE PLO.

Departments and colleges that wish to participate in the GE program must open their courses to all students and offer their approved courses every semester. Courses not offered for two consecutive semesters are subject to removal from GE. If a department cannot offer a course every semester and has a set of highly complementary courses (e.g. HIST 362 The Middle East to 1800 and HIST 363 The Middle East after 1800), it may propose a set of two GE courses, one to be offered only in fall and one to be offered only in spring.

GE courses will not normally have prerequisites, unless prerequisites derive from a lower-level GE course.

Lower-Division GE Curriculum

In accordance with EO 1100, students take a minimum of thirty-nine lower-division units across six areas: Subject Area A (English Language Communication and Critical Thinking), Area B (Scientific Inquiry and Quantitative Reasoning), Area C (Arts and Humanities), Area D (Social Sciences), Area E (Lifelong Learning and Self Development), and Area F (Ethnic Studies). At Chico State, the following are offered to fulfill the American Institutions requirement: one course in US History (also counting as a lower-division Area C2 course) and one course in US Constitution, California State and Local Government (also counting as a lower-division Area D course) from the departments of History and Political Science and Criminal Justice, respectively. To encourage the study of multiple languages and levels of language, successful completion of any foreign language course may be used to fulfill the Area C2 requirement. In accordance with EO 1110, students should enroll in Written Communication and Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning courses during the first academic year, unless the requirement has been completed prior to entering the university.

Upper-Division GE Curriculum and Pathways

As required by EO 1100, students will take three upper-division courses, one each from Subject Area B (Scientific Inquiry and Quantitative Reasoning), Area C (Arts and Humanities), and Area D (Social Science). At Chico State, students must choose one upper-division Pathway for the completion of these requirements. An upper-division Pathway connects courses in an intellectually cohesive course of study that explores an issue or subject from multidisciplinary perspectives. Upper-division Pathways must be broad enough to include different disciplines and narrow enough to maintain thematic cohesion. Students should be able to complete the university's diversity requirements (see below) in an upper-division Pathway. Normally, students may not use an upper-division course for GE credit unless they have completed at least forty-five semester units prior to enrolling in the course. Upper-division Pathways should include all GE programs learning outcomes, all GE values, and as many Global Cultures (GC), United States Diversity (USD) and Writing (W) courses as possible.

Interdisciplinary GE Minors

Interdisciplinary GE Minors connect a select set of lower-division GE courses with the courses in an upper-division Pathway of the same name to form an intellectually cohesive course of study that explores an issue or subject from multidisciplinary perspectives. Upon completion of nine units from designated courses in an upper-division Pathway and an additional nine units from designated courses in lower-division GE, students will be awarded a GE Minor with the same name as the upper-division Pathway. GE Minors may not require any more courses from a given disciplinary area than are mandated by EO 1100. The curriculum of each interdisciplinary GE Minor shall ensure that students will meet the USD and GC requirements, as well as at least one upper-division W course, by completing any GE Minor. GE courses not part of the GE Minors still satisfy lower-division GE Area or upper-division GE Pathway requirements. All significant changes to GE minors will go through the normal curriculum process of EPPC and Senate approval, as specified in the Academic Department Manual.

Management of Upper-Division GE Pathways and GE Minors

Normally there will be a minimum of five and no more than ten upper-division Pathways and corresponding GE Minors. The number and thematic content of upper-division Pathways and corresponding GE Minors will be managed by the GE Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) in accordance with the following criteria: the need to meet student demand; the quality of proposed Pathways; their ability to meet the values of GE; and their reflection of the diverse disciplines of the campus.

Each upper-division Pathway will have a Coordinator who will assure breadth and consistent thematic coherence of the upper-division Pathway and GE Minor. Pathway Coordinators will

receive release time and will be elected by faculty members participating in the upper-division Pathway and corresponding GE Minor. Every department that has a course in the upper-division Pathway or in the lower-division of the corresponding GE Minor will have a vote. Pathway faculty should be supported as they consult with Pathway Coordinators, CAB and each other to create Pathway integrity, determine coherent course learning objectives and their measurement, promote intellectual development and communicate to strengthen interdisciplinary innovation.

The proposal or elimination of a new upper-division Pathway and corresponding GE Minor will follow the normal procedures for the proposal or elimination of minors. The proposal and/or elimination of individual courses within a Pathway must be advertised (e.g. through memos of intent) and approved by the CAB.

Once an upper-division Pathway and corresponding GE Minor has been established, courses can be eliminated and new ones proposed through CAB.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS OVERSEEN BY GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM ADVISORY BOARD

Diversity Graduation Requirement:

The principal goal of this requirement is for students to gain insight into intercultural relations and the variety of cultures and peoples present both in the United States and the world at large. This requirement will be met by taking two courses. Upper-division Pathways should include courses that allow transfer students to complete this requirement without taking additional courses.

Students must complete both of the following two aspects of the Diversity Requirement (two courses):

- U.S. Diversity (USD): One course outside Area F that develops greater understanding of the history and experiences of diverse peoples and cultures within the U.S. Any course that focuses on the study of sign language also meets this requirement.
- Global Cultures (GC): One course that focuses on the exploration and understanding of cultures outside of the U.S. Any course that focuses on the study of an international language also meets this requirement.

Courses that satisfy the Diversity Requirement must introduce and examine:

- Basic concepts of intergroup and intercultural relations, such as racism, ethnocentrism, the impact of cultures on each other, perception, and the intersection of differing value systems.
- The intersection of ethnicity, language, or culture with gender, sexuality, class, or other important social categories, such as religion.

Students, after completing the diversity courses, will have knowledge of:

- Relationships between different ethnic groups and cultures
- Interactions, values, and perceptions of marginalized or underserved communities
- The social construction of class, race, ethnicity, gender, or nationality

SUBSTITUTIONS

Major Fulfillment of GE Requirements

Major programs may apply to CAB to designate up to three GE requirements fulfilled upon completion of that major. Students who have completed these areas for a major and subsequently declare a different major may use the courses already taken to fulfill GE requirements.

Advanced Course Substitution

A student may substitute a more advanced course for an Area A or lower-division Area B course. For example, a student might take MATH 120 Analytic Geometry and Calculus, substituting it for a lower-level GE mathematics course such as MATH 101 Patterns of Mathematical Thought. CAB will keep a running list of acceptable course substitutions and administer this process in consultation with appropriate disciplinary faculty.

Additional Waivers and Substitutions

The current program is designed to provide a rigorous, shared experience that is essential for a liberal education. Given the built-in flexibility of the program, additional waivers or substitutions to the GE program are strongly discouraged. Per Executive Order 1100 high-unit professional major degree programs may apply for additional waivers and substitutions from the Chancellor's Office if they are first approved at the campus level. For such approval at CSU, Chico, programs must demonstrate convincingly with supporting evidence that the overall units required for the major cannot be reduced by any other means, due to explicit accreditation or credentialing requirements, which will need to be referenced. CAB will consult with Senate on these exceptions. Finally, any proposed substitution must be consistent with the mission of the GE program and address the Program Learning Outcomes as specified in the first section of this document. The program needs to demonstrate how it will meet these outcomes with its proposed substitute(s), which will be assessed as part of the GE program.

ADMINISTRATION OF GE

Curriculum Advisory Board

The Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) will be responsible for making recommendations to the Provost or designee on the implementation, monitoring, development, and assessment of the GE program. In consultation with appropriate disciplinary faculty, it is responsible for the coordination of assessment and the addition or deletion of individual courses as well as any proposed substitutions. Since CAB will advise the Provost on a major university program, it may either initiate advice or respond to requests for advice. The committee membership will consist of:

- Eight Faculty Representatives - One representative elected by and from each college and one by and from the library. Faculty representative shall serve staggered, two-year, renewable terms.
- Pathway Coordinators – Pathway Coordinators receive release time for overseeing the coherence and breadth of upper-division Pathways and corresponding GE Minors, meeting regularly with faculty teaching courses in the GE Minor, and participating on CAB. A coordinator may not also serve concurrently as an elected college faculty representative. Pathway Coordinators shall serve staggered, two-year, renewable terms.
- One member selected from the Academic Senate’s Educational Policies and Programs Committee (EPPC), who shall serve a one-year term, renewable twice.
- Three student representatives, one being the AS President or designee, one being the Director of University Affairs or designee, and one student appointed by Associated Students, who shall serve a one-year term, renewable twice.
- One representative from Academic Advising Programs and one representative from Graduation Advising (Office of the Registrar).
- Ex-officio, non-voting, members – one from Academic Publications and Scheduling Services, one from Curriculum Services, one from First Year Experience, and one Provost designee.

The CAB chair will be elected annually from the faculty representatives and will receive release time for coordinating the committee’s work.

Curriculum Oversight

Once a year, in consultation with Academic Advising, the Enrollment Management Advisory Committee, and college deans, CAB may recommend a call for new GE course proposals in one or more areas based on programmatic needs and historical and projected student demand data. The date and rationale will be publicly available at www.csuchico.edu/ge. If there is no need for additional courses in any Subject Area, Subarea, upper-division Pathway, or GE Minor there will be no call for new courses to GE.

Upper-division Pathways and corresponding GE Minors should maintain their intellectual coherence and breadth. Pathway Coordinators, in consultation with faculty teaching in the upper-division Pathways and corresponding GE Minors, will report annually to CAB on steps taken to maintain coherence and breadth and demonstrated student learning.

At least once every five years, CAB will review all GE courses to ensure EO 1100 subject area compliance, and will review all upper-division GE Pathway and GE Minor courses for thematic coherence. At the time of review, course proponents will provide evidence of how racially just classroom practices, antiracist pedagogies, and the dismantling of anti-Black practices are utilized, with the overall intention of contributing toward a healthy racial campus climate that results in equitable educational experiences for Black students. In keeping with the Academic Senate "Resolution Regarding Equity Gaps of Underrepresented Minority Student Achievement" adopted April 4, 2019, at the time of GE review, course proponents will provide evidence of how equity gaps have been addressed and provide non-instructor specific data, if available, concerning those equity gaps as defined in the resolution. Following review, CAB will recommend retention or removal of courses from GE and/or the GE Minor.

Other administrative tasks associated with GE, such as ensuring adequate funding of the program, and ensuring that courses are offered and space needs are met, are ultimately the responsibility of the Provost. Functionally, these tasks, and appropriate consultation concerning them, will be handled by an ad hoc committee of all college deans chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Education.

Implementation of Revisions

Upon the approval of these revisions, CAB will work directly with departments/faculty currently teaching GE courses, along with other departments/faculty interested in teaching GE courses, in a transparent and consultative process of revising the number and/or title of upper-division Pathways and corresponding GE Minors and designating the lower- and upper divisions courses that will count for each GE Minor. During this process, no courses that currently have GE status, including "experimental courses," will forfeit their status, and courses with current GE status can change their title and/or Pathway focus without forfeiting GE status. Specifically, all courses with lower-division Subject Area or Subarea GE status and all courses in upper-division GE Pathways on the date when this EM is signed will maintain their status unless a department chooses to change the status of the course. In 2019-20, CAB will propose changes to existing GE Minors to EPPC. In 2020-21, CAB will promote GE through new graphics, digital interfaces and general outreach. The revised program will be implemented in fall 2022. The current EM 18-005 will remain in effect until implementation in fall 2022, with the exception of the policy for adding new courses to GE that will take effect immediately (per EMs 19-021, 19-021 Revision) and the addition of Area F: Ethnic Studies (Interim EM 21-002) that will take effect for first-time freshmen students admitted in fall 2021. Area F courses will focus on the core competencies

developed and approved by the CSU Ethnic Studies Council, the Academic Senate of the CSU, and the CSU with regard to historically defined racialized core groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latino/a Americans. Also beginning immediately, CAB will work with relevant units to transition our practices to support EO 1100, sec 2.2.3. This EM shall be reviewed beginning five years after implementation is complete and every five years thereafter.