

2.7.3

General Education

In each undergraduate program, the institution requires in each undergraduate degree program the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses.

Judgment

Compliance Partial Compliance Non-Compliance Not Applicable

Narrative

General education is the foundation of the undergraduate collegiate experience at Tennessee Technological University (TTU). It encompasses the broad range of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that distinguish an educated citizen who is capable of professional success and societal engagement.

General Education Program

The TTU General Education program is founded on the principle that all students should develop college-level competencies and perspectives that enhance their professional and personal lives. It connects a wide range of traditional academic disciplines and seeks to highlight the relationships among bodies of knowledge, developing the cognitive process of reasoning essential for productive lives and self-directed learning. Specifically, these attributes may be obtained through studies in communication, mathematics, social/behavioral and natural sciences, and humanities, with the aim of developing a student's ability

- to think logically, critically, and creatively
- to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- to read extensively and perceptively
- to explore moral and aesthetic values, social relationships, and critical thinking through the humanities
- to understand the importance of key social institutions, ethics and values, and how individuals influence events and function with others in these institutions throughout the world
- to appreciate creative and aesthetic expressions along with their impact on individuals and cultures
- to express, define, and logically explore questions about the world through mathematics
- to use computer technology to communicate and to solve problems
- to use acquired facts, concepts, and principles of the physical and natural sciences in applying the scientific process to natural phenomena
- to perceive the importance of wellness and values in human life
- to manifest a commitment to lifelong learning

Beyond the General Education core, these abilities are developed further through the curriculum of the major and participation in campus events and activities, all of which support the University's vision of "producing practical, ready-to-work graduates from a broad range of academic disciplines prepared to compete in a technologically driven world."

The current structure of the General Education core was developed as a system-wide initiative of the Academic Affairs office of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), of which TTU is one of six constituent universities, along with 13 community colleges, as described in the 2002 "Proposal for a Lower Division General Education Core" developed by an ad hoc TBR committee [1]. A common rubric of 41 credit hours in six General Education categories was established by the approval of this proposal, effective Fall 2004, as follows:

- Communication 9 credit hours (6 writing, 3 oral)
- History 6 credit hours
- Humanities/Fine Arts 9 credit hours (3 must be in literature)
- Mathematics 3 credit hours
- Natural Sciences 8 credit hours
- Social/Behavioral Sciences 6 credit hours

Common learning outcomes were also established for each category [2]. Courses eligible to fulfill these requirements may be identified by each campus through its regular curricular development and review process, but must also be approved by the TBR General Education Advisory Committee, a statewide committee with members from each TBR campus, which determines whether proposed courses meet the prescribed outcomes set for each General Education area, and otherwise appear to be sufficiently rigorous and not narrowly intended for a particular major or for professional training. This approval process at the campus and state-system levels also assures that each course approved for General Education is a college-level course in its content and methods, and sufficiently broad in its focus to be beneficial to a wide range of students. All TTU students are required to complete ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1020, a course in oral communication (SPCH 2410 or PC 2500), and, as part of the nine-hour requirement in humanities/fine arts, at least one approved literature course (ENGL 2130, 2230, or 2330). The complete list of courses approved for the TTU General Education Core as of Fall 2014 is published in the TTU Undergraduate Catalog [3]. The General Education requirements are also included in "Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation" (Policy 260) [4].









General Education Oversight and Procedures

The TTU General Education Committee is a subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee and has oversight of the TTU General Education curriculum as well as authority to recommend exceptions, substitutions, and appropriate transfer credit for courses taken at other institutions. The Committee also conducts the annual assessment of "core competencies" in writing, oral communication, mathematics, and critical thinking. The Committee is comprised of faculty, administrators, and academic advisors from all academic units on campus, including a representative from a regional office of Extended Education programs [5]. The procedures that apply specifically to proposing additions to the TTU General Education core are available on the TTU website [6]. As described in the Committee's guidelines [7], it works with faculty who wish to propose courses to develop syllabi that meet the prescribed learning outcomes and represent a college-level experience. A recent example, EXPW 2015 (Concepts of Health and Wellness), was developed from an early proposal that did not appear to have sufficiently college-level content and scope to an improved version that was recently approved by the General Education Committee and the University Curriculum Committee, and will be included in the TTU General Education Core after final approval by the TBR committee [8].

Conclusion

All baccalaureate programs at TTU include a 41-hour General Education foundation that includes at least one course from humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, natural sciences, communication, history, and mathematics. These courses have been reviewed and approved for college-level content and for contributing to the broad knowledge and understanding essential for continued growth and professional success. TTU is therefore in compliance with Core Requirement

Sources

-  [1] Proposal for the Establishment of a Lower Division General Education Core 2002
-  [2] General Education Learning Outcomes Summary
-  [3] University Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree
-  [4] TTU Policy 260 Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation
-  [5] General Education Committee
-  [6] Process for Course Proposal
-  [7] General Ed Committee Procedures
-  [8] Comparison of First and Second Versions of EXPW Course