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# General Education Program Description

This document describes the number of units as well as the learning outcomes and specifications for courses in each area of the General Education program (GE) at California State University, Fresno. The guiding document on GE is the Executive Order from the Chancellor’s office, which governs GE programs on all CSU campuses. For information regarding the composition of the GE committee, guidelines and procedures for GE proposal submissions and policies for evaluation of GE courses, please refer to the GE policies and procedures document.

#

Courses in General Education are expected to meet the following criteria:

All General Education courses must meet the specifications of the Executive Order and the specifications and required learning outcomes for each Sub-Area.

1. General Education are grounded in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, though professional courses that meet the guidelines may be included.
2. Courses must cover the subjects by exploring major ideas, themes, and concepts consistent with the intent of the Sub-Area goals, learning outcomes and specifications. The area goals, learning outcomes, and specifications should be integrated into the course in meaningful ways.

# Descriptions for Areas A, B, C, D and E

**General Education Area A**

**Communication in the English Language and Critical Thinking**

**In alignment with the California State University System Executive Order on GE:**

a minimum of nine semester units or twelve quarter units in communication in the English language, to include both oral communication (Sub-Area A1) and written communication (Sub-Area A2), and in critical thinking (Area A3), to include consideration of common fallacies in reasoning.

1. Students taking courses in fulfillment of Sub-Areas A1 and A2 will develop knowledge and understanding of the form, content, context, and effectiveness of communication. Students will develop proficiency in oral and written communication in English, examining communication from the rhetorical perspective and practicing reasoning and advocacy, organization, and accuracy. Students will practice the discovery, critical evaluation, and reporting of information, as well as reading, writing, and listening effectively. Coursework must include active participation and practice in both written communication and oral communication in English.

Given the mandates of the Executive Order, Area A will contain 9 units, divided as follows:

Three lower division units in each Sub-Areas A1, A2 and A3.

**Oral Communication (A1) and Written Communication (A2)**

**A1 and A2 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area A1 (Oral Communication) course, students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate effective communication by analyzing, creating, and presenting extemporaneous informative and persuasive messages with clear lines of reasoning, development of ideas and documentation of external sources.
2. Analyze the impact of culture and situational contexts on the creation and management of the communication choices used to inform and persuade audiences.
3. Create and criticize public arguments and reasoning, decision making processes and rhetorical messages through oral and written reports.

**Upon completion of an Area A2 (Written Communication) course, students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate appropriate language use, clarity, proficiency in writing, and citation mechanics.
2. Demonstrate effective academic reading strategies and processes, as well as critical evaluation of written work.
3. Demonstrate effective academic summary, rhetorical awareness and perception, and analysis and synthesis of information.

**:**

In addition to meeting the above learning outcomes, all courses must:

1. Emphasize the form, mechanics and content of communication.
2. Require students to prepare at least three major oral presentations (for A1) or at least six written presentations (for A2) which will receive oral or written critiques by the instructor. For A2 courses, at least one written presentation must utilize a manual of style for preparing a term paper. These requirements are in addition to standard GE writing requirements.

**Critical Thinking (A3)**

**In alignment with the California State University System Executive Order on GE:**

In critical thinking (Sub-Area A3) courses, students will understand logic and its relation to language; elementary inductive and deductive processes, and develop an understanding of the formal and informal fallacies of language and thought; and be able to distinguish matters of fact from issues of judgment or opinion. In A3 courses, students will develop the abilities to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas; to reason inductively and deductively; and be able to reach well-supported factual or judgmental conclusions*.*

**A3 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area A3 (Critical Thinking) course, students will be able to:**

1. Recognize, analyze, evaluate and construct arguments in ordinary language.
2. Distinguish between inductive and deductive reasoning.
3. Identify common fallacies of reasoning.
4. Analyze and evaluate the various types of evidence for various types of claims

**General Education Area B**

**Physical Universe and Its Life Forms**

**In alignment with the California State University System Executive Order on GE:**

1. In Sub-Areas B1-B3, students develop knowledge of scientific theories, concepts, and data about both living and non-living systems. Students will achieve an understanding and appreciation of scientific principles and the scientific method, as well as the potential limits of scientific endeavors and the value systems and ethics associated with human inquiry. The nature and extent of laboratory experience is to be determined by each campus through its established curricular procedures.

Given the mandates of the Executive Order, Area B will contain 9 units, divided as

Three lower division units in each of Sub-Areas B1, B2 and B4. The Laboratory requirement of the Executive order (B3) is met through mandatory labs in all B1 and B2 courses.

**Physical Science (B1)**

**B1 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area B1 (**Physical Sciences**) course, students will be able to:**

1. Recognize and explain scientific theories, concepts, and data about non-living systems.
2. Use data and observations from a specific scientific field to elucidate scientific hypotheses and theories.
3. Discuss the tentative nature of scientific knowledge, and how scientific uncertainty is reflected in the value systems and ethics associated with human inquiry and public policy.

Courses in the physical Sciences (B1) must:

1. provide instruction in the fundamental principles and methods of the science being studied, and on the development and testing of hypotheses.
2. involve understanding and active exploration of the fundamental principles which govern the materials of the physical universe as well as the distribution of those materials and the processes applicable to them, and also involve an understanding of and ability to employ the experimental and mathematical methods used in science.
3. engage students in understanding the fundamental principles and laws of Physical Science, exploring the analytical and quantitative methods of inquiry, and clearly demonstrating the use of the scientific method.

By using tools of science, encourage students to enter into major scientific debates that affect the politics and ethics of our democratic society, economic systems, and our quality of life, e.g., nuclear power, genetic engineering, the purity of our drinking water, environmental issues, and science education. Students should learn how to develop informed judgments, and therefore be able to influence societal views about science and technology.

Examine the structure and implications of major scientific disputes in their historical context.

### Life Science (B2)

**B2 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area B2 (Life Sciences) course, students will be able to:**

1. Recognize and explain scientific theories, concepts, and data about living systems.
2. Recognize scientific principles and apply the scientific method.
3. Discuss the distinctive strengths and scope of scientific endeavors and the ethics associated with intellectual inquiry.

Courses in the Life Sciences (B2) must provide:

1. Instruction in the fundamental features and unifying theories of all living things, including the chemical and physical bases of life and the relationships between living and nonliving materials, and the relevance of this biological knowledge to human affairs;

or

Instruction pertaining to a major evolutionary lineage of living things (e.g. plants, animals) rather than a more constrained group, and the relationships between these organisms and humans;

or

1. Instruction demonstrating the linkages among the biological sciences and the relevance of those linkages to human affairs.

**Laboratory Activity (B3)**

1. The required laboratory activity requirement will be met by Integral laboratory components which must be associated with all courses in Sub-Areas B1 and B2.

**Quantitative Reasoning (B4)**

**In alignment with the California State University System Executive Order on GE:**

Sub-Area B4 shall have an explicit intermediate algebra prerequisite, **and** students shall develop skills and understanding beyond the level of intermediate algebra. Students will not just practice computational skills, but will be able to explain and apply basic mathematical concepts and will be able to solve problems through quantitative reasoning.

**B4 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area B4 (**Quantitative Reasoning**) course, students will be able to:**

1. Represent and explain mathematical information beyond the level of intermediate algebra symbolically, graphically, numerically and verbally.
2. Apply mathematical models of real-world situations and explain the assumptions and limitations of those models.
3. Use mathematical models to find optimal results, make predictions, draw conclusions, and check whether the results are reasonable.

Courses in Quantitative Reasoning (B4) must have a prerequisite of at least Intermediate Algebra, and must use a level of mathematics beyond that of Intermediate Algebra.

## General Education Area C

**Arts and Humanities**

**In alignment with the California State University System Executive Order on GE:**

Across the disciplines in their Area C coursework, students will cultivate intellect, imagination, sensibility and sensitivity. Students will respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and will develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. Students will cultivate and refine their affective, cognitive, and physical faculties through studying great works of the human imagination. Activities may include participation in individual aesthetic, creative experiences; however Area C excludes courses that exclusively emphasize skills development.

In their intellectual and subjective considerations, students will develop a better understanding of the interrelationship between the self and the creative arts and of the humanities in a variety of cultures.

Students may take courses in languages other than English in partial fulfillment of this requirement if the courses do not focus solely on skills acquisition but also contain a substantial cultural component. This may include literature, among other content. Coursework taken in fulfillment of this requirement must include a reasonable distribution among the Sub-Areas specified, as opposed to restricting the entire number of units required to a single Sub-Area.

Given the mandates of the Executive Order, Area C will contain 9 units, divided as follows:

1. Three lower division units in each Sub-Areas C1 and C2.
2. An additional 3 units in either Sub-Area C1 or C2.

**Arts (Art, Dance, Music, Theatre) (C1)**

**C1 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area C1 (Arts) course, students will be able to:**

1. Respond orally and in writing to aesthetic experiences, both subjectively and objectively, validating the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses.
2. Recognize and explain the relationship between the self and the arts in a given cultural context.
3. Recognize, describe, and interpret works of art and performance; students may engage in skill development and/or participate in artistic creation.

**Humanities (Literature, Philosophy, Foreign Languages) (C2)**

**C2 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area C2 (Humanities) course, students will be able to do one of the following:**

1. Objectively review and explain important philosophical, historical or linguistic findings and developments.

or

Recognize, describe, and interpret works of the human imagination or intellect in their cultural context, either subjectively or objectively.

or

Demonstrate basic competence with a language (not English) and interpret texts or speech produced in that language from a relevant cultural perspective.

Courses in the humanities (C2) must:

1. Promote an understanding of the development of contemporary civilization through studies of its historical and cultural roots in the principal humanistic endeavors, e.g., literature, philosophy, and foreign languages.

Include exposure to diverse cultural perspectives.

1. Reflect critically and systematically on questions concerning beliefs, values and the nature of existence;

or

1. Include a survey of the various types and styles of literature from a variety of historical perspectives and cultures, including instruction in the techniques of literary criticism:

or

1. Foster skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing a language other than English within a cultural and artistic context.

**General Education Area D**

**Social, Political, and Economic Institutions and**

**Behavior, Historical Background**

**In alignment with the California State University System Executive Order on GE:**

1. Students learn from courses in multiple Area D disciplines that human social, political and economic institutions and behavior are inextricably interwoven.   Through fulfillment of the Area D requirement, students will develop an understanding of Problems and issues from the respective disciplinary perspectives and will examine issues in their contemporary as well as historical settings and in a variety of cultural contexts.  Students will explore the principles, methodologies, value systems and ethics employed in social scientific inquiry. Courses that emphasize skills development and professional preparation are excluded from Area D.  Coursework taken in fulfillment of this requirement must include a reasonable distribution among the Sub-Areas specified, as opposed to restricting the entire number of units required to a single Sub-Area.
2. Given the mandates of the Executive Order, as well as the American Institutions requirement, Area D will contain 9 units, divided as follows:

lower division units in each of Sub-Areas D1, D2 and D3.

1. Six lower division units that ensure that students acquire knowledge and skills that will help them to comprehend the workings of American social and political institutions as well as enable them to contribute to society as responsible and constructive citizens. Courses satisfying this requirement shall provide for comprehensive study of American history (Sub-Area D1) and American government (Sub-Area D2) including the historical development of American institutions and ideals, the Constitution of the United States and the operation of representative democratic government under that Constitution, and the processes of state and local government.
2. Three lower division units in the subject area of the social sciences (Sub-Area D3).

### American History (Area D1)

**D1 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area D1 course (American History), a student will be able to:**

1. Trace the historical development of American documents, institutions, and ideals, including the Constitution of the United States and the operation of representative democratic government.
2. Describe the origins of American social, political, cultural, and economic institutions and how they have changed over time.
3. Analyze and synthesize historical sources, including primary and secondary documents, and place them in their historical context.

### American Government (Area D2)

**D2 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area D2 course (American Government), a student will be able to:**

1. Explain the structure of the governments of the United States of America and the State of California.
2. Recognize the major political philosophies regarding the role of government articulated in current political discourse.
3. Assess the meaning of representation in a democratic system of government and the pathways through which citizens may seek representation.

### Social Science (Area D3)

**D3 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area D3 course (Social Science), a student will be able to:**

1. Discuss issues in the social sciences in their contemporary as well as historical settings and in a variety of cultural contexts.
2. Explain the principles, methodologies, value systems, and ethics employed in social scientific inquiry.

Discuss the influence of major social, cultural, economic, and political forces on human behavior and institutions.

**Specifications**

In addition to meeting the above learning outcomes, all courses in Social, Political, and Economic Institutions and Behavior, Historical Background (Area D) must:

1. Introduce students to the methodologies and analytical concepts necessary to evaluate society and promote more effective participation in the human community.
2. Study the influence of major social, cultural, economic and political forces on societal behavior and institutions,

or

1. Provide an understanding of different cultures and ethnic diversity through the use of comparative methods and a cross-cultural perspective.

**Note:** No student may take more than two courses from a single department or program to satisfy the requirements of Area D.

**General Education Area E**

**Lifelong Understanding and Self-Development**

**In alignment with the California State University System Executive Order on GE:**

a minimum of three semester units or four quarter units in study designed to equip learners for lifelong understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological, social, and psychological beings.

1. Student learning in this area shall include selective consideration of content such as human behavior, sexuality, nutrition, physical and mental health, stress management, financial literacy, social relationships and relationships with the environment, as well as implications of death and dying and avenues for lifelong learning. Physical activity may be included, provided that it is an integral part of the study elements described herein.

**Area E Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area E course (lifelong learning and self-development), a student will be able to:**

1. Explain how, during the course of a lifetime, humans are physiologically, socially, and psychologically integrated.
2. Explain, model, or practice activities, skills, and behavior that promote lifelong learning and development.

**Specifications**

To equip human beings for lifelong understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological, social and psychological entities.

physical activity or skills acquisition alone cannot meet this requirement. such content should be integrated into courses with broader purpose or the amount of such credit applicable to the requirement should be limited.

Descriptions for upper division Integration Areas IB, IC, ID and MI

Given the mandates of the Executive Order, as well as three additional units, upper division general education will contain 12 units, divided as follows:

Nine upper division units in Integration (3 units from each of Areas IB, IC and ID).

1. Three upper division units in Multicultural International (MI)

All upper division integration courses must:

provide opportunities for students to discover a variety of ways in which specific areas of human knowledge are related.

Be congruent with an Area (B, C, or D) goal, as well as the appropriate Sub-Area specification(s), and learning outcomes.

Be integrative, aiming toward a genuine appreciation of the linkages among Sub-Areas as well as the area goal.

1. Be taken outside the student's major department unless the course is interdisciplinary involving more than one department.

### Integration - Physical Universe and Its Life Forms (Area IB)

**IB Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of a course in Area IB (Integration - Physical Universe and Its Life Forms), a student will be able to:**

1. Describe the inextricable connections among the physical universe, the life forms which inhabit it, and the mathematical models used to describe it.
2. From the perspective of a particular scientific discipline, explain the ways in which science shapes our lives.
3. From the perspective of a particular scientific discipline, assess scientific issues including the value systems and ethics associated with them.

### Integration - Arts and Humanities (Area IC)

**IC Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of a course in Area IC (Integration - Arts and Humanities), a student will be able to:**

1. Recognize and explain, subjectively or objectively, the content and interpretation of creative works of culture (artistic, literary, and intellectual).
2. Explain relationships among the humanities, arts, and the self.

### Integration - Social, Political, and Economic Institutions and Behavior, Historical Background (Area ID)

**ID Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of a course in Area ID, a student will be able to:**

1. Describe the inextricable connections among human social, political, cultural and economic institutions and behavior and employ the diverse methodologies used to examine them.
2. Discuss social science issues, human institutions and their interconnections from both a contemporary and historical perspective.

### Multicultural International (Area MI)

**MI Student Learning Outcomes**

**Upon completion of an Area MI course (Multicultural / International), a student will be able to:**

1. Explain and interpret aspects of race, gender, culture, class, ethnicity or the relations among nations in a multicultural world.
2. Identify systems of oppression, inequality, or discrimination within and among groups, cultures, subcultures or nations.

**MI Specifications**

Courses in Multicultural International (Area MI) must:

1. Prepare the student to live and function in an international and multicultural world or address the roles of specific cultures in contemporary societies.

Be taken outside the student's major department unless the course is interdisciplinary involving more than one department.