

FAQ's

Q. Who has been involved in the general education revision process?

A. A full list of faculty and staff involvement is listed on page 4 of the summary document. All faculty and staff who volunteered were placed on either the Executive Committee or a working group. 75% of committee members were tenured or tenure track faculty. As specific expertise was needed, faculty in areas such as Math, CeMAST, Music, English, and Sciences, among others were consulted. All college curriculum committees were asked for feedback to ensure the committee was going in the right direction.

Q. Where are we in the shared governance process?

A. The process is outlined on the [curriculum website](#). After the feedback sessions are complete and the data analyzed, the Executive Committee will discuss the results and make changes they deem necessary. The final proposal will be sent to the CGE, UCC, and then the Academic Senate.

Q. What are the most significant changes being proposed?

A. A new category on experiential learning and civic engagement was added; an additional writing course category was added; UST & ICL categories were removed; the total number of hours was dropped by 3-6 hours; the vision and learning outcomes are all new; requirements are category and outcomes based rather than discipline based; opportunities for interdisciplinarity was enhanced; and students will have the ability to earn certificates on various topics.

Q. Why was the curriculum dropped from 39 to 33 hours?

A. Only eight majors require 39 hours. All other majors have a category exemption, reducing their total hours to 36. The number of hours was reduced as this curriculum was moved from a course-based approach to an outcomes approach. The outcomes are achieved through an increased interdisciplinary approach. Hours were also reduced to help students double major, add a minor, add a teacher education endorsement, or add a certificate (once they are available). Students will also have more flexibility if they change majors (60%+ change majors at ISU) or simply want to take an elective that looks interesting.

Q. Can students still “double dip” general education and major courses?

A. Yes. This has not changed from the current curriculum. Students can also double dip AMALI & IDEAS courses, but AMALI and IDEAS cannot double dip with each other.

Q. Is there an example of how certificates will work?

A. Certificate creation will be faculty driven. Certs within general education will be 9 hours. For example, a student could take courses in 3 categories and receive a WGSS certificate. If they planned well, they could also complete 9 hours of the WGSS minor.

Social and Behavioral Sciences	Humanities	Applied Writing Inquiry	Creative Arts
WGS 120	ENG 160	IDS 121a39	WGS 177
FCS/HIS/SOC 112	ENG 261	LAN/ENG/COM 128	TBD
TBD	LAN/ENG 206	TBD	TBD
TBD	LAN/ENG 206a01	TBD	
	LAN/ENG 206a02		
	LAN/ENG 206a03		
	LAN/ENG 206a04		

Note: This grid is an example based on current minor requirements and is not a cert proposed or endorsed by WGSS.

Q. How do these changes impact transfer students?

A. Following current practice, transcripts for transfer students will be reviewed to determine whether it is in their best interest to complete IAI or ISU’s general education program. Currently only half of ISU’s students complete our general education curriculum.

Q. What if I do not see my courses fitting in the revised structure?

A. Talk directly with a member of the current Executive Committee about where courses could fit. Extensive discussions were had to make sure departments would not be excluded. This was always an underlying question that the committee continued to ask itself. The college curriculum committees were also asked to consider this question to ensure that all departments who want to be a part of general education can be.

Q. Could a student graduate from ISU without taking a course in <insert any discipline>?

A. Yes. This general education program is outcomes based and not discipline based. Almost, if not all students, will graduate with a course in MAT, COM, and ENG as they currently do. No other discipline dominates a category in the current structure.

Q. What is the difference between the general education curriculum and graduation requirements?

A. General education is a curriculum students will complete based on the 11 categories. Completing a general education curriculum is a graduation requirement as is IDEAS, AMALI, the BA language requirement, and the BS-SMT requirement.

Q. What was the biggest challenge to the revised general education curriculum?

A. The committee was charged with creating a structure that addressed many of the challenges of the current curriculum (see page 7 of the summary document). It was also challenging to keep the student experience at the forefront while balancing the impact of changes on departments.

Q. If a revised general education curriculum is approved, what are the next steps?

A. Committees will be established to develop an implementation plan including such things as how to reconfigure Campus Solutions, how to recategorize existing courses, how new courses could be designed, etc. It will likely take 3-5 years to fully implement a revised general education curriculum.

Q. How does the new structure address the challenges of the current structure?

A. The Academic Senate asks that the general education curriculum be reviewed every five years. Often this is a general review with very minor changes. However, the charge for the current review was to review and make significant changes to meet the needs of our current students. In doing so, weaknesses of the current general education curriculum were identified through assessment activities. The discussion on these areas included:

- Need to improve transferability between ISU and IAI; ISU has too many pre-requisites on courses.
 - o No prerequisites on courses
 - o Categories comport more easily with IAI
- Limited courses in some categories (e.g. LH).
 - o More broadly defined categories, including Humanities, should allow for more courses/seats
 - o Fewer categories can allow for more courses per category
- One department can dominate a specific category because they are too discipline specific.
 - o Requirements are based on categories and outcomes and not specific disciplines.
 - o Categories are defined broadly to encompass multiple disciplines.
 - o Learning outcomes associated with each category can be achieved through study in a wide variety of disciplines. Taking courses in any single discipline will not be required.
- No significant changes have been made in 30 years.
 - o Proposal calls for significant changes to the General Education program that make it more student-centered by allowing for greater flexibility and choice.
 - o Students can choose courses in a way that will result in a more coherent and focused curriculum.
 - o Basing requirements on broadly defined categories will encourage faculty to develop new cross-disciplinary courses or refine existing courses to take advantage of cross-disciplinary opportunities.
 - o The proposed structure allows room for disciplines/departments/schools who do not participate in the current General Education Program to develop courses (or cross-disciplinary connections) that will give them a place within the program.
- Concern that the current structure is too science and math heavy.

- o Science, math, and quantitative thinking are represented in four of the eleven categories (Scientific Literacy, Quantitative Literacy, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and STEM)
 - o These categories are more broadly defined to encourage cross-disciplinary courses that may include participation by disciplines currently not represented by science and math courses.
 - o The learning outcomes associated with courses in these categories are consistent with multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary courses.
- The two-tiered structure makes course scheduling difficult.
 - o Reduced to a single tier
- Requires 39 hours but 28 programs have a 1 course exemption; out of step with peer institutions and negatively impacts time to degree, transferability, and affordability.
 - o 33 required hours
- Current structure does not connect to the major in a meaningful way.
 - o Basing the requirements on categories rather than courses will allow for the development of courses (or the refinement of existing courses) that connect meaningfully with majors and minors, including interdisciplinary minors.
 - o The proposed structure should serve to provide all students with the opportunity to explore academic disciplines beyond their major while also allowing students to choose courses that connect to their majors or life/career goals.
- General education needs to be repositioned, so it is viewed as an opportunity instead of a burden.
 - o See just above. The proposed structure based on categories rather than courses, will allow students to explore a wide variety of academic disciplines while at the same time constructing a coherent path through the General Education program that is meaningful to them.
 - o The availability of “Certs” within the General Education Program will allow students to develop and document experience and competence in areas that are meaningfully related to their interests and lifegoals.
- Many faculty do not want to teach within the current general education curriculum. The curriculum must better reflect the expertise of 21st century faculty.
 - o Categories developed with an eye toward providing faculty with the opportunity to develop a wide range of courses that meet the goals of the program and have the interest of the teaching faculty
 - o Focus on interdisciplinarity, which is in keeping with how scholars are being trained and where many publishing trends are heading, while still making room for more traditional expertise.
 - o The proposal includes Civic Engagement and Experiential Learning, which are hallmarks of a modern student-centered curriculum.
- Too many categories (13) resulting in a curriculum that lacks sufficient coherence, predictability, and focus.
 - o Number of categories reduced to 10, plus an elective
- Inability to directly assess the general education curriculum (a concern in ISU’s last HLC review.
 - o Focused and required learning outcomes should make assessment paths clearer

- Tenure and promotion guidelines do not always reward faculty work in general education or recognize the skills needed to teach in the general education curriculum.
 - o Beyond the scope of this task force
- Many general education classes are large and lack the pedagogy to engage students like small classes do. While large courses are needed due to budget limitations, many of the courses in the current curriculum were initially conceived of as smaller classes with accordingly different pedagogies.
 - o Course sizes are not mandated in the proposal; some courses will be necessarily small, others may vary in size. Departmental decisions.
 - o The implementation phase will address best practices in pedagogy to accommodate larger classes.