

General Education Statement of Philosophy

Approved by Faculty Referendum - June 9, 1999

In recognition of that which we value for ourselves, our students, our institution and the community we serve, the faculty of De Anza College affirms that the primary purpose of our General Education Program is to prepare students to live in and contribute to a complex, ever changing, diverse, and multicultural world. Toward that end we are committed to providing students learning experiences meant to develop such abilities as to think critically, to communicate clearly and effectively--both orally and in writing--to use mathematics and technology practically, and to acquire good physical health. In addition, we will guide them in understanding the modes of inquiry of the major disciplines, and lead them through learning activities in the experience and appreciation of the creative arts, in understanding multicultural and diverse perspectives, and in achieving insights gained through experiences involving ethical and social issues. Throughout these learning experiences, we will guide students in their development of self-understanding and in the process of becoming life-long learners.

The General Education Program reflects our conviction that students must have knowledge about certain basic principles, concepts, and methodologies both unique to and shared by the various disciplines. The faculty intend that the General Education Program will provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate and appreciate the physical environment, the contributions of both men and women, their culture and other cultures, the society in which they live, and will help them connect various fields of knowledge in order to become active, vibrant participants in a diverse and global society.

Criteria for All General Education Courses

Ensuring that the spirit and intent of the Philosophy Statement is satisfied, every General Education course:

- Is designed to stimulate students to think critically
- Presents core concepts that define the discipline systematically
- Fosters the ability to think and to communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing.
- Teaches students how to access information in the discipline.
- Helps students achieve insights into ethical problems and develops the capacity for responsible decision making.
- Includes diverse perspectives and contributions in the discipline and comparative treatments of issues related to gender, culture - both majority and minority - values, and societal perspectives.
- Is placed within a global and historical context.
- Includes the scope of the established body of knowledge within the discipline as well as knowledge shared between disciplines.

And, in developing courses, those who propose General Education curriculum address and may include:

The use of “real-world” or “hands-on” applications, studio practice, performance, or artistic form as long as the concepts and theories that make up the core of the discipline remain the main focus.

- Multiple approaches appropriate to different sensory learning styles.
- Collaboration and teamwork within the culturally diverse context of the course

Criteria specific to each of the Five Areas of General Education

In addition to criteria which must be satisfied by all courses, in order to qualify as a general education course within an Area, courses in the Area demonstrate that they meet the criteria specific to the Area.

The Natural Sciences: Includes introductory or integrative courses in astronomy, biology, chemistry, general and physical science, geology, meteorology, oceanography, physical geography, physics, and other scientific disciplines.

Courses in the natural sciences examine the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena. A course in the natural sciences (to the extent existing in the discipline):

- Develops in the student an appreciation and understanding of the scientific method.
- Encourages an understanding of the relationships between science and other human activities.
- Develops the student’s capacity to understand his or her relationship to the physical universe, its life forms, and its natural phenomena.
- Involves students actively in examining solutions to major problems and in projecting probable outcomes related to the natural sciences.

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Social and Behavioral Sciences: Includes introductory or integrative survey courses in cultural anthropology, cultural geography, economics, business, history, political science, psychology, sociology, intercultural studies, child development, women’s studies, and related disciplines.

Courses in the social and behavioral sciences focus on people as members of society. A course in the social and behavioral sciences (to the extent existing in the discipline):

- Encourages the student to study the methods of inquiry and the theories used by the social and behavioral sciences.
- Helps the student to understand how diverse peoples interact in response to their histories, societies, and cultural traditions.
- Promotes the understanding of human history, society, cultures, organizations, and various social groups.
- Develops the student’s understanding of how she or he relates to historical processes, social structures, institutions, and cultural traditions.
- Teaches the student to examine ideologies and practices from multiple perspectives.

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Arts and Humanities: Includes introductory or integrative courses in the arts, ethnic studies, foreign languages, literature, philosophy, religion, communication, and history.

Courses in the arts and humanities study the cultural and artistic expressions of human beings. A course in the arts and humanities (to the extent existing in the discipline):

- Develops in the student an awareness of the ways in which people through the ages have responded to themselves and the world around them in artistic and cultural creation.
- Helps the student develop aesthetic and cultural understanding, ethical values, and an ability to make value judgments.
- Promotes an appreciation and an understanding of the modes of inquiry used in the Humanities.
- Teaches students how to examine values and issues in the arts and humanities and to project probable outcomes to problems related to the discipline.
- Teaches students through theory and practice to express themselves through artistic forms.

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Language and Rationality: Includes courses in English composition (both expository and argumentative writing) and courses in communication and analytical thinking (mathematics, logic, statistics, computer languages and programming, and related disciplines).

Courses in the area of Language and Rationality develop in the student college level reading and writing skills, effective communication, and logical problem solving skills. A course in Language and Rationality (to the extent existing in the discipline):

- Helps the student formulate and communicate ideas and analyze and solve problems in various symbol systems
- Covers the principles and applications of language involving logical thought.
- Helps the student to understand and use clear and precise expression or computation.
- Develops the student’s ability to critically evaluate types of communication.
- Teaches the student when to apply the appropriate technical, interpretive, or evaluative skills.
- Fosters an appreciation and an understanding of the modes of inquiry used in Language and Rationality.

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Physical Education, Development, and Performance: Includes courses in physical education and adaptive physical education and dance.

Courses in Physical Education, Development, and Performance involve structured psychomotor activity. A course in Physical Education, Development, and Performance (to the extent existing in the discipline):

Teaches the student skills and attitudes that will help him or her live a longer, healthier, and more productive life.

- Helps the student to move more effectively and efficiently.
- Fosters an awareness of the ways that people through the ages and in different cultures have developed exercise and movement experience.

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Other Considerations for General Education

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the General Education Program, a course should:

- Be readily available to both day and night students if there is sufficient enrollment to offer it at both times and be offered at least once a year.
- Be scheduled in patterns that assist the student in completing his or her program in a timely fashion.
- Count only once, if repeatable, as a general education course. While a course might satisfy more than one general education requirement, it may not be counted more than once for these purposes. The course may be used to satisfy both a general education requirement and a major requirement.
- Have no college level prerequisite other than a skills or performance prerequisite.
- Appear in only one general education area unless the course is designated as interdisciplinary.
- Not be included in the major track when two tracks are provided in the discipline.