

ACADEMIC ALERT #2001-02

DATE: September 19, 2000

DECISION: Implementation of new General Education Core Requirements.

(see attached)

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Immediately

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National-Louis University

General Education Core

Philosophy Statement

Consistent with the university mission, the general education core provides the foundation to develop the breadth of knowledge, intellectual understandings, and skills that NLU graduates will demonstrate. A coherent general education core is fundamental to further, in-depth study and serves as a catalyst for lifelong learning. The core enables students to acquire critical inquiry skills and to recognize the interrelationships of areas of study. Analytical skills, information technology literacy, and ethics, values and respect for human diversity are infused throughout the core:

General Education Core Requirements

General education "is not directly related to a student's formal technical, vocational, or professional preparation; it is a part of every student's course of study, regardless of his or her area of emphasis, and it is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts, and attitudes that every educated person should possess."

The following skills, knowledge and abilities are integrated throughout the general education core and academic programs:

Analytical Skills

Students will learn to evaluate ideas and outcomes, solve problems, and make informed decisions based upon consideration of evidence, reason and implications.

Information and Technology Literacy

Students will learn to access information efficiently and effectively; evaluate it critically and competently; and use it accurately and creatively. They will be able to identify technological applications and devices appropriate to tasks and will acquire skills necessary to use them effectively.

Ethics, Values, and Respect for Human Diversity

Students will gain an understanding of the personal and social importance of ethical values and social reasoning. They will develop recognition of and respect for the diversity of social organizations and cultures throughout an ever-changing and evolving world.

Field of Knowledge 1: Communications, Humanities, and Fine Arts

Communications

Students will learn to acquire and exchange information accurately from a variety of sources. Using appropriate methodologies, they will develop the ability to speak, read, write, and listen with understanding and critical discernment.

Appropriate courses: Oral and written communications.

Humanities

Students will examine the human conditions through a variety of fields and disciplines including the study of language, literature, history, philosophy, religion, and ethics.

Appropriate courses: History (U.S. and Western; intellectual history), literature, philosophy, religion, and foreign language.

Fine Arts

Students will be exposed to, experience, participate in, and create artistic expression in a variety of forms and contexts.

Appropriate courses: art, music, theatre.

Field of Knowledge 2: Quantitative Reasoning; Physical and Life Sciences

Quantitative Reasoning

Students will understand quantitative concepts and perform basic operations at the college level. They will understand the possible multiple interpretations of data and will be able to respond critically and appropriately to concepts, arguments, and conclusions based on numbers and statistics in both abstract and concrete contexts.

Appropriate courses: Mathematics / statistics and research methods.

Physical and Life Sciences

Students will learn and apply appropriate scientific methods in order to identify, understand, compare, apply, and evaluate natural and physical phenomena.

Appropriate courses: chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology, biology, microbiology, genetics, ecology and conservation, zoology.

Field of Knowledge 3: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Social Sciences

Students will understand the organization of social institutions and the emergence and structure of society through the application of appropriate concepts, as well as theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Appropriate courses: anthropology, economics, geography, cultural and ethnic history, political science, and sociology.

Behavioral Science

Students will understand concepts and theories that seek to explain human behavior, mental processes and development throughout the life span, and the application of behavioral science principles in a variety of settings.

Appropriate courses: Psychology and related behavioral science areas.

The Proposed General Education Core Distribution

NLU takes pride in its diversity and in making learning accessible to its students. The university currently serves both a large undergraduate student body at its five Illinois campuses and a significant number of adults enrolled in degree-completion programs nationally and internationally. The distinctiveness of these two undergraduate populations necessitates a general education model that is broad enough to accommodate their unique needs. All undergraduate students, whether they are enrolled in on-campus or field-based programs, are expected to develop and strengthen all core skills, knowledge and abilities and to demonstrate a level of achievement that is appropriate for their program area. ' ,

This is accomplished through a general education core requiring a minimum of 60 quarter hours of course work (or the equivalent) distributed across the three fields: I: Communications, Humanities, and Fine Arts; II: Quantitative Reasoning and Physical and Life Sciences; and III: Social and Behavioral Sciences. The following sections outline the ways in which these two undergraduate populations may fulfill the general education core requirements.

I. Basic Model for On-Campus, Undergraduate Programs - Minimum of 60 Quarter Hours

Field 1. Communications, Humanities, and Fine Arts: minimum of 6 courses (or 30 quarter hours)

Field II. Quantitative Reasoning and Physical and Life Sciences: minimum of 3 courses (or 15 quarter hours)

Field III. Social and Behavioral Sciences: minimum of 3 courses (or 15 quarter hours)

Total: 12 courses or 60 quarter hours

II. Basic Model for Undergraduate Degree-Completion Programs

NLU faculty recognize that adult learners often bring a wealth of experiential learning to the university classroom. Typically the adult learner is employed and comes to NLU to complete the bachelor's degree for career advancement or other professional goals. Students have often completed up to 90 quarter hours of previous college work and documented prior learning through other means. Their classroom environment features active engagement in the learning process, as students validate their experiences and relate them to content and theories. A total of

90 quarter hours is generally required for admission into an accelerated degree completion program, including 69 quarter hours for the general education core.

Adult learners in degree completion programs are required to complete a minimum general education requirement of 60 quarter hours distributed among the three fields of knowledge (see below). This more flexible path to fulfilling their general education requirements allows adult learners to address their educational goal in a variety of ways which meet their unique needs as adult students.

Field I. Communications, Humanities, and Fine Arts: minimum of 2 courses (or 10 quarter hours)

Field II. Quantitative Reasoning and Physical and Life Sciences: minimum of 1 course (or 5 quarter hours)

Field III. Social and Behavioral Sciences: minimum of 2 courses (or 10 quarter hours)

Total: 12 courses or 60 quarter hours Additional hours or equivalent to total 60 quarter hours of general education.

Specific academic programs may designate courses that should be taken to meet general education core requirements. Additional courses may be required from across the university curriculum as part of program requirements.

The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI)

Students who have completed an IAI general education core at another Illinois college or university may transfer this core to meet NLU's general education core requirements. Departments or programs may require additional courses as part of programmatic requirements.

Students who are interested in transferring NLU's general education core to another IAI college or university must work closely with their adviser to ensure that they choose the appropriate course distribution and levels of courses to meet IAI requirements.

Assessment of Student Achievement of the General Education Goals

Assessment will be managed around the general education goals. The recommended policy permits broad control of the ways in which the general education competencies are met and assessed.

Programs are required to:

- Indicate how their students will meet the general education core requirements through curricular structures;
- Indicate the assessment processes that will be used to determine if the competencies are met.
- Identify a curriculum revision process that will take place to respond to assessment results.

The University Assessment Council will work with the programs to assure that the desired student learning outcomes are achieved.