



State University of New York

---

## Memorandum to Presidents

---

Date: July 22, 2003 Vol. 03 No. 5

From: Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: Policy Review and Update: The State University General Education Requirement and Transfer

To: Presidents, State-Operated Campuses  
Presidents, Community Colleges

I am writing to promulgate the attached document, *Policy Review: The State University General Education Requirement (SUNY-GER) and Transfer*. The purpose of the *Policy Review* is to clarify System policy as it relates to the intersection of Board of Trustees policies on Transfer (90-196) and on General Education (98-241). The *Policy Review* has been developed as a result of discussions conducted with the Provost's Advisory Council on General Education, the Provost's Ad Hoc Committee on Transfer, and gatherings of campus transfer and general education administrators. In its final form the *Policy Review* also incorporates feedback received after circulation among Presidents and Chief Academic Officers from all sectors of the University. It is my intention that the *Policy Review* reflect the letter and spirit of both relevant Board policies, while affording campuses reasonable leeway to accommodate the needs and aspirations of associate degree transfers.

Questions regarding the *Policy Review* may be directed to Assistant Provost Patricia Pietropaolo (pietropa@sysadm.suny.edu).

---

Peter D. Salins  
Provost and Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs

Attachment

Copy: Chief Academic Officers, State-Operated Campuses  
Chief Academic Officers, Community Colleges

## State University of New York

### Policy Review and Update: The State University General Education Requirement (SUNY-GER) and Transfer

- I. The relevant Board policies are contained in resolution 90-196 (“Reaffirmation and Extension of the State University Board of Trustees’ Transfer Policy”), and resolution 98-241, (“State University General Education Requirement”).
- A. Resolution 90-196, subsuming and extending all previous Board policies on transfer.

#### Salient Provisions

- i. SUNY AA/AS graduates are guaranteed an opportunity to enroll full-time at a SUNY baccalaureate institution.
  - ii. “When accepted in parallel programs at baccalaureate campuses of the University,” SUNY AA/AS graduates shall have full junior status and be able to complete the bachelor’s degree in four full-time semesters.
  - iii. When accepted with full junior status in parallel programs, associate degree graduates are granted full credit for general education courses taken, and not required to repeat courses with similar content.
  - iv. SUNY AA/AS graduates’ privileges are accorded to CUNY AA/AS graduates.
  - v. The policies of this resolution are not intended to diminish current transfer opportunities for AAS graduates.
- B. Board Resolution 98-241, creating a State University General Education Requirement for bachelor’s degree recipients.

#### Salient Provisions

- i. Thirty credits of general education—consisting of three credits in each of ten subject categories, plus two competencies—are made a condition for graduation with a SUNY baccalaureate degree.

With the consent of the Board of Trustees’ General Education Committee, the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on General Education made the following modifications to the resolution:

- the Humanities/Arts category was split into separate Humanities and Arts categories, and Information Management was designated a competency; and
- the ten subject categories were defined in terms of learning outcomes, rather than a strict 3 credit per category requirement.

Updated SUNY-GER course approval guidelines, and accompanying Task Force learning outcomes, may be accessed online at [www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation](http://www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation).

- ii. Each institution's general education curriculum shall complement and build on students' prior academic preparation.
- iii. Institutions offering AA and AS degrees shall design their general education requirements so as to facilitate transfer.
- iv. The Provost is charged with oversight of implementation, including the charge to make appropriate exceptions to B.i for "Specialized Colleges, Colleges of Technology, programs awarding two-year vocational degrees, and for other special circumstances."

## **II. Current Implementation of the SUNY-GER *vis a vis* Transfer.**

### **A. Starting Date for Transfers**

Transfers are subject to the SUNY-GER beginning in fall 2002 (i.e., two years subsequent to the inception for native baccalaureate candidates).

### **B. AA/AS Graduates**

Associate-degree-granting institutions have made a commitment to provide a minimum 7/10 SUNY-GER subject categories in AA/AS degree programs (with waivers granted for specific programs on grounds of accreditation and/or time-to-degree). Therefore, a significant number of SUNY AA/AS graduates may arrive with junior status at SUNY baccalaureate institutions needing to complete 3/10 SUNY-GER subject categories.

### **C. AAS Graduates**

While many SUNY AAS programs are incorporating the 7/10 subject categories that have been established as the minimum for AA/AS programs, this may not comprise a majority of the AAS graduates who transfer within the system. The Board policy on general education does not address AAS degree holders. The Board resolution on transfer says that current transfer policies are not intended to diminish existing opportunities for AAS graduates. The AAS as such is not addressed systematically in either Board policy.

### **D. "Course Equivalency"**

Any course offering (or other instructional modality) at any SUNY campus that has been approved for a given SUNY-GER category must be accepted as such for transfer purposes at every other SUNY campus. The sending institution will provide a General Education Transcript Addendum for each transferring student, and the receiving institution will respect its certification *vis a vis* each SUNY-GER category. This "course equivalency" does not preclude campuses from implementing local requirements that go beyond the SUNY-GER, or from applying all relevant local requirements to transfer students. Lists of approved SUNY-GER courses, by campus, are accessible online at [www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/CampusList.htm](http://www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/CampusList.htm).

### **III. Policy Provisions**

#### **A. Directive: SUNY-GER Starting Date for Transfers**

Fall 2002 has been established as the inception of the SUNY-GER's applicability to transfer students. In order to accommodate concerns about equitable treatment of transfers who matriculated into the system prior to fall 2000, baccalaureate campuses shall exempt such transfers from the SUNY-GER as such. This directive does not apply to any additional campus-based general education requirements that go beyond the SUNY-GER.

#### **B. Facilitation of Transfer: Baccalaureate Institutions**

- i. Baccalaureate institutions should adopt measures that afford AA/AS degree holders from SUNY institutions the opportunity of obtaining a bachelor's degree in a period of time comparable to upper-division students who are not transfers. Creative approaches to enabling transfers to complete 10/10 SUNY-GER subject categories are welcome. Such measures may include, but need not be limited to:
  - incorporation of the remaining 3/10 SUNY-GER categories into the upper-division requirements of transfers' baccalaureate programs;
  - development of upper-division general education modules specifically for transfer students; and
  - development of regional arrangements with feeder institutions.
- ii. Baccalaureate institutions that envision difficulties for their traditional transfer populations in completing the SUNY-GER because of otherwise prescriptive degree requirements may request a waiver from part of the SUNY-GER specifically for students transferring into particular programs.

Waiver requests shall be made in writing to the University Provost using the Programmatic Waiver Reporting Template (available online at [www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation](http://www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation)). Transfer-specific waiver requests must

- be related to specified baccalaureate programs;
- apply to associate degree holders transferring to parallel baccalaureate programs; and
- be justified in terms of time-to-degree considerations.

#### **C. Facilitation of Transfer: Associate Degree-Granting Institutions**

- i. In addition to providing AA/AS graduates with 7/10 SUNY-GER subject categories, associate degree-granting institutions should ensure that students receive appropriate advisement so as to facilitate full completion of the SUNY-GER if they transfer to a SUNY baccalaureate institution. Coursework should be made available that will enable students to complete as much of the SUNY-GER as possible above the 7/10 minimum.

While some associate degree-granting institutions are providing 7/10 SUNY-GER subject categories on an advisement basis, System Administration considers it a

preferable practice to include the 7/10 minimum as an integral part of AA/AS degree requirements.

- ii. Associate degree-granting institutions should adopt measures that will maximize the number of AA/AS graduates able to complete 10/10 SUNY-GER categories. Such measures may include, but need not be limited to,
  - incorporation of 10/10 SUNY-GER categories into AA/AS degree program requirements;
  - development of special advisement tracks for students planning to transfer within SUNY;
  - development of certificate programs in general education that would in themselves demonstrate certificate holders' fulfillment of the SUNY-GER; and
  - use of the SUNY Learning Network: SUNY-GER offerings will be identified as such on SLN promotional materials. (The SLN web site—[sln.suny.edu](http://sln.suny.edu)—provides sorting of relevant offerings by SUNY-GER category.)
- iii. Associate degree-granting institutions should, wherever feasible, incorporate a minimum 7/10 SUNY-GER categories into AAS programs, especially if they are known to transfer significant numbers of graduates to SUNY baccalaureate programs.