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[Academic Affairs](#)

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General Education Requirement

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This policy item applies to:  
Community Colleges  
State-Operated Campuses

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## Summary

The State University of New York (University) maintains a General Education Requirement (SUNY-GER) applicable to its campuses offering undergraduate degrees. As a condition of graduation, all candidates for a bachelor's degree are required to complete an academically rigorous and comprehensive core General Education curriculum. The curriculum, of no fewer than 30 credit hours, must be designed to instill knowledge and skills in at least seven of the following areas: Basic Communication (required); Mathematics (required); Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; American History; Western Civilization; Other World Civilizations; Humanities; The Arts; and Foreign Languages. Additional requirements exist in two competencies: Critical Thinking (Reasoning), and Information Management.

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## Policy

The State University of New York (University) maintains a General Education Requirement (SUNY-GER) applicable to all of its state-operated institutions offering undergraduate degrees. As a condition of graduation, candidates for a baccalaureate degree are required to complete an academically rigorous and comprehensive core General Education curriculum of no fewer than 30 credit hours including, but not limited to, at least three credit hours each of course work to instill knowledge and skills in mathematics and basic communication as well as at least three credits each in at least five of the following eight academic areas—Natural Science, Social Science, American History, Western Civilization, Other World Civilizations, Humanities, The Arts and Foreign Languages. Also required are overall competency in the areas of Critical Thinking and Information Management.

The implementation of the General Education Requirement is subject to the following principles:

1. The faculty of each institution will retain the responsibility for establishing the specific course requirements and content of a General Education curriculum reflective of the best practices in American higher education. Such General Education curriculum courses shall be broad, high-quality courses that provide students with a set of

non-specialized, coherent and focused educational experiences aimed at enabling students to acquire knowledge and skills that are useful and important for all educated persons regardless of their jobs or professions.

2. Individual campuses are encouraged to allow faculty to develop more than one curriculum which meets the General Education Requirement.
3. Each institution's General Education curriculum shall complement and build on students' foundation of secondary school or other prior academic preparation, especially with respect to mathematics, science and foreign language.
4. Each institution shall devote sufficient resources to the General Education program to assure effective instruction and successful learning.
5. Institutions offering Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees shall design their General Education Requirement so as to facilitate the ability of such Associates degree graduates to transfer into State University baccalaureate degree programs consistent with Trustees' Resolution 2009-138, adopted November 17, 2009.
6. The Provost of the State University may establish additional guidelines and procedures for implementation of these requirements as appropriate and necessary, which guidelines may permit waiver or modifications of portions of these requirements for the Specialized Colleges, Colleges of Technology, programs awarding two-year vocational degrees and for other special circumstances.
7. The original requirements shall apply to students entering the State University as freshmen beginning in the fall of 2000, and the revised requirements shall apply to students entering as freshmen beginning in the fall of 2010.
8. In accordance with Section 6306(2) of the Education Law, the State University Board of Trustees urges the boards of trustees of the community colleges operating under the program of the State University to adopt General Education Requirements and curricula consistent with the aforementioned principles.

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#### Definitions

There are no definitions relevant to this policy.

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#### Other Related Information

[Assessment](#)

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#### Procedures

[General Education Requirement](#)

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#### Forms

[See Document No. 1402, General Education, Procedure](#)

## Authority

The following link to FindLaw's [New York State Laws](#) is provided for users' convenience; it is not the official site for the State of New York laws.

[NYS Education Law §355 \(2\)\(h\)](#) (Powers and duties of trustees.)

In case of questions, readers are advised to refer to the New York State Legislature site for the menu of [New York State Consolidated](#).

State University of New York University Board of Trustees Resolution 90-196 adopted September 27, 1990

State University of New York Board of Trustees Resolution 98-241 adopted December 15, 1998

[State University of New York Board of Trustees Resolution 2010-006 adopted January 19, 2010](#)

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## History

During the 1990s, the University Board of Trustees, under the leadership of the Academic Standards Committee and the Subcommittee on General Education and Core Curriculum, was interested in setting General Education standards for the campuses of the State University of New York. This interest was in keeping with national and university-wide discussions on the subject, as well as the efforts undertaken by the Joint Task Force on General Education of the State University of New York Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community Colleges. That Task Force issued a report in January 1998, which expressed the need for enhancing General Education curricula and recommended the adoption of common, system-wide learning goals.

Over a two-year period, the Trustees' Committee on Academic Standards conducted public meetings in which General Education standards were discussed and representatives of the faculty and noted national experts took part. Additionally, the Trustees' Subcommittee on General Education and Core Curriculum reviewed and discussed the report of the Joint Task Force and a Report prepared by the Provost of the State University dated December 1, 1998, which included descriptions of General Education programs at leading universities around the country. Resolution 98-241 was the result of these discussions, and established for the state-operated institutions of the State University a General Education Requirement, which was a condition of graduation starting with the class of students entering as freshmen in the fall semester 2000.

In January 2010, after consultation involving the University Faculty Senate and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, upon the recommendation of the Academic Affairs Committee, the Board of Trustees adopted Resolution 2010-006 to amend the General Education Requirement, consistent with the University's commitment to high academic standards, timely degree completion and student mobility. The resolution continued to require candidates for a baccalaureate degree to complete no fewer than 30 credit hours in general education, but changed the number of subjects in which candidates had to demonstrate knowledge and skills to seven of the ten key academic areas identified in Resolution 98-241. The amendments:

- continue to ensure that baccalaureate degree recipients have breadth of study in multiple subject areas;
- provide students more flexibility in selecting courses that satisfy the general education requirement as well as other degree requirements;
- give baccalaureate degree candidates more opportunity for in-depth study in a general education subject area;
- facilitate transfer to baccalaureate programs for Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree holders; and
- support timely degree completion for baccalaureate degree candidates, regardless of where they begin their study.

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## Appendices

[Provost's Advisory Task Force on General Education: Implementation Guidelines for SUNY Baccalaureate Candidate General Education Requirement \(PDF version\)](#)

[Provost's Advisory Task Force on General Education: Implementation Guidelines for SUNY Baccalaureate Candidate General Education Requirement \(Web version\)](#)

[Provost's Report: Overview and Recommendations - December 1998](#)

[Memorandum to Presidents 2010-001](#)