

***Plan B: Revised Goals for General Education at UND
(a proposal from the GE Task Force Subcommittee on goals)***

GENERAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

The University of North Dakota values a liberal arts education in which major degree programs are fully integrated with the general education program, so that common attributes of educated persons are reinforced throughout all curricula. Graduates of the University of North Dakota should have the skills, knowledge and sense of personal responsibility to thrive and engage in lifelong learning in an increasingly complex, rapidly changing, and interdependent world. The practical skills and knowledge students need to meet these challenges are extensive, sophisticated and continually expanding. It is essential that students learn the skills to effectively communicate orally, visually, and in writing, and be efficient in the use of information processing technology. They should also have the skills to understand and employ quantitative and qualitative analysis to solve problems and critically interpret and evaluate information from a variety of sources. Practical skills are essential but so is a deeper knowledge of the world students will inherit, as human beings and contributing citizens. This knowledge extends beyond core factual concepts to include ways of investigating human society and the natural world. Students should have sustained opportunities to acquire an understanding of the means by which knowledge is accumulated and conclusions are reached in the natural sciences, social sciences, and the arts and humanities. They should also be able to understand the historical and modern interrelations within and among global and cross-cultural communities, and they should learn a sense of personal responsibility and civic values, including the ability to discern the ethical and personal consequences of one's decisions and actions.

CURRICULAR GOALS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

By the time students complete their general education at the University Of North Dakota, they should:

1. communicate effectively and persuasively, both orally and in writing;
2. efficiently acquire information by reading texts and using information technology;
3. reason quantitatively;
4. possess essential knowledge about the natural, social, and artistic worlds, including a clear understanding of the forms of inquiry and role of critical thinking in the development of this knowledge;
5. make and assess judgments of value and personal choice in the areas of ethics, aesthetics, public policy, and lifespan wellness;
6. appreciate the diversity of international cultures and the connections between those cultures.

In light of the multi-faceted needs for students in the 21st century, General Education at the University of North Dakota has been divided into three learning domains related to *Essential Skills*, *Critical Knowledge*, and *Personal Responsibility*. Each domain, in turn, has specific educational goals and intended educational outcomes associated with those goals.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS DOMAIN – EMPHASIZES MASTERY OF FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS ESSENTIAL FOR VIRTUALLY ALL INTELLECTUAL ENDEAVORS.

Writing/Speaking/and Information Processing (9 semester hours)

The goal of these courses is to teach students to communicate effectively and persuasively, both orally and in writing, and to develop skills for acquiring information through the reading of text and use of information technology. These skills will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- be sufficiently proficient in writing and speaking that their expository prose and oral presentations meet the expectations of an educated reader and listener in both form and style;
- write and speak with clarity and a sense of purpose that reflects the awareness of audience;
- comprehend, interpret and critically analyze texts to draw appropriate conclusions;
- make efficient use of information resources and technology for personal and professional needs.

Quantitative Reasoning (3 semester hours)

The goal of quantitative reasoning courses is to teach students to solve problems that are quantitative in nature. These skills will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- reason quantitatively and be able to interpret relevant disciplinary variables and probabilities;
- be aware of appropriate technologies for solving quantitative problems;
- be sufficiently literate with quantitative reasoning to apply basic mathematical process to their daily work and everyday living.

CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN – EMPHASIZES ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE NATURAL, SOCIAL, AND ARTISTIC WORLDS, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE FORMS OF INQUIRY AND ROLE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN THESE STUDIES.

Natural Sciences (9 semester hours)

The goal of natural science courses is to help students understand science through exposure to the scientific process and the broad divisions of scientific inquiry, including physical science, chemical science, biological science, and earth science. Knowledge of natural science will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- acquire and interpret scientific factual information and appreciate the complexity of the natural world;
- use the scientific method to understand how the natural world operates;
- understand how scientists reason, draw conclusions and think critically to evaluate the logic, validity and relevance of data.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (9 semester hours)

The goal of social and behavioral science courses is to develop students' understanding of the diverse personal, interpersonal, and societal forces that shape people's lives. Knowledge of the social and behavioral sciences will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- understand the interrelationships that determine the organization of human behavior;
- approach subjects in the social and behavioral science through the concepts, principles, and methods of scientific inquiry, including the ability to think critically to evaluate the logic, validity and relevance of data.

Humanities (Humanities and the Arts combined, 9 semester hours)

The goal of courses in the humanities is the development of competency in the interpretive understanding of the human condition and the values inherent in it. Knowledge of the humanities will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- acquire knowledge of, and concern for, the humanistic values that motivate and inform all humanistic studies;
- develop insights and critically evaluate the meaning of life, in its everyday details as well as in its historical and universal dimensions.

The Arts (Humanities and the Arts combined, 9 semester hours)

The goal of courses in the arts is to help students understand and appreciate important creative works, traditions, literature, and history of the arts. Knowledge of the arts will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- recognize aesthetic values as an integral part of society's essential need and gain lifelong benefits through the acquisition and appreciation of arts-related knowledge;
- be conversant with the terminology, techniques, attitudes, and ideas that the arts comprise so as to understand how humankind relates to the arts.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY DOMAIN – EMPHASIZES THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR PERSONAL ACTIONS, INCLUDING THEIR CIVIC VALUES, PERSONAL HEALTH, AND SENSITIVITY TO OTHER CULTURES.

Ethics (3 semester hours)

The goal of these courses is to foster the ability of students to make and assess judgments of value in the areas of ethics, aesthetics and public policy. A sense of personal ethical responsibility will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- recognize the importance of ethics and esthetics in their personal lives and society;
- make informed and principled choices related to conflicting situations in their personal and public lives and foresee the consequence of those choices.

Wellness (2 semester hours)

The goal of courses in wellness is to enhance understanding of the role personal choice and personal responsibility plays in determining lifespan wellness and fitness. An appreciation of personal responsibility for lifespan wellness and fitness will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- understand the attitudes and habits needed to live a healthy life;
- appreciate the relevance of diverse topics related to wellness, including diet, exercise, stress management, wise use of leisure time, alcohol consumption and drug use, and sexual health awareness.

World Culture (3 semester hours)

A minimum of three (3) credits of the General Education Requirements must meet the World Cultures designation. The goal of courses that meet the World Cultures requirement is to increase student knowledge of the variety of international societies and may deal to some extent with U.S. culture in its international connections. It need not focus strictly on the present and may indeed be a historical subject. The appreciation for world cultures will be demonstrated by the ability of students to:

- know the similarities and differences among international cultures;
- appreciate the range of international cultural achievements and human conditions through time;
- be aware of the ways cultural perspective shapes knowledge.