

Proposal for a new UTK General Education + Graduation Requirement

What makes this new curriculum different?

- **Global Citizenship:** Requiring all students to have exposure to both a US-focus and International focus course will ensure more students take a US History or other US-focused course to help them understand issues of pluralism and their role within the United States.
- **Applied Oral Communication:** Highlights those communication skills needed and valued in many different disciplines across campus including: interpersonal, small group and team communication; nonverbal and cross-cultural communication; communication of discipline-specific information both within and outside the discipline; conversational communication in formal and informal settings; and active listening.
- **Electives:** The new General Education curriculum offers students more choice and flexibility by allowing them to choose specific areas and courses in which to take their 6 elective General Education credits. By not limiting the areas or departments in which these electives are taken, students have the flexibility to pursue a minor as they fulfill General Education requirements.
- **Applied Arts & Humanities:** This new elective option will allow students to count experiential courses in the arts (e.g., performance-based music or theatre classes, studio art) toward their General Education requirements, promoting active learning.

The most significant change in the new General Education is not in the specific content to which students will be exposed in the classroom but the ways in which students experience the curriculum within – and beyond – the classroom.

- **Engaged Inquiries:** The Engaged Inquiries designation is designed to encourage active and experiential learning, interdisciplinary thinking, self-reflection, and application; in short, it is designed to encourage innovative pedagogy to transform students' (and instructors') experience of the General Education curriculum.
- **Contemporary Issues and Solutions Integrative Experience:** A capstone experience that integrates the disciplinary knowledge, awareness of self and other, and communication and reasoning skills developed through the General Education curriculum with focused inquiry in one or more specific disciplines (often a student's major) to examine critical issues facing today's world.

Side-by-side comparison of current and proposed new requirements

CURRENT	NEW
3 WC	3 WC
1 OC	1 OC
2 QR	2 QR
2 NS	2 NS
2 CC	2 Global Citizenship (1 US, 1 Int'l)
2 AH	1 AH + 1 SS
2 SS	2 electives (AH, AAH, SS, GC)
	1 AOC
	3* Engaged Inquiries
	Contemporary Issues & Solutions

AH = Arts and Humanities

AAH = Applied Arts & Humanities

AOC = Applied Oral Communication

CC = Cultures and Civilization

GC = Global Citizenship

GCI = Global Citizenship - International Focus

GCUS = Global Citizenship - US Focus

NS = Natural Sciences

OC = Oral Communication

QR = Quantitative Reasoning

SS = Social Sciences

WC = Written Communication

***9 of students' 120+ credits must be designated Engaged Inquiries (EI)**

EI, WC, OC, AOC all may overlap with other courses within or outside of General Education. For example, a course may be both a designated Arts & Humanities (AH) course *and* an AOC course or a GCUS *and* EI *and* WC.

FAQs:

What about foreign language requirements?

Assuming the language course meets the GCI learning outcomes, two semesters of a foreign language could be used to satisfy the GCI requirement *and* one elective requirement. (Assuming American Sign Language (ASL) courses meet the GCUS learning outcomes, two semesters of ASL could be used to satisfy the GCUS requirement *and* one elective requirement.)

It looks like some students may take only one Social Science or Arts & Humanities course. Is that true?

Possibly, yes. Keep in mind, however, that we expect courses in the Global Citizenship category to span the Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities. That means, for example, that a student might only take one Ways of Knowing Social Science course but use a second course from a social science discipline to fulfill the GCUS requirement.

The new curriculum guarantees exposure to the Arts & Humanities and the Social Sciences for all students while also introducing flexibility for students to choose courses in which they are most interested or to pursue minors.

How will our students fit in the new Applied Oral Communication course?

Our expectation is that there are already many courses students take within their major in which disciplinary communication is sufficiently emphasized to meet the AOC designation, meaning departments would not necessarily have to create a new course. (Rather, they could apply for such an existing course to count for the AOC General Education area.)

How will our students fit in the new Contemporary Issues and Solutions graduation requirement?

Again, our expectation is that there are many courses students take within their major or to fulfill the Global Challenges requirement in Arts & Sciences that could readily be adjusted to fulfill the CIS graduation requirement. In addition, programs could develop 0-credit options for pre-existing study abroad or internship requirements. This requirement creates exciting opportunities for programs to consider innovative capstone courses and co-curricular experiences.

Engaged Inquiries (EI) – 9 credits

Foundational knowledge alone is insufficient for being a truly well-educated global citizen ready to lead and solve novel problems; students also need experiences that broaden, extend, apply, and integrate prior learning and promote collaboration and self-awareness.

In all Engaged Inquiries courses, students will produce an investigative, creative or practical work relevant to the course topic.

In addition, EI courses must demonstrate that they produce learning outcomes from at least 2 of the following areas:

- **COLLABORATIVE LEARNING**

Throughout the semester, students will engage in a process of sharing ideas, making useful contributions, communicating effectively, understanding their role(s), planning and implementing the plan to completion.

Courses in this domain are expected to produce the following outcomes for students:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a group to complete a project or performance.

- **INTEGRATIVE OR MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING**

Courses that address this domain may include team-taught interdisciplinary courses; exploration into adjacent fields; courses on pre-defined interdisciplinary subjects (e.g., Law & Literature).

Courses in this domain are expected to produce the following outcomes for students:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to draw on theories, tools, and / or methods from at least two fields of study to produce an investigative, creative, or practical work or understand a relevant issue.

- **APPLIED LEARNING**

In applied learning courses, students will engage in a process of proposing, implementing, and assessing the success of strategies, plans, or approaches to addressing questions in applied contexts.

Courses in this domain are expected to produce the following outcomes for students:

1. Students will apply skills and knowledge from the classroom in hands-on and /or real-world settings or in independent / directed research or creative projects.

- **REFLECTIVE LEARNING**

Students will engage in reflective activities including journal entries, reflective response papers, creative exercises, etc., on a regular basis in this course not only to grapple with the major ideas of the course, but with the question of what these ideas mean to them:

Courses in this domain are expected to produce the following outcomes for students:

1. The ability to draw connections between the subject matter of the course and the student's own experience, to concepts from other classes, to ethical or social issues raised by the subject matter, or to the larger significance of the materials.
2. The ability to reflect on their own thinking, learning, understanding, and competencies.

This requirement is satisfied by taking 9 credits of courses from the approved Engaged Inquiries (EI) list. These courses must be from at least 2 different departments. These courses may be within the student's major, minor, elective or within any General Education area (AH, AAH, AOC, GCI, GCUS, OC, NS, QR, SS, WC).