A. Introduction
The purpose of General Education in the Ontario college system is to contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity, and richness of the human experience; who are able to establish meaning through this consciousness; and, who, as a result, are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively, and positively to the society in which they live and work. Specific themes for General Education courses to cover are: Arts in Society, Civic Life, Social and Cultural Understanding, Personal Understanding, and Science and Technology.

At Niagara College, we believe that General Education is an essential and integral element of effective and comprehensive college programming. We ensure that General Education courses remain a significant component of post-secondary programs in keeping with the intention of the Minister’s Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction, originally issued April 1, 2003.

Although the inclusion of General Education in programs of instruction leading to either a College Certificate or an Ontario College Certificate is determined by each college, the policy recommends that graduates of Ontario College Certificate programs have engaged in learning that incorporates some breadth beyond the vocational field of study.

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Diploma or Ontario College Advanced Diploma, it is required that graduates have been engaged in learning that exposes them to at least one discipline outside their main field of study, and increases their awareness of the society and culture in which they live and work.

B. Practice on General Education
1. General Education Courses
General Education courses are discrete courses that include measurable outcomes that provide evidence of student achievement. Typically, students’ achievement is demonstrated by their ability to apply these specific learning experiences to a broader understanding of the themes under study.

In addition, it is recognized that essential employability skills and vocational learning outcomes may also be infused into General Education courses.
Mandatory General Education courses are identified on programs of instruction using the designation of “G”. The Academic Administrator responsible for General Education determines whether or not a course meets the requirements for a “G” designation. The Course Outline for all such courses requires approval of both the Academic Administrator responsible for the course and the Academic Administrator responsible for General Education.

Elective General Education courses are identified on programs of instruction using the designation of “GE”.

2. Requirement for Programs of Instruction

(a) General Education electives are a minimum of three credit (45 hour) courses. All General Education courses are designed discretely and separately from vocational learning opportunities (courses) and must meet the criteria for a General Education course (see General Education Criteria Checklist). Courses and their learning outcomes may be drawn from either a specific discipline, or from across disciplines. These learning opportunities are delivered using a combination of mandatory courses and a minimum of one General Education elective.

(b) The General Education requirement for programs of instruction is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Education Requirement</th>
<th>College Certificate</th>
<th>Ontario College Certificate</th>
<th>Ontario College Diploma</th>
<th>Ontario College Advanced Diploma</th>
<th>Ontario Graduate Certificate</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Encouraged but not required</td>
<td>At least 3 – 5 courses</td>
<td>At least 3 – 5 courses</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives required</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) In special circumstances, students may be granted one course (three credits) for learning activity undertaken that meets General Education guidelines, subject to approval of the Academic Administrator responsible for General Education.

(d) Effective for September 2008, all diploma programs at Niagara College will include a minimum of three (3) general education courses, at least one of which must be an elective.

3. Themes

The following themes are used in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfill the General Education requirement for programs of instruction:
PRACTICE TITLE: General Education

- Arts in Society
- Civic Life
- Social and Cultural Understanding
- Personal Understanding
- Science and Technology

Additional information on the themes can be found in Appendix C1 of the Framework for Programs of Instruction.

C. Related Documents

Framework for Programs of Instruction, Minister’s Binding Policy Directive (available on the corporate drive at G:\Corporate\Practices & Procedures\Practices\MTCU Documents) General Education Criteria Checklist