

<b>ALGONQUIN COLLEGE DIRECTIVE</b>	<b>NO. OF PAGES</b> 5	<b>DIRECTIVE NO.</b> E 41
	<b>ORIGINATOR</b> Vice President, Academic	
	<b>APPROVED BY</b> President's Executive Committee	
<b>TITLE</b> General Education	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> 2006.09.21	<b>REPLACES</b> 2001.05.23

## **PREAMBLE**

The purpose of General Education in the Ontario college system is to develop educated citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity, and richness of the human experience and who 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.

The General Education requirement for programs is stipulated in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' Binding Policy Directive entitled Framework for Programs of Instruction. The policy stipulates that General Education courses are discrete courses.

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 an 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. This requirement increases their awareness of the society and culture in which they live and work. This will typically be accomplished by students taking three to five courses offered and designed discretely and separately from vocational courses. Although some General Education courses may be mandated by the College, students must have the opportunity to exercise choice amongst General Education electives. The College is accountable for delivering the standards as published by the Ministry.

## **POLICY**

1. Post-secondary programs of study at Algonquin College will comply with Ministry policies by including General Education courses equivalent to approximately 48 normative hours using a combination of mandated and elective courses as follows:

<i>General Education Requirement</i>	<i>Program Credential</i>				
	Algonquin College Certificate	Ontario College Certificate	Ontario College Diploma including NSDP	Ontario College Advanced Diploma	Ontario College Graduate Diploma
Courses required	N/A	1	3	5	N/A
Courses that may be mandated	N/A	1	2	3	N/A
Minimum <i>Themes</i> learners must cover	N/A	1	2	2	N/A
Minimum <i>Themes</i> available to learners	N/A	1	5	5	N/A

\*NSDP = Non-Semestered Diploma Program

2. General Education courses are defined as those post-secondary learning experiences that enable learners to more effectively meet the societal challenges they face in their community, family, and working life. General Education provides learners with insight into the enduring nature of the issues being addressed and into their particular relevance to today and to the future. General Education is intended to encourage and support continuous learning, and it is delivered via discrete courses designed to address one or more of the five themes as described in the provincial policy.
3. Each General Education course, whether mandated or elective, must meet the criteria for a General Education course and must not require a vocationally-specific course as a prerequisite.
4. Students choose General Education electives from an approved pool of courses.

## **PROCEDURES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5. Programs of Study**

Academic administrators will ensure that programs of study for post-secondary programs comply with the following requirements for mandated and elective courses:

*Ontario College Certificate Programs:*

One mandated General Education course of approximately 48 hours.

*Ontario College Diploma Programs:*

- *Two Year Programs (Four terms)*
- *Non-Semestered Programs (Three terms)*

Students must complete three General Education courses of approximately 48 hours each, two of which may be mandated and one which is chosen by the student as an elective. Students must have successfully completed three General Education courses from a minimum of two theme areas in order to graduate.

*Ontario College Advanced Diploma Programs*

Students must complete five General Education courses of approximately 48 hours each, three of which may be mandated courses and at least two of which are chosen by the student. Students must have successfully completed five General Education courses from a minimum of two theme areas in order to graduate.

It is the responsibility of the program administrator to ensure that the combination of mandated and elective courses allows students access to General Education courses in each of the five themes: Arts and Society, Civic Life, Social and Cultural Understanding, Personal Understanding, Science and Technology.

**6. General Education Courses**

- 6.1 General Education course outlines will identify the theme addressed. Themes will be assigned in the curriculum program module of GeneSIS.
- 6.2 Mandated General Education courses are developed, loaded, scheduled and delivered by the department responsible for the subject area they address. They may be provided as service courses to other departments.
- 6.3 Elective General Education courses are also developed, loaded, scheduled and delivered by the department responsible for the subject area they address. Central coordination/monitoring of the elective offerings will be the responsibility of the Office of the Vice President, Academic.
- 6.4 To the extent possible, General Education electives will be delivered online.
- 6.5 To be deemed General Education, courses must
  - be approximately 48 hours in length. Any exceptions must be approved by the Vice President Academic
  - clearly contribute to learning that is distinct from specific vocational skills;
  - enable college learners to more effectively meet the societal challenges that face them as they take their place in community, family, and working life;
  - ensure the focus of the course is sufficiently broad to be of value to

- students regardless of their vocational interests;
- deal with issues related to the content, and not just with mastery of the content;
  - provide opportunities for learners to explore questions related to values and ethics that are raised by the subject matter;
  - guide learners through the historical context of issues introduced, their theoretical bases, and their application to contemporary life;
  - include discussion of, demonstration of, or practice in the modes of inquiry used in this field (e.g., analysis, modeling, experimentation, assessments, inventories, or critical thinking).

The General Education Committee, a sub-committee of the Curriculum Review Committee, will review new General Education courses against these criteria to ensure that college programming meets provincial guidelines. In addition, they will review programs' curricula and make recommendations to ensure programs meet General Education requirements. The Committee will also validate the General Education designation and theme identification for individual courses.

## **7. Transfer of Academic Credit/PLA – General Education Courses**

- 7.1 For mandated courses, granting of transfer of credit will be based on prior completion of a course covering the same theme and meeting similar course learning requirements. Course administrators will be responsible for assessing applications for transfer of credit.
- 7.2 For elective courses, granting of transfer of credit will be based on the nature of the courses a student has taken previously. There are two possibilities:
- 7.2.1 If the course the student wishes to use as the basis for an exemption matches an Algonquin College General Education elective directly, then the transfer of credit request will be sent to the course administrator who is responsible for the elective. Successful students will receive a grade of EX on their transcript next to the General Education ELECTIVE being matched.
- 7.2.2 If the course the student wishes to use as the basis for an exemption does not match an Algonquin elective directly but appears to match one of the theme areas, the transfer of credit request will be sent to the administrator who is responsible for General Education at the student's campus for a ruling. Unlike vocational and mandated General Education courses, students can apply for a transfer of credit if the eligible course taken was completed more than five years prior to their current program of study. Successful students will receive a grade of EX on their transcript next to the General Education theme number being matched: GED0011, GED0012, GED0013,

GED0014, GED0015.

- 7.3 Students who wish to challenge the General Education electives based on prior learning may challenge the theme areas. The Prior Learning Assessment Office and subject resource specialist will assess applications for credit and, where credit is recognized, assign it to the appropriate theme outlined below, and enter it on the student's transcript.
- GED0011 Arts in Society
  - GED0012 Civic Life
  - GED0013 Social and Cultural Understanding
  - GED0014 Personal Understanding
  - GED0015 Science and Technology
- 7.4 Students who apply for transfer of academic credit must still meet Algonquin's breadth requirements: The General Education courses must cover the number of themes identified for their program of study. If all previous courses have been in only one theme, the student will be required to take one or more courses to achieve the required breadth.

**Related Policies**

- E9 Transfer of Academic Credit (Internal)
- E10 Transfer of Academic Credit (External)
- E21 Certificates and Diplomas
- E29 Program Progression and Graduation Requirements
- E33 Course Outlines
- E35 Prior Learning Assessment

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Vice President, Academic