

General Education Program

The AIMS General Education Program at CSU Bakersfield provides a liberal arts education that builds a vibrant learning community connecting teachers and students across the university. It promotes student success by structuring educational activities that purposefully contextualize, reinforce, and integrate knowledge. Students have opportunities throughout the curriculum to reflect upon and apply what they learn through a variety of high-impact practices. The program goals and student learning outcomes include the following:

Goal 1. Students will attain competency in the skills that are foundational to a liberal arts education.

- **Outcome 1A.** Students will present information using well-developed oral communication skills.
- **Outcome 1B.** Students will present information using well-developed written communication skills.
- **Outcome 1C.** Students will evaluate information using well-developed critical thinking skills.
- **Outcome 1D.** Students will use quantitative information to draw reasonable conclusions.
- **Outcome 1E.** Students will locate relevant information from credible sources.

Goal 2. Students will develop a well-rounded knowledge base across a broad range of disciplines.

- **Outcome 2A.** Students will apply the principles, concepts, and methods of the natural sciences, arts and humanities, and social and behavioral sciences.
- **Outcome 2B.** Students will integrate the principles, concepts, and methods of the natural sciences, arts and humanities, and social and behavioral sciences.

Goal 3. Students will develop the grounds for engaged citizenship.

- **Outcome 3A.** Students will employ strategies for self-knowledge and lifelong learning.
- **Outcome 3B.** Students will explain key historical events and institutions of the United States.
- **Outcome 3C.** Students will identify the many bases of human diversity.

Foundational Skills: Contextualizing and Reinforcing

The AIMS General Education Program focuses on teaching and reinforcing the foundational skills (oral and written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning) that are core to a liberal arts education. Our campus recognizes the importance of the foundational skills for student success in higher education as well as in their post-collegiate lives and careers.

Therefore, we have many courses that reinforce one or more of these valuable skills. Courses that reinforce a foundational skill build on a prerequisite course which introduces that skill. This ensures that students are well-equipped to be successful in those courses.

Themes: Interdisciplinary Integration

Students and faculty engage in broad, interdisciplinary themes woven throughout lower-division and upper-division GE coursework, as well as co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Thematic pathways provide CSUB students with a strategically defined cohort of fellow students, explicitly designed opportunities to practice integrative and interdisciplinary learning, and robust, collaborative partnerships. Students are encouraged to gain a depth of knowledge by pursuing a minor through GE coursework in one of the three Themes: Quality of Life; Revolutionary Ideas and Innovations; and Sustainability and Justice.

Thematic Minor Requirements

Students may earn a minor in any one of the three Themes: Quality of Life; Revolutionary Ideas and Innovations; and Sustainability and Justice. Courses shall be selected from Area B, C, or D courses, at least two of which are upper division for a total of 12 units. In addition, taking a 1-unit Capstone is recommended.

Guidepost Series: Reflecting and Applying

A series of guidepost courses in the freshman, junior, and senior years provides touchstones throughout the students' college experience to synthesize their learning within the broad topics of acculturation, skill development, and self-reflection. Since the junior-year course includes assignments in which students reflect on their lower-division general education course work, students in this class shall have junior standing and have completed their lower-division GE courses. Likewise, students in the senior-level class shall have senior standing and have completed their upper-division GE courses.

Structure and Units

Students must complete the general education requirements and accumulate as many additional units as are needed to reach a total of 48 units.

Lower Division (38 units)

1. First-Year Seminar

One 2-unit course provides students with an engaged, supportive environment where they can make vital connections with a cohort of fellow students, their instructor, and key members of the campus community who can help ensure their success. Students in the FYS course are introduced to the GE Foundational Skills and the Thematic Pathways.

2. Area A and B4: Foundational Skills (12 units)

Three-unit courses in oral communication, written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning connects all three themes through use of relevant examples and/or assignments to contextualize student learning.

A1. One course in Oral Communication with emphasis on public speaking and listening (must be completed with a grade of "C-" or higher)

A2. One course in Written Communication (must be completed with a grade of "C-" or higher)

A3. One course in Critical Thinking (must be completed with a grade of "C-" or higher)

B4. One course in Quantitative Reasoning (must be completed with a grade of "C-" or higher)

3. **Area B: Natural Sciences** (6 units)
Three-unit courses that include inquiry into the physical universe and its life forms, with participation in a related laboratory activity. Students develop knowledge of scientific theories, concepts, and data about both living and non-living systems.
B1/B3. One course in Physical Sciences, including a lab
B2/B3. One course in Life Sciences, including a lab
4. **Area C: Arts and Humanities** (6 units)
Three-unit courses from among the Arts and the Humanities. Students cultivate intellect, imagination, sensibility, and sensitivity.
C1. One course in Arts
C2. One course in Humanities
5. **Area D: Social and Behavioral Sciences** (3 units)
Three-unit course dealing with human social, political, and economic institutions and behavior, and their historical background. Students explore the principles, methodologies, value systems, and ethics employed in social scientific inquiry.
D. One course in a Social or Behavioral Science discipline
6. **Area E: SELF: Student Enrichment and Lifelong Fulfillment** (0-3 units)
This requirement can be completed with a 1-3 unit lower- or upper-division SELF course or with a course from Area B, C, or D that also fulfills the SELF requirement. This area of study is designed to enhance students' awareness and understanding of themselves as integrated physiological, social, and psychological beings who must relate to others in a physical and social environment. Courses focus on disciplined inquiry leading to self-discovery and self-knowledge. Student learning in this area centers on issues such as human behavior, sexuality, nutrition, substance use, physical and mental health, stress management, financial literacy, social relationships, relationships with the environment, religion, as well as implications of death and dying and avenues for lifelong learning. Physical activity, as a modality for developing health, may be included provided that it is an integral part of the study elements described.
7. **Area F: Ethnic Studies** (3 units)
This three-unit requirement fulfills Education Code Section 89032 and must be offered by an Ethnic Studies discipline or cross-listed with an ETHS course. This requirement shall not be waived or substituted.
F. One course in an Ethnic Studies discipline. (3 units)
8. **American Institutions** (6 units)
One course in AI-History
One course in AI-Government

Upper Division (9-10 units)

9. **JYDR: Junior-Year Diversity and Reflection Requirement** (3 units)

This three-unit course brings transfer students and native students together into one group to reflect on their lower-division general education experience and how those basic skills and ways of knowing are important in the major. In addition to self-knowledge, students develop intercultural knowledge and the ability to recognize and navigate diversity through investigation of the cultural values and history, language, traditions, arts, and social institutions of a group of people. Intensive use of writing will help students critically explore diverse social experiences, world views, beliefs, practices, and values.

10. **Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)**

The Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) must be satisfied by every student in one of two ways: (1) passage of the GWAR exam, or (2) a grade of C- or better in a course approved to meet GWAR. In GWAR courses, students will develop expository and argumentative reading and writing skills for different rhetorical contexts, including researching, reading, and writing an academic research paper. Courses contain frequent reading and writing assignments. (For information about the GWAR exam, visit DDH B-100.)

11. **Upper-Division Thematic Area Courses** (6 units)

Students will take two upper-division Thematic Area courses in the areas outside of their home school. Upper-division Area courses (B/C/D) are thematic and reinforce two foundational skills. Upper Division Thematic Area courses shall NOT be used to satisfy lower-division Area requirements or the JYDR requirement.

12. **Capstone** (0-1 unit)

This course provides a holistic integration of students' university experience and reinforces their oral communication skills in preparation of completing their studies at CSU, Bakersfield. Students may take this course within their major if the student learning outcomes of the Capstone course are embedded in the Senior Seminar of their major. Theme-based Capstone courses of 1-3 units will also be available for students.

Double-Counting

General education courses may be double-counted for the major, minor, cognate, or foundation requirements.

Students must complete two approved upper division courses outside of their major area in-residence at CSUB or another CSU. These are required of all students intending to graduate from CSUB, regardless of community college certification or the courses completed at other institutions. These courses cannot be completed and counted toward this requirement until the student has achieved upper division status, i.e., 60 semester units. These courses can NOT be double-counted toward lower division area requirements or the Junior-Year Diversity and Reflection (JYDR) requirement.

Waiver Exams for Area A and B4 Courses

The requirements for subareas A1, A2, A3, and B4 may be satisfied by a test designed

specifically for that requirement. The exam for subarea A1 is scheduled once each semester by the AIMS General Education Office (AE 101). Exams for subareas A2, A3, and B4 are available through the Testing Center. Exams cost \$10.00 each.

Certification of General Education

The university accepts full certification of lower-division General Education (38 semester units) or partial certification by Area (A, B, C, or D) from California Community Colleges, other CSU campuses, and other institutions of higher education that have negotiated agreements with the CSU. Courses and examinations used to certify units must be baccalaureate level and have been completed at the certifying institution. However, any participating institution may report completion of courses or examinations taken at other participating institutions provided that all such courses and examinations would be certified by the institution offering them. Such courses and examinations shall be deemed to have been certified. It is the student's responsibility to request the community college, other CSU, or other institutions of higher education to send the certification to the Office of the Registrar at CSUB.

Course Substitutions for Students with Disabilities

Students with a verified learning disability who are registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) may be eligible to petition for a course substitution for a General Education requirement. The AVP for Academic Programs reviews all such petitions. Information regarding course substitutions can be obtained from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

Course Substitutions and Waivers for Transfer Students

Transfer students may petition to the AIMS General Education office (Administration East 101) to request that courses previously taken at another regionally accredited college or university that counted at that institution for General Education be counted for General Education requirements at CSUB. We encourage students to work with their advisor to petition for a General Education course substitution. If the course is from another college or university, please provide a syllabus with your petition. Petition for Exception forms are available at the AIMS General Education office.

In unusual circumstances, transfer students may petition for a waiver from a specific General Education requirement by providing appropriate justification and demonstration of means by which the student has acquired the knowledge for that requirement. Petitions must be submitted to the AIMS office (Administration East 101).

Students Who Have Broken "Continuous Enrollment"

Upper-division students who have broken "continuous enrollment" (see *Applicable Catalog Graduation Requirements* section in Academic Policies chapter) may discover that the General Education requirements have changed upon their re-admission to CSUB. If these changes cause serious hardship for the student in terms of additional courses needed to complete the new requirements, these students have an opportunity to petition to the Academic Petitions Committee (APC) for a return to the catalog in effect at the time the student stopped attending CSUB. Students desiring to submit such a petition to the APC can get information regarding the

specific content and format of the petition at the Office of Academic Programs (EDUC 242, 661-654-3420).

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)

In May 1976, the CSU Board of Trustees established a system-wide policy that both baccalaureate and graduate (seeking a graduate degree) students must demonstrate writing competence as part of their respective programs. Baccalaureate degree students must be upper-division and must complete the writing competence requirement prior to graduation. Graduate students must demonstrate writing competence upon admission to their programs if they haven't already done so. By CSUB policy, all post-baccalaureate students must also demonstrate writing competence upon admission to their programs.

Students have two options for meeting the GWAR: (1) receive a grade of "C-" or higher in an approved upper-division writing course or (2) achieve a score of 8 or higher on a university-wide writing proficiency examination.

1. Approved Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Courses

Writing competence may be demonstrated by earning a grade of "C-" or higher in any one of the following upper-division courses: COMM 3008, ENGL 3109, ENGL 3119, HIST 3008, PPA 4038. Prerequisite: Upper-division standing and a grade of C- or higher in ENGL 1109, or its equivalent.

2. Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement Exam

The GWAR exam is particularly suited for the student who writes reasonably well within a limited time period. This examination is not recommended for students who need additional work on their writing skills or for students who don't write well under pressure. For these students, the upper division/graduate courses listed above offer an extended opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate their writing skills with the assistance of an instructor.

Special Provisions for Students with Disabilities

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individual arrangements and accommodations for testing will be made for students with disabilities to meet the GWAR. These arrangements will be made in such a manner as to assure the writing competence of handicapped students is tested and not the limitations imposed by their disabilities.

GWAR Waivers for Undergraduate Students

The Office of the Registrar may grant GWAR waivers for those transfer students who have who satisfied the upper-division writing requirement at their previous campus. Students may appeal the decision to the English Department by providing evidence that they have earned a grade of C- or higher in an upper-division writing course equivalent to one of CSUB's GWAR courses (not just a writing-intensive course, but a course that focuses on writing instruction and the development of writing skills). The documentation includes the following materials:

- A description of the relevant course from the college catalog;
- A copy of the student's transcript with the course and grade highlighted;
- An explanation showing that the course is upper division;

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- Proof of upper division standing when the course was taken (such as the number of hours completed before taking the course).