

Revised GER for Voting Purposes

Purpose: General Education at CWRU helps undergraduate students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to understand and address the world's challenges with intellectual rigor, creativity, humility, and integrity. It prepares our graduates not only for their future careers, but also for their futures as whole people and as engaged citizens of local, national, and global communities. It also provides flexibility for students to explore multiple areas of academic interest from the moment they arrive on campus.

CWRU Core Values: Recognizing that we live and work in a complex, interdependent world, our common, core values describe students who:

- i. are skilled in persuasive writing, verbal communication, and public presentation and able to analyze and construct logical and quantitative arguments based in critical analysis and sound evaluation of sources
- ii. are ethical thinkers who make justified, autonomous choices about the human good, social justice, and natural value, and do so with self-awareness and clarity
- iii. understand and are able to use the quantitative reasoning techniques found among mathematics, statistics, computing, and data analytics
- iv. understand global perspectives
- v. respect and value human and cultural diversity and commonality
- vi. are engaged in local, national, and global communities
- vii. understand the broad methods of the arts & humanities; social sciences & management; & the STEM subjects of natural sciences, engineering, & nursing
- viii. have significant expertise in an academic discipline
- ix. engage in innovative research, scholarship, and creative activities
- x. understand the value of personal fitness & wellness & know how to achieve both
- xi. are inquisitive individuals prepared for lifelong learning

As part of **preparation for lifelong learning**, the other ten core values may be divided into four broad components of the revised curriculum, elaborated below:

1. **Skills** essential for critical thinking and active participation in the agora of ideas:
 - a. Written, Oral, & Multimodal Communication
 - b. Quantitative Reasoning
 - c. Wellness
2. **Perspectives** needed to engage with the world, including:
 - a. Moral and Ethical Reasoning
 - b. Understanding Global Perspectives
 - c. Human Diversity and Commonality
 - d. Local and Global Engagement
3. **Breadth** of knowledge, concepts, and approaches of diverse disciplines and from the interplay across disciplines
4. **Depth** of expertise demonstrated by a major in an academic discipline and experience in research and other creative activities

Description of Revised Undergraduate GER:

I. Skills

A. Written, Oral, and Multimodal Communication

- a. Reorganize our writing-across-the-curriculum approach to writing and communication instruction:
 - i. The curricular space now occupied by SAGES First Seminars will be filled by the Academic Inquiry Seminar (3 credits)
 1. Covers introductory reading, writing, and academic inquiry
 2. Includes Foundations, ESL, and Topical courses, as well as an optional, size-limited pilot for innovative research/honors/community-engagement courses.
 3. Primarily taught by new writing faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences.
 - ii. The space now occupied by SAGES University Seminars will be filled by departmentally-based courses meeting the criteria for Communication Intensive courses (3 credits; students take two).
 1. These courses have departmental course codes and some may require completion of the Academic Inquiry Seminar as a prerequisite depending on the needs or expectations of the departments offering them.
 2. These courses can count towards majors, minors, and other university requirements, as appropriate.
 3. These courses must be taken at CWRU; if the appropriate vessel for a student receiving transfer credit is a Communication Intensive course, the student would receive the appropriate credits and placement but cannot use these credits to satisfy the Communication Intensive requirement.
 - iii. Current SAGES Departmental Seminars and Capstone Seminars will be replaced with Disciplinary Seminars and the Agora Capstone Seminar (usually 3 credits each).
 1. Each student needs at least one of these courses which will usually be in a major, but not necessarily.
 2. Have department course codes.
- b. Expectations for each category of course, to be used as criteria for approval:

	Academic Inquiry Seminars (First-Year)	Communication Intensive Courses	Disciplinary Communication Courses	Agora Capstone Experiences
Outcomes Demonstrated Through	Academic argument using sources mostly provided in the context of a course. Seminar-style classroom discussion, often modeled by instructor.	Researched argument (using some sources identified by student) appropriate to the topic of the seminar. At least some significant seminar-style learning, including opportunities for students to lead discussions (as a result of their growing expertise).	Formal genre(s) appropriate to the discipline.	Independent research, scholarly work, or creative activity that represents the culminating experience of a student's undergraduate career.
Written Assignments	3 or more written assignments, at least 2 of which go through substantial drafting/revision; total of at least 5,000 words (~20 pages) of finished (i.e., graded) writing.	2 or more written assignments, at least 1 of which goes through substantial drafting/revision & results in 8-10 page researched argument; total of 5,000-6,250 words (~20-25 pages) of finished writing.	Written product appropriate to the discipline and substantial enough to demonstrate the importance of the project. For entirely writing-based disciplines, 5,000 words (~20 pages) or more of finished writing, in genres appropriate to the discipline; may be less for disciplines employing other modalities of communication.	Written product appropriate to the discipline and substantial enough to demonstrate the importance of the project.
Oral/Multimodal Assignments	1 or, ideally, more oral/multimodal presentation(s).	1 or more oral/multimodal presentations (e.g., "discussion leader" style presentations, formal or informal presentations, and/or asynchronous - e.g., podcast, recorded video presentations)	1 or more discipline-specific presentation(s).	Public presentation for a general educated audience (i.e., Capstone Day).
Communication Instruction	Majority of instructional effort devoted to communication instruction in the context of the course topic; major assignments are sequenced (i.e., designed to build on each other to develop argumentative skills).	Substantial instructional effort devoted to communication instruction in the context of the course topic; major assignments are sequenced (i.e., designed to build on each other to develop research, argumentative, & presentation skills).	Intentional instruction in discipline-specific communication skills & genres.	Intentional and individualized instruction in project-specific communication skills/genres.

	Academic Inquiry Seminars (First-Year)	Communication Intensive Courses	Disciplinary Communication Courses	Agora Capstone Experiences
Grading	Majority (at least 50%) of the course grade is determined by writing & communication assignments.	A significant proportion (at least 30%) of the course grade is determined by writing & communication assignments.	Majority (at least 50%) of the course grade is determined by writing & communication assignments that are appropriate to the discipline.	In addition to appropriate project documents/ performances, etc., the final public artifact should factor into the final grade (at least 15%).
Recommended Enrollment	16 for Inquiry Seminars; 10-12 for Foundational Inquiry Seminars; 10-12 for ESL Inquiry Seminars	18 students/course (or alternative arrangements for "break-out" discussion sections that attend to communication and academic inquiry in appropriately-sized groups)	20 students/course (or alternative arrangements that provide attention to writing/communication in small groups, as appropriate to the discipline)	Communication instruction (including faculty feedback throughout the project) provided as appropriate to the project, students, and discipline.
Experience Portfolio	<p>Student-curated collection of materials, including: artifacts from each course in the sequence (including the "public-facing" written or multimodal presentation of the senior capstone project); one or more reflective documents that provide space for synthesis of learning and self- assessment; and additional documents (related to the Explore curriculum) and/or students' own preferences (e.g., to create a public professional portfolio).</p> <p>This Portfolio would be used for: (1) intentional academic advising (i.e., by pre-major and academic advisors); (2) programmatic assessment of the writing & communication courses; and (3) student-defined purposes (i.e., in a publicly-viewable and student-owned format).</p>			
Notes on Enrollment Caps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The national standard for writing instruction = 15 student maximum for first-year courses (10 for ESL and Foundations courses). For all writing-intensive courses, the recommendation is 15-20 students. • Alternative configurations for CI courses should include communication instruction within seminar-sized "sections." • Disciplinary Communication & Capstone courses should be supported by instructional effort/resources in line with national standards, in order to ensure that students receive support as they develop their professional/disciplinary communication skills. 			

B. Quantitative Reasoning

- a. Students take at least 3 credits using mathematical, statistical, computing and/or data analytic methods for understanding and addressing concerns that are important to their profession and to society in general.
- b. These classes may also count for breadth or school, major, or minor requirements.

C. Wellness

- a. Students take at least two semesters of coursework (commonly taking at least some half-semester courses) that promote wellness, including at least one semester that includes significant active participation in movement.
- b. Students are required to select at least three different topics or activities; this should not be a problem given that many options will be half-semester courses.
- c. Wellness courses may be offered by any CWRU department if approved for that purpose
- d. Credit associated with Wellness courses will be based on the formal definition of a credit-hour at CWRU with fractional credit less than 1/4, equivalent to two hours per week for half a semester (the pattern for most current PHED courses), rounded to zero. Due to the varied nature of credit for Wellness courses, this requirement is in terms of semesters rather than credits (courses or activities satisfying this requirement could earn zero credits).
- e. Existing activities that currently fulfill all or part of the Physical Education requirement, like participation in a varsity sport, marching band, and first aid, will continue to count for all or part of the Wellness requirement unless subsequently changed by the programs offering them.

II. Perspectives

- A. Each student would be expected to take the equivalent of at least 1 credit's worth of work in each of the following four areas, with courses able to satisfy more than one Perspective simultaneously:
 - a. *Moral and Ethical Reasoning*: Courses or programs satisfying this perspective should challenge students to reflect on ethical theories and frameworks, cultural values, or social consequences of ethical choices in either theoretical or concrete ways
 - b. *Understanding Global Perspectives*: Courses or programs satisfying this perspective should substantively explore one or more cultures outside the United States so as to provide students with fresh perspectives on their own cultural assumptions, traditions, and experiences and/or the impact of the United States in an international context.
 - c. *Human Diversity and Commonality*: Courses or programs satisfying this perspective should address in a substantive way ethnic, racial, gender, sexual, class, or religious identities, or other cultural practices, so as to provide students with new understandings of cultural variation, similarity, and change, or how one's actions could have disparate impacts on different peoples.
 - d. *Local and Global Engagement*: Courses, programs, or activities satisfying this perspective should facilitate developing civic or societal responsibilities and the deeper understanding of communities in Cleveland, nationally, or around the world either through either curricular or approved extra-curricular subjects, including experiential learning, co-ops, internships, research in

faculty labs, community-based work, foreign language study, or an immersive study abroad program

- B. To implement, individual schools and departments would determine which of their courses satisfied each of the four perspectives (courses can satisfy more than one perspective) and submit to FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee for certification. If majors or minors require courses that satisfy one or more perspectives, they will be able to communicate that completion of the program entails satisfaction of these requirements. If a major distributes a total of a credit's worth of work in one perspective between more than one required course, they can submit that to FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee for certification so students can satisfy the perspective by completing the major.

III. **Breadth**

- A. Students must complete a minimum of 18 credits of breadth coursework.
 - a. This coursework must include at least 6 credits from each of the two broad areas (among STEM, Social Science + Management, and Arts + Humanities) outside the student's major area, with the remaining 6 credits to be satisfied in either area.
 - b. Breadth courses *may* also count towards Communication Intensive, Perspectives, Quantitative Reasoning, and/or Wellness requirements, as appropriate.
 - c. Up to 9 credits of breadth may be satisfied with AP, IB, or transfer credits, though students must take a minimum of 3 credits in each breadth area outside their majors at CWRU.
 - d. Departments may designate particular courses as not being eligible to count towards the breadth requirement (when the course prefix would ordinarily do so), and in appropriate circumstances, departments may request FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee to consider counting a course that would normally count in one breadth area to count in a different breadth area.

IV. **Explore & Pre-Major Advising**

- A. *Assign incoming first year students a generalist advisor from among the ranks of Regular Faculty (Tenure/Tenure Track faculty plus Non-Tenure Track faculty)*
 - a. Pre-major advisors chosen from a department or program the student has indicated as a potential major, minor, or simply a subject area the student wishes to learn more about.
 - b. As now, students in Nursing and Music would continue to enter with academic advisors in those fields; for those students, these advisors would also serve as their generalist pre-major advisors.
 - c. Advisees of each academic advisor should share the same Navigator, allowing academic advisors to develop closer working relationships with their paired Navigator.

- d. As now, Navigators would remain the principal contact for incoming first year students during the summer before matriculation, with academic advisors engaging with advisees upon their arrival on campus.
 - e. Student Advancement and Academic Representatives should continue to consult at least yearly at the end of the spring semester to ensure program information is up to date in preparation for the summer.
 - f. Student Advancement will develop the structure for departments or programs to host virtual summer sessions for incoming students if departments wish to do so.
 - g. Academic Representatives will help Student Advancement redevelop a first year registration guide that will help introduce incoming students to the full range of departments and disciplines they might explore here. The guide will focus on exploring disciplines of interest, not selecting specific courses.
- B. *Implement the new Explore Advising Program* (described in detail on pages 10-13 of the Advising, Mentoring, and Student Success Final Report of January 20, 2021)
- a. Once the first semester has begun, first-year students will meet at least three times with their academic advisors during this semester, and at least once during the following semester. Though most students will begin in the fall semester, appropriate adaptations of this schedule will be made for new first year students who begin in the spring.
 - i. During discover week, pre-major Academic Advisors will meet individually with each of their advisees, reviewing course selections and beginning their general guidance for the coming year.
 - ii. The subsequent meetings are tied to the new **Explore Advising Experience**.
 - b. Explore programs would fall into three broad categories and first year students should attend **at least two programs** from each of these three categories:
 - i. Academic Fields and Programs: Sponsored by schools and the college, departments, or individual academic programs. Could involve everything from open houses to meet faculty to departmental introductions to research, lab tours, field trips, or other activities. Individual departments decide what sorts of programming to offer, so long as they offer at least one.
 - ii. University Resources: Sponsored by units like Student Advancement, Academic Resources, Postgraduate Planning and Experiential Education, SOURCE, the Center for International Affairs, the Writing Resource Center, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the Center for Civic Engagement and Learning, Athletics, and other offices. Would focus on introducing the range of support services and co-curricular experiences available at the university.
 - iii. Student Activities and Cultural Institutions: Sponsored by individual student activities or organized centrally for events at the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Cleveland Botanical Gardens, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Western Reserve

Historical Society, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the theaters of Playhouse Square, and other institutions.

- c. During the first six weeks of the fall semester, first year students would have to attend at least two programs from the menu of scheduled Explore events. By the end of the sixth week, students will meet with their academic advisors and discuss their explorations, and also check in more generally about how the semester is progressing. If students do not complete their Explore activities, a hold would be placed on a student's registration.
 - d. During the second six weeks of the fall semester, first year students would have to attend at least two more Explore programs before again meeting with their Academic Advisor for a similar check in as well as a discussion of registration plans for the next semester.
 - e. During the first six weeks of the regular spring semester, first-year students would attend at least two final Explore programs before meeting with their first-year Academic Advisors one final time.
 - f. After a student declares a major, their pre-major advisor is automatically switched in SIS to the status of "designated advisor," formally recognized as connected to that student but without the ability to release advising holds or holding other formal responsibilities.
 - g. The administrative home for the new GER would be the Office of Undergraduate Studies, which would ensure the proper scheduling of Explore programs in collaboration and consultation with other university offices with expertise and responsibilities
- C. *Shorten the window for initial undergraduate major declarations to the period between November 1 and March 31 of the first year*
- a. Students matriculating in the spring semester would be subject to appropriately shifted dates.

V. UGER Governance

- A. Governance of the UGER will be under faculty in Undergraduate Program Faculty (UPF) departments and schools based on existing structures, policies, and processes. The Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE) will oversee common elements of the curriculum. FSCUE is, however, responsible to the Faculty Senate and to the UPF and also responsive to the distinctive characteristics of individual UPF units. Any major changes in the structure of the UGER will require review by those bodies. The administrative home for the UGER will be the Office of Undergraduate Studies.
- a. For courses satisfying Academic Inquiry, Communication Intensive, Perspectives, and Wellness requirements, individual school and college curriculum committees retain the jurisdiction to approve all courses within their units, but these courses require a separate approval through FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee to count towards satisfying these specific GER requirements. As now, the former would be required for a course to be

permanently rostered and available for departments to offer at their discretion, and the latter optional if the course is to count towards one or more of these GER requirements as a Perspective or communication course.

b. Reviews Needed by requirement

- i. *Academic Inquiry Seminars* would be coordinated by the Director of the Writing Program with administrative support from the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and reviewed by both the College of Arts and Sciences CEP as well as FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee. For regular faculty proposing pilot research-focused Academic Inquiry Seminars, they would coordinate with the Director of the Writing Program and be reviewed by FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee
 - ii. *Communication Intensive* courses (in individual departments) would be approved for rostering by existing processes in respective schools and the College and reviewed by FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee for their meeting the framework communication and writing criteria of the new GER.
 - iii. *Disciplinary Seminars* and *Agora Capstone Seminars* will be approved only by the curriculum committees of originating schools and the College, though may be periodically reviewed for non-binding feedback by FSCUE to evaluate the alignment of assessment with student outcomes.
 - iv. To qualify for satisfying the newly-proposed **Perspectives** requirements, faculty would also submit courses (or coursework distributed within a major or minor) for FSCUE Curriculum Subcommittee review with a brief explanation of how at least 1 credit of the course or major/minor is focused on the particular perspective. Alternatively, if satisfaction of one or more perspectives within a particular program will likely come from a large range of individual experiences, a school or the College may propose for approval a method for approving these experiences internal to the school or College. A course, major, or minor may satisfy more than one Perspective.
 - v. For the physical education portions of the **Wellness** requirement, activities offered by the Department of Physical Education and Athletics will be periodically reviewed by FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee; courses offered by other UPF units will be approved for rostering by existing processes in respective schools and the College and reviewed by FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee for their meeting the goals of the new Wellness requirement to count for up to half a credit towards Wellness.
- c. If the FSCUE Curriculum Subcommittee is unable to reach a clear consensus on a particular issue the chair of the subcommittee will bring it to the full FSCUE.

VI. Transfer Students

- a. In preparation for implementation, FSCUE and the Office of Undergraduate Studies will develop appropriate adaptations of these requirements for the circumstances of transfer students.

VII. Timeline and Implementation

a. Implementation Timeline

- i. Once approved by each UPF unit, this GER curriculum will be passed to the Faculty Senate to distribute for a full UPF faculty vote and Senate approval.
- ii. If such approvals are completed by early-fall of 2021, the university will begin preparations for implementation for students matriculating as early as the fall of 2022.

b. Assessment and Review

i. Periodic Assessment

1. While our regular faculty governance process will be able to consider and revise any portion of the new GER at any time, as needed, after two years of implementation, FSCUE, in consultation with each UPF unit, will conduct an initial review to determine how things are working.
2. After this initial review, further regular reviews take place every five years.
3. In addition, the provost will sponsor a full external evaluation after three years of implementation.

ii. Ongoing Assessment

1. Programmatic writing and communication assessment is ongoing and undertaken through reviews of students' Experience Portfolios and non-binding feedback on alignment of curricula with student outcomes.
2. Ongoing assessment of other components of the GER to be supervised by FSCUE through FSCUE's Curriculum Subcommittee according to criteria reflecting relevance, alignment of instruction with learning outcomes, and student and faculty satisfaction.