



Degree Breadth Requirements Policy

POLICY CATEGORY: ACADEMIC

POLICY NUMBER: A003

POLICY OWNER: Dean, Faculty of Community Services and Interdisciplinary Studies

POLICY APPROVER: Provost / Vice-President Academic

APPROVAL DATE: Click or tap to enter a date.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Click or tap to enter a date.

REVIEW PERIOD: Every 5 Years

REVIEWED: N/A Click or tap to enter a date.

REVISED: N/A 11/20/2024

1. Purpose

The Degree Breadth Requirements policy ensures that George Brown Polytechnic degree programs meet the breadth requirements outlined by the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) and the Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF). The policy establishes the structure, oversight, and requirements for breadth (Liberal Studies) in all degree programs.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all degree programs to ensure that students achieve the provincially mandated breadth requirements.

3. Definition of Terms

Word/Term	Definition
Core Curriculum	The core curriculum consists of required courses that comprise the main field(s) of study of a degree or non-degree program, as indicated by the program title or nomenclature. Core courses are aligned with, and contribute directly to, the achievement of program learning outcomes appropriate to the credential level.
Non-Core Curriculum	The non-core curriculum consists of courses outside the main field(s) of study and includes General Education courses or Liberal Studies (breadth) courses, as appropriate to the credential. The non-core curriculum provides learning experiences in disciplines beyond the core field(s) of study and contribute to the development of broadly transferable knowledge and skills appropriate to the credential level, including critical thinking, communication, quantitative reasoning, cultural and societal awareness, and civic engagement.
General Education Course	A General Education course is a diploma or advanced diploma-level course outside the main field of study that increases awareness of the society and culture in which students live and work. These courses broaden perspectives beyond the vocational program and strengthen broadly transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem solving,

Word/Term	Definition
	and communication, consistent with the Minister’s Binding Policy Directive on Framework for Programs of Instruction and GBP’s General Education Requirements Policy.
Liberal Studies (Breadth) Course	A Liberal Studies (breadth) course is a degree-level, non-core course that meets the Degree Level Standard of the Ontario Qualifications Framework and fulfills PEQAB’s breadth requirements for degree programs. These courses develop critical thinking, communication, quantitative reasoning, cultural and societal understanding, and civic engagement, and collectively provide exposure to breadth categories.
Lower-Level Liberal Studies Course	A lower-level Liberal Studies course is a degree-level introductory or intermediate breadth course outside the core field of study that provides foundational disciplinary knowledge and basic theories, concepts, or methods of analysis, preparing students for more advanced breadth study.
Upper-Level Liberal Studies Course	An upper-level Liberal Studies course is an advanced, degree-level breadth course outside the core field of study that provides beyond introductory disciplinary depth and engages students with advanced theories, concepts, or methods of analysis.
Elective Liberal Studies Course	An elective Liberal Studies course is a breadth course that students may select from the list of approved offerings, subject to any program-level course exclusions.
Course Exclusion	<p>A course exclusion is a course that cannot be taken as a breadth course credit by students in a specific degree program because the content is deemed integral to the program's core curriculum, as determined by the Liberal Arts and Sciences, in consultation with the Academic Faculty that is offering the degree program and the Office of Academic Excellence.</p> <p>A course exclusion is a Liberal Studies course that cannot be taken for breadth credit by students in a specific degree</p>

Word/Term	Definition
	program because its content is too similar to that program's core curriculum, as determined by Liberal Arts & Sciences.
Mandated or Accreditation Breadth Course	A Mandated or Accreditation Breadth Course is a required Liberal Studies (breadth) course designated for a specific degree program to meet PEQAB breadth expectations or the requirements of an external accrediting or regulatory body. These courses may be required for students in a particular program to ensure appropriate coverage of breadth categories, achievement of degree-level learning outcomes, or compliance with industry accreditation standards.
Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB)	A Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) is the Ontario agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security (MCURES) on applications for ministerial degree consents under the terms of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000.

4. Policy

4.1. Breadth Requirements

Aligned with PEQAB's requirement for depth and breadth of non-core offerings, George Brown's Degree Breadth curriculum for degree programs is designed to broaden learning beyond the core field(s) of study and to contribute to the development of critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, written and oral communication skills, knowledge of society and culture, and skills relevant to civic engagement.

The breadth curriculum includes knowledge of Indigeneity, that is First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit cultures, and exposure to multiple disciplinary perspectives outside the core field(s) of study, including i) humanities, ii) sciences, iii) social sciences, iv) global cultures, and v) mathematics. Breadth learning includes, in at least one area, engagement beyond introductory knowledge with the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of a discipline outside the core field(s).

4.1.1. In the course of their full program of study, students will be expected to successfully complete:

- at least two (2) lower-level Liberal Studies courses in a minimum of two (2) of the five (5) above fields of study;
- at least one (1) upper-level Liberal Studies course that provides learning beyond introductory knowledge;
- at least one (1) Liberal Studies course that is an elective, freely chosen by the student; and
- the percentage of breadth required by the specific degree as outlined by PEQAB.

4.1.2. All degree programs must meet the breadth percentage requirements as outlined by PEQAB. Liberal Studies Breadth courses normally represent 20% of the total program hours in Four Year degrees and 15% in Three Year degrees.

4.1.3. Degree programs may designate exclusions where a Liberal Studies Breadth courses is determined to be too closely related to the main area of study of the degree and would therefore be considered “core” rather than breadth.

4.1.4. The pre-requisite for upper-level Liberal Studies courses is one (1) lower-level Liberal Studies credit.

4.1.5. The requirements are subject to periodic review by PEQAB. The institution will reference the most current version in effect at the time of review, and this policy will be updated as required to remain aligned with changes to PEQAB standards and expectations.

4.2. Transfer Credit

The Faculty of Community Services and Interdisciplinary Studies is responsible for the academic evaluation of General Education and other non-core courses for transfer toward lower-level Liberal Studies breadth, confirming they are outside the core field(s) of study, academically appropriate as lower-level breadth, and aligned with an approved breadth field of study; the Office of the Registrar applies institutional transfer-credit regulations and records approved credits.

4.3. Responsible Executive

The Dean of the Faculty of Community Services and Interdisciplinary Studies will interpret and apply the policy and has the responsibility to draft any associated procedures. The Provost and Vice President, Academic has the responsibility to approve any associated procedures.

5. Procedures

5.1. Planning and Delivery of Degree Breadth

Degree breadth courses are delivered and approved in consultation with the Faculty of Community Services and Interdisciplinary Studies, through the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) in compliance with standards outlined by the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) Manual for Degree Breadth Review.

5.2. Transfer Credit for General Education or Other Non-Core Courses

General Education courses completed as part of an Ontario College credential, as well as equivalent non-core courses completed at other recognized postsecondary institutions, may be considered for transfer toward lower-level Liberal Studies breadth requirements in a degree program.

To be eligible for credit transfer, a course must be assigned a minimum of 3.0 (or equivalent) credit hours, be completed with at least a C– (60–62%), and must not duplicate core degree curriculum. Transfer credit may be granted where the course:

- is outside the core field(s) of study of the degree program
- demonstrates academic learning appropriate to degree-level expectations; and
- aligns with one of the Liberal Studies (breadth) fields of study.

5.3. Course Exclusions

Liberal Arts and Sciences is responsible for communicating new curriculum developments in degree breadth to degree programs.

Liberal Arts and Sciences, in consultation with the Office of Academic Excellence and the Academic Faculty offering the degree, will determine if a course exclusion is warranted for any courses deemed integral, or too similar in subject matter, to the degree program's core curriculum.

The Academic Faculties will communicate any exclusions, or changes to existing exclusions, to the students, the Office of the Registrar (OTR) for system implementation and Liberal Arts and Sciences for planning and communication purposes.

5.4. Mandated or Accreditation Breadth Courses

In cases where degree programs are governed by accrediting or other industry/professional regulatory bodies requiring specialized Liberal Studies Breadth courses, the Academic Faculties may deliver Accreditation Breadth courses to prevent an extraordinary number of credit hours.

5.5. Quality Assurance

Liberal Studies breadth offerings are subject to ongoing quality assurance processes, including internal review and the PEQAB Breadth Capacity Review.

6. Related Materials

[PEQAB Manuals & Guidelines](#)

- PEQAB Manual for Ontario Colleges: Applied Master's Degrees
- PEQAB Manual for Ontario Colleges: Four Year Degrees
- PEQAB Manual for Ontario Colleges: Three Year Degrees
- PEQAB Manual for Breadth Review

[MCURES Ontario Qualifications Framework](#)

[Minister's Binding Policy Directive on Framework for Programs of Instruction, 2009](#)

7. Related Policies and Procedures

[General Education Requirements Policy](#)