



**General Education and Liberal Studies Requirements Policy**

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**PURPOSE**

To provide students with information about their General Education (diploma-level) and Liberal Studies (degree-level) courses.

**SCOPE**

All George Brown College students enrolled in certificate, diploma and degree programs require information about their General Education or Liberal Studies requirements for their programs.

**DEFINITIONS**

This section includes an explanation of terms and abbreviations used within this document.

<u>Word/Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
General Education Course	A <i>Diploma-level</i> course (coded GHUM, GSCI, or GSSC) designed to enable students to enhance their critical thinking and analytic reasoning skills while they expand and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the humanities, sciences and social sciences.
Liberal Studies Course	A <i>Degree-level</i> course (coded LHUM, LSCI, or LSSC) designed to enable students to expand and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the humanities, sciences and social sciences.
Lower-Level Liberal Studies Elective Course	A Liberal Studies course (coded LHUM, LSCI, or LSSC 12XX) that introduces students in degree programs to the key concepts in the subjects of Arts and Humanities, Science and Technology, and Social Sciences.
Upper-Level Liberal Studies Elective Course	A Liberal Studies course (coded LHUM, LSCI, or LSSC 13XX) that enables degree students to explore key issues in subject areas in greater depth relative to lower-level electives, and often from an interdisciplinary perspective.
General Education Elective Course	A course that is <i>chosen by the student</i> enrolled in a certificate or diploma program and brings together students from a variety of programs into one class.
Liberal Studies Elective Course	A course that is <i>chosen by the student</i> enrolled in a degree program and brings together students from a variety of programs into one class.
Mandated General Education Course	A General Education (diploma level) course that the program has decided all students in the program must complete.
Mandated Liberal Studies	A Liberal Studies (degree level) course that the program has decided all students in the program must complete.
Breadth Requirements	The part of students' programs that enables them to explore a range of topics and issues that are distinct from their program/vocational courses. Breadth courses fall under the categories of Arts and Humanities, Sciences and Technology, and Social sciences.
PEQAB (Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board)	The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board is an armslength advisory agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development on applications for ministerial consent. Ministerial consent to offer a degree or part of a degree program is required by all private organizations, either for profit or non-profit, all CAATs, and public institutions based outside of the province.
Program Elective Course	Some programs also have electives that allow students to choose courses of particular interest or focus directly linked to the program. These should not be confused with General Education or Liberal Studies courses. They do not satisfy General Education or Liberal Studies requirements.

**POLICY****1.0 General Principles**

The purpose of General Education/Liberal Studies 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. General Education and Liberal Studies courses strengthen students' generic skills, such as critical analysis, problem solving, and communication, in the context of an exploration of topics with broad-based personal and/or societal importance. The minimum credits and contact hours for General Education and Liberal Studies courses are 3 credits and 42 hours.

Consistent with the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (formerly Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) Framework for Programs of Instruction, graduates are engaged in learning that exposes them to disciplines outside of their main field of study and increases their awareness of the societies and cultures in which they live and work. This involves students taking courses designed discretely from vocational learning requirements, providing breadth for the program. This learning would normally be delivered using a combination of Mandated and Elective General Education / Liberal Studies courses. General Education and Liberal Studies courses, both Mandated and Elective, must meet the requirements of the Ministry, and must be reviewed by the Chair of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences to ensure that the courses meet the requirements of the Ministry's Framework for Programs of Instruction and/or the Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB).

The College is responsible for ensuring that, in accordance with prevailing ministerial policies and the needs of society and students, all College academic programming contains General Education/Liberal Studies courses.

Some programs have program-based elective courses in which students are required to choose a program course from a larger pool of program courses. These program-based elective courses are not equivalent to General Education and/or Liberal Studies elective courses. This policy does not apply to program-based electives.

**2.0 General Education Course Requirements (Applies to Diploma/Certificate Programs)**

**2.1** Four- or six-semester diploma programs require 4 General Education courses: 1 or 2 may be Mandated and at least 2 must be Electives. At least 1 General Education course from 2 of the 3 content areas must be successfully completed:

- Arts and Humanities (GHUM)
- Social Sciences (GSSC)
- Science and Technology (GSCI)

**2.2** This breadth requirement will be met by General Education Elective(s) and/or Mandated General Education course(s). All four general education courses cannot be from one content area. The 3 content areas are based on the 5 categories as set out by the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

General Education courses contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity, and richness of the human experience, and of the societies in which they live and work. Specific themes that General Education courses cover are:



- 2.2.1 **Arts in Society** *Courses that fall within this theme will normally be designated with an Arts and Humanities course code, GHUM.*
- 2.2.2 **Civic Life** *Courses that fall within this theme will normally be designated with a Social Science course code, GSSC.*
- 2.2.3 **Social and Cultural Understanding** *Courses that fall within this theme will normally be designated with a Social Science course code, GSSC.*
- 2.2.4 **Personal Understanding** *Courses that fall within this theme will normally be designated with a Social Science course code, GSSC, or an Arts and Humanities course code, GHUM.*
- 2.2.5 **Science and Technology** *Courses that fall within this theme will normally be designated with a Science and Technology course code, GSCI.*

2.3 Certificate programs do not necessarily require General Education courses; however, those certificate programs that ladder to diploma programs usually require General Education courses.

2.4 Students in diploma or advanced diploma programs must successfully complete a total of 4 General Education courses to graduate. Students are responsible for ensuring that they meet the College General Education requirements.

### 3.0 Liberal Studies Course Requirements (reflect the degree-level program breadth standards of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assurance Board and apply to all degree programs)

Liberal Studies courses are degree-level courses that develop:

- critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, written and oral communication skills
- more than introductory knowledge in the humanities, sciences, social sciences, global cultures and/or mathematics
- knowledge of society and culture, and skills relevant to civic engagement
- more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of a discipline outside the core field(s) of study

The College abides by Ministry principles. The standards for Liberal Studies courses for degree programs are set according to the Ministry.

#### 3.1 Lower- and Upper-Level Courses

Every Liberal Studies course is classified as a lower- or an upper-level course. Courses fall into 3 broad content areas and students must complete courses from at least 2 of the 3 areas:

- Arts and Humanities (LHUM)
- Social Science (LSSC)
- Science and Technology (LSCI)

Lower-level courses are degree courses that are an introduction to a discipline and consist of a survey of topics within the discipline. Students must complete at least 1 lower-level Liberal Studies Elective before taking any upper-level Liberal Studies Electives for adequate preparation of academic skills.

Upper-level courses are degree courses that delve into a specific topic area within a discipline, often exploring the topic from an interdisciplinary perspective.



Both levels of degree courses are academically rigorous, focusing on comprehension and critical analyses of the prevailing theoretical frameworks within the discipline area and with a strong emphasis on written assessments that develop clear, coherent arguments. In upper-level courses, students are required to have greater depth of evaluative analyses, as demonstrated by written assessments, than in lower-level courses.

Students are required to complete a minimum of 3 upper-level Liberal Studies Electives in order to meet the requirement that they develop “more than introductory knowledge” in Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and/or Science and Technology.

#### 4.0 Transferring Credits from Diploma to Degree: General Education and Liberal Studies Electives

Students who have earned a grade of “B” or higher in 2 General Education Electives might be eligible for exemption from 1 lower-level Liberal Studies Elective. Students may earn a maximum of 2 Liberal Studies Elective credits through the General Education-to-Liberal Studies transfer.

Some exceptions are:

- The ECE concurrent degree/diploma program (due to Ryerson University’s policies).
- Mandated General Education or any other General Education courses that overlap with core program course content. The Chair of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences determines whether or not the degree of overlap in content violates breadth requirements for the program.

#### 5.0 General Education / Liberal Studies Exemptions

Some students may be eligible for exemption from General Education / Liberal Studies courses on the basis of prior post-secondary credit from a recognized post-secondary institution. Only the Chair of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, or a designate, has the authority to grant or deny exemption requests for General Education or Liberal Studies Elective courses.

To be exempted from a General Education or Liberal Studies Elective, students must have successfully completed a post-secondary General Education or Liberal Studies credit (minimum mark of 60% or C-) from a recognized post-secondary institution. The course cannot previously have been used for an exemption. The Breadth requirement still applies.

Please to go to the [George Brown website](#) and enter ‘Elective Exemptions’ in the search bar for details on the appropriate steps to apply for an exemption.

##### 5.1 Processing Requirements

Exemptions will not be processed until the student is registered and all fees are paid or deferred.

##### 5.2 Class Attendance

It is the student’s responsibility to attend classes until exemptions are granted.

##### 5.3 Course Drop Form

Students who have completed (passed) equivalent courses in other programs at George Brown College should confirm with the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences that the course(s) can be applied to their current program requirements. Students may also need to consult with their current Coordinators or Chairs.

#### NON-COMPLIANCE IMPLICATIONS

This policy has been sanctioned by the Board of Governors, requiring compliance across the College. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary measures commensurate with the offence.



## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1: Applying for a General Education / Liberal Studies Course Exemption

## RELATED POLICIES

Transfer Credit Policy

PLAR Policy

Office of the Registrar's Policies

## RELATED MATERIALS

Not Applicable



## APPENDIX 1, PROCEDURES

### Applying for a General Education / Liberal Studies Elective Exemption

**Timeline:** The deadline for exemption applications is the 10<sup>th</sup> working day from the start of the semester.

**Action:** Submit a completed General Education / Liberal Studies course exemption application [General Education / Liberal Studies course exemption application](#) with a copy of the course description and outline, and a copy of an official transcript showing the grade(s) earned for the course(s), to the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences office on the Waterfront, St. James, or Casa Loma campuses.

To be exempted from a General Education or Liberal Studies Elective, students must have successfully completed a course equivalent to 3 credits (42 contact hours) with a minimum final grade of 60% or C- from a recognized post-secondary institution in a General Education and/or Liberal Studies course not previously used for an exemption.

Students who have taken post-secondary courses in a College or University outside of Canada must submit documentation to show institutional/course equivalency. This may be obtained through the services of the International Credential Assessment Services (ICAS) or World Education Services (WES). Students who are unable to submit full documentation may consult with the Chair of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences to discuss options.

**Timeline:** All complete exemption applications submitted by the deadline will be evaluated by the end of the third week of classes.

**Action:** The Electives Coordinator will evaluate the exemption applications. Students do not receive an exemption from specific Elective courses. If an application for an exemption has been approved, the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences will apply an "EX" course code for either Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, or Science and Technology based on the courses completed at the previous institution.

Students will be informed through their George Brown email account about whether or not an exemption has been granted. Exemptions that have been granted will appear in students' CAPP reports.

Students should check their CAPP reports on STU-VIEW to determine whether or not an exemption has been granted.