

GENERAL EDUCATION ACT (GEA): FAQ

What does the GEA do?

GEA creates a new, independent School of General Education at the flagship state university (or whichever public institution the legislature selects), which will teach most general-education courses. GEA then transforms the general-education requirements (GERs) at the flagship into a core curriculum of Western history, Western humanities, world civilizations, United States history, United States government, and United States literature (among other subjects).

Why is GEA needed?

American universities have replaced traditional GERs that once gave a core civic education on the history and ideals of America and the West with a cafeteria menu of distribution requirements. Young people are no longer taught why the American republic is worth preserving. GEA replaces the failed cafeteria system with a core curriculum that teaches America's civic ideals.

Will adopting the GEA add extra time to graduation?

No, it will not. The General Education Act core curriculum of 13 courses is 42 semester hours, which is very reasonable for a bachelor's degree. This course load is lighter than GERs at many other universities. The new GEA requirements will replace all former general-education requirements and will not add time to degree completion.

Will adopting the GEA affect transfer students?

The GEA includes a section easing the transition to the new system for transfer students. Students transferring to a GEA-based university will be effectively grandfathered in for the first four years of the new system. This will give time for a wide range of GEA-compatible courses to be designed and offered at community colleges and other institutions.

How will GEA affect early college classes?

GEA's focus on a limited number of core curriculum classes will make it easier to offer early college classes that allow high-school students to complete GERs before they enroll in college. High schools will find it easier to offer dual-credit classes, and community colleges will find it easier to offer dual-enrollment classes.

How much will adopting the GEA cost?

Other than some initial start-up costs, GEA is designed to be spending neutral; appropriations and other operational funding should be reallocated from other university sources. For students and families paying tuition, the GEA is cost-effective since its core curriculum includes only 42 semester hours—less than that of many other programs. GEA also keeps universities from adding more GERs and burdening students with unnecessary tuition costs.

How long will it take to implement GEA?

The GEA builds in a three-year transition from the old system of general education to the new. An institution has one full academic year after the passage of this act to appoint a dean of the School of General Education.

BS majors take intensive STEM courses. Will the GEA increase their workload?

No. Due to BS majors' extra course load, GEA reduces the number of core courses they have to take from 13 to 10. GEA will not cause a delay in graduation for BS majors.

What mechanisms of oversight and accountability will be in place?

The dean of the School of General Education is required to submit an annual report to the university's governing board, the governing board of the State Public University System (if applicable), and the general assembly. The report will provide a full account of the institution's budget, achievements, opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in the development of the School. The university's governing board will also report regularly to state policymakers about the progress of the School.

What precedent exists for legislatures creating general-education curricula?

In the 1920s, nearly half of the states mandated courses on the Constitution and civics at public universities, in many cases as graduation requirements. Modern versions of those statutes still exist and are enforced in states such as Texas and South Carolina. More recently, several states including Texas, Missouri, Idaho, and Florida have instituted statewide general-education requirements for their public colleges and universities.

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