

What is General Education?

- The part of a liberal education curriculum that is shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual, civic, and practical capacities. General education can take many forms, and increasingly includes introductory, advanced, and integrative forms of learning.

Why change the General Education Program at UWSP?

- The old General Degree Requirements (GDRs) at UWSP were specific to degree types. What (and how many credits) students were required to take in a category of the GDRs was dependent upon whether they were pursuing a BA, BS, BM or BFA.
- There was little logic to the distribution of credits, particularly as it connected to a student's major area of study.
- Faculty and advisors frequently viewed the GDRs as things to "get out of the way" and disconnected from the student's major or pre-professional education. Students, therefore, failed to see why they were required to take classes in particular categories and how they were related to their path of study.
- The number of credits was perceived as a heavy load, particularly as bottlenecks existed in some categories (such as Writing Emphasis).

What is preferable about the new General Education Program at UWSP?

- The new General Education Program (GEP) is developmental. There is a logical progression from the early stages of the GEP to the most advanced stages of work, tied to the student's major. This provides students with multiple opportunities to develop critical knowledge, skills, and dispositions; starting at the Foundation Level where critical ideas are introduced, moving into the Investigation Level where additional content and application of skills are explored, and ending with the Integration Level where more complex connections are made and advanced skills applied.
- The new GEP is integrative. Aspects of general education are incorporated into majors and disciplinary studies. For example, students now learn to write and communicate orally in ways professionals in a major area of study do. This makes the writing students are required to do more meaningful, with practical applications readily apparent.
- The new GEP is less credit-intensive. As a result, students can begin to study in their chosen major earlier than before, allowing students to pursue additional majors or minors while adding less time to degree.
- In short, the new GEP is not something to "get out of the way," nor does it end after 60 credits; it is woven throughout the student's entire course of study, thereby helping them understand that liberal education is not separate from disciplinary and professional training, but part of the unique and valuable experience of a university education.