



GENERAL STUDIES

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW 2019

GENERAL STUDIES COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW 2019

INTRODUCTION

The General Studies Program is designed for students who want maximum flexibility in their choice of courses. The program provides a core foundation in the humanities, mathematics, computer science, science, and social sciences. Beyond meeting general education state requirements, the program offers students numerous selections for informal areas of concentration (formal concentrations were recently archived, see Curriculum Changes below) as well as the opportunity to design, in cooperation with an academic advisor, a series of courses for exploring career opportunities, achieving personal goals, or meeting transfer requirements.

Many students elect General Studies as their major at Cecil College at the outset of their studies. Many other students choose to enter the major after having started in another major. Advisors often recommend that students who are struggling in another major switch to General Studies. Advisors also recommend adding General Studies as a second major, since the requirements are often already mostly met through the requirements of their first major. The popularity of the major is due to the high degree of flexibility in terms of course choices that it offers to students. General Studies has the fewest required courses of any major on campus. The only requirements for General Studies are that students meet all General Education requirements. Students are not only more likely to complete a General Studies degree given the open structure of the degree, they are also more likely to complete the degree in less time and with fewer credits. There are often savings of both time and money when a student elects General Studies as their major. General Studies transfers well to four year programs with most credits going to electives and general studies requirements and usually at least a few credits going toward particular major requirements.

ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION TRENDS

Enrollment*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
General Studies	602	579	623	656	774

*Enrollment includes program areas of concentration that are no longer offered

Graduates*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
General Studies	72	64	77	53	108

*Graduates includes program areas of concentration that are no longer offered

Enrollment and graduation trends show a large and growing enrollment. General Studies continues to be the largest major on campus. With the growth of ECA's (see below) and the roll out of a fully online option in 2019, General Studies enrollment is likely to continue to grow in the coming years.

EARLY COLLEGE ACADEMY ENROLLMENT

Starting in the fall of 2014, General Studies enrollment increased related to a new Early College Academy (ECA) offered in partnership with a local area high school. General Studies enrollment today includes both traditional and returning adult college students as well as ECA students.

Cecil College offered its first ECA in collaboration with Oxford Public Schools in the fall of 2014 with a total of 20 students enrolled. In the fall of 2017 Homeschool students became a second cohort. In the fall of 2018 CCPS students at Elkton HS were added, bringing the total enrollment to 94 students. In the fall of 2019 a new CCPS cohort at Perryville will be added. Students must have a 3.0 high school GPA and have completed Algebra by the beginning of the 9th grade in order to be eligible. Demand among Cecil County Public School students has been so strong that all who have enrolled for the last two years have had at least a 3.5 GPA. These selective ECA programs are all in General Studies and have had strong retention as well as high graduation rates.

ECA students take Cecil College courses both at our campus as well as at their home high schools. The campus community is enriched by the presence of ECA students in classes. The majority of ECA courses are offered on campus, however, some Cecil faculty teach ECA students off campus at local high schools. Given the success and desirability of the ECA's, the growing need for off-site staffing could emerge as an area of concern.

OXFORD

Began ECA	Current ECA
Cohort 1: 20 students (2014)	Cohort 1: 15 students Graduated 2018
Cohort 2: 22 students (2015)	Cohort 2: 17 students Graduated 2019
Cohort 3: 33 students (2016)	Cohort 3: 26 students
Cohort 4: 30 students (2017)	Cohort 4: 24 students
Cohort 5: 23 students (2018)	Cohort 5: 22 students
Cohort 6: (2019)	

Cohort 1: 75% completed the program in four years

Cohort 2: 77% completed the program 3.30 overall GPA

Cohort 3: 78% remain in the program 3.41 overall GPA 6 semesters

Cohort 4: 80% remain in the program 3.19 overall GPA 4 semesters

Cohort 5: 95% remain in the program 3.29 overall GPA 2 semesters

HOMESCHOOL

Began ECA	Current ECA
Cohort 1: 11 students (2017)	Cohort 1: 10 students
Cohort 2: 13 students (2018)	Cohort 2: 12 students
Cohort 3: (2019)	

Cohort 1: 90% remain in the program 3.11 overall GPA 4 semesters

Cohort 2: 92% remain in the program 3.82 overall GPA 2 semester

CCPS

Began ECA

Current ECA

E Cohort 1: 27 students (2018)	Cohort 1: 26 students
E Cohort 2: (2019)	
P Cohort 1: (2019)	

Cohort 1: 96% remain in the program 3.72 overall GPA 2 semester

ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

- Arcadia
- Delaware Valley University
- Kaplan University
- Messiah College
- Neumann University
- Regis University
- Strayer University
- University of MD Baltimore County
- University of MD University College
- West Chester University
- Wilmington University

Some additional articulations exist specifically for some of our ECA's.

- Messiah College
- Millersville University of PA
- Penn State Harrisburg
- West Chester
- Wilmington

General Studies is a highly transferable major and new articulations should be sought.

PLACEMENT/TRANSFER

Data regarding placement and transfer is incomplete. In particular, employment figures upon graduation are currently unavailable. The data available indicates that half of all General Studies graduates went on to four year programs, most transferred to different majors. Students went on to study in 19 states, with 44% choosing schools in MD, 31% in DE, and 9% in PA. Of those studying in MD, 33% went to Towson, 29% went to UMUD, and 17% went to Salisbury.

Placement/Transfer

	AY 2013-2018
Total Graduates	374
Transferred	201
Employed	?
Unknown	173

LICENSURE EXAMS (if applicable) - N/A

MISSION AND GOALS

The program assists the college by: decreasing time to graduation, increasing transfer rates, and currently by piloting a first year experience as well as learning communities, now referred to as the Cecil New Student Experience. Although General Studies is often not the first choice of major, many students arrive at General Studies after exploring other majors. General Studies meets student need by the high degree of flexibility of course choices, offering a path to graduation in less time as well as by providing a large number of transfer credits should the student elect to continue their studies at a four year institution, saving them time and money.

Given declining enrollments in credit bearing courses in recent years, growth of the General Studies major should enhance the college's enrollment, decrease time to graduation, and improve graduation rates. The addition of Early College Academies has brought additional enrollment as well as a significant boost to the average student profile. Related to the selective admissions process, ECA students are among the most successful of Cecil College students. The new fully online General Studies option should also positively impact enrollment.

STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The greatest strengths of the General Studies major are its large total enrollment, transferability to four year programs, and options for degree completion. General Studies continues to be the major of choice for many students who leave other majors on campus.

In the spring of 2019 a Student Success Committee was formed. Several of the recent changes to the General Studies major (see Curriculum Changes below) are targeted to improve student success through improved retention and graduation rates. Specifically, a new required course HUM 101 – Introduction to Critical Inquiry will be offered in the fall of 2019. HUM 101 is designed to help students with basic skills needed for success at college. In addition, learning communities consisting of students enrolled in coordinated sections of HUM 101, EGL 101 and MAT 127 should help positively impact retention and assist with their transition to college¹. Addition of the fully online option, as well as coordinated delivery of HUM 101, EGL 101, and MAT 127, are both student centered positive changes to the General Studies program. The college will monitor the success of the learning community cohort approach to determine whether the practice should be continued in the next academic year.

1 - <https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Learning-Communities-Can/245754>

The greatest shortcoming of the program is a direct result of its minimal requirements. Since students are not required to build a particular area of concentration, they lack depth of knowledge in one particular area of knowledge. Students graduate with at least 60 credits, but do not have an area of strength in their portfolio, whether to transition to work or continue to a particular major at a four year college. Lack of an area of concentration is less of a concern to students who wish to transfer to a Bachelor of Arts degree program, since most BA degrees have lots of room for elective credits. Students who wish to transfer to more specialized or highly technical majors may be at a disadvantage, since they will likely require additional credits in order to graduate. If graduating General Studies majors were to obtain certificates or badges, it might provide them with a competitive edge in the marketplace. The college may wish to explore offering certifications in keeping with General Studies student learning outcomes (SLO's) to students graduating with a General Studies major. At this point it is unclear as to which certifications or badges make sense. More research needs to be done in order to make a cost/benefit decision with respect to making badges and certifications available.

MARKETING

General Studies is the most popular major on campus, it does not require marketing. However, it is important that students know of the program's existence and advantages.

Effective fall 2019 a fully online course of study has become available for General Studies. General Studies is the first Associate Degree program at the college to be offered fully online. Given the recent decline in credit bearing revenue at the college overall, a marketing effort for online General Studies is currently underway, primarily focused on convenience and low cost of study. It is hoped that marketing will lead to growth of online enrollment and help to stem the recent declines due to losses in face to face enrollment.

CURRICULAR STRUCTURE

	<i>General Education and Program Requirements</i>	<i>General Education Code</i>	<i>Credits</i>
ART/HUM	Arts and Humanities Electives ¹	H	6
EGL 101	College Composition	E	3
EGL 102	Composition and Literature	H	3
HST	History Elective	H	3
HUM 101	Introduction to Critical Inquiry ²	H	3
MAT	Math Elective	M	3
SCI	Science Electives [One with Lab] ³	S/SL	7
SOC SCI	Social Science Electives ⁴	SS	6
CIS 101	Introduction to Computer Concepts	I	3
HEA	Health Elective		3
SPH 121 or SPH 141	Interpersonal Communications or Public Speaking	H	3
<i>Subtotal General Education & Program Requirements: 43</i>			
	<i>Electives</i>		17

Total Credits Required in Program: 60

¹ One course must have an ARTS designation; the other course must be from a humanities discipline other than ARTS.

² Early College Academy (ECA) students, or students who transfer 12 or more college credits from another institution, may substitute PHI 101 or an ethics course.

³ Courses must have two different designations from any of the following: AST, BIO, CHM, ENV, PSC, or PHY. At least one of the courses must include a lab.

⁴ Courses must be from two different disciplines.

The required courses for the major total 43 credits, leaving 17 credits of free electives. Most requirements can be met through a variety of courses. The only specifically required courses are:

CIS 101, EGL 101, EGL 102, and HUM 101.

CURRICULUM CHANGES

During the fall of 2018 General Studies removed formal concentrations in favor of informal areas of concentration. The formal General Studies concentrations had only been in existence for a few years, but enrollment trend data indicated that they were poorly enrolled (under 10 majors at any given time). The following concentrations were archived: English, History, Philosophy and Sociology. Archiving the concentrations has given students maximum flexibility in designing their General Studies experience. Students can still opt to take several courses in a given area (e.g. English), but they are not locked into a set sequence of courses. This action has reduced the volume of requests for course substitutions, thereby saving students and the college time and labor. Removal of the concentrations also makes outcomes assessment more useful. Attempts to draw meaningful conclusions from small cohorts are usually not fruitful. Determining program effectiveness with larger cohorts will aid in curricular development going forward.

As of the fall of 2019 all entering General Studies majors will be required to take Humanities 101 - Introduction to Critical Inquiry. HUM 101 has been designed to help new students to transition to college and improve their retention and success rate. ECA students, as well as students transferring more than 12 credits, are exempted from the requirement to take HUM 101.

LOW ENROLLMENT COURSES

N/A: With the exception of the newly required HUM 101 – Introduction to Critical Inquiry, there are no courses being offered specifically in support of the General Studies major. Since HUM 101 is a program requirement, it is unlikely that it will ever have low enrollment.

DFW RATES IN KEY/CORE/HIGH ENROLLMENT COURSES

Course	FY 2016 DFW Rate	FY 2017 DFW Rate	FY 2018 DFW Rate
EGL 101 College Composition	36.3%	35.5%	35.3%
MAT 127 Introduction to Statistics	32.7%	35.9%	35.9%

The two required courses that pose the greatest challenges to students are their college composition and math courses. As an open admissions institution with a strong commitment to minimizing developmental coursework as well as maximizing student success in these two gateway courses, both the English Department and the Math Department give considerable attention to passing rates in their respective courses. Much innovation and refinement continues with regard to accurate placement as well as access to free tutoring through the Writing Center and Math Lab. Use of embedded tutors shows promise and every effort is being made to improve passing rates in EGL 101 and MAT 127

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Prior to the fall of 2018 several concentrations were being offered. Elimination of the concentrations has streamlined assessment. During AY 2018-2019 the Assessment Committee reviewed the General Studies student learning outcomes (SLO's) and pared them down from 18 SLO's to 7. It should be noted that the 18 SLO's were not being uniformly assessed and the reduction to 7 SLO's should aid in making assessment feasible as well as useful for program development and revision. The 7 SLO's for the General Studies major are in direct relation to the college wide General Education SLO's.

The Assessment Committee has identified measures for four of the 7 SLO's for the program (see program outcomes grid below). The other three outcomes all pose a challenge that will require further discussion. Our current General Education (GE) SLO satisfier course designations are assigned based on alignment of course content with GE SLO's. However, it is unclear whether artifacts supporting attainment of the SLO are available for all courses carrying that designation. If the college were to restrict GE SLO satisfier course designations to solely those courses that had artifacts to support meeting the outcome, the number of such courses would be drastically reduced. The Assessment Committee will continue to discuss criteria for receipt of GE SLO satisfier designation in the coming FY and present its recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee for further deliberation. GE SLO designation is an important matter, since any change from the present practice is likely to have significant curricular impacts for many areas of study at the college.

Goal	Measure(s)	Results/Success Rate	Reason/Hypothesis	Action
1. Apply critical thinking skills to explain theoretical and concrete issues, evaluate evidence, recognize and incorporate divergent perspectives, explore the assumptions of self and others, propose problem-solving strategies, and support a position using evidence.	ETS proficiency profile results			
2. Analyze the aesthetic, historical and cultural values of artistic works across genres and disciplines.	TBD – possibly artifacts from certain ARTS or HUM courses			
3. Identify cultural norms and biases, and how they	TBD – possibly artifacts from HUM 101, or			

shape experience.	certain ANT or SOC SCI courses			
4. Develop, organize and present ideas orally and in writing.	ETS proficiency profile results			
5. Select and ethically use current and emerging technologies effectively to acquire, organize, analyze, produce and share information.	Passing score on information literacy quiz in EGL 101			
6. Construct objective investigations using the scientific method.	TBD - possibly artifacts from certain SCI courses			
7. Apply mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning to solve problems.	ETS proficiency profile results			

NON-MAJORS - N/A

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback arising from the two sections of FYE offered in 2017 was used to develop the new HUM 101 course. A much larger cohort is envisioned for HUM 101 in the fall of 2019. The faculty will closely monitor the effectiveness of this new course and use student feedback to inform modifications to the course in the spring of 2020.

HUM 101 is the only course specifically offered for General Studies majors. Students can apply courses from any and all programs on campus toward their degree. Student feedback regarding courses offered by other programs is incorporated in curricular development by the departments offering the courses in question.

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

The College ensures faculty are qualified in their fields and in the classroom through their hiring practices, education standards, and experience requirements. Faculty searches are initiated by Academic Programs in collaboration with Human Resources based primarily on four factors: 1) Increased student FTE for a department based on year-to-year trends, 2) underrepresentation of a discipline, 3) development of a new program, and 4) faculty replacement. The “Recruitment and Hiring Policy” states that hiring power is granted by the Board of Trustees to a shared governance process including the president, vice presidents, office of Human Resources, and the search committee. Search committees are comprised of discipline-specific faculty members as well as at-large faculty representatives and appropriate staff. Qualified candidates are invited for interviews. Final candidates are typically asked to present teaching demonstrations. Cecil College recognizes that, as a learning centered institution, considerable priority

must be given to classroom experience in the discipline and a passion for student success and learning. The search committee forwards the finalists to the dean and vice president of academic programs for the final decision. The final approval then comes from the College president and the Board of Trustees (**Recruitment and Hiring Policy**). Of full-time faculty, 36% have Doctoral level degrees, and 64% have Master's level degrees. Beyond teaching, faculty also participate in professional development annually and many faculty continue to take classes or earn certifications within their fields.

HUM 101 is the first course to be solely associated with General Studies. Since HUM 101 is conceived of as an introduction to study at the college level, as well as a broad preparation for further study in any number of disciplines, every effort has been made to recruit a diverse faculty to deliver the course. Participating faculty for fall 2019 come from many departments: Math, Science, Social Science, English, Business, and Nursing. All other required and elective courses needed for the General Studies major are delivered by faculty from different departments on campus.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Faculty members are evaluated every semester by students enrolled in their courses. The College uses an electronic survey process (Evaluation Kit) and students are required to complete the evaluation within a specified time frame at the end of the semester or they are locked out of the learning management system (Blackboard) until they complete the survey. This has resulted in a very high response rate for all courses. In addition, faculty members are assessed in the classroom by the appropriate dean or designee each semester for their first year at Cecil College, annually for the next two years, and every three years thereafter. Student course evaluations are an important component in the College's process of monitoring student satisfaction.

All faculty members are contractually obligated to complete an annual report that includes assessment results. Faculty satisfaction is monitored through the Great Colleges to Work For Survey, which is administered every two years.

At this point in time there is only one adjunct faculty member teaching HUM 101. She will be mentored by the faculty who developed the course. Adjuncts teaching general education courses or electives are supervised by chairs of the departments they teach in.

RESOURCES

No additional resources are required to offer General Studies. All faculty and staff associated with the program report to their existing areas. No additional library holdings are needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ECA's will continue to grow, so increasing numbers of faculty will need to be identified to teach off-site at local area high schools.
- Employment figures for graduates should be obtained. The reply rate to our graduate survey is low.
- The college may wish to offer certifications and badges to students graduating with a General Studies degree. These certifications might provide a competitive edge in the job market.

- The list of transfer opportunities should be updated. Additional transfer articulations should continue to be sought.
- Careful review of the success rates for these learning communities should be undertaken.
- HUM 101 – Introduction to Critical Inquiry should be closely monitored to determine effectiveness and changes should be made based on data as well as faculty and student feedback.
- The Assessment Committee, in consultation with the Academic Affairs Committee, should take up the issue of how General Education satisfier status is awarded and consider limiting the designation to those courses that have artifacts that indicate that students have attained the outcome.
- The new fully online General Studies option should be aggressively marketed. Additional online General Education satisfiers are needed, since several areas currently only have a single course available online. An effort should be made to gain more Quality Matters certified General Education courses.