

Accreditation Matters

Issue 2

General Education at UC Blue Ash College

UC Blue Ash College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation was granted on July 25, 1969 and the most recent reaffirmation of accreditation was in 2008-09. The next reaffirmation of accreditation is slated for 2018-19.

Higher Learning Commission Criteria for Accreditation

The Higher Learning Commission, Criterion 3, Core Component 3.B states “The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.”

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

Ohio Department of Higher Education Requirements

The University’s general education requirements adhere to Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) guidelines. General education requirements comprise no fewer than 36 semester hours for baccalaureate degrees, associate of arts and associate of science degrees, and no fewer than 15 semester hours for applied associate degrees. The ODHE also recommends that an institution’s general education curriculum reflect a breadth of study and a focus on in-demand skills and knowledge.

UC's General Education Requirements

The University has a comprehensive website (uc.edu/gened) dedicated to its general education program. The University's General Education Core requirements reflect the ODHE guidelines and consist of three main components that span every baccalaureate degree:

- Coursework in foundational skills (English Composition—6 credit hours and Quantitative Reasoning—3 credit hours) and traditional (Fine Arts, Historical Perspectives, Humanities & Literature, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences—12 credit hours) and contemporary Breadth of Knowledge (BoK) topics (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Society, Culture, and Ethics; and Technology and Innovation—6 credit hours),
- Development of five undergraduate competencies including Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Knowledge Integration, Social Responsibility, and Information Literacy, and
- Three key touchpoints throughout the baccalaureate degree including First-Year Experience, Mid-Collegiate, and Capstone Experiences.

The General Education program, developed by the faculty and approved by each college at the University, has continued to evolve since its initial implementation in 1996. The most recent changes, reflecting a reaction to societal needs, will go into effect in fall 2019. These changes include a restructuring of the existing Diversity and Culture (DC) and Social and Ethical Issues (SE) Breadth of Knowledge (BoK) categories into two new contemporary topic areas: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Society, Culture, and Ethics (SCE).

General Education Requirements at UC Blue Ash

The University of Cincinnati's general education requirements are a fundamental component of UC Blue Ash's comprehensive education that develops critical thinking and an engaged citizenry and promotes free inquiry and lifelong learning - all of which are reflected in the College's Guiding Statements.

UCBA's two **baccalaureate programs** are designed for students to meet all UC General Education requirements. Students must complete the number of general education credits remaining (beyond their associate degree) to reach the 36 semester hour minimum. Mid-collegiate and senior capstone experiences are also required of students in these two bachelor degree programs.

The general education requirements of UCBA's associate degrees are appropriate for their level. The curriculum of each of UCBA's **associate transition programs** is designed to match the first two years of its baccalaureate counterpart degree on the main campus, ensuring that students who transfer to pursue a bachelor's degree are on track to complete their general education requirements. The **career/technical associate degrees** have general education requirements that meet ODHE's 15 semester hour rule and have a minimum of at least two of the three touchpoint experiences.

UC Blue Ash students also experience the **key general education touchpoints**. The purpose of UCBA's **First Year Experience (FYE)** is to promote student reflection on academic and career goals. Most FYE courses are program specific, with an Exploratory Studies course for undecided students. All FYE courses at the College include introduction to the major/program and career planning, information literacy, introduction to the College and University, and student success skills. For baccalaureate programs, the University requires a **mid-collegiate experience** including experiential learning, systematic methods and history of the discipline/profession, and mid-collegiate writing. Baccalaureate programs at the University, including the two at UCBA, also include a **senior-year experience** that enables students to transition to a profession or graduate school and continue to pursue life-long learning and social responsibility. Many of our career-oriented associate degree programs also include capstone experiences. As a culminating experience, the capstone requires interdisciplinary perspectives, application of acquired knowledge, and reflection on students' academic experiences in preparation for their careers.