

## R470, General Education, Common Course Numbering, Lower-Division Pre- Major Requirements, Transfer of Credits, and Credit by Examination

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**R470-1. Purpose:** To assure reciprocity and consistency in the structure and core requirements for General Education programs in the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE); to provide a lower- and upper-division course numbering code for the System, to establish common lower-division pre-major requirements and support timely progress toward student graduation; to provide policies and principles for the transfer of credit among System institutions; and to establish the credit by examination policy.

### R470-2. References

- 2.1. Utah Code [§53B-2-106\(2\)\(c\)](#) (Direction of Instruction, Examination, Admission and Classification of Students)
- 2.2. Utah Code [§53B-16-102](#) (Changes in Curriculum)

**R470-3. General Education Policy:** The purpose of General Education is to help students prepare for the 21<sup>st</sup> century by gaining knowledge and proficiency in: 1) Intellectual and Practical Skills; 2) Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; 3) Personal and Social Responsibility; and 4) Integrative Learning. This policy assures there is coherence and consistency in the structure and core requirements of General Education programs at all USHE institutions, and that institutions will grant total reciprocity for General Education programs completed at other USHE institutions.

**3.1. General Education Credit and Core Requirements:** To assure full value and reciprocity among all USHE institutions, the number of credits required in General Education for each institution shall range from at least 30 to 39 semester credits, including credits required in the three core areas of Composition, Mathematics, and American Institutions. Institutions are encouraged to allow students who demonstrate competencies by other means, such as Advanced Placement (AP) tests, International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Prior Learning Assessment, and departmental challenge examinations, to satisfy General Education requirements.

**3.1.1. Acquire Intellectual and Practical Skills:** Including inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving. Also included are visual, kinesthetic, design and aural forms of artistic communication.

**3.1.2. Gain Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural Worlds:** Courses requiring study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages and the arts, focused by engagement with “big” questions – both contemporary and enduring.

**3.1.3 Develop Personal and Social Responsibility:** Including civic knowledge and engagement – local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, foundations and skills for lifelong learning. These categories of General Education development must be demonstrated through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.

**3.1.4. Demonstrate Integrative Learning:** Including synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies, demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems. Integrated learning is expected to be part of all courses and programs.

**3.2. General Education Core Requirements:** Students must satisfy all of the following General Education core requirements, which will be included at all institutions: Students shall be required to complete English 1010,

Introduction to Writing (3 credits), and English 2010, Intermediate Writing (3 credits). Some institutions offer English 2100, Technical Writing. While English 2010 is preferred, if institutional policy allows, English 2100 may satisfy the English 2010 requirement. Students may satisfy the mathematics requirement by completing Mathematics 1030, Quantitative Literacy (3 credits), Mathematics 1040, Statistics (3 credits), or Mathematics 1050 (3 or 4 credits), College Algebra. All of the courses in the mathematics General Education curriculum require high school intermediate algebra or 2 years of high school algebra as prerequisites. Students also may satisfy the requirement by completing at least one institutionally approved mathematics course at the level of college algebra or which requires college algebra as a prerequisite. USHE institutions may determine if an ACT, SAT or placement examination score is sufficiently high enough to waive English 1010 or Quantitative Literacy requirements. American Institutions: Students shall satisfy this requirement by completing one of the following courses: Economics 1740, (3 credits); United States Economic History 1740, (3 credits); Political Science 1100, American Political Institutions (3 credits); or History 1700, American Civilization (3 credits). An interdisciplinary integrated course that satisfies comparable competencies may also satisfy the requirement. Some institutions may require a two course sequence in the areas of economics, political science, or history which satisfies comparable competencies.

**3.3. General Education Breadth Requirements beyond the Core:** In addition to completing all core requirements described in 3.1, students will be required to complete 18 to 27 credits beyond the General Education core. These courses shall be in the areas of fine arts, humanities, social and behavioral sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, and other areas deemed appropriate at individual USHE institutions. Outside the core requirements, USHE institutions are encouraged to establish unique course requirements which reflect emphases of the institutions, strengths of faculties, and the varying interests of students. Institutional General Education requirements may be accessed through the [www.HigherEdUtah.org](http://www.HigherEdUtah.org) Website.

**3.4. Substitution of Courses in Pre-Major Area for General Education Requirements:** To encourage timely decisions by students to select pre-major areas while promoting educational breadth, institutions may allow students with declared pre-majors in areas listed in section 3.3. to substitute study and achievement in their pre-major area for General Education requirements. Students may achieve the required number of total General Education credits by completing additional coursework in other General Education areas. USHE transfer students who retain the same pre-major area will be allowed to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and will not be required to complete additional General Education coursework in their major area.

**3.5. Similar Names, Common Numbers, and Equal Credits for General Education Courses:** To facilitate articulation, General Education courses at USHE institutions having essentially the same learning goals and similar content, rigor, and standards, should have similar names, common numbers, and equal credits. The Statewide Articulation Committee shall assure, through institutional action, that all courses satisfying General Education requirements at any USHE institution will be articulated to the fullest extent possible to satisfy comparable General Education requirements at all other USHE institutions.

**3.6. General Education Common Competencies and Learning Goals:** To support efforts to assess the results of General Education instruction, common competencies and learning goals underlying General Education areas shall be identified by the General Education Task Force and faculty during their Majors' meetings under the direction of the Chief Academic Officers. These competencies and learning goals will be utilized at all USHE institutions. All General Education courses will be expected to address the identified competencies and learning goals.

**R470-4. Committees for General Education Procedures:** To implement the General Education policy, the following committees shall be established:

**4.1. Regents' General Education Task Force:** The Regent's' General Education Task Force will be comprised of one representative who oversees General Education on his/her campus, from each USHE institution, nominated by the Chief Academic Officer and appointed by the President, and non-voting or ex officio members as needed for

expertise on particular issues. A member of the Commissioner's academic staff will sit with the General Education Task Force. This Task Force shall:

4.1.1. Establish overarching learning goals in the core and other General Education areas, based on recommendations made by the General Education faculty and Majors' Meeting groups.

4.1.2. Propose methods to assess student learning outcomes in General Education and submit those recommendations to the Chief Academic Officers and the USHE institutions.

4.1.3. Facilitate coordination with groups working on related tasks by appointing members of the Task Force to assist other USHE committees, such as the Statewide Articulation Committee, as requested and appropriate.

**4.2. General Education Area Work Groups:** The General Education Area Work Groups include Fine Arts, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences, Computer Literacy, Composition, and Mathematics. These work groups may be comprised of two representatives from each USHE institution, nominated by the appropriate academic dean and appointed by the Academic Vice President, and non-voting or ex officio members as needed for expertise on particular issues. These work groups may be convened by the General Education Task Force as needed. These task forces shall:

4.2.1. Provide recommendations on competencies underlying each General Education area and suggestions on methods used to assess student learning outcomes in relation to the competencies. These recommendations are to be submitted to the General Education Task Force for review.

4.2.2. Meet annually during the "What is an Educated Person?" conference and, as needed, review the General Education competencies and learning goals in each area, and discuss and compare programs.

4.2.3. Submit recommendations for review by the General Education Task Force.

**R470-5. Course Numbering Code:** Courses of similar level shall be given numbers in accordance with the following code.

**5.1. Lower-Division Courses:** This includes all USHE institutions.

- 0001-0999 Remedial or preparatory courses—noncredit
- 1000-1999 Freshman courses
- 2000-2800 Sophomore courses
- 2800-2999 Lower-division independent study designation (directed reading, individual projects, seminars, special topics, workshops, private lessons, tutoring.)

**5.2. Upper-Division Courses:** This includes courses at the University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State University, Southern Utah University, Utah Valley University, and Dixie State College of Utah. These numbers are meant to act as a guide.

- 3000-3999 Junior courses
- 4000-4800 Senior courses
- 4800-4999 Upper-division independent study designation (directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, seminars, etc.)
- 4800 Individual research courses (1-5 credits)
- 4830 Directed reading courses (1-5 credits)
- 4860 Practicum courses (1-12 credits)
- 4890 Internship courses (1-12 credits)
- 4920 Workshops, festivals, institutes (1-5 credits)
- 4950 Field trips (1-5 credits)

- 4990 Seminars (1-5 credits)
- 5000-5799 Advanced upper-division and graduate courses (graduate credit allowed for department majors or by permission of student's department chair.)
- 5800-5999 Advanced upper-division and graduate independent study designations (seminars, directed reading, individual projects, et cetera - by permission of department chair.)

**5.3. Honors Programs:** These courses can be found at the University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State University, Southern Utah University, Snow College, Dixie State College, and Utah Valley University.

- Honors courses will be clearly designated in institutional catalogs.

**5.4. Graduate Courses:** These can be found at the University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State University, Southern Utah University, and Utah Valley University. These numbers are meant to act as a guide.

- 6000-7999 Graduate courses (students without baccalaureate degrees must obtain special permission to enroll)
- 6800-6899 Graduate seminars (including methodology and research seminars)
- 6900-6999 Directed reading, individual projects, thesis, etc.
- 6970-6979 Master's thesis research
- 6980-6989 Master's thesis faculty research consultation
- 6990 Master's thesis continuing registration
- 7800-7899 Advanced graduate seminars
- 7900-7969 Doctoral independent study, special topics, etc.
- 7970-7979 Doctoral dissertation and/or project research
- 7980-7989 Doctoral dissertation faculty research consultation
- 7990 Doctoral dissertation continuing registration

**R470-6. Lower-Division Pre-Major Requirements:** In establishing policies and procedures to support ease of transfer and timely progress toward graduation for USHE students, the Board of Regents recognizes that pre-majors and emphases may differ because of the institutions' unique missions. Committees and procedures are therefore established to provide common lower-division pre-major requirements so that when students transfer or apply for upper-division majors, they will receive full value for their academic work.

**6.1. USHE Major Committees:** To achieve these objectives, the Office of the Commissioner shall organize USHE Majors' Committees in each of the academic disciplines. Major departments at the universities are expected to work closely with the Majors' Committees in order to achieve the greatest possible congruence between pre-major emphases at community colleges and lower-division major requirements at four-year institutions.

**6.1.1.** The Chief Academic Officers of each institution shall nominate a faculty representative from his or her institution in each discipline area. If appropriate, the President may also nominate faculty representatives in major areas within a discipline.

**6.1.2.** Meetings of the Major Committees shall be organized by the Office of the Commissioner and be held at least annually.

**6.2. Committee Responsibilities:** It shall be the responsibility of each USHE Major Committee to:

**6.2.1.** Reach agreement on specific required lower-division pre-major courses that are common at all USHE institutions. It is important to note that equivalencies are based on content and mastery of subject matter, not only course level. Not all institutions offer all lower-division courses.

**6.2.2.** Continually review standards of skills and content matter that should be satisfied in required lower-division pre-major area courses to assure that students who complete the coursework will be fully prepared to successfully complete upper-division coursework.

**6.2.3.** Assure that in most major programs at USHE four-year institutions, courses numbered 3000 or higher are not required for lower-division students; and community colleges do not offer courses at the lower division that the Major Committee agrees should be taught at the upper-division level. Exceptions will be dealt with by the individual Major Committees.

**6.2.4.** Review lower-division courses now commonly numbered to assure they fulfill General Education and pre-major requirements. Additional lower-division courses may be considered for common numbering if they are similar in content, standard, and rigor as specified in the Utah Code.

**6.3. Maximum Credits:** Each committee will establish a maximum number of credits for lower-division pre-major coursework required in each discipline.

**6.3.1.** Generally, the number of credits required should be limited so that students may also complete required General Education coursework within the number of credits allowed for the AA or AS degree.

**6.3.2.** Exceptions may be made when mandated by accreditation, licensing, extra-departmental professional, or other institutional requirements. When exceptions are made, students may not be able to complete required General Education coursework within the number of credits allowed for the AA or AS degree.

**6.3.3.** If Major Committees determine additional lower-division credits are needed to prepare students to successfully complete upper-division coursework, the committee may recommend the delay of some General Education requirements until after transfer and/or acceptance to an upper-division major program. Under no circumstances will individual Major Committees be allowed to make exceptions to General Education requirements—a degree may not be awarded unless the General Education and program requirements for that degree are met.

**6.4. Admission to Upper-Division Major Program:** Completion of required lower-division pre-major coursework by transfer students from USHE community colleges and institutions also having a community college role shall not constitute an assurance that transfer students will be admitted into a specific major program at a USHE four-year institution. It must be understood that many programs have a limited number of openings and that admission may be highly competitive.

**6.5. Disclosure of Partial Program:** If an institution does not have the faculty or resources to offer, as part of its curriculum, all of the agreed-upon lower-division pre-major courses in a given discipline and emphasis, it will inform prospective students interested in that pre-major area that the institution does not offer all of the needed lower-division pre-major courses; students may consider attending another institution offering the required coursework or enroll in online courses offered elsewhere in the USHE .

**R470-7. Transfer of Credit Policy:** USHE colleges and universities shall facilitate transfer from institution to institution.

## **7.1. Transfer of General Education Credits**

**7.1.1. Transfer of Partially Completed General Education Credits:** For transfer students from USHE institutions who have not fully satisfied the General Education requirements, all USHE receiving institutions shall accept at full value all General Education coursework approved by the sending institution, provided it meets the minimum letter grades accepted by the receiving institution. Receiving institutions shall only require transfer students to complete any additional coursework needed to satisfy the unmet requirements of the receiving institution.

**7.1.2. Transfer of Completed General Education Credits through Program Completion:** An AA or AS degree earned at any USHE institution will meet the General Education requirements of other USHE institutions. If a student

has completed all institutional General Education requirements, a Letter of Completion (issued by the sending institution confirming General Education completion) should be accepted by the receiving USHE institution.

**7.1.2.1. Letter of Completion Using non-USHE Credits/Courses:** Students who enter a USHE school with most of their General Education credits from a non-USHE regionally-accredited institution, and who want a Letter of Completion from the USHE institution, must complete at least nine credit hours or meet the minimum residency and grade point average requirements of the institution from which the Letter of Completion is requested.

**7.1.2.2. Length of Time for Acceptance and Applicability of Credit:** USHE institutions must accept credit transferred from institutions within the System. Institutional colleges and departments may review courses taken over the prior 15 years, or over a time period in compliance with institutional policies, and make a determination of applicability to current requirements of a credential or degree based on the appropriateness of course content, rigor, and standards. Students may petition an institution's transcript office for an exception to the 15 year limit, and that office will consult with the appropriate academic departments before making a decision.

**7.2. Transfer of Non-General Education Credits:** Credit for courses numbered 1000 or above earned in the USHE, regardless of being General Education credits or not, is transferable within the USHE and will be carried on the student's transcript by the receiving institution.

**7.2.1. Application of Credit:** Acceptance of credit should not be confused with its application. Transfer applicants are entitled to a clear disclosure by the receiving institution of the difference between acceptance of credits and the application of credits toward a credential or degree. Transfer credit may or may not apply to the graduation requirements of an institution, regardless of the number of credits transferred. The receiving institution will apply credit based on the appropriateness to a particular institution's specific degree program requirements and curricula.

**7.2.2. Transfer with Upper-Division Status:** Institutions shall enable community college students (if they fully complete an AA or AS degree and a prescribed pre-major area that comports and articulates with the receiving institution's pre-major requirements) to transfer with upper-division status to any USHE four-year institution without taking any lower-division pre-major courses at the receiving institution.

**7.2.3. Exceptions to Applying Pre-Major Coursework Credit:** Exceptions may occur when mandated by institutional requirements or other accreditation, licensing, or extra-departmental professional requirements, and as provided in 6.3.3, 6.4, and 6.5 above. In such cases, the transfer student will be expected to complete lower-division coursework required at the four-year institution.

## **R470-8. Credit Transfer Principles within USHE**

**8.1. Institutional Integrity:** In order to promote institutional integrity, each institution is responsible for developing its own transfer policies and procedures consistent with the policies established by the Board of Regents to facilitate the transfer of credits within the USHE.

**8.2. Transfer Statements:** Because USHE institutions are part of a statewide system, institutions should clearly communicate online and in print reasonable and definitive transfer statements to avoid confusion and possible injustice to individual applicants and promote articulation within the USHE.

**8.3. Minimum Standards:** Course quality, content, level, and amount of credit earned should be comparable to those courses at the receiving institution.

**8.4. Individual Student Consideration**

**8.4.1. Anticipated Program:** Information of program and course requirements, including transfer and articulation agreements between two-year and four-year institutions, should be published online and/or in print and available to prospective students. Students should be encouraged to establish educational goals early in their educational program. Each student should request assistance from an academic advisor to assure the student's educational goals fit with the program at the institution to which that student intends to transfer. Transfer policies and practices should facilitate transfer once the student is prepared to enter, and has been accepted to, the anticipated program.

**8.4.2. Accredited Institutions:** A receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from recognized regionally-accredited institutions are qualified to undertake its educational program. Students from recognized national or specialized accredited institutions may need to demonstrate competency only in instances where academic attainment is uncertain.

**8.4.2.1. Students Entering with Associates' degrees from Regionally Accredited non-USHE Institutions:** Students, who enter USHE schools from regionally-accredited institutions and have completed the AA/AS degree, will have their transcripts reviewed to assure they have successfully completed relevant courses in the three core areas required of USHE students: mathematics, composition and American Institutions. While the USHE will honor associate degrees, deficiencies found in one or more of the three core areas may need to be addressed.

**8.4.2.2. Students Entering from Regionally Accredited Institutions with Associates' degrees but without Pre-Major-specific Courses:** Students who enter USHE institutions with the AA/AS degree but are deficient in pre-requisite courses required for their major course of study, may be required to successfully complete such courses at the lower-division level in order to prepare these students for success in their chosen major once they are accepted.

**8.4.2.3. Students Entering from Regionally Accredited Institutions without Associates' degrees:** Students who enter the USHE from regionally accredited institutions without having completed an associate's degree must have their transcripts evaluated by the receiving institution to determine if additional pre-major and/or General Education coursework will be required to meet USHE institutional requirements.

**8.5. Institutions without Regional, National nor Specialized Accreditation:** Receiving institutions should evaluate on a case by case basis any credits earned at institutions that do not have regional, national, or specialized accreditation. Evaluation may be assisted by information provided by or about the unaccredited institution such as a catalog covering the years students attended, a description of courses the students completed, course syllabi, faculty credentials, and library facilities. Institutions may require verification of competency attainment through assessments or examinations.

**8.5.1. Foreign Institutions and Proprietary Schools:** In evaluating credits from foreign institutions and proprietary schools, the receiving institution should make equivalency and placement decisions in terms of its own policies and curricula.

**8.6. Credits from Extra Institutional Settings:** In order to expand the range of educational opportunities and to incorporate them into the credit exchange system, and in order to remove unnecessary restrictions to access, institutional policies should contain statements on credits earned in extra institutional settings (structured and non-structured) including the military, religious, career, and technical institutions.

**8.7. Basic Responsibilities of All Institutions:** The basic responsibilities of both sending and receiving institutions include:

**8.7.1.** Furnishing transcripts and course descriptions vital in judging the quality and quantity of transfer students' work,

**8.7.2.** Advising students as to the acceptability of credits shown on individual transcripts,

8.7.3. Making clear and prompt decisions on credit acceptance and application,

8.7.4. Informing potential students of services in the institution.

**R470-9. Credit by Examination Policy:** The Board of Regents accepts as valid the concept of credit by examination without equivalent previous college coursework. Because of the variety of testing programs, the domain of individual departments and General Education, the following specific policies shall apply:

**9.1. Examinations that Replace Specific Coursework:** Individual departments may use examinations/assessments consistent with the standards set in Major Committees to award credit that replaces specific General Education coursework.

**9.1.1. Departmentally Devised Examinations:** Each department may determine which of its offerings may be challenged by examination and should construct, administer, and evaluate appropriate and departmentally approved examinations upon the request of students.

**9.1.2. External Standardized Examinations:** External standardized examinations should be evaluated by individual departments as they become available, to determine their appropriateness, validity, and acceptable scores. When a transfer student has completed the General Education requirements of a USHE institution, the receiving institution will honor the sending institution's determination of General Education credit awarded, including credit granted for external standardized exams.

**9.1.2.1. Advanced Placement Examinations:** The following policies for the awarding of credit for Advanced Placement have been determined by a statewide committee with representatives from all USHE institutions:

**9.1.2.1.1.** Scores of 3, 4, or 5 may receive a maximum of 10 semester hours of credit for a foreign language exam, up to 8 semester hours of credit for a full year course, or up to 4 semester hours of credit for a half year course.

**9.1.2.1.2.** A score of 2 should be evaluated by the department to determine what, if any, credit should be awarded.

**9.1.2.1.3.** A score of 1 should receive no credit.

**9.1.2.2. CLEP (College Level Examination Program):** CLEP General Examination credit should be recognized and a standard should be set based on the recommendations of the Statewide Articulation Committee and CLEP Examination Guidelines. A minimum score of 50 is required to award credit with 10 semester hours per test being the maximum number of credits allowed. Each institution shall award credit as it sees fit; however, the following guidelines are for awarding General Education credit through the CLEP process.

**9.1.2.2.1. Composition:** The College Composition or College Composition Modular examination will satisfy the introduction to writing requirement.

**9.1.2.2.2. Quantitative Literacy:** College Algebra Subject examination or the Pre-Calculus Subject examination will satisfy the Quantitative Literacy requirement.

**9.1.2.2.3. American Institutions:** The American Government Subject examination or the American History Subject examination will satisfy the American Institutions requirement.

**9.1.2.2.4. Life Science:** The Biology Subject examination will satisfy the Life Science requirement.

**9.1.2.2.5. Physical Science:** The Chemistry Subject examination will satisfy the Physical Science requirement.



**9.1.2.2.6. Humanities:** The Analyzing and Interpreting Literature with Essay examination will satisfy the Humanities requirement.

**9.1.2.2.7. Social and Behavioral Sciences:** The Introductory Psychology or Introductory Sociology examinations will satisfy the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement.

**9.1.2.2.8. Other General Education:** CLEP-verified General Education credit other than that for which specific guidelines are provided in this policy may be awarded as determined by each institution.

**9.1.3. International Baccalaureate:** Credit should be granted for International Baccalaureate examinations and/or diplomas as determined by each institution.

**9.2. Prior Learning Assessments:** Students may demonstrate that they have specific subject matter credit through the Prior Learning Assessment developed by the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning. Institutional departments should evaluate and accept such credit if it meets institutional and departmental standards.

**9.3. Allowable Credit:** Institutional limits may be imposed on the amount of General Education credit that may be earned by means other than taking courses directly from the institution. Institutional limits may also be imposed on the amount of credit that may be earned through departmentally devised or standardized subject area examinations.