General Studies Program

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General Studies Program
The General Studies Program at IU Northwest offers the Bachelor of General Studies (B.G.S.) degree.

General studies degree programs provide higher education alternatives for nontraditional students that leads to a Bachelor of General Studies (B.G.S.) degree. Those students may have work or home schedules that are uncertain, or may simply desire flexibility in program planning and scheduling that is not generally available in traditional programs. Many of our students began a program some time ago and now wish to continue their education in a way that builds upon prior academic achievements and present personal realities.

It is possible to design an academic program that fits you. It is possible to complete your studies in a variety of ways.

The B.G.S. degrees consist of two parts: (1) course work that must be done in broad categories, called "required areas of learning," and (2) course work that can be done in any school, division, or program of the university, called "elective credit." The three required areas of learning are arts and humanities, science and mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences. They provide students with a broad exposure to the humanities and the sciences. Electives permit students to explore other areas of interest and to tailor the degree to their individual needs.

Academic Standards

Degrees Awarded with Distinction
The General Studies Program recognizes outstanding performance in course work by awarding degrees with three levels of distinction: distinction, high distinction, and highest distinction. In order to graduate with distinction, students must have 60 graded IU credit hours for the B.G.S. degree. (Pass/fail and self-acquired competency credits and courses not applicable to the degrees [e.g., remedial courses] are not counted in calculating the number of credit hours.) Courses with S grades (not self-acquired competency) are counted in these 60 hours.

The levels of distinction, which are printed on both the student's transcript and IU diploma, are determined by the overall cumulative grade point average of each graduating class and generally approximates the following GPAs:

- 3.50-3.74 distinction
- 3.75-3.89 high distinction
- 3.90-4.00 highest distinction

Required Areas of Learning

Areas
- Arts and Humanities
- Capstone Experience
- Electives
- Science and Mathematics
- Social and Behavioral Sciences

Each degree program requires completion of course work in three required areas of learning. To fulfill the requirements, students may choose from within each area of learning.

In each degree program, a student must demonstrate competency in each of the following areas: written communication, oral communication, mathematics, and computer literacy. All students are required to take an additional writing course and a diversity course (see advisor for details) Students should discuss with their academic advisors the appropriate ways to establish competency.

The subject fields grouped under the three areas of learning follow. Similar subject fields from other colleges and universities may be applied toward fulfilling the area requirements.

Science and Mathematics
- Anatomy and physiology
- Astronomy
For any changes to the degree requirements that may have occurred since the publication of this bulletin, contact your general studies advisor or program director.

**Degree Requirements**

**Bachelor of General Studies (B.G.S.) Requirements**
- A minimum of 12 credit hours in each of the three required areas of learning. (The credit hours required in each area must be taken in at least two academic departments.)
  - Arts and humanities (12 cr.)
  - Science and mathematics (12 cr.)
  - Social and behavioral sciences (12 cr.)
- A minimum of 18 additional credit hours in one of the preceding areas with courses from at least two academic departments (18 cr.)
- Electives (66 cr.)

Total (120 cr.)

**Certificate in General Studies Requirements**
- A minimum of 6 credit hours in each of the three required areas of learning. (The credit hours required in each area must be taken in at least two academic departments.)
  - Arts and humanities (6 cr.)
  - Science and mathematics (6 cr.)
  - Social and behavioral sciences (6 cr.)
- Electives (12 cr.)

Total (30 cr.)

**Other Requirements**
- No more than three sequential courses (not to exceed 10 credit hours) in any one academic department may be applied to the 30 credits.
- Students must successfully complete at least 8 credit hours of course work at Indiana University or through the IU Independent Study program. Earning credit through an academic department examination at Indiana University is the equivalent of having completed the course at IU. Credits earned by self-acquired competency (SAC) and Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) cannot be applied to the 8 credit hour requirement. The campus director must approve exceptions.
- The Certificate in General Studies is available to students admitted to the School of Continuing Studies who have 24 credits or fewer applicable to the General Studies Program.
- Students must complete at least 6 credit hours after admission to the General Studies Degree Program.
- Students must earn a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on all courses considered for the certificate and on all courses completed after admissions to the School of Continuing Studies. The
Requirements for a Second Bachelor's Degree

Normally, the holder of a baccalaureate degree who wishes to pursue a further educational goal is encouraged to become qualified for admission to a graduate degree program. In certain cases, however, a student may be admitted to candidacy for the B.G.S. degree.

After admission to the General Studies Degree Program, bachelor's degree candidates must earn:

- At least 30 credit hours of the required 120 from Indiana University if they have not previously earned credit from the Indiana University system
- A minimum of 20 credit hours acceptable for the B.G.S. degree after admission to the General Studies Degree Program
- All requirements for the Bachelor of General Studies degree

Recognition of Previously Earned Credit

Many students in the General Studies Degree Program have previously earned academic credit at Indiana University or at other institutions. They may also be eligible for credit by examination or for the award of credit for college-level learning gained through life experiences (self-acquired competency). Such credit is applied to the degree requirements of the B.G.S. degrees within the following guidelines.

Credits from Indiana University

A maximum of 100 hours of credit can be applied to the B.G.S. degree, provided that the grades earned were D or higher. Exception: Credit for the grade of D will be granted only for elective courses, not those required for the distribution requirements of the degree or the minor(s).

Students with academic deficiencies (cumulative grade point average below 2.0 or below a C average) in course work done within the Indiana University system may be admitted to the General Studies Degree Program on "probation." All students must achieve at least a 2.0 grade point average for all courses applied to the degree at Indiana University after admission to the General Studies Degree Program in order to obtain a degree. Students who have been dismissed from another academic unit of Indiana University and whose cumulative GPA is below 2.0 may not be admitted to the General Studies Degree Program until at least one calendar year has passed since the date of dismissal.

Upon the successful completion (GPA of 2.0 or higher) of 12 credit hours in the General Studies Degree Program, the following policies take effect:

Grades of D or F earned in the Indiana University system five years or more before admission to the General Studies Degree Program may be deleted from the General Studies records at the option of the student; a student may request forgiveness of an unsatisfactory semester at Indiana University if that semester is within a five-year period of the student's admission to the program. Although all Indiana University course work remains on the student's permanent record, the General Studies Degree Program can exclude the grades and credit earned during this unsatisfactory semester when computing the student's grade point average. Students should note that the General Studies Program removes all grades and credit earned during this unsatisfactory semester from the grade point average; therefore, students are advised to consult with their advisors about the advisability of this procedure.

The program is designed to avoid placing an excessive burden on students who have made an unsatisfactory start at Indiana University in the past. The program is not intended to permit students with chronically poor performance in the university to stay in school, nor to raise false hopes for students who are not making progress toward a degree.

Credits Eligible for Transfer from Institutions Other than Indiana University

A maximum of 90 credit hours at an institution other than Indiana University can be applied to the B.G.S. degree, provided that grades are at least C. In order for transfer credit to be applied to any of the required areas of learning, courses taken must be equivalent in nature to those offered by Indiana University in these areas. Courses taken at another institution in which the student received the grade of C– or below will not be transferable for credit. In addition, there is a 64 credit hour maximum for courses applied toward the B.G.S. degree.

Credits from community/associate's colleges.

Students who have been dismissed from another postsecondary institution cannot be admitted to the General Studies Degree Program until at least one calendar year has passed since the date of dismissal.

University regulations require that the admissions office indicate on the credit transfer report any deficiencies in grade point average (grade point average below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale) at another institution.

Credit by Examination at Other Institutions

If the transcript indicates credit by examination, and if students do not enroll in sequential courses to validate their knowledge in the subject matter, credit will be granted only on the basis of review by the appropriate academic department of Indiana University.
Credits Awarded for Educational Programs in Noncollegiate Organizations

Where relevant to the academic program sponsored by the General Studies Degree Program, the Program will consider the evaluation and credit recommendations of the two publications below as a guide in awarding credit to persons who have successfully completed noncollegiate or in-company sponsored instruction:

- American Council on Education, *The National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs*
- University of the State of New York, *A Guide to Educational Programs in Noncollegiate Organizations*

Credit for Self-Acquired Competencies (SAC)

The General Studies Degree Program recognizes that students do gain college-level knowledge and understanding through various life experiences that are equivalent to the subject matter of specific courses in the university curriculum or that may be recognized as general elective credit. Students who believe themselves eligible for such credit are encouraged to accelerate their college programs by discussing their background in detail with the General Studies Degree Program advisor.

In general, the following procedures and limitations govern the awarding of credit for self-acquired competencies:

- A student must be admitted to the School of Continuing Studies, have completed 12 credit hours, and be in good standing before any credit for self-acquired competency is awarded.
- A maximum of 30 credit hours to the B.G.S. degree.
- Students seeking either general-elective or specific course credit for self-acquired competencies should first consult their General Studies Degree Program advisors about the feasibility of their applications for credit.
- General credit is awarded as elective credit for college-level knowledge that cannot be equated to any specific course. The general self-acquired competency credit awarded is recorded as School of Continuing Studies SCS G299 or SCS G499 credit and is applied only in the fulfillment of the elective credits to be earned for a degree. In other words, the Continuing Studies Self-Acquired Competency Committee awards this general credit only if the learning of the student cannot be credited as a specific course, or courses, by other schools, divisions, or departments.
- The student requesting credit for self-acquired competency will always do so in consultation with the General Studies Degree Program advisor and the chairperson of the campus SAC committee. Details on procedures to be followed will be furnished at the time the advisor and the student begin fitting the SAC activities into the student's plan of study.

Transfer of Self-Acquired Competencies Credit within the Indiana University System

Self-acquired competencies credit awarded by the faculty of one Indiana University campus is recorded and explained on the permanent record of the student in the system-wide office. The School of Continuing Studies on any other Indiana University campus to which the student may transfer in order to complete the associate or bachelor's degree will honor such credit. The student should be aware, however, that such credit would not necessarily be honored by other degree programs of Indiana University or by other institutions.

Transfer of Self-Acquired Competencies Credit from Other Institutions

Up to 15 hours of the possible credit toward the B.G.S. degree will be awarded for self-acquired competencies previously recognized by other accredited postsecondary institutions. Additional hours of self-acquired competencies credit from other institutions must be reviewed in the same manner as other Indiana University self-acquired competencies credit. The total amount (transfer and IU) of SCS G299-SCS G499 credit applicable to the B.G.S. is 30 credit hours.

Military Service and Law Enforcement Credit

Veterans of military service and military and law enforcement personnel on active duty are eligible for academic credit as a result of their training and experience. The General Studies Degree Program of the School of Continuing Studies follows the provisions of the American Council on Education's *Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* in granting credit. Copies of official discharge, separation papers, certificates of completion (in-service schools), or transcripts must be submitted as a basis for granting credit. For more information, contact the Admissions office.