

Criteria Applying to All Areas

Courses in the IGETC shall be culturally broad in their conception. They should help students understand the nature and richness of human culture and social structures through a comparative approach and have a pronounced historical perspective. They should recognize the contributions to knowledge, civilization, and society that have been made by men, women and members of various ethnic or cultural groups.

IGETC courses shall address the modes of inquiry that characterize the different areas of human thought: the nature of the questions that can be addressed, the way questions are formulated, the way analysis is conducted, and the validity and implications of the answers obtained.

CCCs will indicate the pattern, GE Area and Subarea for which courses are proposed. Reviewers use area-specific criteria as well as the following, which apply to all submitted courses:

Any course submitted for GE must be baccalaureate level. Because CCCs serve multiple constituencies, not everything they teach is comparable in depth and rigor to courses at four-year universities; for example, some courses are instead meant to train students for specific jobs, or to prepare them for college.

The UC faculty have asked to review every community college course proposed for transferability, whether or not for general education. Community college courses must be approved for the UC Transfer Course Agreement (UC TCA) in order to be submitted and approved for IGETC.

CSU faculty chose instead to let CCCs decide which courses should transfer. In 1973, the CSU adopted Transfer Credit ([Executive Order 167](#)) to define transferability. Later the CSU's faculty senate elaborated on the definition in a document called "[What Constitutes a Baccalaureate Level Course](#)". Generally, indications that a course is baccalaureate level include (1) a clear emphasis on cultural, historic, aesthetic, or other intellectual facets of the subject taught – particularly in classes that otherwise would amount to skills development; (2) stated requirements in reading and writing; (3) high demands of students, substantial student-faculty interaction, and clearly distinguished entry- and exit-level expectations; and (4) the existence of comparable courses at four-year institutions.

Courses must carry an appropriate number of units. In the IGETC pattern, any course must carry at least 3 semester units or 4 quarter units of credit. In the CSU GE Breadth pattern, *courses of less than 3 units (other than physical activity and lab science courses) are rarely approved as they do not provide the depth and breadth that is required for CSU GE courses.*

Stand-alone lab science courses that have a prerequisite or co-requisite of the corresponding lecture course must be a minimum 1 semester/quarter unit). For specific unit requirements, see [CSU General Education Breadth Requirements](#) and [IGETC Standards](#).

Course content should reflect a balance between breadth and depth appropriate for lower-division work. While it is important for course outlines to reflect the depth of university-level work, proposed courses may be denied if their focus is too narrow. For example, an otherwise acceptable course in literature (IGETC Area 3B Humanities) that focuses on a single book, or in self-development (CSU GE Breadth Area E Lifelong Learning and Self-Development) that focuses only on the first years of childhood, would not provide the breadth expected of GE.

Variable-topics courses are excluded. Variable-topics courses (or directed-studies courses) are not acceptable for IGETC or CSU GE Breadth regardless of area, because they change too much from one term (and instructor) to the next.

However, not all the topics in a course have to be specified in detail. For example, a course on Victorian-era English literature doesn't have to name every novel assigned. A course in "Contemporary Controversies in Science" that examined a different controversy every term would be denied.

Courses may be approved in more than one area. One course may meet the criteria for more than one GE area. However, ordinarily students will be able to count it toward only one area.

Courses may be offered in any modality. The CSU allows online and hybrid course offerings across all areas of CSU GE, as does IGETC provided that the courses have been approved by the CSU and UC during the IGETC course review process.

Proposed courses shall include at least one textbook. Reviewers use the representative text as a way to confirm their understanding of course content. It's understood that the instructor in a given section may choose a different text, but the proposed one is still given close attention. It's expected that the structure of the text will be consistent with the course outline. Including additional reading is a good way to demonstrate that multiple points of view will be evaluated, as a means of developing critical thinking.

Textbooks must be dated within seven years of the course submission date or clearly identified in the outline as a "classic text" or "discipline classic" in the course outline. Lab science courses must include a clearly identified lab manual in the course outline.

Texts do not need to be published in hard copy. The UC and CSU welcome the use of online texts and other Open Educational Resources (OER), so long as the resource is a stable, bona fide textbook, and not just a collection of links to lecture notes or other web pages.

Open Educational Resources (OER)



All CSU and UC campus departments consider the content of textbooks when reviewing articulation proposals from the CCCs. The use of online texts is reviewed by campuses on a case-by-case basis for articulation with CCCs.

Multiple CCC courses already use online texts that are approved for CSU- and UC-transferability, and for articulation with CSU and UC campuses.

Texts, both online and traditional, must be dated within seven years for most course submissions. Older books should be included if they are considered classics in the field and clearly identified as classics in the course outline (e.g., "classic text" or "discipline classic"). Lab science courses must include a lab manual.

Courses and representative textbooks should be current. Course outlines should reflect contemporary thinking in the discipline, for example by showing a relatively recent date of approval from the department or campus curriculum committee.



 Textbooks 
At least one text must be published within seven years of the submission date (e.g., published in 2015 for course outlines submitted fall 2022).
Older books should be included if they're considered classics in the field and clearly identified as classics in the course outline (e.g., “classic text” or “discipline classic”).
Lab manuals are required and must be explicitly listed on the COR for all lab science courses in IGETC Area 5 and CSU GE Breadth Area B.
“Home-grown” lab manuals, created by CCC faculty, are also acceptable.
Course outlines lacking textbooks or with out-of-date textbooks will be denied for CSU GE Breadth and IGETC.
Physical activity courses in CSU GE Area E may include textbooks but are not required.

Course outlines should contain enough detail to make a decision possible. Lists of topics or chapter headings rarely give the reviewers enough information or detail on course content. Among the areas of information submitted, course descriptions are considered the least reliable because descriptions are used to market the course to students. Course objectives, content, methods of instruction, methods of evaluation, and college-level assignments are more informative when detailed and not boilerplate lists. Listed prerequisites are also good indicators of course content, rigor, and disciplinary grounding. Reviewers are asked not to make assumptions based on their own disciplinary background or knowledge of the community college, course topic, or instructor.

Course outlines should make sense to the reviewer. Occasionally courses are not approved due to discrepancies in the course outline or has gaps or contradictions in the submitted information.

Course outlines should be in English—even when the course is not.

Guiding Notes for General Education Course Review

CSU GE Breadth decisions should be consistent with IGETC. Because transfer students count on courses that meet IGETC standards to work in the CSU Breadth pattern, reviewers will approve courses in CSU GE Breadth for the sake of consistency.