

Updating the De Anza GE Pattern

Background

State Regulatory Changes

Local Pattern Changes: In Fall of 2021 AB 928 was signed by the Governor, updating the Title V language pertaining to the general education (GE) pathways required for transfer and mandating a singular GE pattern for transfer to both the UCs and CSUs. As an outgrowth of these efforts, the California Community College Chancellor’s Officer (CCCCO) approved [a proposal](#) in September of 2023 to change the graduation requirements for associate degrees, including updates to local GE patterns. This introduced a new 21-unit minimum local GE pattern based on the Cal-GETC pattern established by AB 928. Updated GE patterns for both transfer and local degrees must be effective starting Fall 2025 to remain in compliance and to effectively support student transfer efforts. The new pattern is shown below in comparison to our current pattern.

Current GE Pattern for AA/AS Degrees	New Title V Requirements
Area A: Communication, Expression, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy (10-15 Units) (Also satisfies reading/writing proficiency requirement)	Area 1 Communication, Expression, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy (10 Units)
A1: English Composition	1A: English Composition (5 units)
A2: Oral Communication	1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking (5 units)
A3: Critical Thinking	
Area B: Natural Sciences (4-6 Units) (From either Biological or Physical Sciences)	Area 5: Natural Sciences (4-6 units) (From either Bio or Physical Sciences)
Area C: Arts and Humanities (one from each of the below, 8-9 units)	Area 3: Arts and Humanities (4 units)
C1: Arts	
C2: Humanities	
Area D: Social and Behavioral Sciences (8 Units)	Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences (4 units)
Area E: Physical/Mental Wellness and Personal Development (2-5 units)	Not required
Math Proficiency (Course or AP/IB/CLEP)	Area 2: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning (4-5 units)
One Intercultural Studies Course (ICS) (identified in above areas, double counted) 	Not required
One Environmental Sustainability and Global Citizenship Course (ESGC) (identified in above areas, double-counted) 	Not required
Not Required	Area 6: Ethnic Studies (4 units)
Total Units: 32-43 units	Total Units: 30-33 units

Notable differences between the two above patterns include the addition of Ethnic Studies Area (Area 6), the addition of Area 2 (Area 2), the elimination of Lifelong Learning (De Anza Area E), and the unit reductions in De Anza Areas A, C, and D. Our local requirements for ICS and ESGC understandably do not appear at the state level either. *Note: Absolute minimum unit requirements for the new pattern are lower in some places based relative to the table above. This is because locally approved courses do not carry lower unit values. For example, the state requires 4 units at minimum for English Composition, but at De Anza, it is 5 units.*

Accepting Cal-GETC in Lieu of Local Pattern: Another change in Title V requires that Community Colleges also accept the Cal-GETC GE pattern in place of their own locally determined one for the purposes of awarding AA/AS Degrees. The [Cal-GETC pattern](#) and new state-mandated minimums align significantly, as this was the intent. Any student with transfer as a goal will be required to complete Cal-GETC for any ADT (Associate Degree for Transfer) degrees, meaning that 66-75% of De Anza students will be completing Cal-GETC. A comparison of the two follows based on currently available courses at De Anza:

Cal-GETC GE Pattern	New Minimum Local Pattern
Area 1: English Communication (15 units)	Area 1 Communication, Expression, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy (10 Units)
A1: English Composition (5 units)	1A: English Composition (5 units)
A2: Oral Communication (5 units)	1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking (5 units)
A3: Critical Thinking (5 units)	
Area 2: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning (4-5 units)	Area 2: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning (4-5 units)
Area 3: Arts and Humanities (one from each of the below, 8 units)	Area 3: Arts and Humanities (4 units)
C1: Arts (4 units)	
C2: Humanities (4 units)	
Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences (2 courses in separate disciplines, 4 units each, 8 units total)	Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences (4 units)
Area 5: Natural Sciences (1 course in Biological Science, 1 in Physical Science. Must include at least 1 lab unit. 9 units total)	Area 5: Natural Sciences (4-6 units) (From either Biological or Physical Sciences)
Area 6: Ethnic Studies (4 units)	Area 6: Ethnic Studies (4 units)
Total Units: 48-49 units	Total Units: 30-33 units

Current De Anza Work

Current areas of agreement: Over the Winter and Spring quarters in 2024, the Curriculum Committee, GE subcommittee, and Academic Senate worked on developing a new GE pattern. After several small group discussions facilitated by the GE committee and larger discussions in Academic Senate, the following GE pattern pieces were agreed on.

Proposed Local GE Pattern	New Minimum Local Pattern
Area 1 Communication, Expression, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy (15 Units)	Area 1 Communication, Expression, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy (10 Units)
1A: English Composition (5 units)	1A: English Composition (5 units)
1B: Oral Communication (5 units)	1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking (5 units)
1C: Critical Thinking (5 units)	
Area 2: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning (4-5 units)	Area 2: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning (4-5 units)
Area 3: Arts and Humanities (8-9 units)	Area 3: Arts and Humanities (4 units)
3A: Arts	
3B: Humanities	
Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences (8 units)	Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences (4 units)
Area 5: Natural Sciences (4-6 units)	Area 5: Natural Sciences (4-6 units)
Area 6: Ethnic Studies (4 units)	Area 6: Ethnic Studies (4 units)
Area 7: Physical/Mental Wellness and Personal Development (2-5 units)	
Total Units: 45-52 units	Total Units: 30-33 units

This proposed pattern has 15-22 excess units in comparison to the required minimum pattern and is between 3 units under and 4 units over the Cal-GETC pattern while maintaining a similar overall structure to the previous GE pattern and incorporating the new Mathematics and Ethnic Studies requirements. The main difference with the Cal-GETC pattern is that the local pattern requires one fewer course in Area 5: Natural Sciences and maintains our current Area 7: Physical/Mental Wellness and Personal Development. If this pattern is adopted, De Anza would require a similar number of GE units for transfer and non-transfer students.

Areas for further discussion:

a) Introducing a revised ICS requirement.

The current ICS requirement, as written, would be satisfied by any student taking a class in the newly created Area 6: Ethnic Studies, resulting in the suggestion to revise the current ICS requirement to exclude any courses in Area 6 from satisfying the ICS requirement. Students would have to take an ICS-approved course (determined by the Academic Senate) from Areas 3, 4, or 7 in addition to a course in Area 6 as courses in Area 6 would no longer satisfy the ICS requirement.

b) Consideration of the ESGC requirement

There has not been any significant discussion of whether to retain the ESGC requirement.

One of the main aspects of the discussion in the Spring centered on the total number of units students would need for a local degree path vs. Cal-GETC and which of these students are likely to pursue. Further information and questions regarding these items can be found in the following section.

Planned work for the 24/25 Academic Year

According to AB 928 and Title V revisions, we must update our transfer and local GE patterns to be effective Fall 2025. To accommodate our curriculum submission timeline and process, these updates need to be approved ASAP as regular curriculum revisions cannot occur until all GE courses and affiliated programs are updated to reflect the new patterns.

Timeline

To allow faculty to have the most time to address standard required course revisions and write new courses to be effective Fall 2026, decisions about a GE pattern must be made quickly in Fall Quarter. Furthermore, any pattern decided on can not be updated until Fall 2027. The pattern approved Fall 2024 will be effective for at least the 25/26 and 26/27 academic years but can be changed effective Fall 2027.

The following proposed timeline represents a best-case scenario for addressing these topics this Fall 2024.

Sept 9th Document sent to sitting Senators and Department Chairs for background and current proposals

Sept 20th Open Forum for faculty interested in learning more about the current discussion

Sept 23rd Special Academic Senate meeting to present and discuss ideas

Sept 30th Senate approves new GE pattern

Oct 1st- Nov 12th: Curriculum Updates for new GE pattern are made

November 18th: eLumen opens for standard revisions and new courses

Thoughts/Questions/Items for Discussion

There are several considerations when determining a General Education pattern. The following examples are meant to highlight some of the critical areas and are not an exhaustive list.

1. Does the pattern support the College Mission, reflect the College Values, and align with the College GE Philosophy? Does it reflect De Anza's identity?

Our first question must always come back to who we are as a college and what we believe receiving a De Anza education means. The current GE Philosophy can be found [here](#), though given the proposed updates we will likely want to revisit the overall philosophy this year as well.

Regardless of that, one of the core questions here is how we want our GE requirements to enrich our students and what it might equip them for. How much or little should our local pattern align with Cal-GETC or prepare students to shift to a transfer pattern if their educational goals change?

2. Which students are going to pursue the local GE pattern?

The first consideration here is that any student wishing to transfer to a UC or CSU will have a single recommended transfer pattern: Cal-GETC. As of 2023, these students comprise 65-70% of the De Anza student body. Another 25% of the student body is comprised of students that do not need to complete a GE pattern given their goal of a certificate, vocational training, or job recertification. This leaves 9% of our student body with an initial goal of a degree with no intention

of transferring. ([source](#), page 4) Additionally, changes in Title V mean that De Anza will now be required to accept the Cal-GETC pattern, which means that this 9% now has the option of taking our local degree pattern or Cal-GETC. A significant difference is that Cal-GETC requires students to complete each class with a grade of C or better, while our current local degree pattern permits students to complete each class with a grade of D or better.

Given all this, which students are we actually hoping will complete the local GE pattern?

3. Are the number of units appropriate? Are the units required in specific areas appropriate? How should units be distributed within the pattern?

What is an appropriate number of units for General Education courses for an AA/AS degree? How do we balance the desire to educate students on a wide variety of important topics with the concern of creating barriers to completion?

4. How do we make a local GE pattern attractive to students?

It is not surprising that students are often motivated to finish their degrees with as few courses as possible, saving themselves time and money. To make a local GE pattern attractive, that is, to incentivize students who are not already pursuing Cal-GETC to follow the locally designed one instead, what does the local pattern offer that Cal-GETC does not? Does it require fewer units? Does it offer more flexibility or increased variety of courses?

5. How many GE courses should we offer?

Within a GE pattern, how many courses should we offer in order to both provide a diversity of options to students while also supporting the health and vitality of individual programs? Should we look at the content of Areas as well as their identity?

In addition to these general questions with regards to GE patterns, there are also specific questions related to the ongoing discussions of the updates to the De Anza pattern.

1. Overall Unit Count

 5-52 units, our newly proposed GE pattern will exceed the Cal-GETC requirements in some instances and will greatly exceed the requirements of similar institutions which are guided by the Title V minimum requirements (See Appendix). If we wish to reduce the number of units, where will we do that? If we wish to arrive at a specific unit count, which requirements do we add or remove? If a requirement is removed, what courses might students miss and how would that impact their educational journey? How would this affect specific programs of study? What does retaining or removing a requirement mean for our College's overall identity?

Places where we currently have units not required by Title V include Areas 1B/1C (Oral Communication and Critical Thinking, 5 units), Area 3 (Arts and Humanities, 4 units), Area 4 (Social and Behavioral Sciences, 4-5 units), and Area 7 (Physical/Mental Wellness and Personal Development, 2-5 units). The ESGC and ICS requirement are also likely to add 4-8 units for most

students based on current enrollment patterns.

2. Revised ICS Requirement

What is the original intent of the ICS requirement, and what was the intent of revising the requirement in the 2017 and 2020 to include courses in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WMST at the time)¹ and Asian American Studies (ASAM) and other Ethnic Studies course prefixes²? Does it make sense to exclude courses approved for the Ethnic Studies (Area 6) from this requirement? Many courses that satisfy the current ICS requirement do not qualify for Area 6, including courses in LGBTQ Studies, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Disability Studies, and Leadership and Social Change. Is it sufficient that these remain in their current areas (generally Area 3 and/or 4), or should we continue to emphasize them with a separate requirement? What impact does this requirement have on the number of units students take at De Anza? Is double counting this requirement alongside those from other areas serving our students in a meaningful way?

3. ESGC Requirement

What is the impact of this particular requirement on our students? Have the courses approved for this area over the last 10 years accomplished the original intent of this requirement? What impact does this requirement have on the number of units students take at De Anza? Is double counting this requirement alongside those from other areas serving our students in a meaningful way?

Proposed solutions

The questions above are not ones that can necessarily be answered quickly. To remain in compliance, however, we need to reach some agreement quickly. To help facilitate this, the Senate Officers have put together the following list of options to serve as a starting point for our discussion and as a potential path forward.

Option 1: A Two-Stage Approach

Step 1: Initial approval for a plan

In recognition of the fact that this discussion may take more time and merit more extensive input and community outreach in order to arrive at a broad consensus than is possible in the first 2-3 weeks of the quarter, it may be advisable to adopt an initial or temporary GE pattern to serve for the 25/26 and 26/27 academic years with the intent of carrying out deeper and broader discussions during the 24/25 academic year. The results of these discussions would inform a new GE philosophy, GE criteria, and GE pattern. The temporary pattern could be any of the following:

1. The Cal-GETC pattern (48-49 units)
2. The new AS/AA GE minimums required by Title V (30-33 units)

¹Senate Meeting 10/23/17

²Senate Meeting 5/18/20



3. The areas that the Senate completed discussion on without further questions or concerns (Areas 1-7, no additional requirements, 45-52 units)
4. The areas that the Senate completed discussion on without further questions or concerns, plus the newly revised ICS requirement and/or the ESGC requirement (Areas 1-7, ICS rev/ESGC, 45-60 units)

Other patterns have not had significant discussion and would require significant examination that would preclude them from being approved at the start of the quarter. The temporary pattern would be in place until at least Fall 2027. Approval of this pattern would occur no later than October 11th, 2025.

Step 2: More extensive discussion and potential revisions

Over the remainder of the 24/25 academic year, the Academic Senate and/or a new GE Review committee will discuss the above options and others alongside the De Anza GE philosophy and the De Anza GE criteria with the goal of presenting a recommendation to Academic Senate by the end of Winter Quarter 2025. This process should involve a series of open meetings and community forums. The proposal would be voted on by Academic Senate during Spring Quarter 2025 and any alterations to the temporary pattern previously approved would take effect Fall 2027. Regular Curriculum work should commence by mid-November, with the initial due date being March 26th, 2025. Initiators for new and revised curriculum would lose approximately 6-9 weeks of access to eLumen, which is the best-case scenario at this point. Any delays in approving the temporary pattern would increase the delay in access to eLumen workflows.

Option 2: A Slower Approach to a Permanent Solution

Academic Senate and/or a new GE Review Committee could spend more time in Fall Quarter investigating and discussing a permanent solution for the GE philosophy and GE pattern with the intent of presenting a proposed recommendation to Academic Senate by week two or three of Winter Quarter, no later than January 20th. The pattern could be any of those mentioned in the previous section, or something else entirely. Assuming the pattern is approved at that meeting, updates to GE courses should be complete by March 7th. Faculty would then have 3 weeks to start and complete any work in eLumen for new and revised courses effective Fall 2026. Based on submissions in previous years, the initial Curriculum due date of March 26th cannot be delayed.

Appendix

Comparison of GE pattern units* at Comparable Community Colleges**

	De Anza	Santa Monica	Orange Coast	San Diego City	El Camino
Area 1 A&B	15	8	8	8	8
Area 2	4-5	4	4	4	8
Area 3	8-9	4	8	4	4
Area 4	8	4	4	4	4
Area 5	4-6	4	4	4	4
Area 6	4	4	4	4	4
Other	2-13			4	4
Total	45-60	28	32	32	36

*- All units are expressed in Quarter Units. Semester units are multiplied by 1.5, and rounded down, mirroring the CCCCO practice.

** - Colleges selected based on size, student body composition, and success rates.