

**PRESIDENTIAL POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 290**  
**Supersedes PPM 125**

**To:** All Virginia Tech Faculty and Students  
**From:** Timothy D. Sands   
**Date:** April 6, 2015  
**Subject:** Adoption of Pathways General Education Curriculum

**Approved by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies & Polices:** January 26, 2015  
**Approved by the University Council:** April 6, 2015  
**Approved by the President:** April 6, 2015  
**Effective Date:** Fall 2016 (or upon approval of implementation plan, whichever occurs last)

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Upon implementation, this resolution will supersede Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 125, University Core Curriculum

Following is the text of the resolution to adopt the Pathways General Education Curriculum.

WHEREAS, the State Code of Virginia established Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University as a land-grant university with its mission to serve the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia, providing an education to prepare its graduates for leadership in their chosen field of work and as productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, national organizations, including the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), challenge universities to provide access to high quality, effective learning opportunities to develop students intellectual and civic capacities, thereby preparing them to live and work in a rapidly changing global world; and

WHEREAS, disciplinary accrediting organizations identify broad categories of knowledge and experience in the areas of oral and written communication, multidisciplinary problem-solving, ethical understanding and reasoning, societal and global awareness, and understanding of contemporary issues as essential elements of a high-quality undergraduate education; and

WHEREAS, educational research demonstrates that deep learning occurs when foundational learning experiences support increasingly challenging, integrated experiences within the context of disciplinary learning; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech's status as a research university positions it to provide undergraduate students with depth in disciplinary learning as well as integrated learning drawn from a broad range of disciplines; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech must demonstrate to its stakeholders, including students, parents, alumni, and accrediting bodies the value of all elements of the curriculum for its graduates; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech has not undertaken a comprehensive revision of general education requirements since the Core Curriculum inception in 1992; and

WHEREAS, the 2012-2018 Strategic Plan, "A Plan for a New Horizon," calls on the university community to modify the current Curriculum for Liberal Education to provide "strong foundations for the major course of study while facilitating the integration of a broad base of knowledge" and "to embrace alternate pathways to general education"; and

WHEREAS, constituents across campus including faculty, faculty committees, staff, and students were engaged in a multiyear process of information gathering, curriculum design and proposal development; and

WHEREAS, undergraduate students at Virginia Tech deserve a vibrant, flexible, and meaningful general education program, one that helps them to integrate learning for use throughout their lifetimes,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the University adopt the *Pathways General Education* curriculum for students entering fall 2016 or upon approval of the implementation plan (whichever occurs last) and thereafter as explained in the accompanying "Revision of General Education at Virginia Tech," with guiding principles as follows:

1. That the mission statement and guiding principles of integration, inclusivity, and relevance be adopted as referenced in the proposal (pp. 4-5).
2. That the three pathways: distribution, Pathways Minors, and Alternative Pathways are approved as described (pp. 5-7).
3. That learning outcomes and corresponding indicators of learning be adopted as described (pp. 7-11).

4. That the credit hour requirements associated with each core learning outcome be as follows:
  - DISCOURSE: 9 credits--6 foundational + 3 advanced/applied writing and/or speaking courses (pp. 8, 11-12)
  - QUANTITATIVE AND COMPUTATIONAL THINKING: 9 credits—6 foundational + 3 advanced/applied (pp. 8, 12)
  - REASONING IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES: 6 credits (with an additional 2 lab credits for students in some majors) (pp. 9, 12)
  - CRITIQUE AND PRACTICE IN DESIGN AND THE ARTS: 6 credits—3 design + 3 arts OR 6 integrated design and arts (pp. 9, 12)
  - REASONING IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: 6 credits (pp. 9, 12)
5. That to support optimal integration of Ethical Reasoning and Intercultural and Global awareness in the curriculum, the goal is that every course approved to meet general education requirements incorporates learning in one or both of these areas (pp. 10-13) (no additional credit hours will be associated with these integrative outcomes).
6. That any course that meets the stated outcomes may be approved as a general education course with no arbitrary exclusions or restrictions against double-counting (pp. 11).
7. That the University Curriculum Committee for Liberal Education (see PPM #240) will develop specific guidelines for course approvals that will be shared with the university community via the 15-day review process. Upon responding to feedback received from the university community, UCCLE will present criteria to the commission (CUSP) for approval as outlined in the Course Approvals section on (p. 13).
8. That the University Curriculum Committee for Liberal Education, the Office of General Education, and the Office of the Provost will support continuity, stability, and transparency to maximize opportunities, use resources effectively, and reward the efforts of students and faculty.

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