



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

November 30, 2023

MEMORANDUM

Academic Policy Updates: General Education, Transfer, and Common Course Numbering

The Commissioner's office is recommending a much-needed update to Board Policy R470, *General Education, Common Course Numbering, Lower-Division Pre-Major Requirements, Transfer of Credits, and Credit by Examination*. As the current title implies, the existing policy is very cumbersome. It will be split into four separate policies:

- R470, *General Education*
- R471, *Transfer*
- R472, *Credit for Prior Learning*
- R475, *Common Course Numbering*

Because the new Policy R471 will reference transfer between technical colleges and degree-granting institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education, Policy R473, *Standards for Granting Academic Credit for CTE Course Work Completed in Non-Credit Instructional Formats*, will be rescinded as it was adopted when technical education was considered exterior to the Utah System of Higher Education.

R470, General Education

General Education, which provides training in an academic core and a breadth of subjects, is one of two critical components of undergraduate degrees in the United States (the other being specialization through a major). [Utah Code 53B-16-105](#) tasks the Board of Higher Education with aligning General Education across the degree-granting institutions in the system. Policy R470 has for decades referenced a shared set of General Education area requirements in eight key areas that reflect national best practices and are also called for in state code: written communications, quantitative literacy, American Institutions, humanities, social sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, and the arts.

Proposed changes

1. *Number of credits required:* Although the current policy aligns with the area requirements for General Education, it allows institutions to require a disparate range of credits to fulfill them. That range in the number of required credits may result in almost a full semester's difference between institutions, and those discrepancies can create difficulties for transfer students. A recent legislative audit asked the Board of Higher Education to eliminate the range of credit spread and better align the program requirement across institutions. The new policy draft narrows the

spread, shifting away from the current 30-39 credit spread and allowing institutions to require 27-30 credits for their General Education programs.

2. *Recognizing student completion of General Education requirements post-transfer:* Although all earned credits transfer across the degree-granting institutions in the system, the current policies allowed “receiving” institutions to determine which General Education area requirement was fulfilled by a course completed by a transfer student. The updated policy will recognize completion of the area the student fulfilled at the “sending” institution so that transfer students will not have the frustration of having to redo an area requirement they thought had been completed.
3. *Responsibilities of faculty curriculum committees:* Because faculty control the curriculum, the policy update also recognizes the important collaborations within and between institutions. It now provides for cross-institutional area committees to propose curricular “essential learning outcomes” or the skills that students are expected to have acquired after fulfilling a General Education area requirement. The old policy codified those essential learning outcomes in the policy itself; in the updated version, those outcomes will now be housed in an appendix that will allow area committees to more nimbly recommend updates to required curricular components.

These recommendations are being forwarded to the Board by the Commissioner’s office and by the General Education Task Force, a committee comprised of faculty and administrative representatives from all degree-granting institutions, and the Council of Chief Academic Officers. Those two bodies carefully worked at agreements on the credit and curricular components of the General Education program across the System. At the end of October, their recommended policy updates were also vetted by close to 200 faculty and administrators at the annual professional development meetings for General Education faculty, the “What Is an Educated Person? Conference.” The policy draft is accompanied by an issue brief from the General Education Task Force explaining the importance of General Education.

R471 Transfer

The Board also has responsibility under [Utah Code 53B-16-105](#) to “develop, coordinate, and maintain a transfer and articulation system.” Most of the existing policy language on transfer from the current R470 policy is being pulled into the new Policy R471.

Proposed Updates

1. *Transfer from technical colleges and replacement of Policy R473:* After the merger of the state technical college system with the existing Utah System of Higher Education, the language around how to transfer credits from technical colleges to degree-granting institutions in Policy R473, *Standards for Granting Academic Credit for CTE Course Work Completed in Non-Credit Instructional Formats*, is now outdated. That policy allowed degree-granting institutions to grant only elective credit for transfer from technical colleges and only for a narrow range of technical education program lengths. That policy will be rescinded. The new language in Policy R471 will treat credit from technical colleges parallel to credit from degree-granting institutions within the System; it will allow receiving institutions to transfer in course work and entire technical

certificate programs, where appropriate, as equivalent credit for applicable degree requirements in a specific discipline.

2. *Changes in recognition of accreditors:* The updated policy language reflects recent changes at the federal level that eliminate the distinction between regional and national accreditors.
3. *Lower division majors:* The policy provides guidance on lower division majors that allow students to start a major at any degree-granting institution with an assurance that they can complete the major at any other institution without having to redo lower division requirements. For students who complete an associate degree, this means that with the combination of aligned General Education programs and lower division majors, students will be able to complete a bachelor's degree in the same subject with only 60 additional credits (or the equivalent of two years of full-time study). USHE Faculty Major Committees have established over 60 of these lower-division majors.

Policy R475 Common Course Numbering

[Utah Code 53B-16-105](#) similarly requires the Board to “maintain a course numbering system that assigns common numbers to specified courses of similar level with similar curricular content, rigor, and standards” and to use “uniform prefixes” in the course numbering system. USHE has had a common course numbering system in place for decades between the degree-granting institutions. Common course numbering includes the use of a prefix indicating the discipline and a four-digit code, for example, HIST 1700, for a highly enrolled history course. The course numbering system also guides students through degree progression, with courses required early in their academic career having lower numbers, i.e., “lower division” numbering, and graduate programs having the highest numbers.

Proposed updates

1. *Clarification:* Minor edits clarify language and better mirror statute, for example, referencing the language “uniform prefix” from state code.
2. *Lower division majors:* New policy language references the use of common course numbering in lower division majors and recognizes the role of cross-institutional faculty major committees to align the essential learning outcomes of those commonly numbered courses so that receiving institutions can be assured that the course content is adequately similar to the same course on their campus.

R472 Credit for Prior Learning

The current version of Policy R470 includes a section related to how institutions award credit for prior learning. A separate Policy R472, *Credit for Prior Learning*, was created in 2019 in response to a state law mandating particular practices in how USHE degree-granting institutions recognize and award credit to students for knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired outside of higher education institutions.

Proposed updates

Outdated language on credit for prior learning practices will be rescinded from Policy R470. They have already been replaced by Policy R472, which does not need to be updated at this time.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends the Board adopt the following updates to policy:

- Rescind Policy R470, *General Education, Common Course Numbering, Lower-Division Pre-Major Requirements, Transfer of Credits, and Credit by Examination*, and replace it with Policy R470, *General Education*.
- Rescind Policy R473, *Standards for Granting Academic Credit for CTE Course Work Completed in Non-Credit Instructional Formats*, and replace it with the new Policy R471, *Transfer*.
- Approve the new Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

Attachments

R470, General Education¹

R470-1 Purpose: This policy creates guidelines to assure consistency in the structure and essential learning outcomes of general education requirements for undergraduate degree programs and reciprocity in recognition of general education requirements between Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) degree-granting institutions.

R470-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-1-101.5(1) and (8), Definitions
- 2.2 Utah Code § 53B-2-106(3)(c), Duties of Degree-granting Presidents
- 2.3 Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.4 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering, Transferability, General Education
- 2.5 Board Policy R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports
- 2.6 Board Policy R471, Lower division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits
- 2.7 R470 Appendix, Essential Learning Outcomes
- 2.8 Importance of General Education Issue Brief, General Education Task Force

R470-3 Definitions

- 3.1 **“Basic Instruction”** means instruction offered by technical colleges in areas such as reading, language arts, and mathematics that is necessary for student success in a chosen technical education or job-related program. Basic instruction does not include college-level general education courses or introductory college-level disciplinary courses but may parallel developmental education offered by degree-granting institutions.
- 3.2 **“Competencies”** mean the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that demonstrate accomplishment of learning objectives within a specific course or program.
- 3.3 **“Essential Learning Outcomes”** means the requisite competencies of a course or program, including intellectual ideas, bodies of knowledge, and academic skillsets and mindsets.
- 3.4 **“General Education”** means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the

¹ Approved August 19, 2005. Replaces R463, Credit by Examination; R465, General Education; R467, Lower Division Major Requirements; R471, Transfer of Credit and R472, Course Numbering. Amended March 25, 2011, September 16, 2016, and March 31, 2017. Repealed and replaced XXX.

foundational designated areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those designated areas. These areas must include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

R470-4 General Education Guidelines

4.1 Undergraduate degrees within USHE should be structured to prepare students for academic and professional competence in a particular discipline and cross-disciplinary general education to develop critical thinking, analytical and ethical skills, and the broad-based academic knowledge necessary for a responsive 21st century workforce and an educated citizenry. *See Reference 2.8.* All undergraduate degrees must meet the shared USHE General Education requirements. An institution must seek approval from the Board for an exemption as outlined in Board Policy R401, *Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports.*

4.2 USHE degree-granting institutions shall construct their general education programs in alignment with their institutional roles as outlined in Board Policy R312, *Institutional Roles and Missions*, and their unique institutional missions and faculty specialties, but institutional general education programs shall have consistent core and breadth requirements, essential learning outcomes, minimum grade requirements, and credit structures and shall be fully transferable across the system. Technical education programs may not provide general education but may offer basic instruction.

4.3 General education essential learning outcomes are informed by USHE faculty through area work groups and faculty major committees outlined in section 8, disciplinary standards, and nationally recognized expectations as reflected in professional organizations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and accrediting bodies.

4.4 General education courses shall be designed to actively engage students in the designated area, address equity gaps in course success, and make interdisciplinary connections to help students understand the value of the general education program.

R407-5 General Education Credit Requirements: To assure consistency and transferability across USHE and timely completion for students, each institutional general education program shall require 27-30 semester credits to build student competence in the core and breadth general education areas. These include:

5.1 12 credits in the core requirements. Six credits in Written Communications (three credits at the 2000-level or higher), three credits in Quantitative Literacy, and three credits in American Institutions.

5.2 Three credits from each of the five breadth area requirements of arts, humanities, life sciences, physical sciences, and social and behavioral sciences.

5.3 Up to three credits of unique institutional coursework to address gaps in meeting shared general education program-level essential learning outcomes, not to exceed an institutional requirement for 30 general education credits. Because each USHE degree-granting institution structures its general education program around its unique faculty specialties and academic departments and serves students of differing backgrounds and levels of academic preparation, some institutions may need to specify this unique institutional coursework to ensure students achieve the expected system-level general education program outcomes.

5.4 Institutions may develop integrative courses or programs rather than requiring courses in each designation area, not to exceed 30 credits except as allowed in subsection 5.5.

5.5 Courses with embedded co-requisite developmental education, instructional supports, labs or other high impact pedagogical strategies may result in individual students having a general education credit count above 30 credits.

5.6 In some cases, students majoring in a particular discipline may be required to take a two-course sequence in the major rather than a traditional single introductory course to meet a general education requirement served by that discipline. Two-course sequences may be given the appropriate general education requirement attribute for students in the major without affecting the institution's base general education credit count.

R470-6 Essential Learning Outcomes: USHE's shared general education essential learning outcomes should inform institutions' design of their general education programs at the program, area (core and breadth), and course level to offer an appropriate core breadth, depth, and sequence of learning.

6.1 Program-Level Essential Learning Outcomes: Program-level design shall ensure student demonstration of specific understanding and application of the following general education competencies:

6.1.1 Intellectual and Practical Skills: These skills include inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, information literacy, teamwork and problem-solving, and practical skills such as visual, kinesthetic, design,

and aural forms of artistic communication.

6.1.2 Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural Worlds:

Engagement with “big questions”—both contemporary and enduring—in the sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts.

6.1.3 Personal and Social Responsibility:

Development of personal and social responsibilities, including ethical reasoning and actions, foundations and skills for lifelong learning, community and civic knowledge and engagement, involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges, and local and global intercultural knowledge and competence.

6.1.4 Integrative Learning:

Demonstration of synthesis of learning and advanced accomplishment across coherent general and disciplinary studies and the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

6.2 General Education Core Requirements: General education core essential learning outcomes address foundational competencies to promote student success across the curriculum and prepare students for subsequent coursework. The essential learning outcomes for the core areas are not exhaustive, and other outcomes may also be addressed at each institution’s discretion.

6.2.1 Written Communication (Six Credits): Students may satisfy this requirement by completing at least two institutionally approved courses focused on the development of academic composition and communication skills to serve as a foundation for continued writing experiences across the curriculum, in professional settings, and as a tool for democratic and civic engagement. Students must demonstrate an ability to evaluate and synthesize credible information and effectively organize and deliver well-reasoned arguments appropriate to an intended audience. Courses receiving this designation should emphasize critical thinking, analysis, logical reasoning, and appropriate context and shall meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the Written Communication Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*. Requirements can be met by taking these courses: (1) ENGL or WRTG 1010 Introduction to Writing, and (2) ENGL or WRTG 2010 Intermediate Writing or ENGL 2100 Technical Writing, or other institution-approved courses.

6.2.2 Quantitative Literacy (Three Credits): Students satisfy this requirement by

demonstrating familiarity with fundamental quantitative methods and concepts, formal reasoning, the ability to apply quantitative skills in an appropriate context, and the ability to evaluate arguments based on quantitative reasoning. Courses receiving this designation should meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the Quantitative Literacy Area Work group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*. Requirements can be met by taking MATH 1030 Quantitative Reasoning, MATH or STAT 1040 Statistics, MATH 1050 College Algebra, or other institution-approved courses.

6.2.3 American Institutions (Three Credits): Consistent with Utah Code section 53B-16-103(1)(b), to satisfy this requirement students must “demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States.” Approved courses should include the use of disciplinary methods from history, political science, or economics to come to an understanding of the history, principles, multi-cultural populations, form of government, and economic system of the United States. Approved courses shall meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the American Institutions Area Work group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*. Requirements can be met by taking ECON 1740 Economic History of the United States, HIST 1700 American Civilization, HIST 2700 United States History to 1877/HIST 2710 United States History 1877 to Present (for History majors), POLS 1100 American/US National Government, or other institution-approved courses.

6.3 General Education Breadth Areas: General education breadth areas cultivate exposure to a range of subjects, analytical skills, and to develop the intellectual agility required to navigate a variety of perspectives and participate effectively in professional life and a diverse democracy. Courses that meet general education requirements may also fulfill lower division major requirements.

6.3.1 Arts (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate an understanding of the scope and variety of the fine arts, explain the aesthetic standards used in making critical judgments in various artistic fields, and demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of values, beliefs, ideas, and practices embodied in artistic expression. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the Arts Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.2 Humanities (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate an understanding of the complexities and changes in human experience through analytical reading and critical thought and shall be able to analyze how human experience is shaped by social, cultural,

linguistic, and/or historical circumstances. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the Humanities Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.3 Life Sciences (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate understanding of the scientific method in conducting research and subjecting empirical evidence analysis to scientific models. Proficiency also entails an understanding of how the life sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, cultural, and social contexts. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the Life Sciences Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.4 Physical Sciences (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate familiarity with scientific methods and modeling to understand forces in the physical world and an understanding of how the physical sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, cultural, and social contexts. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the Physical Sciences Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.5 Social and Behavioral Sciences (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate an understanding of social and behavioral science methodology, concepts, and theories, and demonstrate a critically reasoned understanding of human cultures, value systems, institutions, economic structures, social patterns, and individual variation. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes established based on proposals from the Social and Behavioral Sciences Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.6 Faculty teaching general education courses shall actively collaborate with faculty across USHE institutions to clarify and articulate specific course learning outcomes and objectives for commonly numbered courses.

6.3.7 Institutions shall develop rules to assure that students encounter a broad range of disciplines within their general education course selection.

6.3.8 Breadth course learning outcomes may also support students acquiring relevant career information and professional, civic, and personal skills.

R470-7 General Education Sequencing and Completion: Institutions shall implement strategies

to facilitate student completion of general education requirements.

7.1 Lower Division Sequential Numbering: General education courses shall be numbered at the 1000 and 2000-level, allowing students to fulfill all general education requirements through lower division coursework. Expectations that these requirements should be completed early in a student's academic career shall be reflected through the appropriate use of the common course numbering sequences outlined in Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

7.2 Upper Division Coursework in General Education: General education courses should be numbered at the 1000- and 2000-level, allowing students to fulfill all general education requirements through lower division coursework. However, in rare cases, courses that receive general education designations may have upper division numbering in alignment with the standards of Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering* and justified as being in the students' best interests.

7.3 Institutional Upper Division Non-major, Non-general Education Requirements: Institutions that implement specific requirements for upper division courses outside of a major and outside of the USHE standardized general education program shall not refer to those requirements as general education and should carefully consider the possible negative effects of those requirements on transfer students and completion in general.

7.4 Early engagement with General Education: Institutions shall structure general education programs so that students begin general education work during their first year of enrollment, particularly in core requirements that are foundational to subsequent coursework.

7.5 Clear Explanations of General Education Sequencing and Requirements: Degree plans and advising materials should encourage students to complete general education requirements early and through the most effective curricular and pedagogical means possible, i.e., co-requisite rather than developmental course entry points where possible.

7.6 Completion within First Two Years: Depending on a student's intended major and transfer plans, general education may be completed within the first 60 credit hours or spread across multiple semesters to accommodate major requirements and facilitate completion.

7.7 Certificate of General Education Completion: Institutions shall mark completion of the general education program with a certificate to ensure transferability of the entire program within USHE or to non-USHE institutions.

7.8 Credit for Prior Learning: In support of timely completion, institutions shall allow students to obtain general education credit by other means, such as prior learning assessments as outlined in Board Policy R472, *Credit for Prior Learning*.

7.8.1 Allowable Credit: Institutions shall not impose limits on the amount of general education credit that a student may earn by means other than taking courses directly from the institution only in alignment with accreditation requirements and Board Policy R472, *Credit for Prior Learning*.

7.9 Substitution of Courses in General Education to Accommodate Major

Requirements: Institutions may allow students with declared majors in breadth areas listed in subsection 6.3 to substitute study and achievement in lower division major courses for the general education requirement and to achieve the required number of total general education credits by completing additional coursework in other general education areas. The receiving institution shall allow a USHE transfer student who retains the major to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and shall not require the student to complete additional general education coursework.

R470-8 Designated Responsibilities for General Education Procedures: To implement this policy, the following committees are established:

8.1 Board’s General Education Task Force (“Task Force”): The Task Force will be comprised of one representative from each USHE degree-granting institution who: oversees General Education at their institution, is nominated by the institution’s Chief Academic Officer, and is appointed by the President. Non-voting or ex officio members may also attend as needed to provide expertise on particular issues. The Task Force will select a chair and vice chair, who must be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education. These officers’ terms of office are three years, and they are eligible for reelection. Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (“OCHE”) staff will provide administrative support to the Task Force and may serve as ex officio participants. The Task Force shall:

8.1.1 Establish general education program-level essential learning outcomes and goals and essential learning outcomes in the core and breadth areas of general education, based on the most current recommendations of the general education area work groups and with input from general education faculty, faculty major committees, and accrediting bodies, national associations, and academic societies that are considered leaders in general education;

8.1.2 Propose methods to assess student learning outcomes in general education and submit those recommendations to the Chief Academic Officers and USHE institutions;

8.1.3 Coordinate with groups working on related tasks by appointing members of the Task Force to assist other USHE committees, such as the USHE Transfer Council, as requested and appropriate;

8.1.4 Address disagreements about general education attributes for courses across USHE as they arise; and

8.1.5 Recommend policy updates to OCHE, which must be vetted and endorsed by the Council of Chief Academic Officers before being forwarded to the Council of Presidents and then to the Board.

8.2 General Education Area Work Groups: The general education area work groups (“work groups”) include Arts, Humanities, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and American Institutions. These work groups are comprised of two faculty representatives from each USHE degree-granting institution nominated by the institution’s general education committee and approved by the Chief Academic Officer. Non-voting or ex officio members may also attend as needed to provide expertise on particular issues. Each work group shall be chaired by a member of the Task Force or a faculty member appointed by the Task Force. The work groups shall:

8.2.1 Meet annually during the annual professional development conference organized by the Task Force each fall, and at least once during the spring semester, to review the general education competencies and learning goals in each area and discuss and compare programs; and

8.2.2 Provide recommendations on changes to the competencies and essential learning outcomes underlying each general education area and suggestions on methods used to assess student learning outcomes in relation to the learning outcomes to the General Education Task Force.

8.3 Institutional General Education Committees: Institutions shall establish policies, practices, and appropriate faculty curriculum committees to assess identified learning outcomes at program, area, and course-levels and shall ensure that courses receiving general education designations adequately assess shared essential learning outcomes. This assessment may be augmented with cumulative and integrative learning experiences in which students can demonstrate intellectual skills and specialized knowledge, as designed by faculty subject-matter experts, for the institution’s general

education program.

8.4 USHE Faculty Major Committees: As outlined in Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*, institutional faculty representatives serving on USHE faculty major committees shall review commonly numbered and lower division major courses to assure they fulfill general education requirements and essential learning outcomes and the proper sequencing of general education requirements within the major. Faculty should design course content and pedagogical strategies inclusive of students from a diversity of cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and viewpoints. Major committees shall identify assessment of general education program and area-level essential learning outcomes in their expectations for commonly numbered courses.

8.5 Individual Faculty

8.5.1 Faculty Design of General Education Courses: Faculty teaching general education courses shall address and assess competencies and learning outcomes identified by designated faculty major committees and work groups within USHE. Faculty shall design course content and pedagogical strategies inclusive of students from a diversity of cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and viewpoints, and structure pedagogy and assessments to actively address equity gaps in course success rates. Courses should include assessment of general education program and area-level essential learning outcomes.

8.5.2 Communication and Assessment of Essential Learning Outcomes: Faculty teaching courses in each general education area shall include relevant course expectations and assignments based on the shared essential learning outcomes and reflect those expected outcomes in the class syllabus.

R470-9 Transfer of Credit in Fulfillment of General Education Requirements

9.1 Within USHE: USHE degree-granting institutions shall facilitate transfer of general education credits, partially completed requirements, and full program completion from institution to institution within the system, as outlined in Board Policy R471, *Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits*.

9.1.1 Similar Names, Common Numbers, and Equal Credits for General Education Courses: Institutions shall assure that all courses satisfying general education requirements at any USHE institution are articulated to the fullest extent possible to satisfy comparable general education requirements at receiving USHE institutions as outlined in Board Policy R471, *Lower Division Major Requirements and*

Transfer of Credits. General education courses at USHE institutions having similar learning goals, content, rigor, and standards shall have similar names, common numbers, and credits in compliance with Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

9.1.2 Transfer of Partially Completed General Education Credits: For transfer students from USHE institutions who have not fully satisfied general education requirements at the sending institution prior to transfer, the receiving institution shall accept the credit hours and area designation of all general education coursework earned with a passing grade approved by the sending institution. The receiving institution may change the sending institution's course attribute if it is in the student's interest in fulfilling the receiving institution's general education requirements and the receiving institution notifies the student. However, a receiving institution with unique general education course requirements shall accept the sending institution's completed institutional general education courses as fulfilling these requirements. A receiving institution shall only require a transfer student to complete any additional coursework needed to satisfy the unmet requirements of the receiving institution.

9.2 Students Entering with Associate Degrees from Accredited Non-USHE Institutions: The receiving institution shall review the transcripts of a student who enters a USHE institution with an associate degree from an appropriately-accredited non-USHE institution to assure the student has successfully completed relevant courses in the three core areas required of USHE students: written communication, quantitative literacy, and American Institutions. While USHE will honor associate degrees, institutions must address deficiencies found in one or more of the three core areas.

9.2.1 Where possible, articulation agreements to accept transfer of a sending institution's entire general education program in fulfillment of the USHE general education program should be vetted by the Task Force and the USHE Transfer Council and conducted at the system level rather than between individual institutions. Where the Task Force and Transfer Council agree on a program-to-program general education articulation, the receiving institution shall accept a transfer student's entire lower division general education program without the student having to repeat or add courses, except American Institutions as required by Utah Code section 53B-16-103(1)(b).

9.3 Students Entering without Associate Degrees from Accredited Non-USHE

Institutions: The receiving institution shall evaluate the transcript of a student who enters USHE from an appropriately-accredited institution without an associate degree to determine if additional general education coursework will be required for the student to meet USHE institutional requirements.

R470 Appendix, Essential Learning Outcomes¹

1. Written Communication: Over the course of six credit hours, students will demonstrate skill with the following:

1.2 Context and Purpose for Writing: Includes consideration of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s);

1.3 Content Development: Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work;

1.4 Genre and Disciplinary Conventions: Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices;

1.5 Sources and Evidence: Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing;

1.6 Control of Syntax and Usage: Uses language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency; and

1.7 Revision and Feedback: Shapes texts through the process of revision and feedback. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of both ENGL 1010 Introduction to Writing, and either ENGL 2010 Intermediate Writing or ENGL 2100 Technical Writing.

2. Quantitative Literacy: Students may satisfy this requirement by completing at least one institution-approved Quantitative Literacy course that clearly demonstrates quantitative reasoning skills beyond those found within required high school courses and that is at an appropriate introductory university level. Approved courses will significantly focus on the following:

¹ Approved XXX.

2.1 Interpretation: Explain information presented in mathematical forms, e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables;

2.2 Representation: Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms, e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables;

2.3 Calculation: Demonstrate the ability to successfully complete basic calculations to solve problems;

2.4 Application/Analysis: Make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on quantitative analysis of data, recognizing the limits of this analysis;

2.5 Assumption: Make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modeling, and data analysis;

2.6 Communication: Express quantitative evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized); and

2.7 Creation: Demonstrate the ability to problem solve using quantitative literacy across multiple disciplines. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of MATH 1030 Quantitative Reasoning, MATH or STAT 1040 Statistics, MATH 1050 College Algebra, or another institutionally approved course.

3. American Institutions: Approved courses will address the following:

3.1 Use of Primary Documents: Analyze, contextualize, and use primary source documents to understand the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States;

3.2 Interpretation: Explain and use historically, politically, and economically relevant information;

3.3 Communication: Communicate effectively about the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States;

3.4 Diversity: Engage a diversity of viewpoints in a constructive manner that contributes to a dialogue about the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States; and

3.5 Integration: Use historical, political, and economic methods to come to an understanding of the United States that integrates those viewpoints. This requirement may be fulfilled by a discrete course, a multidisciplinary integrated course, or multiple courses. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of ECON 1740 Economic History of the United States, HIST 1700 American Civilization, HIST 2700 United States to 1877, HIST 2710 United States 1877 to Present, POLS 1100 American/US National Government, or another institutionally approved course.

4. General Education Breadth Areas

4.1 Arts: Courses with the GE Arts designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.1.1 Discuss the scope and variety of the fine arts, e.g., art, music, theatre, or dance;

4.1.2 Recognize the aesthetic standards used in making critical judgments in various artistic fields;

4.1.3 Analyze and articulate understanding of a range of artistic processes;

4.1.4 Participate in and/or appreciate an introductory performance, production, or design experience in the arts; or

4.1.5 Demonstrate how the creative process is informed and limited by social and historical contexts.

4.2 Humanities: Courses with the GE Humanities designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.2.1 Derive evidence from primary sources regarding the complexities and changes in human experience through analytical reading and critical thought;

4.2.2 Describe how human experience is shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, and/or historical circumstances;

4.2.3 Demonstrate attentiveness to linguistic, visual, and/or audio texts when communicating meaning; or

4.2.4 Use appropriate verbal, perceptual, or imaginative skills when organizing meanings, developing a sense of self, and balancing potentially disparate values.

4.3 Life Sciences: Courses with the GE Life Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.3.1 Demonstrate understanding of science as a way of knowing about the natural world;

4.3.2 Demonstrate a basic understanding of how organisms live, grow, respond to their environment, and reproduce;

4.3.3 Discuss the organization and flow of matter and energy through biological systems;

4.3.4 Explain from evidence patterns of inheritance, structural unity, adaptation, and diversity of life on Earth; or

4.3.5 Describe how the life sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, and social contexts.

4.4 Physical Sciences: Courses with the GE Physical Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.4.1 Demonstrate understanding of science as a way of knowing about the physical world;

4.4.2 Demonstrate understanding of forces in the physical world; Discuss the flow of matter and energy through systems (in large and small scales);

4.4.3 Develop evidence-based arguments regarding the effect of human activity on the Earth; or

4.4.4 Describe how the physical sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, and social contexts.

4.5 Social and Behavioral Sciences: Courses with the GE Social and Behavioral Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.5.1 Demonstrate understanding of social and behavioral science methods, concepts, and theories;

4.5.2 Formulate basic questions about social behavior and phenomena through interpretive and systematic analyses;

4.5.3 Develop empirically-derived and theoretically-informed explanations of human behavior in both its individual and collective dimensions; or

4.5.4 Demonstrate a critically-reasoned understanding of social patterns and individual variation congruent with and divergent from those patterns.

R470 Appendix, Essential Learning Outcomes¹

1. Written Communication: Over the course of six credit hours, students will demonstrate skill with the following:

1.2 Context and Purpose for Writing: Includes consideration of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s);

1.3 Content Development: Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work;

1.4 Genre and Disciplinary Conventions: Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices;

1.5 Sources and Evidence: Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing;

1.6 Control of Syntax and Usage: Uses language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency; and

1.7 Revision and Feedback: Shapes texts through the process of revision and feedback. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of both ENGL 1010 Introduction to Writing, and either ENGL 2010 Intermediate Writing or ENGL 2100 Technical Writing.

2. Quantitative Literacy: Students may satisfy this requirement by completing at least one institution-approved Quantitative Literacy course that clearly demonstrates quantitative reasoning skills beyond those found within required high school courses and that is at an appropriate introductory university level. Approved courses will significantly focus on the following:

¹ Approved XXX.

2.1 Interpretation: Explain information presented in mathematical forms, e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables;

2.2 Representation: Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms, e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables;

2.3 Calculation: Demonstrate the ability to successfully complete basic calculations to solve problems;

2.4 Application/Analysis: Make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on quantitative analysis of data, recognizing the limits of this analysis;

2.5 Assumption: Make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modeling, and data analysis;

2.6 Communication: Express quantitative evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized); and

2.7 Creation: Demonstrate the ability to problem solve using quantitative literacy across multiple disciplines. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of MATH 1030 Quantitative Reasoning, MATH or STAT 1040 Statistics, MATH 1050 College Algebra, or another institutionally approved course.

3. American Institutions: Approved courses will address the following:

3.1 Use of Primary Documents: Analyze, contextualize, and use primary source documents to understand the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States;

3.2 Interpretation: Explain and use historically, politically, and economically relevant information;

3.3 Communication: Communicate effectively about the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States;

3.4 Diversity: Engage a diversity of viewpoints in a constructive manner that contributes to a dialogue about the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States; and

3.5 Integration: Use historical, political, and economic methods to come to an understanding of the United States that integrates those viewpoints. This requirement may be fulfilled by a discrete course, a multidisciplinary integrated course, or multiple courses. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of ECON 1740 Economic History of the United States, HIST 1700 American Civilization, HIST 2700 United States to 1877, HIST 2710 United States 1877 to Present, POLS 1100 American/US National Government, or another institutionally approved course.

4. General Education Breadth Areas

4.1 Arts: Courses with the GE Arts designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.1.1 Discuss the scope and variety of the fine arts, e.g., art, music, theatre, or dance;

4.1.2 Recognize the aesthetic standards used in making critical judgments in various artistic fields;

4.1.3 Analyze and articulate understanding of a range of artistic processes;

4.1.4 Participate in and/or appreciate an introductory performance, production, or design experience in the arts; or

4.1.5 Demonstrate how the creative process is informed and limited by social and historical contexts.

4.2 Humanities: Courses with the GE Humanities designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.2.1 Derive evidence from primary sources regarding the complexities and changes in human experience through analytical reading and critical thought;

4.2.2 Describe how human experience is shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, and/or historical circumstances;

4.2.3 Demonstrate attentiveness to linguistic, visual, and/or audio texts when communicating meaning; or

4.2.4 Use appropriate verbal, perceptual, or imaginative skills when organizing meanings, developing a sense of self, and balancing potentially disparate values.

4.3 Life Sciences: Courses with the GE Life Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.3.1 Demonstrate understanding of science as a way of knowing about the natural world;

4.3.2 Demonstrate a basic understanding of how organisms live, grow, respond to their environment, and reproduce;

4.3.3 Discuss the organization and flow of matter and energy through biological systems;

4.3.4 Explain from evidence patterns of inheritance, structural unity, adaptation, and diversity of life on Earth; or

4.3.5 Describe how the life sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, and social contexts.

4.4 Physical Sciences: Courses with the GE Physical Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.4.1 Demonstrate understanding of science as a way of knowing about the physical world;

4.4.2 Demonstrate understanding of forces in the physical world; Discuss the flow of matter and energy through systems (in large and small scales);

4.4.3 Develop evidence-based arguments regarding the effect of human activity on the Earth; or

4.4.4 Describe how the physical sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, and social contexts.

4.5 Social and Behavioral Sciences: Courses with the GE Social and Behavioral Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.5.1 Demonstrate understanding of social and behavioral science methods, concepts, and theories;

4.5.2 Formulate basic questions about social behavior and phenomena through interpretive and systematic analyses;

4.5.3 Develop empirically-derived and theoretically-informed explanations of human behavior in both its individual and collective dimensions; or

4.5.4 Demonstrate a critically-reasoned understanding of social patterns and individual variation congruent with and divergent from those patterns.



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

ISSUE BRIEF

November 2023

General Education Task Force

The Importance of General Education within the Utah System of Higher Education

General Education is a crucially important part of undergraduate degrees in the United States. It lays the foundation for academic skills necessary for student success in subsequent college coursework. Shared General Education requirements help institutions address equity gaps in students' preparation for college and are important tools for helping students become eligible to access multiple college disciplines. Supporting student success in General Education classes may take many forms, but central among them are pedagogies and practices to engage, excite, connect, include, and provide scaffolded support for students to help them acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for the 21st Century.

In addition to establishing foundational core skills, General Education also offers students cross-disciplinary training in how to think deeply, broadly, and analytically across a variety of topics in order to make students more adaptable to professional and civic settings. General Education courses provide students with a broader understanding of the world, their place in it, and their responsibilities for it.

The impact of General Education has been well documented by the [American Association of Colleges and Universities](#) (AACU) and other organizations. A regular AACU survey of employers repeatedly affirms the importance of transferable skills beyond specific preparation for a particular job. The surveys consistently find employers understand that the broad-based knowledge, skills, mindsets, and attitudes as developed through General Education programs are important for career success. General Education forms the “transferable skills” employers consider critical for job preparation and help ensure student competitiveness in an ever-changing job market.

For decades, USHE has used Board Policy R470 to outline the principles, processes, and essential learning outcomes of the system's shared General Education requirements. The policy is updated periodically based on shifting social and economic needs, national norms, and research. It is designed to uphold academic quality, conform to accreditation requirements, and encourage the success and completion of all undergraduate degree students. The policy assures coherence and consistency in the structure of General Education requirements across USHE institutions and that institutions will grant total reciprocity for General Education requirements completed by transfer students from other USHE institutions. Policy R470 establishes shared “essential learning outcomes” at the program level and in Core and Breadth area requirements: Written Communications, Quantitative Reasoning, American Institutions, Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences. These shared

essential learning outcomes are based on recommendations from faculty committees, established by the General Education Task Force, approved by the Board of Higher Education, reflected in institutional General Education programs, and incorporated by individual faculty members in the General Education courses they teach. The essential learning outcomes define a broad set of common competencies to ensure reciprocity and consistency in General Education programs and courses across USHE institutions. The essential learning outcomes offer an appropriate breadth, depth, and sequencing of learning across all USHE degree-granting institutions' General Education programs. However, these outcomes remain essential, and institutions further refine and define them to align their General Education program and courses to their institutional mission and the needs of their students. In inviting institutions to tailor the essential learning outcomes to their unique niches, the policy recognizes the faculty's central role in establishing curricula, assessing student learning, and improving instructional programs.

Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits¹

R471-1 Purpose: This policy assists students in completing certificates and degrees efficiently and affordably by ensuring that earned credits will seamlessly transfer between Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) institutions.

R471-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-2-106(2)(c), Duties and Responsibilities of a Degree-Granting President
- 2.2 Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.3 Utah Code § 53B-16-107, Credit for Military Service and Training – Notification – Transferability – Reporting
- 2.4 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering – Transferability of Credits– Agreement with Competency-Based Gen ed Provider
- 2.5 Board Policy R470, General Education
- 2.6 Board Policy R472, Prior Learning Assessment

R471-3 Definitions

3.1 “Accredited Institution” means an institution recognized by an accreditation agency that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education. An accredited institution has gone through rigorous evaluation to assure that benchmarks are met that enable the institution to teach students academic content and utilize pedagogies deemed as rigorous and engaging by curriculum experts.

3.2 “Common Course Number Designation” (“CCN”) means common numbers assigned to courses the USHE faculty majors committees have identified as having the same course quality, content, competencies, and credit earned at all USHE institutions. CCN designated courses transfer as equivalent credit.

3.3 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

¹ This policy was part of R470 until December 2023 when it was separated. Approved XXX.

3.4 “Lower Division Major” means a program of study designed to prepare lower division students for upper study in a specific major. Lower division major courses are aligned across degree-granting institutions by the USHE faculty majors committees to assure seamless transfer and timely completion of a four-year degree.

3.5 “Prior Learning Assessment” (“PLA”) means a validated process through which faculty subject matter experts evaluate a student’s previously learned competencies in a particular field and grant college credit when appropriate. PLA may include national exam equivalencies, portfolio completion, challenge exams (oral or written), or other appropriate forms of assessment used to determine student mastery of course content.

3.6 “System Articulation Agreement” means an agreement among USHE institutions that details a common set of curricular program requirements. These agreements are made to facilitate seamless transfer of credits in general education (“gen ed”), lower division major, transfer of work completed by students at technical colleges to degree-granting institutions, and national examination/course equivalencies such as AP, CLEP, DSST, and IB exams.

3.7 “Third-Party Provider” means a non-accredited entity that maintains training programs, particularly in technical education areas. These programs may include formal instruction, apprenticeships, technical certifications, and student assessment/testing.

3.8 “USHE Faculty Majors Committee” means a committee comprised of faculty from specific disciplines that meet annually to articulate and align lower division courses and lower division major requirements for seamless transferability between USHE institutions.

3.9 “USHE Transfer Council” (“Transfer Council”) means a standing committee under the Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) that works to improve and advance post-secondary transfer for USHE students. As required by [Utah Code section 53B-16-105\(2\)](#) and (3), the Transfer Council focuses primarily on identifying transfer obstacles and developing transfer policies, best practices, and directives to remove transfer obstacles. These may include recommending better alignment of courses and programs of study, establishing transfer pathways, and adjudicating transfer difficulties between institutions where needed.

3.10 “Utah Transfer Guide” means a USHE-licensed, online portal that enables students to determine the transferability of their earned and planned credit to and between USHE institutions.

R471-4 Course Credit Transfer and Program Articulation Principles and Procedures

4.1 System Integrity: Each institution is responsible for developing its own transfer policies and procedures consistent with Board policy to ensure credits transfer seamlessly within the system.

4.2 Minimum Standards: To transfer as equivalent credit, course quality, content, competency level, and amount of credit earned at one institution must be comparable to those qualities of the same courses at the receiving institution.

4.3 Academic Department Evaluation: Academic departments evaluate credit that has not been previously designated as CCN credit, to determine if it meets institutional and departmental standards and to articulate to departmental courses when there is an appropriate course.

4.4 Course Numbering: An essential element of a transparent, seamless transfer system is uniform course numbering. USHE institutions shall number courses using the guidelines in Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

4.5 Lower Division Requirements: The faculty majors committees shall establish common lower division major requirements that allow students who transfer to receive full value for their academic work. For a very competitive program, an institution may not be able to admit a transfer student to a program because of enrollment limits and the need for applicants to meet certain academic requirements such as an established grade point average.

4.6 Lower Division Numbered Courses: Only lower division courses should be required during the first two years of any major. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Transfer Council.

4.7 Institutional Transfer Procedures: Institutions must provide students with clear, comprehensive, and accurate transfer procedures to avoid confusion and possible unfairness to individual applicants. Institutions shall, at minimum, provide accurate, current information about program and course requirements, including transfer and articulation agreements between specific institutions in the Utah Transfer Guide and ensure that their transfer profile is up to date for both Fall and Spring semester.

4.8. System-Wide Standards and Practices

4.8.1 Annual Faculty Majors Committee Evaluation: Faculty majors committees meet at least annually to review institutional policies and practices for awarding credit to ensure consistent system-wide practices for evaluating and awarding credit.

4.8.2 Credit for Common Course Numbered Courses: CCN tables, once approved by Faculty majors committees, shall be available in the Utah Transfer Guide. OCHE shall publish common course tables approved by the faculty major committees.

4.8.3 Evaluation of Courses That Meet Gen ed Requirements: When a student with completed courses in gen ed transfers from a USHE institution, the receiving USHE institution will honor the sending institution's determination of the type of gen ed credit awarded. *See Board Policy R470, General Education.*

4.8.4 Pre-Transfer Advisement: Institutions should advise students to establish educational goals early in their educational program. Institutions shall communicate with the transferring student how to request assistance from an academic advisor to assure the student's educational goals fit with the program at the institution to which they intend to transfer. Transfer policies and practices should facilitate transfer when the student has been accepted to the anticipated program and should ensure information on the transferability of credits is available to students in a timely manner.

4.9 Institution Responsibilities: USHE institutions shall:

4.9.1 Provide current and accurate course, program, and credit equivalency information to the Utah Transfer Guide. Institutions shall meet Transfer Guide annual deadlines for the submission of finalized data;

4.9.2 Participate in faculty majors committees to share syllabi, course descriptions, expected learning outcomes and competencies, and course sequencing to establish credit equivalencies;

4.9.3 Assure that all courses satisfying gen ed requirements are articulated to the fullest extent possible to satisfy comparable gen ed requirements at all other USHE institutions;

4.9.4 Furnish transcripts and course descriptions vital to determining transferability of earned credit;

4.9.5 Make clear and prompt decisions on credit acceptance and application; and

4.9.6 Maintain a designated webpage to disseminate transfer information including:

4.9.6.1 Where students can seek assistance regarding transfer;

4.9.6.2 The types of documentation needed to evaluate credit transfer, such as transcripts from all previously attended institutions, course descriptions, syllabi, and coursework;

4.9.6.3 How transfer credit applies to minimum institutional degree requirements including minimum grades;

4.9.6.4 A student's right to request an explanation on transfer credit decisions and the process to appeal a transfer credit decision with the institution and, after exhausting institutional remedies, through the USHE Transfer Council; and

4.9.6.5 a link to the Utah Transfer Guide.

R471-5 General Transfer of Credits Principles

5.1 Transfer of Gen Ed Credits

5.1.1 Transfer of Partially-Completed Gen Ed Requirements: An institution that receives from another USHE institution a transfer student who has not fully satisfied the gen ed requirements of Board Policy R470, *General Education* shall accept as equivalent all gen ed coursework approved by the sending institution, provided the coursework meets the minimum letter grades accepted by the receiving institution. A receiving institution may change a sending institution's gen ed course attribute if it is in the student's interest in fulfilling the receiving institution's gen ed outcomes and the student is notified and agrees to the change. An institution with a gen ed requirement that is in addition to the USHE core and breadth requirements shall accept a sending institution's completed gen ed requirement that is in addition to USHE core and breadth requirements. A receiving institution shall only require transfer students to complete any additional coursework needed to satisfy their unmet gen ed requirements.

5.1.2 Transfer of Completed Gen Ed Requirements: A student who has earned an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science ("AA/AS") or higher degree at a USHE institution will meet the gen ed requirements of all USHE institutions. If a student has completed all gen ed requirements at a USHE institution but not an

associate degree, the institution shall issue a certificate or letter signifying that the student has met the gen ed requirements at any receiving USHE institution.

5.1.2.1 Special Associate Degree Programs That do not Require

Gen Ed Completion: In some specialized associate degree programs, students may not have completed all gen ed requirements and will need to complete those requirements prior to graduating with a bachelor's degree.

5.1.3 Gen Ed Certificate Using Non-USHE Credits/Courses: Students who enter a USHE institution with most of their gen ed credits earned from an accredited non-USHE institution and who want a certificate designating gen ed completion from the USHE institution must complete at least nine credit hours or meet the minimum residency and grade point average requirements of the USHE institution from which the certificate is requested.

5.1.4 Substitution of Courses in Lower Division Major Area for Gen Ed

Requirements: Institutions may allow students to substitute study and achievement in their lower division major area for gen ed requirements. USHE transfer students who retain the same lower division major area will be allowed to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and will not be required to complete additional gen ed coursework after transfer.

5.1.5 Substitution of Gen Ed Courses as an Accommodation: USHE transfer students who were provided, as an accommodation, alternative courses to complete gen ed requirements will be allowed to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and will not be required to complete additional gen ed coursework after transfer.

5.2 Transfer of Non-gen Ed Credits: Credit for courses numbered 1000 or above earned at a USHE institution is transferable within the system—regardless of whether the course is a gen ed course or not—and will be recorded on the student's transcript at the receiving institution.

5.3 Transfer of Credits Awarded through PLA: When transferring in credits, institutions shall treat credits awarded through an assessment of prior learning the same as credits earned in a traditional classroom-based course.

5.4 Transfer of Credits from USHE Technical Colleges: A USHE degree-granting institution may award credit for completion of courses at a USHE technical college after curriculum specialists at the receiving institution review courses to ensure that:

5.4.1 Course content, learning outcomes, course procedures, and student assessment are comparable and applicable to the institution's program(s) to which the credit is applied;

5.4.2 A student who completes a certificate program at a USHE technical college can transfer stackable course credits to a USHE degree-granting institution associate degree program as appropriate;

5.4.3 A student who has completed coursework and transferred from a USHE technical college in a specific discipline can be awarded up to 30 credits towards the completion of an applied associate degree in that field at a degree-granting institution as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution; and

5.4.4 A student who has completed coursework and transferred from a USHE technical college in a non-specific discipline may be awarded up to 30 credits towards the completion of an applied associate degree in general technology at a degree-granting institution as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution .

5.5 Transfer of Credits from Third-Party Providers: USHE degree-granting institutions and technical colleges may award credit for completion of non-credit courses from third-party providers after curriculum specialists review courses to ensure that:

5.5.1 Course content, learning outcomes, course procedures, and student assessment are compatible and applicable to the institution's program(s) to which the credit is applied;

5.5.2 A student who completes a certificate program through a third-party provider can transfer stackable course credits to a USHE technical college or degree-granting institution's degree program as appropriate; and

5.5.3 A student who transfers from a third-party provider and has completed coursework may be awarded credits toward the completion of a certificate or degree program as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution. Where they exist, faculty major committees should make this determination to enhance transfer across the system. Degree-granting institutions may award up to 30 transfer credits.

R471-6 Application of Transfer Credit

6.1 Transfer with Upper Division Status: Institutions shall allow students who complete AA/AS degrees in a lower division major with requirements established by the faculty majors

committee to transfer with upper status to any USHE four-year institution without taking any lower division major courses at the receiving institution.

6.1.1 Exceptions to Applying Lower Division Major Coursework Credit:

Exceptions may apply when mandated by accreditation, licensing, extra-departmental professional requirements, as agreed upon by the faculty majors committees, or as directed by the Transfer Council. In such cases, the transfer student will be expected to complete lower division coursework required at the four-year institution.

6.2 Admission to Upper Division Major Program: Institutions should clearly communicate to prospective transfer students that completing required lower division major coursework at USHE community colleges or institutions serving a community college role does not assure they will be admitted into a specific major program at a USHE four-year institution. Institutions must inform students when a particular program has a limited number of openings and highly competitive admissions to the program.

6.3 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 major courses in a given discipline and emphasis, it will inform prospective students interested in that lower division major area that the institution does not offer all of the needed lower division major courses so that students may consider attending another institution offering the required coursework or enroll in online courses offered elsewhere in USHE.

6.4 Allowable Credit: Institutions may not impose limits on the number of gen ed credits students may earn by means other than taking courses directly from the institution unless limited by the accreditation standards of a specific academic program.

6.5 Length of Time for Acceptance and Applicability of Credit: Institutions must accept credit transferred from other institutions within the system. An institution's colleges and departments may review courses taken over the prior 15 years 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 wanting transfer credits that were earned more than 15 years earlier may be asked to demonstrate competencies in the learning outcomes expected in gen ed courses they have completed by using portfolios, challenge examinations, or other forms of PLA.

R471-7 Transfer of Credit from Institutions Outside USHE

7.1 Evaluating Credit from non-USHE Institutions: A receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from non-USHE accredited institutions are qualified to undertake its educational program. In cases where students are attempting to

transfer credit from non-accredited institutions and foreign institutions, additional evaluation may be necessary before assigning credit to a student's transcript.

7.1.1 Students Entering with Associate Degrees: A student who enters a USHE institution with an AA/AS degree from an accredited institution will have their transcript reviewed to assure they have successfully completed relevant courses in the three gen ed core areas required of USHE students: Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and American Institutions. While USHE will honor associate degrees, deficiencies found in one or more of the three gen ed core areas may need to be addressed. A student who enters a USHE institution with an AA/AS degree but deficient in lower division prerequisite courses required for their major course of study will be required to successfully complete such courses.

7.1.2 Students Entering from Accredited Institutions without Associate Degrees: Students who enter USHE without having completed an associate degree must have their transcripts evaluated by the receiving institution to determine if additional lower division major and/or gen ed coursework will be required to meet USHE requirements.

7.1.3 Students Entering from Non-accredited Institutions and Foreign Institutions: Receiving institutions should evaluate on a case-by-case basis any credits earned at unaccredited or foreign institutions. The evaluation may include information provided by or about the unaccredited or foreign institution, such as a catalog covering the years the student attended, a description of courses the student completed, course syllabi, faculty credentials, and library facilities. An assessment will be made to determine if additional lower division major and/or gen ed coursework will be required to meet institutional requirements.

7.1.3.1 Institutions may require verification of competency attainment through assessments or examinations.

7.1.3.2 A USHE institution that makes a determination of equivalency in transferring in credit will share their findings with the appropriate technical college or degree-granting faculty major committee. The faculty major committee will determine whether the credit equivalency should be treated as equivalent for transfer by all USHE institutions.

7.1.3.3 Institutions may bring requests for exceptions to the Transfer Council.

R471-8 Committees to Facilitate Articulation and Transfer: In establishing policies and procedures to support ease of transfer and timely completion for USHE students, the Board recognizes that lower division majors and emphases may differ because of USHE institutions' unique missions. The Board therefore establishes faculty majors committees and procedures to provide common lower division major requirements that allow transfer students who apply for upper majors to receive full value for their academic work.

8.1 USHE Faculty Majors Committees: To achieve these objectives, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education ("OCHE") shall organize USHE faculty majors committees in each academic discipline. Major departments at the universities shall work closely with the faculty majors committees to effectively articulate and align lower division major emphases at community colleges and four-year institutions with a community college role and lower division major requirements at four-year institutions.

8.1.1 The Chief Academic Officer of each institution shall nominate a faculty representative in each discipline area to serve on a faculty majors committee. If appropriate, the Chief Academic Officer may also nominate additional faculty or staff in major areas within a discipline to attend faculty majors committee meetings.

8.1.2 OCHE shall convene faculty majors committees meetings at least annually.

8.1.3 The Board's Gen Ed Task Force ("Task Force") and OCHE staff will collaborate to develop an agenda for faculty majors committees meetings. Chief Academic Officers and faculty majors committees will review agendas and provide additional agenda items as needed.

8.2 Faculty Majors committees Responsibilities: Each faculty majors committee shall be responsible to:

8.2.1 Reach agreement on specific required lower division major courses that are common at all USHE institutions. Equivalencies are based on content and mastery of subject matter, not only course level. Not all institutions offer all or the same lower division courses, and in such cases, equivalencies for individual courses may not exist at some institutions.

8.2.2 Continually review course learning outcomes and expected competency levels and content matter that should be satisfied in required lower division major area courses to assure that students who complete the coursework will be fully prepared to successfully complete upper coursework.

8.2.3 Community colleges shall not offer courses at the lower division that the faculty majors committees agree should be taught at the upper level. Individual faculty major committees and affected institutions will address exceptions. When agreement cannot be reached, the Transfer Council may adjudicate.

8.2.4 Review lower division CCN courses to assure they fulfill gen ed and lower division major requirements at all USHE degree-granting institutions. Additional lower division courses may be considered for common numbering if they are similar in content, standard, and rigor.

8.2.5 Maximum Credits: Each faculty major committee will establish a maximum number of credits, in keeping with institutional practices, for lower division major coursework required in each discipline.

8.2.6 Minimum Credits: Each faculty major committee will establish at least 15 credits of lower division major coursework in each discipline. If a faculty major committee determines that fewer than 15 credits of coursework are appropriate for a particular lower division major, they will seek approval of the lower division major from the Transfer Council.

8.2.6.1 The number of credits required for a lower division major should not prevent students from completing required gen ed coursework within the number of credits allowed for an AA/AS degree.

8.2.6.2 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 gen ed coursework within the number of credits allowed for an AA/AS degree. Such exceptions must be approved by the Transfer Council.

8.2.6.3 If faculty majors committees determine additional lower division credits are needed for students to successfully complete upper coursework, a committee may recommend the delay of some gen ed requirements until after transfer or acceptance to an upper major program. Such exceptions must be approved by the Transfer Council. Under no circumstances will individual Major Committees be allowed to make exceptions to gen ed requirements—a degree may not be awarded unless the gen ed and program requirements for that degree are met.

8.3 Transfer Council Membership and Responsibilities

8.3.1 Transfer Council Membership: Transfer Council membership includes the following:

8.3.1.1 The Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs. The Associate Commissioner or a designee serves as chair of the Transfer Council;

8.3.1.2 A transfer expert from each USHE institution, such as a president, Chief Academic Officer, transfer advisor, or registrar, as recommended by the institution's president;

8.3.1.3 One academic faculty senate leader regularly rotated among institutions; and

8.3.1.4 The chair of the Task Force

8.3.2 Transfer Council Responsibilities: The Transfer Council shall engage in the following on behalf of and with authority of the Board.

8.3.2.1 Annually ascertain and assess system transfer data and identify transfer and articulation obstacles, develop policies and practices needed to address specific obstacles and to improve system-wide transfer and articulation in general, which will include lower division major alignment, transfer pathways, and transfer outreach and communication to current and incoming students.

8.3.2.2 Require regular follow-up from institutions on implementing the Transfer Council's directives and transfer and articulation policies.

8.3.2.3 Establish an appeals process and serve as the final appeal level for students and institutions on contested decisions on transfer and articulation.

8.3.2.3.1 An appeal to the Transfer Council will be available to a student or institution only after they have exhausted all available administrative remedies at the institution level.

8.3.2.3.2 Annually report the Transfer Council's activities, directives, recommendations, and priorities to the Board.

Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits¹

R471-1 Purpose: This policy assists students in completing certificates and degrees efficiently and affordably by ensuring that earned credits will seamlessly transfer between Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) institutions.

R471-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-2-106(2)(c), Duties and Responsibilities of a Degree-Granting President
- 2.2 Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.3 Utah Code § 53B-16-107, Credit for Military Service and Training – Notification – Transferability – Reporting
- 2.4 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering – Transferability of Credits– Agreement with Competency-Based Gen ed Provider
- 2.5 Board Policy R470, General Education
- 2.6 Board Policy R472, Prior Learning Assessment

R471-3 Definitions

3.1 “Accredited Institution” means an institution recognized by an accreditation agency that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education. An accredited institution has gone through rigorous evaluation to assure that benchmarks are met that enable the institution to teach students academic content and utilize pedagogies deemed as rigorous and engaging by curriculum experts.

3.2 “Common Course Number Designation” (“CCN”) means common numbers assigned to courses the USHE faculty majors committees have identified as having the same course quality, content, competencies, and credit earned at all USHE institutions. CCN designated courses transfer as equivalent credit.

3.3 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

¹ This policy was part of R470 until December 2023 when it was separated. Approved XXX.

3.4 “Lower Division Major” means a program of study designed to prepare lower division students for upper study in a specific major. Lower division major courses are aligned across degree-granting institutions by the USHE faculty majors committees to assure seamless transfer and timely completion of a four-year degree.

3.5 “Prior Learning Assessment” (“PLA”) means a validated process through which faculty subject matter experts evaluate a student’s previously learned competencies in a particular field and grant college credit when appropriate. PLA may include national exam equivalencies, portfolio completion, challenge exams (oral or written), or other appropriate forms of assessment used to determine student mastery of course content.

3.6 “System Articulation Agreement” means an agreement among USHE institutions that details a common set of curricular program requirements. These agreements are made to facilitate seamless transfer of credits in general education (“gen ed”), lower division major, transfer of work completed by students at technical colleges to degree-granting institutions, and national examination/course equivalencies such as AP, CLEP, DSST, and IB exams.

3.7 “Third-Party Provider” means a non-accredited entity that maintains training programs, particularly in technical education areas. These programs may include formal instruction, apprenticeships, technical certifications, and student assessment/testing.

3.8 “USHE Faculty Majors Committee” means a committee comprised of faculty from specific disciplines that meet annually to articulate and align lower division courses and lower division major requirements for seamless transferability between USHE institutions.

3.9 “USHE Transfer Council” (“Transfer Council”) means a standing committee under the Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) that works to improve and advance post-secondary transfer for USHE students. As required by [Utah Code section 53B-16-105\(2\)](#) and (3), the Transfer Council focuses primarily on identifying transfer obstacles and developing transfer policies, best practices, and directives to remove transfer obstacles. These may include recommending better alignment of courses and programs of study, establishing transfer pathways, and adjudicating transfer difficulties between institutions where needed.

3.10 “Utah Transfer Guide” means a USHE-licensed, online portal that enables students to determine the transferability of their earned and planned credit to and between USHE institutions.

R471-4 Course Credit Transfer and Program Articulation Principles and Procedures

4.1 System Integrity: Each institution is responsible for developing its own transfer policies and procedures consistent with Board policy to ensure credits transfer seamlessly within the system.

4.2 Minimum Standards: To transfer as equivalent credit, course quality, content, competency level, and amount of credit earned at one institution must be comparable to those qualities of the same courses at the receiving institution.

4.3 Academic Department Evaluation: Academic departments evaluate credit that has not been previously designated as CCN credit, to determine if it meets institutional and departmental standards and to articulate to departmental courses when there is an appropriate course.

4.4 Course Numbering: An essential element of a transparent, seamless transfer system is uniform course numbering. USHE institutions shall number courses using the guidelines in Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

4.5 Lower Division Requirements: The faculty majors committees shall establish common lower division major requirements that allow students who transfer to receive full value for their academic work. For a very competitive program, an institution may not be able to admit a transfer student to a program because of enrollment limits and the need for applicants to meet certain academic requirements such as an established grade point average.

4.6 Lower Division Numbered Courses: Only lower division courses should be required during the first two years of any major. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Transfer Council.

4.7 Institutional Transfer Procedures: Institutions must provide students with clear, comprehensive, and accurate transfer procedures to avoid confusion and possible unfairness to individual applicants. Institutions shall, at minimum, provide accurate, current information about program and course requirements, including transfer and articulation agreements between specific institutions in the Utah Transfer Guide and ensure that their transfer profile is up to date for both Fall and Spring semester.

4.8. System-Wide Standards and Practices

4.8.1 Annual Faculty Majors Committee Evaluation: Faculty majors committees meet at least annually to review institutional policies and practices for awarding credit to ensure consistent system-wide practices for evaluating and awarding credit.

4.8.2 Credit for Common Course Numbered Courses: CCN tables, once approved by Faculty majors committees, shall be available in the Utah Transfer Guide. OCHE shall publish common course tables approved by the faculty major committees.

4.8.3 Evaluation of Courses That Meet Gen ed Requirements: When a student with completed courses in gen ed transfers from a USHE institution, the receiving USHE institution will honor the sending institution's determination of the type of gen ed credit awarded. *See Board Policy R470, General Education.*

4.8.4 Pre-Transfer Advisement: Institutions should advise students to establish educational goals early in their educational program. Institutions shall communicate with the transferring student how to request assistance from an academic advisor to assure the student's educational goals fit with the program at the institution to which they intend to transfer. Transfer policies and practices should facilitate transfer when the student has been accepted to the anticipated program and should ensure information on the transferability of credits is available to students in a timely manner.

4.9 Institution Responsibilities: USHE institutions shall:

4.9.1 Provide current and accurate course, program, and credit equivalency information to the Utah Transfer Guide. Institutions shall meet Transfer Guide annual deadlines for the submission of finalized data;

4.9.2 Participate in faculty majors committees to share syllabi, course descriptions, expected learning outcomes and competencies, and course sequencing to establish credit equivalencies;

4.9.3 Assure that all courses satisfying gen ed requirements are articulated to the fullest extent possible to satisfy comparable gen ed requirements at all other USHE institutions;

4.9.4 Furnish transcripts and course descriptions vital to determining transferability of earned credit;

4.9.5 Make clear and prompt decisions on credit acceptance and application; and

4.9.6 Maintain a designated webpage to disseminate transfer information including:

4.9.6.1 Where students can seek assistance regarding transfer;

4.9.6.2 The types of documentation needed to evaluate credit transfer, such as transcripts from all previously attended institutions, course descriptions, syllabi, and coursework;

4.9.6.3 How transfer credit applies to minimum institutional degree requirements including minimum grades;

4.9.6.4 A student's right to request an explanation on transfer credit decisions and the process to appeal a transfer credit decision with the institution and, after exhausting institutional remedies, through the USHE Transfer Council; and

4.9.6.5 a link to the Utah Transfer Guide.

R471-5 General Transfer of Credits Principles

5.1 Transfer of Gen Ed Credits

5.1.1 Transfer of Partially-Completed Gen Ed Requirements: An institution that receives from another USHE institution a transfer student who has not fully satisfied the gen ed requirements of Board Policy R470, *General Education* shall accept as equivalent all gen ed coursework approved by the sending institution, provided the coursework meets the minimum letter grades accepted by the receiving institution. A receiving institution may change a sending institution's gen ed course attribute if it is in the student's interest in fulfilling the receiving institution's gen ed outcomes and the student is notified and agrees to the change. An institution with a gen ed requirement that is in addition to the USHE core and breadth requirements shall accept a sending institution's completed gen ed requirement that is in addition to USHE core and breadth requirements. A receiving institution shall only require transfer students to complete any additional coursework needed to satisfy their unmet gen ed requirements.

5.1.2 Transfer of Completed Gen Ed Requirements: A student who has earned an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science ("AA/AS") or higher degree at a USHE institution will meet the gen ed requirements of all USHE institutions. If a student has completed all gen ed requirements at a USHE institution but not an

associate degree, the institution shall issue a certificate or letter signifying that the student has met the gen ed requirements at any receiving USHE institution.

5.1.2.1 Special Associate Degree Programs That do not Require

Gen Ed Completion: In some specialized associate degree programs, students may not have completed all gen ed requirements and will need to complete those requirements prior to graduating with a bachelor's degree.

5.1.3 Gen Ed Certificate Using Non-USHE Credits/Courses: Students who enter a USHE institution with most of their gen ed credits earned from an accredited non-USHE institution and who want a certificate designating gen ed completion from the USHE institution must complete at least nine credit hours or meet the minimum residency and grade point average requirements of the USHE institution from which the certificate is requested.

5.1.4 Substitution of Courses in Lower Division Major Area for Gen Ed

Requirements: Institutions may allow students to substitute study and achievement in their lower division major area for gen ed requirements. USHE transfer students who retain the same lower division major area will be allowed to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and will not be required to complete additional gen ed coursework after transfer.

5.1.5 Substitution of Gen Ed Courses as an Accommodation: USHE transfer students who were provided, as an accommodation, alternative courses to complete gen ed requirements will be allowed to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and will not be required to complete additional gen ed coursework after transfer.

5.2 Transfer of Non-gen Ed Credits: Credit for courses numbered 1000 or above earned at a USHE institution is transferable within the system—regardless of whether the course is a gen ed course or not—and will be recorded on the student's transcript at the receiving institution.

5.3 Transfer of Credits Awarded through PLA: When transferring in credits, institutions shall treat credits awarded through an assessment of prior learning the same as credits earned in a traditional classroom-based course.

5.4 Transfer of Credits from USHE Technical Colleges: A USHE degree-granting institution may award credit for completion of courses at a USHE technical college after curriculum specialists at the receiving institution review courses to ensure that:

5.4.1 Course content, learning outcomes, course procedures, and student assessment are comparable and applicable to the institution's program(s) to which the credit is applied;

5.4.2 A student who completes a certificate program at a USHE technical college can transfer stackable course credits to a USHE degree-granting institution associate degree program as appropriate;

5.4.3 A student who has completed coursework and transferred from a USHE technical college in a specific discipline can be awarded up to 30 credits towards the completion of an applied associate degree in that field at a degree-granting institution as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution; and

5.4.4 A student who has completed coursework and transferred from a USHE technical college in a non-specific discipline may be awarded up to 30 credits towards the completion of an applied associate degree in general technology at a degree-granting institution as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution .

5.5 Transfer of Credits from Third-Party Providers: USHE degree-granting institutions and technical colleges may award credit for completion of non-credit courses from third-party providers after curriculum specialists review courses to ensure that:

5.5.1 Course content, learning outcomes, course procedures, and student assessment are compatible and applicable to the institution's program(s) to which the credit is applied;

5.5.2 A student who completes a certificate program through a third-party provider can transfer stackable course credits to a USHE technical college or degree-granting institution's degree program as appropriate; and

5.5.3 A student who transfers from a third-party provider and has completed coursework may be awarded credits toward the completion of a certificate or degree program as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution. Where they exist, faculty major committees should make this determination to enhance transfer across the system. Degree-granting institutions may award up to 30 transfer credits.

R471-6 Application of Transfer Credit

6.1 Transfer with Upper Division Status: Institutions shall allow students who complete AA/AS degrees in a lower division major with requirements established by the faculty majors

committee to transfer with upper status to any USHE four-year institution without taking any lower division major courses at the receiving institution.

6.1.1 Exceptions to Applying Lower Division Major Coursework Credit:

Exceptions may apply when mandated by accreditation, licensing, extra-departmental professional requirements, as agreed upon by the faculty majors committees, or as directed by the Transfer Council. In such cases, the transfer student will be expected to complete lower division coursework required at the four-year institution.

6.2 Admission to Upper Division Major Program: Institutions should clearly communicate to prospective transfer students that completing required lower division major coursework at USHE community colleges or institutions serving a community college role does not assure they will be admitted into a specific major program at a USHE four-year institution. Institutions must inform students when a particular program has a limited number of openings and highly competitive admissions to the program.

6.3 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 major courses in a given discipline and emphasis, it will inform prospective students interested in that lower division major area that the institution does not offer all of the needed lower division major courses so that students may consider attending another institution offering the required coursework or enroll in online courses offered elsewhere in USHE.

6.4 Allowable Credit: Institutions may not impose limits on the number of gen ed credits students may earn by means other than taking courses directly from the institution unless limited by the accreditation standards of a specific academic program.

6.5 Length of Time for Acceptance and Applicability of Credit: Institutions must accept credit transferred from other institutions within the system. An institution's colleges and departments may review courses taken over the prior 15 years 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 wanting transfer credits that were earned more than 15 years earlier may be asked to demonstrate competencies in the learning outcomes expected in gen ed courses they have completed by using portfolios, challenge examinations, or other forms of PLA.

R471-7 Transfer of Credit from Institutions Outside USHE

7.1 Evaluating Credit from non-USHE Institutions: A receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from non-USHE accredited institutions are qualified to undertake its educational program. In cases where students are attempting to

transfer credit from non-accredited institutions and foreign institutions, additional evaluation may be necessary before assigning credit to a student's transcript.

7.1.1 Students Entering with Associate Degrees: A student who enters a USHE institution with an AA/AS degree from an accredited institution will have their transcript reviewed to assure they have successfully completed relevant courses in the three gen ed core areas required of USHE students: Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and American Institutions. While USHE will honor associate degrees, deficiencies found in one or more of the three gen ed core areas may need to be addressed. A student who enters a USHE institution with an AA/AS degree but deficient in lower division prerequisite courses required for their major course of study will be required to successfully complete such courses.

7.1.2 Students Entering from Accredited Institutions without Associate Degrees: Students who enter USHE without having completed an associate degree must have their transcripts evaluated by the receiving institution to determine if additional lower division major and/or gen ed coursework will be required to meet USHE requirements.

7.1.3 Students Entering from Non-accredited Institutions and Foreign Institutions: Receiving institutions should evaluate on a case-by-case basis any credits earned at unaccredited or foreign institutions. The evaluation may include information provided by or about the unaccredited or foreign institution, such as a catalog covering the years the student attended, a description of courses the student completed, course syllabi, faculty credentials, and library facilities. An assessment will be made to determine if additional lower division major and/or gen ed coursework will be required to meet institutional requirements.

7.1.3.1 Institutions may require verification of competency attainment through assessments or examinations.

7.1.3.2 A USHE institution that makes a determination of equivalency in transferring in credit will share their findings with the appropriate technical college or degree-granting faculty major committee. The faculty major committee will determine whether the credit equivalency should be treated as equivalent for transfer by all USHE institutions.

7.1.3.3 Institutions may bring requests for exceptions to the Transfer Council.

R471-8 Committees to Facilitate Articulation and Transfer: In establishing policies and procedures to support ease of transfer and timely completion for USHE students, the Board recognizes that lower division majors and emphases may differ because of USHE institutions' unique missions. The Board therefore establishes faculty majors committees and procedures to provide common lower division major requirements that allow transfer students who apply for upper majors to receive full value for their academic work.

8.1 USHE Faculty Majors Committees: To achieve these objectives, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education ("OCHE") shall organize USHE faculty majors committees in each academic discipline. Major departments at the universities shall work closely with the faculty majors committees to effectively articulate and align lower division major emphases at community colleges and four-year institutions with a community college role and lower division major requirements at four-year institutions.

8.1.1 The Chief Academic Officer of each institution shall nominate a faculty representative in each discipline area to serve on a faculty majors committee. If appropriate, the Chief Academic Officer may also nominate additional faculty or staff in major areas within a discipline to attend faculty majors committee meetings.

8.1.2 OCHE shall convene faculty majors committees meetings at least annually.

8.1.3 The Board's Gen Ed Task Force ("Task Force") and OCHE staff will collaborate to develop an agenda for faculty majors committees meetings. Chief Academic Officers and faculty majors committees will review agendas and provide additional agenda items as needed.

8.2 Faculty Majors committees Responsibilities: Each faculty majors committee shall be responsible to:

8.2.1 Reach agreement on specific required lower division major courses that are common at all USHE institutions. Equivalencies are based on content and mastery of subject matter, not only course level. Not all institutions offer all or the same lower division courses, and in such cases, equivalencies for individual courses may not exist at some institutions.

8.2.2 Continually review course learning outcomes and expected competency levels and content matter that should be satisfied in required lower division major area courses to assure that students who complete the coursework will be fully prepared to successfully complete upper coursework.

8.2.3 Community colleges shall not offer courses at the lower division that the faculty majors committees agree should be taught at the upper level. Individual faculty major committees and affected institutions will address exceptions. When agreement cannot be reached, the Transfer Council may adjudicate.

8.2.4 Review lower division CCN courses to assure they fulfill gen ed and lower division major requirements at all USHE degree-granting institutions. Additional lower division courses may be considered for common numbering if they are similar in content, standard, and rigor.

8.2.5 Maximum Credits: Each faculty major committee will establish a maximum number of credits, in keeping with institutional practices, for lower division major coursework required in each discipline.

8.2.6 Minimum Credits: Each faculty major committee will establish at least 15 credits of lower division major coursework in each discipline. If a faculty major committee determines that fewer than 15 credits of coursework are appropriate for a particular lower division major, they will seek approval of the lower division major from the Transfer Council.

8.2.6.1 The number of credits required for a lower division major should not prevent students from completing required gen ed coursework within the number of credits allowed for an AA/AS degree.

8.2.6.2 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 gen ed coursework within the number of credits allowed for an AA/AS degree. Such exceptions must be approved by the Transfer Council.

8.2.6.3 If faculty majors committees determine additional lower division credits are needed for students to successfully complete upper coursework, a committee may recommend the delay of some gen ed requirements until after transfer or acceptance to an upper major program. Such exceptions must be approved by the Transfer Council. Under no circumstances will individual Major Committees be allowed to make exceptions to gen ed requirements—a degree may not be awarded unless the gen ed and program requirements for that degree are met.

8.3 Transfer Council Membership and Responsibilities

8.3.1 Transfer Council Membership: Transfer Council membership includes the following:

8.3.1.1 The Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs. The Associate Commissioner or a designee serves as chair of the Transfer Council;

8.3.1.2 A transfer expert from each USHE institution, such as a president, Chief Academic Officer, transfer advisor, or registrar, as recommended by the institution's president;

8.3.1.3 One academic faculty senate leader regularly rotated among institutions; and

8.3.1.4 The chair of the Task Force

8.3.2 Transfer Council Responsibilities: The Transfer Council shall engage in the following on behalf of and with authority of the Board.

8.3.2.1 Annually ascertain and assess system transfer data and identify transfer and articulation obstacles, develop policies and practices needed to address specific obstacles and to improve system-wide transfer and articulation in general, which will include lower division major alignment, transfer pathways, and transfer outreach and communication to current and incoming students.

8.3.2.2 Require regular follow-up from institutions on implementing the Transfer Council's directives and transfer and articulation policies.

8.3.2.3 Establish an appeals process and serve as the final appeal level for students and institutions on contested decisions on transfer and articulation.

8.3.2.3.1 An appeal to the Transfer Council will be available to a student or institution only after they have exhausted all available administrative remedies at the institution level.

8.3.2.3.2 Annually report the Transfer Council's activities, directives, recommendations, and priorities to the Board.

R475, Common Course Numbering¹

R475-1 Purpose: This policy provides a lower and upper division course numbering code for the Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”).

R475-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering
- 2.2 Board Policy R471, Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits

R475-3 Definition

3.1 “Common Course Number Designation” (“CCN means common numbers assigned to courses the USHE faculty majors committees have identified as having the same course quality, content, competencies, and credit earned at all USHE institutions. CCN designated courses transfer as equivalent credit.

3.2 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

R475-4 Principles of Course Numbering: Course numbers provide a guide to the key learning outcomes for courses.

4.1 Course numbers shall be comprised of a uniform prefix indicating a discipline plus four digits or four digits and one letter, e.g., HIST 1700.

4.2 In most cases, increasing course numbers indicate more challenging content and higher-order learning outcomes.

4.3 Course numbering indicates the sequence in which courses should be completed. Prerequisite courses should have lower first digits, e.g., 1000- or 2000-level digits than subsequent courses.

¹ This policy was part of R470 until December 2023 when it was separated. Approved XXX.

4.4 Under Utah Code § 53B-16-105(4)(a), to ensure transferability, institutions and departments should use uniform prefixes across the system and standardized course numbers when established by faculty major committees.

R475-5 Course Numbering by Levels: Courses of similar level shall be given numbers in accordance with the following:

5.1 Precollege or Developmental Courses (0001-0999): These courses carry no credit applicable to a postsecondary certificate or degree, develop basic precollege concepts and principles related to an area of study, and are designed to lead to mastery of precollege learning outcomes.

5.2 Lower Division Courses (1000-2999): These courses are for students beginning in the study of a discipline. Lower division courses offer breadth, foundation, general education, preparation for employment, or preparation for continued study and may serve as prerequisites for upper division courses. Within the same institution, a lower division course may not be cross listed with an upper division course.

5.2.1 Special Lower Division Course Number Designations (1900-1999 and 2900-2999): Lower division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, seminars, special topics, workshops, and tutoring.

5.2.2 1000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of first-year courses include:

5.2.2.1 Display an introductory understanding of disciplinary content;

5.2.2.2 Demonstrate a beginning ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments; and

5.2.2.3 Develop a beginning ability to evaluate approaches for problem solving within the context of the course's subject matter.

5.2.3 2000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of second-year courses include:

5.2.3.1 Display knowledge and critical understanding of established concepts and principles related to the area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.2.3.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how concepts and principles have developed within the field;

5.2.3.3 Display an ability to apply concepts from the course within and outside the field;

5.2.3.4 Demonstrate a developing knowledge of the key methods of inquiry related to the field;

5.2.3.5 Articulate a developing understanding of the limitations of students' knowledge and understanding, and how this can influence their own thinking;

5.2.3.6 Demonstrate an increasing ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within the area of study;

5.2.3.7 Display an ability to undertake a critical analysis of information and propose solutions to problems; and

5.2.3.8 Show an ability to communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.3 Upper Division Courses (3000-4999): These courses are for students usually beyond their first two years of study in college and integrate and build upon learning outcomes from earlier studies. In general, upper division courses offer specialized learning outcomes for a specific degree and provide depth, specialization, refinement, and preparation for employment or graduate study. Upper division courses are directed toward the more central concepts of a discipline. Most 4000-level courses are more concentrated, narrower in scope, and involve more independent study, research, and projects outside of class than 3000-level courses. 4000-level courses may also be designed as capstone courses that integrate a broad array of learning outcomes from previous courses.

5.3.1 Special Upper Division Course Number Designations

5.3.1.1 4800-4999: Upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.3.1.2 4800: Individual research courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.3 4830: Directed reading courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.4 4860: Practicum courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.5 4890: Internship courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.6 4920: Workshops, festivals, and institutes (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.7 4950: Field trips (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.8 4990: Seminars (1-6 credits)

5.3.2 Upper Division Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of 3000- and 4000-level courses include:

5.3.2.1 Integrate and build upon concepts introduced in earlier course work to develop a deeper understanding of the subject at hand;

5.3.2.2 Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of specialized terminology, ideas, and practices related to a specific topic within an area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.3.2.3 Display a developing understanding of the integrated and convergent nature of learning goals within a discipline, and an ability to demonstrate that learning, e.g., writing a computer program to solve a particular problem;

5.3.2.4 Articulate the ways in which disciplinary concepts are applied within and outside of the field, as well as to employment situations;

5.3.2.5 Display an understanding of the key methods of inquiry related to the field, and an ability to demonstrate these through inquiry-based activities;

5.3.2.6 Demonstrate an ability to present, interpret, and evaluate in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within a narrowly-defined area of the field of study;

5.3.2.7 Complete a critical analysis of information, interpret findings, and propose solutions to problems; and

5.3.2.8 Communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.4 Honors Program Courses: Honors courses will be clearly designated in institutional catalogs and meet the institution's expectations for honors designation.

5.5 Advanced Upper Division Courses (5000-5999): These courses allow for extension beyond bachelor's degree requirements, preparation for a graduate degree, or a natural connection between the two. Content requires significant independent thinking on the student's part and offers opportunity for specialized seminars, directed reading, independent study, and research.

5.5.1 Special 5000-Level Course Number Designations (5800-5999): Advanced upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.5.2 Conditions for 5000-Level Course Designations

5.5.2.1 Courses should meet one or both of the following criteria:

5.5.2.1.1 Have specific prerequisites at the 4000 level;

5.5.2.1.2 Be supported by a substantial body of 3000-4000-level course offerings from which a student could normally be expected to gain adequate background for a 5000-level course.

5.5.2.2 Credit from 5000-level course work shall not be used to fulfill master's degree or graduate certificate requirements, except for specific and unusual 5000-level courses identified and approved by the institution for such purposes, e.g., courses offered by education units for the professional development of K-12 teachers.

4.5.2.3 For purposes of efficiency, an institution may offer a 5000-level course concurrently with a 6000-level graduate course, with the two sections meeting together under the same instructor. In such cases, students enrolled in the 6000-level course shall be required to complete additional and substantive learning objectives and assignments approved for graduate-level work beyond those required of students enrolled at the 5000 level.

4.6 Graduate Courses (6000-7999): These courses are limited to graduate students and graduate degrees and certificates. Graduate courses may only be offered at USHE institutions with a Board-approved mission to offer graduate-level programs.

4.6.1 Special Graduate Course Number Designations: The following designation of graduate course numbers guide, but do not constrain, institutional course numbering policies.

4.6.1.1 6800-6899: Graduate seminars, including methodology and research seminars;

4.6.1.2 6900-6999: Directed reading, individual projects, thesis, etc.;

4.6.1.3 6970-6979: Master's thesis research;

4.6.1.4 6980-6989: Master's thesis faculty research consultation;

4.6.1.5 6990: Master's thesis continuing registration;

4.6.1.6 7600-7899: Advanced graduate seminars;

4.6.1.7 7900-7969: Doctoral independent study, special topics, etc.;

4.6.1.8 7970-7979: Doctoral dissertation and project research;

4.6.1.9 7980-7989: Doctoral dissertation faculty research consultation; and

4.5.1.10 7990: Doctoral dissertation continuing registration.

R475, Common Course Numbering¹

R475-1 Purpose: This policy provides a lower and upper division course numbering code for the Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”).

R475-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering
- 2.2 Board Policy R471, Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits

R475-3 Definition

3.1 “Common Course Number Designation” (“CCN means common numbers assigned to courses the USHE faculty majors committees have identified as having the same course quality, content, competencies, and credit earned at all USHE institutions. CCN designated courses transfer as equivalent credit.

3.2 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

R475-4 Principles of Course Numbering: Course numbers provide a guide to the key learning outcomes for courses.

4.1 Course numbers shall be comprised of a uniform prefix indicating a discipline plus four digits or four digits and one letter, e.g., HIST 1700.

4.2 In most cases, increasing course numbers indicate more challenging content and higher-order learning outcomes.

4.3 Course numbering indicates the sequence in which courses should be completed. Pre-requisite courses should have lower first digits, e.g., 1000- or 2000-level digits than subsequent courses.

¹This policy was part of R470 until December 2023 when it was separated. Approved XXX.

4.4 Under Utah Code § 53B-16-105(4)(a), to ensure transferability, institutions and departments should use uniform prefixes across the system and standardized course numbers when established by faculty major committees.

R475-5 Course Numbering by Levels: Courses of similar level shall be given numbers in accordance with the following:

5.1 Precollege or Developmental Courses (0001-0999): These courses carry no credit applicable to a postsecondary certificate or degree, develop basic precollege concepts and principles related to an area of study, and are designed to lead to mastery of precollege learning outcomes.

5.2 Lower Division Courses (1000-2999): These courses are for students beginning in the study of a discipline. Lower division courses offer breadth, foundation, general education, preparation for employment, or preparation for continued study and may serve as prerequisites for upper division courses. Within the same institution, a lower division course may not be cross listed with an upper division course.

5.2.1 Special Lower Division Course Number Designations (1900-1999 and 2900-2999): Lower division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, seminars, special topics, workshops, and tutoring.

5.2.2 1000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of first-year courses include:

5.2.2.1 Display an introductory understanding of disciplinary content;

5.2.2.2 Demonstrate a beginning ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments; and

5.2.2.3 Develop a beginning ability to evaluate approaches for problem solving within the context of the course's subject matter.

5.2.3 2000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of second-year courses include:

5.2.3.1 Display knowledge and critical understanding of established concepts and principles related to the area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.2.3.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how concepts and principles have developed within the field;

5.2.3.3 Display an ability to apply concepts from the course within and outside the field;

5.2.3.4 Demonstrate a developing knowledge of the key methods of inquiry related to the field;

5.2.3.5 Articulate a developing understanding of the limitations of students' knowledge and understanding, and how this can influence their own thinking;

5.2.3.6 Demonstrate an increasing ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within the area of study;

5.2.3.7 Display an ability to undertake a critical analysis of information and propose solutions to problems; and

5.2.3.8 Show an ability to communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.3 Upper Division Courses (3000-4999): These courses are for students usually beyond their first two years of study in college and integrate and build upon learning outcomes from earlier studies. In general, upper division courses offer specialized learning outcomes for a specific degree and provide depth, specialization, refinement, and preparation for employment or graduate study. Upper division courses are directed toward the more central concepts of a discipline. Most 4000-level courses are more concentrated, narrower in scope, and involve more independent study, research, and projects outside of class than 3000-level courses. 4000-level courses may also be designed as capstone courses that integrate a broad array of learning outcomes from previous courses.

5.3.1 Special Upper Division Course Number Designations

5.3.1.1 4800-4999: Upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.3.1.2 4800: Individual research courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.3 4830: Directed reading courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.4 4860: Practicum courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.5 4890: Internship courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.6 4920: Workshops, festivals, and institutes (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.7 4950: Field trips (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.8 4990: Seminars (1-6 credits)

5.3.2 Upper Division Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of 3000- and 4000-level courses include:

5.3.2.1 Integrate and build upon concepts introduced in earlier course work to develop a deeper understanding of the subject at hand;

5.3.2.2 Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of specialized terminology, ideas, and practices related to a specific topic within an area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.3.2.3 Display a developing understanding of the integrated and convergent nature of learning goals within a discipline, and an ability to demonstrate that learning, e.g., writing a computer program to solve a particular problem;

5.3.2.4 Articulate the ways in which disciplinary concepts are applied within and outside of the field, as well as to employment situations;

5.3.2.5 Display an understanding of the key methods of inquiry related to the field, and an ability to demonstrate these through inquiry-based activities;

5.3.2.6 Demonstrate an ability to present, interpret, and evaluate in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within a narrowly-defined area of the field of study;

5.3.2.7 Complete a critical analysis of information, interpret findings, and propose solutions to problems; and

5.3.2.8 Communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.4 Honors Program Courses: Honors courses will be clearly designated in institutional catalogs and meet the institution's expectations for honors designation.

5.5 Advanced Upper Division Courses (5000-5999): These courses allow for extension beyond bachelor's degree requirements, preparation for a graduate degree, or a natural connection between the two. Content requires significant independent thinking on the student's part and offers opportunity for specialized seminars, directed reading, independent study, and research.

5.5.1 Special 5000-Level Course Number Designations (5800-5999): Advanced upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.5.2 Conditions for 5000-Level Course Designations

5.5.2.1 Courses should meet one or both of the following criteria:

5.5.2.1.1 Have specific prerequisites at the 4000 level;

5.5.2.1.2 Be supported by a substantial body of 3000-4000-level course offerings from which a student could normally be expected to gain adequate background for a 5000-level course.

5.5.2.2 Credit from 5000-level course work shall not be used to fulfill master's degree or graduate certificate requirements, except for specific and unusual 5000-level courses identified and approved by the institution for such purposes, e.g., courses offered by education units for the professional development of K-12 teachers.

4.5.2.3 For purposes of efficiency, an institution may offer a 5000-level course concurrently with a 6000-level graduate course, with the two sections meeting together under the same instructor. In such cases, students enrolled in the 6000-level course shall be required to complete additional and substantive learning objectives and assignments approved for graduate-level work beyond those required of students enrolled at the 5000 level.

4.6 Graduate Courses (6000-7999): These courses are limited to graduate students and graduate degrees and certificates. Graduate courses may only be offered at USHE institutions with a Board-approved mission to offer graduate-level programs.

4.6.1 Special Graduate Course Number Designations: The following designation of graduate course numbers guide, but do not constrain, institutional course numbering policies.

4.6.1.1 6800-6899: Graduate seminars, including methodology and research seminars;

4.6.1.2 6900-6999: Directed reading, individual projects, thesis, etc.;

4.6.1.3 6970-6979: Master's thesis research;

4.6.1.4 6980-6989: Master's thesis faculty research consultation;

4.6.1.5 6990: Master's thesis continuing registration;

4.6.1.6 7600-7899: Advanced graduate seminars;

4.6.1.7 7900-7969: Doctoral independent study, special topics, etc.;

4.6.1.8 7970-7979: Doctoral dissertation and project research;

4.6.1.9 7980-7989: Doctoral dissertation faculty research consultation; and

4.5.1.10 7990: Doctoral dissertation continuing registration.