

De Anza GE Philosophy Statement

General Education (GE) at De Anza College provides students with experience in disciplines both within and outside the students' chosen field of study. GE at De Anza has been designed to impart both breadth and depth in multiple disciplines, thereby resulting in a well-rounded, multi-dimensional education. Students graduating with an associate's degree from De Anza College will complete GE requirements. This serves to educate students to be intellectually curious critical thinkers and problem solvers as well as individuals who are aware of the importance of maintaining lifelong physical and mental wellness. In addition, the De Anza GE curriculum encourages students to be culturally and socially engaged members of their communities who possess a multicultural awareness and sensitivity to diversity.

The GE philosophy is closely related to the [De Anza College Mission Statement](#) and the [Institutional Core Competencies](#). The seven major focus areas of General education at De Anza College are: 1) communication, expression, critical thinking, and information literacy, 2) mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning, 3) arts and humanities, 4) social and behavioral sciences, and 5) natural sciences, 6) ethnic studies, and 7) physical/mental wellness and personal development.

1. Communication, expression, critical thinking, and information literacy:

This area emphasizes the foundational skills of reading, writing, oral communication, critical thinking, and information literacy. These skills are crucial for decision-making, problem-solving, constructing and critiquing arguments, and addressing real-world challenges through creativity and adaptability. Students become confident communicators and critical thinkers who can adapt to diverse challenges, allowing them to develop a lifelong engagement with intellectual and societal issues. Courses include disciplines such as English, Philosophy, and Communication Studies, ensuring students gain versatile tools for effective communication and analysis.

2. Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning

This area focuses on mathematical reasoning and gives students the ability to develop, present, use, and critique quantitative arguments. Courses in this area give students the skills and knowledge required for estimation, calculation, interpretation, critical thinking, and analysis of arguments. Since public and private decision making is increasingly expressed in quantitative terms, people routinely confront raw data that requires calculation and analysis to enable them to make decisions and take actions. Courses in this area enable students to participate in such quantitative reasoning and to critique quantitative arguments.

Students will gain a foundation in quantitative literacy that will prepare them to respond effectively and flexibly to the challenges they will face in the growing number of fields that require a sound mathematical foundation. Courses in this area include disciplines such as mathematics and statistics.

3. Arts and Humanities:

This area focuses on fostering creativity and arts appreciation, promoting cultural understanding, and developing creative thinking skills, ongoing curiosity and innovation. Courses in these fields help students develop multiple perspectives, build understanding and appreciation for the technical and creative aspects of the arts, and strengthen problem-solving skills. Cultural literacy, which includes creativity, critical analysis, interpretation, and imagination, is needed across disciplines to fuel innovation and respond to an ever-changing world. Courses in this area include disciplines such as humanities, literature, world languages, philosophy, and the history and appreciation of visual arts and design, dance, music, film/TV, animation, and photography.

4. Social and Behavioral Sciences:

This area focuses on understanding social structures, human lives, and cultural traditions, equipping students to become informed and engaged global citizens. Students gain tools to critically examine ideologies and practices, enabling them to contribute thoughtfully to societal development and lead meaningful lives. These courses offer students an understanding of how law, culture, politics, history, identities, and social institutions shape our world. Exploring a wide variety of cultural traditions enables students to examine the social world from multiple perspectives. Courses in this area include disciplines such as administration of justice, anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, history, and political science.

5. Natural sciences:

Courses in the natural sciences encourage critical thinking and information literacy through scientific and experimental methodologies. Students will use the process of systemic questioning and assessment to test hypotheses, analyze experimental data, communicate results to a broad audience, and develop a data-informed understanding of the natural world. Many of the challenges we face as individuals and as a society concern the relationship between scientific advancements, human values, and social goals. Students will hone their civic capacity for global, cultural, social, and environmental

justice through an understanding of basic scientific concepts as they apply to physical and biological aspects of the world as well as the human experience. Courses in this area include earth and planetary sciences, physical anthropology, biology, chemistry, environmental sciences, and physics.

6. Ethnic studies

Ethnic studies equips students with tools to analyze and address social, institutional, and cultural inequalities that have challenged historically underrepresented groups in the United States through an interdisciplinary and comparative study of race and ethnicity. Students explore the lived experiences, social struggles, and cultural production of historically-defined racialized communities. Ethnic studies courses also examine the intersections of race and ethnicity with other identities such as class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, and language. Students of all backgrounds will gain the ability to contribute to their societies as responsible and constructive citizens. Courses in this area include African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Chicanx/Latinx Studies, Native American and Indigenous Studies, and comparative ethnic studies.

- 7. Physical/mental wellness and personal development:** This area focuses on cultivating lifelong habits that promote physical vitality and mental resilience, enabling students to lead balanced, fulfilling lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities. By exploring multicultural perspectives on wellness, exercise, movement, and creative expression, students gain a deeper appreciation for how different cultures approach physical and mental health. Disciplines in this area emphasize informed decision-making in nutrition, fitness, stress management, mental health, artistic expression, and life-long enrichment while addressing broader societal issues such as healthcare access, equity, and community support systems. Courses in this area include disciplines such as physical education, health, nutrition, performing arts, and studio arts.

References:

https://icas-ca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Cal-GETC_Standards_1v0_2023.pdf