

**Reimagining OHIO’s General Education Program  
OHIO BRICKS**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Updated: April 2021**

The following information is provided to answer frequently asked questions about OHIO BRICKS. Please contact Katie Hartman (hartmark) with any additional questions.

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## OHIO'S GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM

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### Q: What is general education?

According to the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE), general education refers to the set of courses and experiences that provide students with a broad exposure to multiple disciplines within the arts and sciences to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the 21st century.

Completing general education is a graduation requirement for all Ohio University undergraduate students (except Honors Tutorial).

### Q: Why did we revise general education?

Updating our general education was urgent for several reasons.

1. **Student recruitment and retention:** Our peer institutions in Ohio and regionally simply look more attractive because their general education programs have a rationale—supported by the curriculum—that offers students valuable skills and unique curriculum. Every year that we cede this advantage to other universities means up to four years of lost enrollment. Further, our current program and policies discourage transfer into OHIO.
2. **One OHIO:** The work of integrating all OHIO campuses so that we can more efficiently work together for all our students should consider the kinds of courses that we will expect to find in different locations. Changing our general education requirements after that structure has already been fully built will make the task even more difficult and disruptive.
3. **External expectations:** Our accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission, will review our accreditation in 2024. At that point, they expect to find that we have completed a full cycle of assessment and improvement based on the Learning Outcomes that we have approved as an institution. Our current program does not fully align with those outcomes and offers significant barriers to practical assessment that can guide us to specific program improvement. In addition, OHIO must comply with the Ohio Department of Higher Education requirements for general education.
4. **Student learning:** OHIO has always prided itself on providing an excellent education centered around the student. Our general education requirements should better reflect and further that commitment. The current tiers are built around what classes a student will take, rather than what students learn and how learning combines to produce essential skills. Organizing the curriculum around what the student should gain makes our academic values more explicit.

### Q: Who revised general education?

**FACULTY.** As stated in the Faculty Handbook (2019, pg. 1), the faculty (through Faculty Senate) “maintains primary jurisdiction over curriculum and academic policies.” Furthermore, the Faculty Handbook states (2019, pg. 107-108) “The University Curriculum Council, a statutory body established by the Faculty Senate in order to discharge the Faculty Senate's responsibilities with respect to curricular matters, is the final organization in a system of committees composed of departmental curriculum committees, college curriculum committees, and the University Curriculum Council itself. The function of the University Curriculum Council is to make recommendations in curricular matters that include ... implementation and maintenance of the General Education program. The Curriculum Council is the final recommending voice in curricular matters. Its recommendations go through the Provost to the President for final approval.”

Five of the seven members of the Reimagining General Education Leadership Task Force are faculty members and include representatives from Faculty Senate and UCC. Likewise, 18 of the 32 members of the Reimagining General Education Advisory Group are full-time, Ohio University faculty, and include broad representation from Faculty, UCC, academic colleges, and Regional Higher Education.

**Q: Were students involved in general education reform?**

YES. Students have been involved in the process in several ways. First, the General Education Advisory Council includes two representatives from the Ohio University Student Senate. Second, students attended the open Question and Answer sessions as well as submitted individual comments and suggestions to the task force. Third, the General Education Task Force presented to the Student Senate on November 6, 2019, and on December 4, 2019.

**Q: Who approves general education?**

FACULTY. OHIO's tier-based general education program was approved by Faculty Senate in 1979. Faculty Senate and the University Curriculum Council have the authority to approve a revised general education program. Revisions also needed to be approved by the Executive Vice President & Provost (EVPP).

After more than 40 years, Ohio University's faculty voted to approve a new general education program referred to as OHIO BRICKS. The University Curriculum Council voted to approve in January 2020; February voted to approved in February 2020.

**Q: When will the new general education begin?**

FALL 2021. BRICKS will be launched with the 2021-2022 Undergraduate Catalog.

**Q: Will revisions increase enrollment in general education?**

MAYBE. Demand for general education courses is a function of several factors: undergraduate enrollment in baccalaureate programs, general education course credit completed before entry (through College Credit Plus, transfer, etc.), and student interest. As such, we cannot accurately predict the extent to which enrollment will increase or decrease.

On the one hand, we believe that our current general education program will likely see continued declines in enrollment in general education courses. According to data from Ohio University's Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, enrollments in courses designated as general education have decreased since 2015-16. Specifically, total enrollment in courses designated as general education (fall and spring semesters only) decreased from 109,796 in 2015-16 to 95,747 in 2018-19; this a percentage decrease of approximately 13%. Arguably, these declines are a result of declines in undergraduate student enrollment as well as an increase in the total credit hours students have earned through College Credit Plus.

On the other hand, we believe a revised general education program may to increase enrollment in general education courses through an increase in student interest in courses. In other words, students may choose to enhance their educational experience by taking general education requirements even if they are not required to do so.

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## OHIO BRICKS LEARNING OUTCOMES

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### **Q: What are the common goals?**

OHIO's general education includes eight common goals:

1. Critical thinking
2. Ethical reasoning
3. Integrative learning
4. Intercultural knowledge and competence
5. Oral Communication
6. Quantitative Reasoning
7. Teamwork
8. Written Communication

Each common goal is an expected learning outcome for at least one BRICKS requirement.

### **Q: Do the common goals include breadth of knowledge?**

YES. Learning outcomes for specific knowledge areas are included in BRICKS through the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) learning outcomes for the five areas of distribution: English Composition, Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic, Arts and Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Sciences.

Each ODHE area of distribution has a set of broad learning outcomes. (Please refer to ODHE [guidelines and learning outcomes](#) for details.) BRICKS achieve ODHE's requirements for the minimum number of credit hours in the ODHE areas of distribution.

### **Q: How were the common goals created?**

In January 2013, the Provost appointed a task force to recommend revisions to OHIO's General Education program. The task force comprised a representative from each college offering undergraduate degrees plus an RHE representative, the Dean of Arts & Sciences, and the Dean of University College. The task force started with the objectives provided by the previous general education task force in 2012 and the [American Association of Colleges & University LEAP objectives](#). Launched in 2005, Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) is a national public advocacy and campus action initiative. LEAP champions the importance of a liberal education—for individual students and a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality.

The task force members each devised a process to solicit feedback from their college's faculty about these objectives and possible curricular components. In some colleges, this took place in a college meeting, while others used systematic surveys. Based on the data collected from those processes, which overwhelmingly supported some version of the LEAP objectives, the task force slightly revised the LEAP objectives to tailor them to OHIO. Those objectives were presented to UCC and Faculty Senate and officially approved by the Faculty Senate in May 2014.

The LEAP objectives are still endorsed by the AAC&U, and they form the basis for the specific skill and competency outcomes found in the well-validated VALUE rubrics (see below).

### **Q: How were the learning outcomes developed?**

In 2017-18, a committee composed of the UCC's General Education Committee, UCC committee leadership, representatives from the 2014 General Education Task Force, the Office of Institutional Research, and representatives from the 2018 AQIP Higher Learning Commission Strategy Forum developed learning outcomes using the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) LEAP Initiative and VALUE Rubrics.

AAC&U's Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics reflect the LEAP essential learning outcomes. Between 2007-09, the original VALUE initiative involved teams of faculty and other

educational professionals from over 100 higher education institutions engaged over many months to develop 16 VALUE rubrics for the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. Each rubric was developed from the most frequently identified characteristics or criteria of learning for each of the 16 learning outcomes. Drafts of each rubric were then tested by faculty with their own students' work on over 100 college campuses.

Today, AAC&U's VALUE rubrics are available for free use by all institutions. More than 2800 colleges and universities use the original or adapted VALUE rubric learning outcomes as a critical component of its assessment processes.

Learning outcomes for the common goals were presented to both UCC and Faculty Senate in 2018.

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## OHIO BRICKS PROGRAM

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### Q: What are the OHIO BRICKS?

BRICKS is the name of the new general education program. BRICKS is focused on student achievement of learning outcomes related breadth of knowledge and the common goals. Statements of intent are known as BRICKS (i.e., Build – Reason – Integrate – Communicate – Know – Synthesize).

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>B</b> | Students will <b>build</b> connections between themselves and others through teamwork and intercultural knowledge.         |
| <b>R</b> | Students will <b>reason</b> quantitatively, critically, and ethically.   |
| <b>I</b> | Students will <b>integrate</b> learning between knowledge and experience.  |
| <b>C</b> | Students will <b>communicate</b> effectively in writing and speech.  |
| <b>K</b> | Students will <b>know</b> the materials and methods of inquiry in arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. |
| <b>S</b> | Students will <b>synthesize</b> skills and knowledge across the curriculum.  |

### Q: What are the requirements?

OHIO BRICKS include a minimum of 38 credit hours distributed across five categories: Foundations, Pillars, Arches, Bridges, and Capstones. Requirements noted with an asterisk (\*) are limited to courses approved by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) as approved for the Ohio Transfer Module (OTM).

#### Category 1: Foundations (minimum = 11 credit hours)

Foundations provide coursework to develop students' abilities to communicate effectively through writing, to use quantitative reasoning, and to develop global and domestic intercultural knowledge and competence. For each requirement, the majority of the course content and experiences should focus on the common goal.

| Requirement(s)                          | Min. Hrs. | Common Goal(s)                         | OTM Requirement                    |
|---|-----------|--|------------------------------------|
| *Written Communication                  | 3         | Written Communication                  | First Writing                      |
| Advanced Writing <sup>1</sup>           | 3         | Written Communication                  | <i>none</i>                        |
| *Quantitative Reasoning                 | 3         | Quantitative Reasoning                 | Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic |
| Intercultural Explorations <sup>2</sup> | 2         | Intercultural Knowledge and Competence | <i>none</i>                        |

#### Category 2: Pillars<sup>3</sup> (minimum = 12 credit hours)

Pillars provide an understanding of knowledge and methods associated with the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Through breadth of knowledge, pillars allow students to explore multiple viewpoints, ideas, and disciplines important for a career. Courses must be accessible for all learners to explore and develop an understanding of broad disciplines important for a liberal arts education.

| GE Component | Min. Hrs. | Breadth of Knowledge Goal | OTM Requirement |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------|
|--------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------|

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<sup>1</sup> Course option fulfilling the Advanced Writing requirement may be at any level and may be specific to major requirements. At least one option must be OTM-approved as Second Writing.

<sup>2</sup> Course option fulfilling the Intercultural Explorations requirement must be at the 1000 or 2000 level. Courses fulfilling the Intercultural Explorations requirement may also fulfill (“double-count”) a Pillar or Arches requirement.

<sup>3</sup> Course options fulfilling Pillar requirements must be OTM-approved for the corresponding OTM area of distribution.

|                                 |   |                              |                               |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| *Humanities: Texts and Contexts | 3 | Humanities                   | Arts and Humanities           |
| *Humanities: Arts               | 3 | Arts                         | Arts and Humanities           |
| *Natural Sciences               | 3 | Natural Science              | Natural Science               |
| *Social or Behavioral Sciences  | 3 | Social or Behavioral Science | Social and Behavioral Science |

**Category 3: Arches<sup>4</sup>** (minimum = 9 credit hours)

Arches should enable students to explore a single topic from different disciplinary perspectives. Arches include nine credit hours (minimum) and are multi-disciplinary. Example topics (subject to faculty development) include Sustainability, Global Connections, and Health & Wellness.

| GE Component       | Min Hrs. | Breadth of Knowledge Goal                   | Common Goal                       | OTM Requirement   |
|--------------------|----------|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| *Constructed World | 3        | Humanities, Arts, or Quantitative Reasoning | Critical Thinking and/or Teamwork | Arts and Humanities OR Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic |
| *Natural World     | 3        | Natural Science                             | Critical Thinking and/or Teamwork | Natural Science   |
| *Connected World   | 3        | Social or Behavioral Science                | Critical Thinking and/or Teamwork | Social and Behavioral Science                             |

**Category 4: Bridges<sup>5</sup>** (minimum = 4 credit hours)

Bridges focus explicitly on specific common goal learning outcomes. Course options should encourage students to build competencies through experiences in a liberal arts discipline and/or their major or minor field.

| GE Component                  | Min Hrs. | Common Goal(s)                         | OTM Requirement |
|-------------------------------|----------|--|-----------------|
| Speaking & Listening          | 1        | Oral Communication                     | <i>none</i>     |
| Ethics & Reasoning            | 1        | Ethical Reasoning                      | <i>none</i>     |
| Diversity & Practice          | 1        | Intercultural Knowledge and Competence | <i>none</i>     |
| Learning & Doing <sup>6</sup> | 1        | Integrative Learning                   | <i>none</i>     |

**Category 5: Capstones** (minimum = 2 credit hours)

Capstones is a capstone course or culminating experience that requires students to integrate and apply what they have learned. Typically offered at the end of a student's educational journey, capstones may be specific to the major, an arch requirement, or combined with a bridges course.

| GE Component                       | Min Hrs. | Common Goal(s)                             | OTM Requirement |
|------------------------------------|----------|--|-----------------|
| Capstone or Culminating Experience | 2        | Critical Thinking AND Integrative Learning | <i>none</i>     |

<sup>4</sup> Course option fulfilling Arch requirements must be distinct from course options fulfilling Pillar requirements. Double counting a course to fulfill both Pillar and Arch requirements is not permitted.

<sup>5</sup> Course options fulfilling Bridge requirements may be (1) standalone courses (1+ credit hours), (2) courses taken concurrently with other courses, (3) courses with a significant portion of content and experiences are focused on common goal learning outcomes, or (4) a series of courses in which student achieve learning outcomes.

<sup>6</sup> Learning & Doing courses must also meet OHIO's experiential learning requirements.



**Q: Which requirements are limited to only OTM-approved courses?**

BRICKS include 38 required credit hours. Of those, 27 credit hours are limited to only courses that have been approved for the Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) (see below).

| <i>Category</i> | <i>BRICKS Requirement(s)</i>   | <i>ODHE Area of Distribution(s)</i>                          | <i>Min. Hrs.</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Foundations     | Written Communication          | English Composition  | 3                |
| Foundations     | Quantitative Reasoning         | Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic                           | 3                |
| Pillars         | Humanities: Texts and Contexts | Arts and Humanities  | 3                |
| Pillars         | Humanities: Arts               | Arts and Humanities  | 3                |
| Pillars         | Natural Sciences               | Natural Sciences   | 3                |
| Pillars         | Social or Behavioral Sciences  | Social and Behavioral Sciences                               | 3                |
| Arches          | Constructed World              | Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic OR<br>Arts and Humanities | 3                |
| Arches          | Connected World                | Social and Behavioral Sciences                               | 3                |
| Arches          | Natural World                  | Natural Sciences   | 3                |

**Q: Which requirements are not limited to only-OTM approved courses?**

BRICKS include 38 required credit hours. Of those, 11 credit hours are NOT limited to only courses that have been approved for the Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) (see below).

| <i>Category</i> | <i>BRICKS Requirement(s)</i> | <i>Min. Hrs.</i> | <i>Common Goal(s)</i>                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Foundations     | Advanced Writing             | 3                | Written Communication                    |
| Foundations     | Intercultural Explorations   | 2                | Intercultural Knowledge and Competence   |
| Bridges         | Speaking & Listening         | 1                | Oral Communication                       |
| Bridges         | Ethics & Reasoning           | 1                | Ethical Reasoning                        |
| Bridges         | Diversity & Practice         | 1                | Intercultural Knowledge and Competence   |
| Bridges         | Learning & Doing             | 1                | Integrative Learning                     |
| Capstones       | Capstone                     | 2                | Critical Thinking + Integrative Learning |

**Q: Do BRICKS increase the number of general education credit hours?**

YES. The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) expects public institutions’ general education program to include a minimum of 36 credit hours across five areas of distribution. Ohio University’s Tier-based general education program only requires 27 credit hours that fit ODHE’s requirement. However, the minimum number of credit hours required by Ohio University for general education is somewhat misleading for three reasons:

1. *Junior Composition.* Ohio University’s junior composition requirement does not technically meet the ODHE requirements because all junior composition requirements are at the upperclassman level (3000 or 4000). BRICKS allow for courses to be at any level (1000 – 4000). As such, BRICKS will enable OHIO to offer options that meet ODHE requirements.
2. *Tier II.* For many majors, Tier II courses also count at major coursework. “Double-counting” courses to count for both general education and major requirements are permitted in BRICKS.
3. *Tier III.* Many Tier III courses also count as major coursework. “Double-counting” courses for both BRICKS and major requirements are permitted in BRICKS.

We recommend that majors with relatively high credit hour requirements (i.e., 90 credit hours or more) should consider the extent to which current or revised major requirements can deliver learning opportunities and learning

outcomes associated with BRICKS requirements. Specifically, majors with relatively high credit hour requirements should consider ways to double-count major and BRICKS requirements.

**Q: Can my discipline participate if we do not have OTM courses?**

YES. Even if your discipline does not offer OTM courses, there are several opportunities for any discipline to contribute to BRICKS that are not restricted to OTM-approved only courses (listed below). Generally, the requirements for these courses is to deliver learning opportunities and experiences that will enable students to achieve desired learning outcomes.

| <i>Category</i> | <i>Requirement(s)</i>      | <i>Min. Hrs.</i> | <i>Common Goal(s)</i>                    |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|--|
| Foundations     | Advanced Writing           | 3                | Written Communication                    |
| Foundations     | Intercultural Explorations | 2                | Intercultural Knowledge and Competence   |
| Bridges         | Speaking & Listening       | 1                | Oral Communication                       |
| Bridges         | Ethics & Reasoning         | 1                | Ethical Reasoning                        |
| Bridges         | Diversity & Practice       | 1                | Intercultural Knowledge and Competence   |
| Bridges         | Learning & Doing           | 1                | Integrative Learning                     |
| Capstones       | Capstone                   | 2                | Critical Thinking + Integrative Learning |

**Q: Can courses count for both BRICKS and major requirements?**

YES. The proposed model allows (and encourages) double-counting courses or experiences for both general education and major requirements.

**Q: May I submit a single course for different BRICKS requirements?**

It depends. For many requirements, courses may only be classified into one requirement. For example, courses listed as options for Pillars: Natural Science cannot be options for Arches: Natural World. The reason is that OHIO needs to achieve the minimum credit hours in each OTM area of distribution.

However, BRICKS allow for “double-counting” in the following ways:

- *Double-Use*. There are some components where hours may be double used to complete one or more requirement. For example, a course listed as an option to complete the Intercultural Explorations requirement may double-count for a course taken to complete any Pillar or Arch requirement.
- *Combinations*. There are some components where hours may be combined to complete one or more requirement. For example, a three-hour Capstone may combine the learning opportunities and outcomes to meet the requirements Capstone (2 hours) and Ethics & Reasoning (1 hour).

**Q: Can learning outcomes be distributed across courses?**

YES. BRICKS allow for majors or disciplines to distribute learning outcomes through concurrent or sequential requirements to deliver minimum learning opportunities and achieve minimum learning outcomes. For example, a major may include learning outcomes for Ethics & Learning across multiple required courses to achieve minimum learning and achieve minimum learning outcomes.

**Q: Can colleges or majors add requirements?**

YES. BRICKS is the minimum requirement for all OHIO undergraduate students (except those in Honors Tutorial College). As such, colleges, majors, or degree programs may require additional courses, outcomes, or learning experiences beyond the minimum general education requirements. For example, the College of Arts and

Sciences currently requires that all candidates for a B.A. degree complete a foreign language requirement. Maintaining this additional requirement is acceptable (and encouraged) under BRICKS.

**Q: Can courses be more than the expected minimum hours?**

YES. The minimum hours for BRICKS components are only the absolute minimum credit hour requirement. For example, Capstones are a minimum of two credit hours, but we anticipate that most will be three-credit hours. The reason for the minimum is to allow departments to combine minimum credit hour requirements into a single course – such as combining the minimum hours required for Capstones (2 hours) and the minimum hours required for Learning & Doing (1 hour) into a single three-credit hour course.

**Q: Will programs need to make changes?**

MAYBE. If a program requires specific general education components or double-counts general education courses for major requirements, programs will need to adjust its requirements to reflect changes in general education. Making changes is most important for majors that include a relatively high number of required credit hours. Although majors may need to consider and adjust major requirements, BRICKS permit majors to double-count general education and major requirements.

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## OHIO BRICKS IMPLEMENTATION

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### Q: What should we do to get ready to implement BRICKS?

To get ready to implement BRICKS, we recommend faculty, departments, and/or academic units do the following:

1. *Review information.* Faculty should become familiar with information about the current (tier-based) general education program and the upcoming (BRICKS) requirements. Information about the current general education requirements is available through the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). Information about BRICKS is available through the UCC [General Education Committee](#) website.
2. *Review existing courses.* Faculty should review their general education courses as well as general education courses that major, minor, or certificate students take as a requirement or elective. What course changes are necessary to transition existing general education courses to BRICKS? How could existing courses be modified to contribute to BRICKS?
3. *Review existing programs.* Faculty should review their major, minor, or certificate programs. What program changes (e.g., requirements, sequencing, options, etc.) will be required to integrate BRICKS?
4. *Ask questions.* Faculty are encouraged to ask questions. Members of the Reimagining General Education leadership team are available to answer questions about BRICKS. Members are also available to provide advice or recommendations as needed. Please contact Katie Hartman (hartmank) with questions.
5. *Communicate.* Faculty are encouraged to communicate intentions with other faculty, departments, and/or academic units. For example, if your courses or programs require specific general education courses, please ask course providers to share transition plans. Alternatively, if your courses or programs provide general education for other courses or programs, we encourage you to communicate your plans with others.
6. *Modify courses and/or create new courses.* Faculty should develop a transition plan and timetable to modify courses and/or create new courses for BRICKS. Most course changes will follow the typical University Curriculum Council's academic calendar. Deadlines for processing new courses and course changes are available through UCC's [Individual Course Committee](#) website.
7. *Modify programs.* The faculty should develop a transition plan and timetable to modify programs to integrate BRICKS. Most changes to programs will follow the typical University Curriculum Council's academic calendar. Deadlines for processing program changes are available through the UCC's [Programs Committee](#) website.

### Q: Were some courses expedited for BRICKS?

YES. Through UCC, the General Education Committee has already expediting select courses already approved for OHIO's tier-based general education into BRICKS. Courses that were eligible for expedited approval were approved at the end of spring 2020. All departments with courses eligible for expedited processed were notified of required course learning outcomes and offered the choice to expedite select courses.

| <i>If a course is approved as...</i>  | <i>...then the course was expedited to be...</i>                    |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1E: English Composition*              | Foundations: Written Communication                                  |
| 1QS: Quantitative Skills*             | Foundations: Quantitative Reasoning                                 |
| 1J: Junior Composition                | Foundations: Advanced Writing                                       |
| 2AS: Applied Science and Mathematics* | Foundations: Quantitative Reasoning OR<br>Pillars: Natural Sciences |
| 2HL: Humanities and Literature*       | Pillars: Humanities: Texts and Contexts                             |
| 2FA: Fine Arts*                       | Pillars: Humanities: Arts   |
| 2NS: Natural Sciences*                | Pillars: Natural Sciences   |
| 2SS: Social and Behavioral Sciences*  | Pillars: Social or Behavioral Sciences                              |

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 3: Tier III-equivalent | Capstones: Capstone |
|------------------------|---------------------|

\* Only courses with OTM-approval were eligible for expedited approval.

**Q: Could courses pick a different BRICKS component through expedited processing?**

YES. Departments with courses eligible for expedited processing were given the option to select a different BRICKS component than the one proposed. For example, an OTM-approved Natural Sciences course may decide to offer the course as an option for Arches: Natural World rather than an option for Pillars: Natural Sciences.

**Q: If a course meets requirements for both Pillars and Arches, do I have to pick one?**

YES. With some expectations (e.g., Intercultural Explorations), credit hours cannot be double used to complete more than one the BRICKS requirement. Accordingly, departments may need to decide among BRICKS components to classify a course. To make this decision, we recommend considering the following.

- *Pillars*. We believe Pillars are most appropriate for introductory courses typically offered as large, lecture-based courses (e.g., BIOS 1070: Biological Sciences I). As compared to other BRICKS categories, courses offered through Pillars will have the highest overlap with transfer credit through AP credit and/or College Credit Plus (CC+).
- *Arches*. We believe Arches are most appropriate for topic-specific general education courses that are typically offered in smaller section sizes (e.g., BIOS 2750: Ecology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century). Courses offered as a part of Arches must fit a topic theme and must achieve common goal learning outcomes (i.e., critical thinking and teamwork).
- *Bridges and Capstones*. We anticipate that most majors will modify existing upper-level courses (or create new upper-level courses) to fulfill Bridges and Capstone requirements.

**Q: Should we contact departments that offer courses for our major?**

YES. We strongly encourage departments to communicate with each other about their plans to align courses and programs with BRICKS. On the one hand, department chairs or curriculum coordinators should ask other departments/units that offer specific courses required for courses or programs to share transition plans. Questions should ask about plans for changing learning outcomes, credit hours, course availability, and/or general education classification. On the other hand, departments or academic units delivering general education courses for other courses or programs should communicate transition plans and intentions.

**Q: When are new courses, changes to courses, and changes to programs due?**

Changes to courses and programs will follow the standard University Curriculum Council's academic calendar. Deadlines for processing new courses and course changes are available through UCC's [Individual Course Committee](#) website. Deadlines for processing program changes are available through the UCC's [Programs Committee](#) website.

**Q: How will BRICKS impact current students?**

Students whose university catalog of entry is before the 2021-22 undergraduate catalog will be required to complete the tier-based general education requirements. However, a student may opt to update their university catalog to a newer catalog.

**Q: How will BRICKS impact transfer students?**

The goal is to make transferring general education credits easier for students who have earned an associate degree or completed a substantial number of credits at another institution. Ease of transfer will be developed through both program design and transfer credit policy. For example, students will be permitted to transfer credits earned from OTM-approved coursework from other universities to complete BRICKS requirements limited to OTM-approved courses, including English Composition, Quantitative Reasoning, Pillars, and Arches.

**Q: Will we offer both tier-based general education and BRICKS at the same time?**

YES. Because graduation requirements follow students' catalog of entry, the two general education programs (i.e., tier-system and BRICKS) will overlap for at least five years. This does not necessarily mean offering a more extensive range of courses because some courses that fulfill tier requirements will also fulfill a BRICKS requirement. Courses developed for the new curriculum may also be approved for tier credit, which will reduce the need to offer older general education courses that departments plan to phase out.

**Q: Can courses count for both BRICKS and major requirements?**

YES. BRICKS allows double-counting courses or experiences for both general education and major requirements.

**Q: Can a student take a course that will fulfill different BRICKS requirements?**

YES. BRICKS allow for “double-counting” in the following ways:

- *Double-Use*. There are some components where hours may be double used to complete one or more requirement. For example, a course listed as an option to complete the Intercultural Explorations requirement may double-count for a course taken to complete any Pillar or Arch requirement.
- *Combinations*. There are some components where hours may be combined to complete one or more requirement. For example, a three-hour Capstone may combine the learning opportunities and outcomes to meet the requirements Capstone (2 hours) and Ethics & Reasoning (1 hour).

However, for many requirements, courses may only be classified into one requirement. For example, courses listed as options for Pillars: Natural Science cannot be options for Arches: Natural World. The reason is that OHIO needs to achieve the minimum credit hours in each OTM area of distribution.

**Q: Can colleges or majors have more general education requirements than the minimum required by BRICKS?**

YES. BRICKS is the minimum requirement for all OHIO undergraduate students (except those in Honors Tutorial College). Colleges, majors, or degree programs may require additional courses, outcomes, or learning experiences beyond the minimum general education requirements. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences

currently requires all candidates for a B.A. degree to complete a foreign language requirement. Maintaining this additional requirement is acceptable (and encouraged) under BRICKS.

**Q: Can BRICKS courses be more than the required minimum hours?**

**YES.** The minimum hours for BRICKS components are only the absolute minimum credit hour requirement. For example, Capstones are a minimum of two credit hours, but most capstones will be three-credit hours. The minimum allows departments to combine minimum credit hour requirements into a single course – such as combining the minimum hours required for Capstones (2 hours) and the minimum hours required for Learning & Doing (1 hour) into a single three-credit hour course.

**Q: What do BRICKS guarantee?**

Through BRICKS, OHIO guarantees that undergraduate students will have the opportunity to take courses that deliver hands-on learning and high impact learning experiences designed to meet the career readiness competencies most frequently sought by employers.

**#1: BRICKS emphasize skills most frequently sought by employers.**

Through BRICKS, students have opportunities to learn career readiness competencies that employers consistently identify as crucial for a successful transition into the workplace. OHIO refers to these as Common Goals, including critical thinking, ethical reasoning, integrative learning, intercultural competence, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, teamwork, and written communication. For example, the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) consistently identifies critical thinking/problem solving (i.e., the ability to exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems) as one of the most critical career readiness competencies sought by employers. BRICKS include four components (11-12 credit hours) that include developing critical thinking skills.

**#2: BRICKS incorporate high impact learning.**

High-impact learning practices, or HIPs, are active learning practices that promote deep learning by promoting student engagement. HIPs have been shown to increase learning and have a positive impact on student success. Combined, BRICKS guarantee four high-impact educational practices available to students enrolled in any major:

- ✓ *Writing-intensive courses.* Written Communication courses emphasize first-year writing, while Advanced Writing courses emphasize writing skill development through a disciplinary lens. The effect of repeated writing practice develops communication skills using a variety of formats for different audiences.
- ✓ *Diversity/global learning.* Intercultural Explorations and Diversity & Practice courses emphasize exploring diverse cultures, life experiences, and worldviews. Courses are designed to deliver opportunities to build cultural self-awareness, cultural understandings, empathy, communications, curiosity, and openness.
- ✓ *Common intellectual experience.* Through Arches, students may select courses focused on a common topic or problem explored through diverse disciplinary perspectives. Starting in Fall 2021, Arch topics available to all students include Global Connections, Health and Wellness, Science, Technology, and Society, Society and Justice, and Sustainability.
- ✓ *Capstone courses.* Often offered as upper-level courses through majors, capstone courses provide students with a culminating experience that integrates and applies what they have learned throughout their learning journey. Capstones emphasize integrative learning and critical thinking.

**#3: BRICKS include hands-on learning through experiential learning.**

Experiential learning is an approach to education that emphasizes engaged learning through direct experience and reflection. Experiential learning activities develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes through an experience related to a field. Through the Bridge: Learning & Doing requirement, students may participate in any number of experiential learning courses to meet their own educational goals. OHIO offers experiential learning through

community engagement, creative endeavors, leadership, internships, research, study away, and other hands-on learning opportunities.

**Q: What value do BRICKS provide to students' learning journeys?**

BRICKS provides opportunities for students to explore a variety of disciplines, skills, and experiences.

- ✓ BRICKS courses provide a wide breadth of learning opportunities and skills that can be applied to everyday life – including broad knowledge of liberal arts and sciences, intellectual and practical skills, personal/social responsibilities, and integrative/applied learning.
- ✓ BRICKS courses contribute to developing broad career readiness competencies necessary for post-graduation success – including critical thinking/problem solving, reasoning, communication, teamwork/collaboration, and diversity/intercultural competence.
- ✓ BRICKS courses foster an intellectual community where students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and educational goals can explore and discover new ideas and thinking together.
- ✓ BRICKS offers a combination of experiences both inside and outside the major, such that deep learning is integrated into each student's primary interests and career goals.

**Q: Are BRICKS required for Associate Degrees?**

YES (see below). The BRICKS required for Associate Degrees are the minimum Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) requirement by the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

General Education Requirements for Applied Associate Degrees

Students completing Ohio University's applied associate degrees are required to complete 15 credit hours of OTM-approved coursework including:

- Written Communication (3 hours). Either ENG 1510 or 1610 (for non-native English speakers only) will satisfy the Written Communication requirement.
- Quantitative Reasoning (3 hours). Courses that fulfill the Quantitative Reasoning requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (FQR) as the general education code.
- Pillars or Arches (6 hours). Credit hours must be completed from at least two different requirement areas:
  - *Humanities: Arts* or *Humanities: Texts and Contexts*. Courses that fulfill the *Humanities: Arts* requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PHA) as the general education code. Courses that fulfill the *Humanities: Texts and Contexts* requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PHTC) as the general education code.
  - *Social or Behavioral Science* or *Connected World*. Courses that fulfill the Social or Behavioral Science requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PSBS) as the general education code. Courses that fulfill the Connected World requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (ACNW) as the general education code.
  - *Natural Science* or *Natural World*. Courses that fulfill the Natural Science requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PNS) as the general education code. Courses that fulfill the Natural World requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (ANW) as the general education code.

To complete the minimum 15 credit hours of OTM-approved coursework, students may also complete OHIO's OTM-approved Second Writing course (ENG 2820) and/or OHIO's OTM-approved Oral Communication course (COMS 1030).

General Education Requirements for Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degrees

Students completing Ohio University's Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees are required to complete 36 hours of OTM-approved coursework with a minimum of 24 semester hours from the following:



- Written Communication (3 hours). Either ENG 1510 or 1610 (for non-native English speakers only) will satisfy the Written Communication requirement.
- Quantitative Reasoning (3 hours). Courses that fulfill the Quantitative Reasoning requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (FQR) as the general education code.
- Humanities: Arts (3 hours). Courses that fulfill the *Humanities: Arts* requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PHA) as the general education code.
- Humanities: Texts and Contexts (3 hours). Courses that fulfill the *Humanities: Texts and Contexts* requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PHTC) as the general education code.
- Social or Behavioral Science or Connected World (6 hours). Courses that fulfill the Social or Behavioral Science requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PSBS) as the general education code. Courses that fulfill the Connected World requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (ACNW) as the general education code.
- Natural Science or Natural World (6 hours). Courses that fulfill the Natural Science requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (PNS) as the general education code. Courses that fulfill the Natural World requirement are marked in this catalog with the designation (ANW) as the general education code.

**Q: What are the ODHE requirements for general education?**

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) requires that all public institutions of higher education require all students to complete a set of liberal education courses within associate and baccalaureate degrees. These courses are commonly known as the general education requirements, but may be called "General Requirements," "University Requirements," "Core Requirements," or "Liberal Education Requirements."

According to ODHE, the general education component at Ohio's public institutions must fulfill the institution's Ohio Transfer Module (OTM). The Ohio Transfer Module contains 36-40 semester hours of coursework in general education. It is a subset or a complete set of general education requirements at each college or university. For general education courses to be a part of an institution's transfer module, all coursework is subject to review by the statewide transfer module panels against the Ohio Transfer Module Guidelines and learning outcomes.

Each transfer module must include a minimum of 24 semester hours of approved OTM courses: at least three semester credit hours in English Composition (e.g., First Writing, Second Writing), at least three semester credit hours in Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic (e.g., College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, Trigonometry, Calculus, Statistics, Formal/Symbolic Logic), at least six semester credit hours in Arts and Humanities (e.g., Art History, Ethics, American History, Literature, Philosophy, Religion, Ethnic or Gender Studies), at least six semester credit hours in Social and Behavioral Sciences (e.g., Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology), and at least six semester credit hours in Natural Sciences (e.g., Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Geology, Physical Geography, Physics). The additional 12-16 semester credit hours needed to complete the OTM are distributed among the same five categories.

Also, according to the ODHE:

- Courses in oral communication and interdisciplinary areas may also be included as elective credit hours by individual institutions to satisfy OTM requirements.
- Courses for the OTM should be at the lower-division level general education courses commonly completed during the first two years of a full-time student's residency.
- Institutions often have general education requirements that go beyond the OTM or have individual degree programs with specific requirements in the liberal education area, which go beyond those required to meet the institution's general education requirements.
- The distributive model required is not meant to discourage institutions from experimenting with thematically clustered or multidisciplinary general education courses, particularly when those courses are approved as OTM or TAG courses.

**Q: Does OHIO's tier-based gen ed achieve ODHE gen ed requirements?**

NO. Ohio University's tier-based general education requirements do not achieve ODHE's requirements. A primary problem is an insufficient number of credit hours. Ohio's general education requirements include 33 credit hours; only 27 of those credit hours could fit within ODHE's requirements. (*Note: Junior Composition courses and Tier III courses do not fit with ODHE requirements.*) In addition, only select courses from the list of courses designated as meeting one of OHIO's general education requirements are currently OTM-approved by ODHE.

**Q: Will BRICKS achieve ODHE general education requirement?**

YES. BRICKS was designed to meet ODHE general education requirements (see table below).

| <b>ODHE Requirement</b> | <b>Min. Hrs.</b> | <b>BRICKS Requirement(s)</b>       | <b>Min. Hrs.</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| English Composition     | 3                | Foundations: Written Communication | 3                |

|                                    |   |  |   |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic | 3 | Foundations: Quantitative Reasoning<br>Arches: Constructed World^                                  | 3 |
| Arts and Humanities                | 6 | Pillars: Humanities: Texts and Contexts<br>Pillars: Humanities: Arts<br>Arches: Constructed World^ | 6 |
| Natural Sciences                   | 6 | Pillars: Natural Sciences<br>Arches: Natural World   | 6 |
| Social and Behavioral Sciences     | 6 | Pillars: Social or Behavioral Sciences<br>Arches: Connected World                                  | 6 |

^ *Note:* Arches: Constructed World is either an OTM-approved Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic course OR an OTM-approved Arts and Humanities course.

**Q: Does OHIO’s tier-based gen ed achieve HLC gen ed requirements?**

NO. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region of the United States. It has several criteria for accreditation broadly related to the mission, integrity, teaching and learning, and resources. Criterion Category 1 (“Helping Students Learn”) involves: determining common outcomes, incorporating curriculum opportunities for all students to achieve the outcomes, selecting the tools, methods, and instruments used to assess the attainment of common learning outcomes, and assessing common learning outcomes.

OHIO received feedback from HLC through its 2014 Systems Appraisal and 2015 Comprehensive Quality Review Report. Combined, feedback from both underscore the necessity of assessment of OHIO’s general education program. Explicitly, reviewers stated, “The University now has the opportunity to develop systematic, comprehensive assessment processes to assess student achievement across the institution as a means to further define and iterate the institutional vision and strategic priorities to support student success.”

By the next review, HLC expects Ohio University to have completed a full assessment cycle for its general education program, including the general education common goals (passed by UCC and Faculty Senate in 2014). A full assessment cycle includes an initial assessment of each learning outcome, continuous improvement based on the results of the assessment, and the second assessment of each learning outcome. Furthermore, HLC expects Ohio University to mechanisms for a system-wide process (explicit, documented, repeatable) for general education assessment.

**Q: Will BRICKS achieve HLC general education requirements?**

YES. Through the General Education Committee, UCC is working toward building a process for assessing student achievement of BRICKS learning outcomes. These will include mechanisms for a system-wide assessment process that is explicit, documented, and repeatable.

Before the next review, OHIO plans to have completed a full assessment cycle for its general education program, including the Common Goals. A full assessment cycle includes an initial assessment of each learning outcome, continuous improvement based on the results of the assessment, and the second assessment of each learning outcome.

**Q: What OHIO courses already have OTM approval?**

OHIO submits a report to ODHE each year to specify courses that are included in the OTM. ODHE publishes a [Transfer Module Grid](#) for each institution online.

For courses that have OTM-approval, OHIO publishes an OTM designation as part of the course description in the Ohio University Undergraduate Catalog. This is noted in the course catalog course description as *Course Transferability*, which includes the OTM-approved area of distribution and the TAG Course equivalent (if applicable). Please refer to the 2019-20 Ohio University Undergraduate catalog for information.

**Q: Are OTM-approved courses and TAG-approved courses the same?**

NO. Although both OTM-approved and TAG-approved courses are approved by ODHE, the criteria for approval are different.

OTM-approved (Ohio Transfer Module) refers to courses that have been ODHE approved as meeting the broad learning outcomes and guidelines for one of the five areas of distribution in the OTM: English Composition and Oral Communication, Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic, Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

TAG-approved ([Transfer Assurance Guide](#)) refers to courses that meet the specific learning outcomes and body of knowledge for a specific course description. TAG-approved courses are used for course-to-course transfer where a specific course taken at one institution will transfer to the equivalent course at another institution.

On the one hand, courses may be TAG-approved but not be OTM-approved for general education. For example, OHIO's MUS 3440 - Violin is TAG-approved as OAH020 Applied Music, but it is not OTM-approved as one of the five areas of general education. In this situation, students can transfer course credit earned from MUS 3440 to other institutions through the equivalent TAG-approved course. On the other hand, courses may be OTM-approved for general education but not be TAG-approved. For example, OHIO's AAS 1500 – Africana Media Studies is OTM-approved as TMAH Arts & Humanities, but it is not TAG-approved to a specific course at other institutions. In this situation, students can transfer course credit earned from AAS 1500 to another university through the broad general education area of distribution.

Courses may also be both OTM-approved and TAG-approved. For example, OHIO's ECON 1030 – Principles of Microeconomics is both OTM-approved for general education as TMSBS Social and Behavioral Sciences and TAG-approved as OSS004 Microeconomics. In this situation, students can transfer course credit earned from ECON 1030 to both the broad general education area of distribution (Social and Behavioral Sciences) and the specific, equivalent course (Microeconomics) at other institutions.

**Q: What do I need to do to get a course to be OTM-approved?**

Courses must be approved by UCC for BRICKS prior to submission to ODHE.

ODHE provides two opportunities per year for institutions to seek OTM approval for courses. The criteria for each area of distribution and [submission preparation templates](#) are provided by ODHE online. Details OTM approval process information is available through the [ODHE Ohio Transfer Module \(OTM\) website](#).

OHIO offers specific step-by-instructions for faculty / academic units who want to request OTM-approval. Please refer to [OHIO's University Curriculum Council's General Education Committee](#) website for details.