

# ARKANSAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD POLICY ON STATE MINIMUM CORE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

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This policy presents the State Minimum General Education Core for associate and baccalaureate degrees as adopted by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board and includes general provisions necessary for implementation.

## I. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are defined:

**Requisite Core:** The mandatory 15-credit-hour foundation established by Act 566 of 2025, focused on the essential domains of Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, and American Civic Traditions.

**Additional Breadth Requirements:** The supplemental credit hours (totaling the remaining 20 hours of the 35-hour state minimum) that expose students to the Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social and Natural Sciences.

**Survey Course:** A foundational offering designed to provide a comprehensive overview of a field's primary theories, historical development, and methodologies, rather than specialized or technical applications.

**Competency-Based Equivalency:** The recognition of student mastery in a State Minimum General Education Core area through verified assessment or proficiency testing rather than traditional seat-time.

## II. Purpose

The Requisite Core and State Minimum General Education Core serve as the intellectual cornerstone for every undergraduate degree granted within the State of Arkansas. Rather than a collection of introductory coursework, the State Minimum General Education Core represents a unified educational philosophy intended to transform students into versatile thinkers and engaged participants in a free society.

The primary intent of this curriculum is to equip students with a durable academic framework that transcends the boundaries of a specific major or vocation. In an era of rapid technological and social transition, the State of Arkansas recognizes that the most valuable asset a graduate can possess is the ability to synthesize information across disparate fields, communicate with precision, and apply rigorous logic to complex problems.

Furthermore, the State Minimum General Education Core is designed to foster a shared civic identity. By engaging with the historical narratives and governing structures of the United States and the State of Arkansas, students cultivate the self-reliance and ethical clarity necessary to uphold the responsibilities of citizenship. Ultimately, the State Minimum General Education Core ensures that regardless of their professional path,

every graduate of an Arkansas institution shares a common standard of cultural literacy and intellectual maturity.

### III. Operational Intent

1. Within the framework of the State Minimum General Education Core specified below, each state institution shall offer 35 semester credit hours from its institutional general education core. The total general educational degree requirements at each institution may exceed the State Minimum General Education Core requirements. This 35-credit hour State Minimum General Education Core must be included in all transferable associate degrees and bachelor's degrees. The Requisite Core must be included in all associate and bachelor's degrees.
2. Each state institution shall present its institutional general education core to the Division of Higher Education for recognition under this policy via a Letter of Notification. Institutions may present proposed changes in their institutional general education cores to the Division as necessary via a Letter of Notification.
3. Each state institution shall accept and apply credit toward requirements for any undergraduate degree such parts of any other state institution's general education core as shall be presented by transfer students. If a student transfers to an institution which has total general education degree requirements that exceed the State Minimum General Education Core, after recognizing all courses presented from the sending institution's general education core, the receiving institution may determine which additional general education courses are required to make up the difference between the State Minimum General Education Core courses presented and the institution's total general education degree requirements. Courses listed in Arkansas Course Transfer System are guaranteed for transfer and must be applied toward Core requirements for associate and bachelor's degrees.
4. Institutions are encouraged to develop and implement Competency-Based Equivalency pathways to satisfy requirements within the State Minimum General Education Core. Where a student demonstrates mastery of a State Minimum General Education Core area through verified assessment or proficiency testing - as defined in Section I - the institution may award credit or a transcript notation satisfying that specific State Minimum General Education Core requirement.
5. In mathematics and science, higher-level courses than those required will be accepted for purposes of the State Minimum General Education Core.
6. A receiving institution may be more lenient in accepting credit at its own discretion. However, the policies regarding the State Minimum General Education Core do not obligate the receiving institution beyond the stated courses and provisions.

IV. State Requisite Core:

<b>Requisite Core</b>	<b>Credit hours</b>
<b>English/Communication</b> Oral or written communication designed to develop the ability to organize ideas and to communicate, with clarity, precision, and syntactical maturity.	6
<b>Mathematics or Science</b> Cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and logical reasoning skills.	3-4
<b>United States History*</b> Must include instruction in the essentials of the United States Constitution and the study of American institutions and ideals.	3
<b>American Government*</b> Must include instruction in the essentials of the United States Constitution and the study of American institutions and ideals.	3
Total Credit Hours:	15-16

*\*required; may not be substituted*

V. State Minimum General Education Core:

<b>State Minimum General Education Core</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>English Composition</b>	6
<b>Speech Communication</b>	0-3
<b>Mathematics*</b> A comprehensive mathematics course such as College Algebra, Statistics, Quantitative Literacy/Mathematical Reasoning or any higher-level mathematics course.	3
<b>Science †</b> Courses must include laboratories.	8
<b>Fine Arts/Humanities ‡</b> Must be broad survey courses.	6-9
<b>American Government</b>	3
<b>United States History</b>	3
<b>Social Sciences ‡</b>	3-6
Total Credit Hours:	35

*\*Institutions may require students majoring in mathematics, engineering, science, and business to take a higher-level mathematics course as part of the state minimum core.*

*†Institutions may require students majoring in mathematics, engineering, science, education, and health professions to take higher-level or specific science courses.*

*‡Institutions may require students majoring in engineering to take either 6 hours of humanities and social sciences at the junior/senior level or substitute an additional 6 hours of higher-level mathematics and/or additional science courses.*