

To: PIC  
From: C. “Griff” Griffin, General Education Director  
Date: February 27, 2026  
Re: General Education Study Abroad Policy

This policy replaces all previous emails and policies related to awarding General Education (GE) credit for Study Abroad courses, including both GVSU faculty-led and non-GVSU faculty-led programs.

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## **I. Authority and Oversight**

### **General Education Director Responsibilities**

The General Education Director is responsible for:

- Identifying which courses may fulfill General Education requirements.
  - Reviewing departmental equivalencies for non-faculty-led courses before determining whether a course may fulfill a Foundations requirement.
  - Developing the student reflection essay questions for Issues credit.
  - Reviewing and approving student reflection essays.
  - Pre-approving selected faculty-led courses that may fulfill one or both Issues requirements. All approved courses are published on the General Education website.
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## **II. Foundations Requirements**

Students may fulfill the following Foundations categories through approved study abroad coursework:

- Arts
- Historical Analysis
- Life Sciences
- Mathematical Sciences
- Philosophy and Literature
- Physical Sciences
- Social and Behavioral Sciences

### **Restrictions**

- Foundations – Writing cannot be fulfilled abroad.
- A single course may not be used to receive both Foundations and Issues credit.

### **Foundations Approval Process**

Students seeking Foundations credit must:

1. Review the host institution’s course offerings.

2. Check the pre-approved course list to determine whether the course is already approved.
  3. Request departmental approval if the course has not been pre-approved. Submit the Foundations Approval Form to the General Education Office for final approval.
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### **III. Cultures Requirements**

#### **Global Perspectives (GP)**

- One study abroad course will automatically satisfy the Global Perspectives requirement if it does not also fulfill U.S. Diversity.
- A single course may not be used to receive both Global Perspectives and U.S. Diversity credit.

#### **U.S. Diversity (US)**

- U.S. Diversity typically cannot be fulfilled abroad. Certain approved faculty-led courses may fulfill U.S. Diversity in place of Global Perspectives, as designated by the General Education Program.
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### **IV. Issues Requirements**

Some study abroad courses may be eligible for Issues credit.

#### **Completion Options**

To fulfill the two-course Issues requirement, students may:

- Take two 3-credit or one 6-credit Issues course(s) abroad; or
- Take one 3-credit Issues course abroad and one 3-credit Issues course at GVSU.

Effective Spring/Summer 2026, students who study abroad may take two Issues courses from the same prefix (e.g., BIO, INT, STA). This applies whether:

- Both courses are taken abroad; or
- One course is taken abroad and one at GVSU.

This only applies to students who study abroad and differs from the standard Issues policy.

#### **Student Responsibilities for Issues Credit**

- Students in Faculty-led Programs must consult the official list of approved Issues courses on the General Education website before enrollment.
- Within 60 days after completing the program, students must:
  - Submit the Issues form; and
  - Submit the required reflection essay.

Reflection essays are reviewed by the General Education Director.

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## V. Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

### Official Course Approval

The official list of faculty-led courses approved for Issues credit is maintained on the General Education website.

- The Padnos International Center (PIC) website must link directly to the GE list of approved courses.
- If there is any conflict between:
  - The GE website
  - The PIC website
  - Promotional materials (flyers, emails, syllabi, etc.)
  - Faculty-generated materials

Only the courses approved and listed on the General Education website may fulfill Issues credit.

Faculty must adhere to the approved Syllabus of Record (SOR) for any course carrying GE credit. Faculty cannot reasonably be expected to adhere to multiple SOR requirements for a single course. The General Education Program designates which courses within a Faculty-Led Program will fulfill the General Education Issues requirements.

- **3-credit program:** if there are multiple courses offered, typically, only one course will be approved to fulfill the Issues requirement.
- **6-credit programs:** if there are multiple courses offered, typically, only two courses will be approved to fulfill the Issues requirement.

Some faculty-led courses may not be approved for General Education credit if they are structured similarly to an Independent Study course, even if not formally designated as such.

Beginning Fall 2026, all Faculty-Led Programs must adhere to this policy.

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## VI. Courses That Do Not Qualify for General Education Credit

The following courses may not satisfy any GE requirement:

- Independent study, independent research, or independent readings courses (e.g., XXX 399, XXX 499).
- Courses attempting to fulfill both Global Perspectives and U.S. Diversity.
- Courses attempting to fulfill both Foundations and Issues credit.