

CSU GE-Breadth Area E

Lifelong Understanding and Self-Development

Courses that meet the learning objectives of Area E draw on findings from the biological, behavioral, and social sciences to study humans from psychological and physiological perspectives.

From Executive Order 1033

This area requires a minimum of 3 semester units or 4 quarter units in study designed to equip human beings for lifelong understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities.

Instruction approved for fulfillment of this requirement should facilitate understanding of the human being as an integrated physiological, social, and psychological organism. Courses developed to meet this requirement are intended to include selective consideration of such matters as human behavior, sexuality, nutrition, health, stress, key relationships of humankind to the social and physical environment, and implications of death and dying. Physical activity could be included, provided that it is an integral part of the study described herein.

Suitable Content

With the exception of courses in physical activity (detailed below), reviewers expect courses in Area E to include three kinds of inquiry:

- ⇒ **Sociological:** in this context, the relationships between an individual and broader society.
- ⇒ **Physiological:** the human body as an integrated organism with systemic functions such as movement, nutrition, growth, reproduction, and aging.
- ⇒ **Psychological:** the study of the mental processes that create consciousness, behavior, emotions, and intelligence.

Any single course should address all three – though not necessarily with equal emphasis. Submissions in this area fail when they focus on a single learning skill (e.g. library use, computer literacy, or study skills for college success).

Second, any course submission should address all three areas for *more than a few years of a human lifespan*. The consideration doesn't need to extend from cradle to grave, but study should include more than early childhood or the octogenarian experience, in order to provide the breadth expected of general education.

Physical Activity

Physical activity courses (except for special-topics or directed studies courses) are acceptable in Area E, if the students move and are instructed (or supervised or coached) by a faculty member or a designee when doing so. Varsity sports may be included, and so may basic training in the military, in cases where they are awarded academic credit.

However, students may not complete Area E using only physical activity courses. Participating institutions are asked to limit the number of physical-activity units they count when certifying a student for Area E.

(Note the wording: a community college may offer a three-semester-unit class in badminton and qualify it for Area E; it just can't apply all three units to a student's Area E certification.)

Typical reviewer comments applying to Area E

"This course is accepted in Area E with the usual unit limitation on physical-activity courses."

"For physical-activity courses to qualify for Area E, the activity has to be under the supervision of the instructor (or appropriately qualified staff members working with the instructor)."

"It is not clear that an instructor or qualified assistant observes the students' physical activity and provides instruction, supervision on the students' performance."

"Attention to the integration of physiological, psychological, and social considerations does not appear to be sufficient; most of the course appears to be devoted to college-specific material, study skills, and educational planning."

"Courses that teach specific job skills are not considered appropriate for Area E."

"This course does not appear to integrate physiological, psychological, and sociological study to a sufficient extent to qualify for Area E."

"Child development courses qualify for Area E only if they cover birth through adolescence."

"Although there is some mention of "behavior" in the outline, the extent to which the course integrates psychological and socio-cultural considerations with its physiological content is not clear."

"Although this course has some topics that draw clearly on findings and principles of psychology and sociology, it hardly touches on physiological (e.g., health) considerations and appears to be devoted to too great an extent to college-specific material and educational planning."

There is no IGETC Counterpart to Area E.

Students using the IGETC pattern to meet their lower-division general education before transfer to the CSU are exempted from this systemwide requirement.