

AGSC General Education Subcommittee: Summary of Spring 2026 Meetings

Report provided by Dr. Robin McGill

Between March and May 2026, the AGSC General Education Subcommittee met virtually three times to reexamine the rationale behind Alabama's statewide general education framework, focusing heavily on the long-standing literature/history sequence requirement across Areas II and IV. The subcommittee was composed of nine institution representatives, including several non-AGSC members who direct their institution's general education efforts, along with representatives from ACCS, ACHE, and Alabama Transfers. Across all three meetings, a consensus emerged around balancing statewide consistency for transfer students against institutional flexibility to tailor general education to local missions.

The group began in March by reviewing documents related to the establishment of the statewide general studies curriculum (Areas I-IV), along with examples of general education rationales that institutions have produced for accreditation purposes. The subcommittee came to consensus that the disciplinary area structure should be maintained, but that the naming should change to highlight the discipline(s) first, with the area numbers second (e.g., "Humanities and Fine Arts [Area II]"). It is hoped that this change will make it easier for students and advisors to understand the area requirements. In April, the subcommittee dug into the historical rationale behind the literature/history sequence requirement, tracing it to an early recommendation to "give Alabama students a clearer understanding of context and the sequential flow of history and literature." Members discussed how this sequence requirement can create transfer barriers, particularly for community college and adult students, and a straw poll showed majority support for removing it, though members wanted to consult their campus stakeholders before making a formal recommendation to the AGSC.

The group also opened a related discussion on 90-hour bachelor's degrees and potential implications for the statewide general studies curriculum. By May, the subcommittee had come to a consensus that the statewide general studies curriculum should remain focused on inter-institutional credit acceptance rather than mandating a uniform statewide curriculum, and members reviewed a preliminary draft of a rationale statement.

The discussions with the General Education Subcommittee over the course of the Spring 2026 resulted in the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- Bring forward a formal recommendation to the AGSC to rename the general studies curricular Areas I–IV so that the disciplinary focus is first, followed by the area number in parentheses, e.g., "Humanities and Fine Arts (Area II)."
- Continue to convene the General Education Subcommittee for the 2026-27 year, with a goal of producing formal recommendations for (i) a rationale statement for the statewide general studies curriculum and (ii) an approach to resolving the issues with the history/literature sequence requirement.
- Propose that the AGSC convene a separate subcommittee to consider articulation agreements (Alabama Transfers Guides) and issues with Area V courses.
- Gather broad stakeholder input on a draft rationale for the general studies curriculum and the implications of eliminating the sequence requirement.