The REAL Education Model

The Guiding Principles and Model Team has been charged with reforming general education at Radford University. The proposed model requires that students study in four academic areas: scientific or quantitative REASONING, humanistic or artistic EXPRESSION, cultural or behavioral ANALYSIS, and applied LEARNING. The proposed model of general education allows for cross-crediting between major/minor subjects and general education (GE) areas known as REAL. Students pursue majors/minors which simultaneously fulfill REAL areas and complete general education. The program includes foundations (writing and quantitative) to help ensure support for academic success.

The REAL areas?

- **Scientific and quantitative REASONING**: Major or minor includes courses in math, natural science, and other related areas. All degree programs must agree to fulfill the assessment plan for the scientific and quantitative reasoning learning goals and outcomes.

- **Humanistic or artistic EXPRESSION**: Major or minor includes courses in humanities, fine arts, and other related areas; all degree programs must agree to fulfill the assessment plan for the learning goals and outcomes for this area.

- **Cultural or behavioral ANALYSIS**: Major or minor includes courses in social science, behavioral science, and other related areas. All degree programs must agree to fulfill the assessment plan for the learning goals and outcomes for this area.

- **Applied LEARNING**: Major or minor includes courses incorporating skills immediately applicable to the workplace; a focus on how academic subjects apply to real world problems and opportunities; and applied courses focus on practice (doing—knowledge in action) within a profession. All degree programs intending to fulfill this area must agree to complete the assessment plan for the learning goals and outcomes for this area.
REAL Model Requirements

**Foundational:** 6 credit hours of coursework designed to help ensure academic success

- 1 foundational writing course taught by the Department of English that includes development of grammar, mechanics, and composition. Students may use competency assessment, transfer, dual enrollment, or advance placement to complete this requirement. (equivalent to ENGL 111 or other deemed appropriate by the Department of English) This course may not count in any minor that is used to fulfill general education.

- 1 foundational mathematics course taught by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics that includes basic numeracy and quantitative literacy. Students may use competency assessment, transfer, dual enrollment, or advance placement to complete this requirement. (equivalent to MATH 114, 116 or 119 or other courses deemed appropriate by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics) This course may not count in any minor that is used to fulfill general education.

Breadth and depth are important for academic success. Students meet the general education requirements by cross-crediting courses with their major/minor programs. Students can complete the areas with traditional/existing minors to allow students to develop depth of knowledge in the four REAL areas. To allow students to prioritize breadth over depth, we introduce 4 new general minors supported by the Office of REAL Education, which is responsible for assessment:

- **Minor in Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning.** Any 15 or more credits that includes coursework in math, natural science, and other related areas, with at least 3 credits at the 300-400 level. Coursework must include classes with at least two different prefixes. The assessment plan for the scientific and quantitative reasoning learning goals and outcomes will be assessed within any minor counting in this area. (Any 15 or more credits for courses coded R in the catalog)

- **Minor in Humanistic and Artistic Expression.** Any 15 or more credits that includes coursework in humanities, fine arts, and other related areas, with at least 3 credits at the 300-400 level. Coursework must include classes with at least two different prefixes. The assessment plan for the Expression area learning goals and outcomes assessed within this minor. (Any 15 or more credits for courses coded E in the catalog)

- **Minor in Cultural and Behavioral Analysis.** Any 15 or more credits of courses in social science, behavioral science, and other related areas; with at least 3 credits at the 300-400 level. Coursework must include classes with at least two different prefixes. The assessment plan for the Analysis area learning goals and outcomes assessed within this minor. (Any 15 or more credits for courses coded A in the catalog)

- **Minor in Applied Learning.** Any 15 or more credits of coursework that includes courses incorporating skills immediately applicable to the workplace; a focus on how academic subjects apply to real world problems and opportunities; and applied courses focus on practice (doing—knowledge in action) within a profession. All degree programs intending to fulfill this area must agree to complete the assessment plan for the learning goals and outcomes for this area. (Any 15 or more credits for courses coded L in the catalog)
These, along with the current catalog of majors/minors are used for cross-crediting with the above requirements. Assessment is completed at the program level.

Conditions:

1. Each major and minor identifies the REAL area or areas, if any, they want to cover. Each major and minor must code every course according to the REAL area or areas, if any, it will count in. Each major and minor must agree to assess goals and learning outcomes for the REAL area or areas that they cover and provide clear communication to their degree-seeking students about which areas still require degree programs to satisfy. In order to fulfill REAL area requirements, majors or minors must include at least 9 credit hours of coursework, of which 3 or more credits must be at the 300 level or above within the area(s) fulfilled.

2. In order for a minor to fulfill a REAL area, minors must include a minimum of 15 credit hours.

3. Within a REAL area, a course cannot count for both a traditional minor and a general studies minor.

4. All students must complete two courses designated as writing intensive within their programs of study. Departments/schools can review and propose which courses are writing intensive. Courses must include application of the writing process within discipline-specific writing and be designated with a (W) in the schedule of classes.

5. Each student will fulfill a personal development and wellness requirement, encompassing multiple areas of competency. This may be fulfilled through a range of activities, engagements, and/or courses. This requirement may be fulfilled through major or minor requirements.

Proposed State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) competencies:

- Written communication
- Critical thinking
- Quantitative reasoning
- Scientific reasoning
- Oral communication

Civic engagement is a required SCHEV competency but is not included as part of general education for Radford University. A task force has been working to develop an assessment plan for this that includes a broad definition with curricular and co-curricular fulfillment options.