



# **Advising General Studies Majors: Ideas for Completing & Marketing Their Degree**

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## What is the General Studies Major?

- Associate of Science (Most flexible)
  - 41 hours of General Education
  - 19 hours of college-level electives
- Associate of Arts
  - 41 hours of General Education
  - 6 hours of foreign language (Spanish or French)
  - 13 hours of college-level electives



## Reasons to Major in General Studies

- Undecided on future aspirations
- Planning to transfer for a major we don't have
- Multitude of transfer credits; needing the quickest path to grad
- Wanting to create their own major
- Avoiding certain classes



## Advising Challenges: Future Planning

- Most GS students do not know what they want to do and need career advising
- GS does not guide toward any specific major
- Risk of taking wrong classes if they change their major (e.g., MATH)
- Some students are dubious at the value of a degree called “General Studies”



# Advising Challenges: Terminology

- AA versus AS options
- “General education” versus “General Studies”
  - “I just want to get my basics done and then figure out what I want to do.”
  - “I want to major in General Education.”
  - “Universal Studios”



# Suggestions for Advising

- Undecided students:
  - [Type Focus](#)
  - MBTI, Strong: Need to meet with a full-time advisor in the Office of Advising first. Best for students who have done the Type Focus and want to dig deeper.
  - [Catalog: Programs by Degree Types](#)



# Suggestions for Advising

- Preparing to transfer to a university for a major we don't have:
  - University catalog
  - Admissions counselor, advisor
    - Which of the university's requirements can be transferred in?
  - Create a Degree Works plan with a personalized title indicating the student's plans
    - "AS General Studies: Interested in BS Nutrition at WKU"



# Suggestions for Advising

- Students with a lot of completed work and no degree
  - Often come/return to Vol State as a different major not knowing about GS
  - Run a what-if audit in DW (AS is usually fastest)
  - Look for possible substitutions in Unused Credits section
  - Discuss marketability of an associate's degree regardless of major





# Suggestions for Advising

- Students choosing courses for career advancement, not transfer
  - Caution them that some courses might not be needed if they choose a more specific major in the future
  - Refer to [suggested elective lists](#) in the new catalog



## General Studies Themes for Resume

- Themes help explain what the General Studies major is
- No “official themes;” freedom to synthesize
- Look up student in Degree Works
- What themes do you notice in their coursework?



# Course Theme Examples

- Built-in themes: 5/13 general ed courses in the GS curriculum are social science/people-related
- All General Studies students could list social science
- Examples: Social science, health, education, business



# Education-Related Sections of Resume Example

## Education

### **Associate of Science in General Studies**

Focus in social science, health, education, and business

*Volunteer State Community College*

**Expected Graduation: May 2023**

*Gallatin, TN*

## Relevant Coursework Completed

Public Speaking | American History | Wellness | Psychology | Economics  
Education | Community Health | Accounting | First Aid/CPR | Nutrition | Medical Terminology



## Marketing the General Studies Degree

- Suggest researching job postings to see what employers are seeking
  - Indeed, LinkedIn, etc.
- Suggest extracurricular activities and paid internships related to career interests



# Marketability of All Degrees

- [NACE Career Readiness Competencies](#)
  - Career & Self-Development
  - Communication
  - Critical Thinking
  - Equity & Inclusion
  - Leadership
  - Professionalism
  - Teamwork
  - Technology



# Reflections

- What challenges (if any) have you experienced in advising for General Studies?
- What ideas do you have?
- What can you take away from this session?



# Questions?

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