



What Value General Education at Penn State Behrend?

General education classes at Penn State Behrend provide powerful tools that complement those specific to a student's major. These broad-reaching classes comprise about one-third of the course work leading to a bachelor's degree. The general education courses benefit students in their professional careers, personally, and they help an individual to benefit society.

Penn State's General Education requirements include the following components.

- *Skills* courses help develop quantitative and communication skills.
- *Arts, Humanities, Health and Physical Activity*, and the *Sciences* provide a broad overview of the world in which we live.
- *First-Year Seminars* help introduce students to the scholarly community of the college
- *Writing Intensive* courses further enhance writing skills.
- *United States* and *International Cultures* classes provide opportunities to increase understanding of the relationship between cultures and widen international perspective.

When considering the value of higher education, many people wonder whether it will lead to a good and well-paying job. In this respect, a degree from Penn State Behrend is an excellent investment. Specialists and technically sound workers will always be needed, as will historians, teachers, scientists, and business managers. Employers, in turn, put a high value on well-rounded individuals because they are the people who make the best informed, the most "human" judgments.

Employers in business, industry, government, health care, and other sectors are looking for people who have *learned how to learn*, people with excellent

communication and teamwork skills—in brief, they are looking for well-rounded, fully educated people. So what is the bottom line? Studies show that college education is an excellent investment in general, but we believe that education should go well beyond specifically training a student for a particular career.

From a broader perspective, general education is valuable because an internationalized society needs citizens who can think for themselves and can participate in improving that society. We need to be able to understand, in a critical and independent way, the issues and structures in which we are immersed. Courses in general education contribute to this understanding by making us aware of all the varied contexts of modern life.

From an individual perspective, general education courses are valuable because they enable personal growth and the cultivation of our human individuality. Including general education in every degree program reflects Penn State's deep conviction that successful, satisfying lives require a wide range of skills and knowledge. These skills include:

- *the ability to reason logically and quantitatively;*
- *the skills to communicate effectively;*
- *an understanding of the sciences that makes sense of the natural environment;*
- *familiarity with the cultural movements that have shaped societies and their values;*
- *an appreciation for the enduring arts that express, inspire, and continually challenge these values.*

Toward those goals, then, general education rounds out the specialized education students receive in their majors and aims to cultivate a knowledgeable, informed, literate human being.