



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
- Confusion with the more restrictive [AA Liberal Arts](#) major
- “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.”



Suggestions for Advising

- Undecided students:
 - [Catalog: Programs by Divisions](#)
 - [Type Focus](#)
 - [My Next Move](#)
 - 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.



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
 - Example: LaStacia Andrews
- 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
 - Leadership
 - Professionalism
 - Teamwork
 - Technology
- Make appt with Coordinator of Career Services:
Tiffany Russell (Tiffany.Russell@volstate.edu)



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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