# Approved by Faculty Council - 21 November 2011

# General Education Purpose Statement

Widener University cultivates critical, creative, and independent thinking to develop undergraduates who demonstrate intellectual integrity, civic engagement and potential for leadership. General education promotes awareness and synthesis of different strategies of knowing, questioning, and understanding. Through the integration of experiences both inside and outside the classroom, students learn to act as responsible citizens and to pursue knowledge beyond the boundaries of the university.

This is commonly referred to as a liberal education, which is defined as:

A philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind from ignorance, and cultivates social responsibility. Characterized by challenging encounters with important issues, and more a way of studying than specific content, liberal education can occur at all types of colleges and universities. "General Education" and an expectation of in-depth study in at least one field normally comprise liberal education.[[1]](#footnote-1)

# Proposed general education goals and objectives

1. A liberally educated graduate communicates effectively.
   1. Gives clear presentations before a group.
   2. Writes papers that require locating, analyzing, and formally referencing information sources to support conclusions.
2. A liberally educated graduate thinks critically.
   1. Makes claims and draws conclusions that require the analysis and evaluation of evidence.
   2. Synthesizes divergent content, methodologies, and models.
   3. Makes and assesses ethical judgments.
   4. Demonstrates an awareness of different points of view and analyzes how these are informed by factors that may include culture, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender identity, age, disabilities, language, religion, sexual orientation, or geographical area, among others.
3. A liberally educated graduate uses quantitative methods effectively.
   1. Solves problems using mathematical methods.
   2. Interprets, makes inferences, and draws conclusions from data.
   3. Determines whether numerical results are reasonable.
4. A liberally educated graduate has developed a wide range of intellectual perspectives and methodologies.
   1. Evaluates the workings of the natural and physical world using theories and models that can be tested by experiments and observations.
   2. Evaluates social science theories and research methods related to questions of human behavior, mental processes, communication, social and cultural structures and institutions.
   3. Evaluates philosophical, historical and aesthetic arguments, evidence, and artifacts.

1. http://www.aacu-edu.org/advocacy/what\_is\_liberal\_education.cfm [↑](#footnote-ref-1)