

Pathways Certificate Program FAQ

February 26, 2021

1. What is the Pathways Certificate Program (PCP) and what is the role of the PCP in the reform of WCU's general education program?

First conceived in 2016 as a way to help students pursue a more cohesive, coherent program of study within their general education coursework, the PCP was created as part of the 2019 general education curriculum reforms. In an effort to encourage more cross-disciplinary thinking, to offer students more opportunities for applying information and learning approaches across multiple disciplines, and to provide a more integrated General Education program within the goals of a degree program, faculty can work collaboratively to create 12-credit certificate programs for general education pathways designed to address specific themes. These certificates will appear on student transcripts.

2. What are the requirements for students who wish to earn the credential?

Each pathway is 12 credits, 9 of which must come from General Education courses with different prefixes. Because they are an optional component of the general education curriculum, pathway certificates are completed at the student's discretion and do not take the place of other general education requirements.

3. What is the process through which faculty design a new pathway?

Faculty will work collaboratively to create 12-credit certificate programs, and any faculty member may take the lead in identifying courses relevant to the chosen theme, recruiting colleagues to revise syllabi or creating new courses, and crafting the framework documentation that will be uploaded to CIM. Instructors across courses in a particular pathway should strive to emphasize the connectivity of the goals within that pathway, helping students to link course learning objectives and activities to the broader theme. Interested faculty will receive guidance from the co-directors of the program (currently Joseph Navitsky and Brent Ruswick). Professional development workshops will also be hosted once a semester and once during the summer.

4. What are the requirements for designing program goals and student learning outcomes?

A pathway must include three to five program goals and list at least two student learning outcomes (SLOs) per goal. Each approved course in a pathway certificate program must include at least two student learning outcomes for each of at least two of the PCP program goals. Note that for an approved course within a PCP, at least one SLO for each of the minimum of two PCP goals must come from a PCP's CAPC-approved framework. But this should not preclude preparers from including other SLOs that fit within the PCP's approved goals, as well. This requirement means that the faculty proposing new pathways should be broad in their thinking about the kinds of courses that might fit into the PCP. The goals/SLOs for an approved PCP can be updated with CAPC approval.

Finally, courses to be included in PCPs need to provide evidence of how course SLOs will be assessed.

5. How can a faculty member add or remove a course from an existing pathway?

Faculty who wish to add or remove a course from an existing pathway should follow current procedures for the CAPC *course* approval process. This might be an edit to an existing course to include the pathway designation or the creation of a new course. The General Education Committee will be responsible for evaluating proposals with respect to pathway criteria, though review by other CAPC committees (e.g., UGPC) will be included in the workflow as with any other course or program change. Faculty teaching in the existing pathway may be consulted to ensure consistency with the PCP. Once the course proposal is approved, the General Education Chair or CAPC Support will make the necessary *program* changes.

5. How does a student enroll in a pathway?

For information on how students can add a pathway certificate through myWCU, please see the instructions provided by the Registrar's Office at <https://www.wcupa.edu/academicEnterpriseSystems/training/genEdPathways.aspx>

6. What pathways currently exist?

For information on the current pathways, and brief descriptions, please see <https://www.wcupa.edu/registrar/documents/GenEdPathwayCertificates.pdf>