

ESSENTIAL EDUCATION

Essential Education is a 30-credit hour undergraduate program that connects foundational disciplinary content with real-world challenges through a cohesive, multi-disciplinary curriculum.

The Essential Education mission is to promote learning that is central to the intellectual pursuits associated with our educational programs and to enable students to make informed choices about matters of public and personal significance in a democratic society and global community. The Essential Education program helps students to become informed, independent thinkers by developing competencies in communication, quantitative analysis, and critical thinking by helping them understand and appreciate cultures, individuals, the natural environment, and the global society. Courses that are used to satisfy the program's Major Requirements cannot also be used to satisfy ECU Essential Education requirements.

Within Essential Education, students develop Essential Skills identified in the Council for Postsecondary Education's Graduate Profile, including communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and collaboration. These skills are embedded across all Elements of the Essential Education program and are progressively strengthened throughout a student's coursework, preparing graduates for both professional success and lifelong learning.

Students who complete the ECU Essential Education will be able to:

- Use critical thinking and disciplinary knowledge to examine issues and to identify solutions.
- Distinguish the methods that underlie the search for knowledge.
- Integrate knowledge and methods that will deepen their understanding of, and will inform their own choices about, issues of personal or public importance.
- Apply essential, transferable skills to academic, professional, or civic experiences, enabling them to adapt, contribute, and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Summary Checklist for General Education

The ECU Essential Education program consists of 30 hours of coursework in four elements:

Code	Title	Hours
Element 1		
1A: Written Communication I (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/written-communication-i/)		3
1B: Written Communication II (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/written-communication-ii/)		3
1C: Oral Communication (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/oral-communication/)		3
Element 2		
2A: Quantitative Reasoning (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/quantitative-reasoning/)		3

2B: Natural Sciences (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/natural-sciences/)	3
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Element 3

3A: Arts (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/arts/)	3
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3B: Humanities (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/humanities/)	3
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Element 4

4A: Historical and Global Dimensions (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/historical-global-dimensions/)	3
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4B: Social and Behavioral Sciences (https://catalogs.eku.edu/undergraduate/general-academic-information/essential-education-requirements/social-behavioral-sciences/)	3
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Students are expected to complete Elements 1 and 2 within their first 60 hours of college credit.

Students must earn the specified number of hours in each of these Elements.

Some courses may be listed in more than one Essential Education category. However, no single course can satisfy more than one Essential Education requirement.

Essential Education Pathways

Essential Education Pathways are collections of disciplinary courses from different Essential Education Elements that allow students to explore a theme or real-world problem. Designed to improve student engagement and build Essential Skills, Essential Education Pathways focus on broad, timeless topics with high career applicability. To complete an Essential Education Pathway and receive recognition on their transcripts, students must take at least five courses spanning at least three Elements.

Launching in Fall 2026, the Artificial Intelligence Pathway offers five courses across four Essential Education Elements. Pathway courses satisfy Essential Education requirements and are open to all ECU students.

Fall 2026 Artificial Intelligence Pathway Course Offerings:

- ENG 102: Research, Rhetoric, and Writing with AI (Element 1B) (Limited Sections)
- STA 100/100R Statistical Literacy: Numbers and Narratives (Element 2A)
- PHI 362 Technology and Ethics: AI (Element 3B)

Spring 2027 Artificial Intelligence Pathway Course Offerings:

- BEM 200: Media & Society (Element 4B) (Limited Sections)
- TEC 102: Technology & Society (Element 4B) (Limited Sections)

Changing General Education Requirements

The Essential Education program is highly integrated with University requirements, therefore students moving into the newest catalog will be

updated to the newest Essential Education and University graduation requirements, as well as major requirements as listed in this Catalog.

Students will have one catalog year governing all graduation conditions. To see how a Catalog change will impact their progress toward their degree, students are expected to first run a "What-If" Degree Works audit and study its impact. Once a student has moved forward to a new catalog year, they cannot move back to a previous year.

The courses listed award three hours of credit, unless a number appears in parentheses following the course name. This number represents the hours awarded for such courses. Courses with an "L" are laboratory classes and one credit hour unless otherwise noted. Course numbers followed by (*) have prerequisites or other restrictions on enrollment. Refer to Course Descriptions in Section Seven of this Catalog for specific restrictions.