

Program Review

Executive Summary

General and Individual Studies

Majors Reviewed:

- *General Studies (GS), A.A.*
- *Individual Studies (IS), A.A.S.*

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Pennsylvania
College of Technology
A Penn State Affiliate

The General Studies (GS) and Individual Studies (IS) programs at the Pennsylvania College of Technology are long-standing, flexible academic pathways designed to support students with diverse educational and career goals. These programs serve as essential academic options for students who are undecided, transitioning between majors, or seeking a customizable degree path that may not be available through traditional programs.

The General Studies program functions primarily as a transfer-oriented degree, allowing students to complete general education requirements that align with a wide range of bachelor's degree programs. Its minimal core requirements and broad elective options provide students with the flexibility to tailor their coursework to meet transfer goals or explore academic interests.

The Individual Studies program is the most customizable associates degree offered at the College. It is designed for students whose academic or professional objectives do not align with existing majors. The program requires students to complete at least 12 credits in a specific discipline, enabling them to build a focused area of concentration while pursuing a general associate degree.

Both programs were revised in 2019 to align with the College's Core Education model, which emphasizes foundational learning, interdisciplinary perspectives, specialization, and integration. These updates ensure that students receive a cohesive and relevant educational experience.

Though the diversity of student experiences within these programs precludes the identification of specific goals, there are broader recommendations that resulted from this review. Specifically, the following suggestions are being made:

1. Develop Structured Advising Tools
 - Create advising templates and tip sheets for GS and IS advisors to guide course selection based on students' goals (e.g., transfer, employment, skill development).
 - Provide training for faculty before they are assigned advisees to ensure consistent and effective advising.
 - Encourage collaboration with the Michael J. Hudock, Sr. Center for Academic Excellence, Center for Career & Design, and other academic departments to support student planning.
2. Integrate Micro-credentials
 - Embed micro-credentials into both programs to validate skill development and support stackable credentials.
 - Train faculty to advise students on selecting credentials aligned with their academic and career goals.