











GC JOURNEYS STUDENT HANDBOOK

GC JOURNEYS IS:

-  The First-Year Experience (FYE)
-  Career Planning Milestones
-  A Capstone Course in the major
-  Study Abroad/Study Away
-  Community-based Engaged Learning
-  Intensive Leadership Experiences
-  Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors
-  Internships, Field and Clinical-based Practica, and Apprenticeships



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A Liberal Arts Education: The Story of GC Journeys

What is a liberal arts education?

A liberal arts education seeks to educate the whole person, preparing that individual for life, not just for a job. It is an education that is about learning how to think and how to create a life worth living. It is an education that prepares people, not for a single job, but for wherever their professional lives take them. Shouldn't education prepare you for wherever you want to go, even the places you can't imagine yet?

GC Journeys: A Fairly Tale Comes to Life

Once upon a time, the educational experiences offered at high quality institutions such as Georgia College & State University were all fairly similar. Every day professors around the world told students about chemical equations, supply and demand, and Shakespeare, believing that through learning about a variety of subjects, students would become consummate thinkers and engaged citizens. But sadly, decades of research suggested that this approach just didn't accomplish those outcomes. One day, one university decided to turn education on its head and do whatever was necessary to *actually* develop extraordinary thinkers and empowered citizens. Because of that, the students who graduated from this university were demonstrably different from those graduating from other institutions. And because of that, those graduates became

- powerful thinkers who blazed their own trails,
- sought after thinkers who employers, graduate schools, and non-profits clamored to attract, and
- agile thinkers who brought about positive change, undaunted by this rapidly shifting world

And in the end, that university transformed the lives of thousands of individuals *and* became a leader in transforming higher education as we know it.

Georgia College & State University is on a mission to turn this fairy tale into reality through a program we call "GC Journeys."

GC Journeys is our vision for enacting our liberal arts mission, where every aspect of your time here – courses, athletics, clubs, residential life, and even the campus itself – contributes to helping you become a thinker and doer prepared to go beyond where you ever imagined you could go.

GC JOURNEYS

What is GC Journeys?

GC Journeys puts your Liberal Arts education into action by highlighting experiences that are proven to be transformative learning experiences for students and intentionally embedding essential skills into each degree program. Each GCSU Student is expected to complete 5 transformative experiences during their degree program.

Your journey starts with...



**THE FIRST YEAR
EXPERIENCE (FYE)**



**CAREER PLANNING
MILESTONES**



**CAPSTONE COURSE
IN YOUR MAJOR**

+ choose 2 from...



**INTENSIVE
LEADERSHIP
EXPERIENCES**



**MENTORED
UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH**



**COMMUNITY-BASED
ENGAGED LEARNING**



INTERNSHIPS



**STUDY ABROAD/
STUDY AWAY**

Where will your journey take you?

GC JOURNEYS

What does GC Journeys consist of?

- A thinking-focused curriculum: A curriculum and co-curriculum for first-year students that focuses on actively developing essential thinking skills that are designed to help you become a powerful, agile, and sought-after thinker who knows how to reason, analyze, innovate, and more. Your knowledge and skills are then captured in an ePortfolio that can be shared with graduate schools and future employers!
- Transformative Experiences (TEs): Five (or more) key experiences, specifically crafted to help you become someone beyond who you imagined you could be. These are opportunities proven to help students push beyond their usual boundaries. Three are built into the GCSU experience and the other two are your choice!

The Personalizable Transformative Experiences You Can Choose from:



MENTORED
UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH



INTERNSHIPS



STUDY ABROAD/
STUDY AWAY



INTENSIVE
LEADERSHIP
EXPERIENCES



COMMUNITY-BASED
ENGAGED LEARNING



@gcjourneys_



GC Journeys

GC JOURNEYS

The **Transformative Experiences** included in every GC undergraduate degree program are:

- The First-Year Experience {FYE}
- The Career Planning Milestones
- A Capstone Course in your major

The **Transformative Experiences** you can **choose from** to personalize your journey are:

- Study Abroad/Study Away
- Community-based Engaged Learning {CbEL}
- Intensive Leadership Experiences
- Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors {MURACE}
- Internships, Field and Clinical-based Practica, and Apprenticeships

The **Essential Skills** you'll seek to master through your courses here are:

1. Civic Engagement
2. Creative Thinking
3. Critical Thinking
4. Ethical Reasoning
5. Global Learning
6. Information Literacy
7. Inquiry and Analysis
8. Integrative Learning
9. Intercultural Knowledge
10. Oral Communication
11. Quantitative Literacy
12. Problem Solving
13. Teamwork
14. Written Communication



Our goal is to help you graduate as:

- curious, critical, and creative problem-solvers
- ethical, reflective, and engaged citizens
- skilled communicators
- service-oriented leaders and professionals who are dedicated to excellence

Discover more at: <http://www.gcsu.edu/gcjournneys>

Where will *your* journey take you?



Why GC Journeys: *What Employers Want*

GC Journeys isn't only about bringing the liberal arts to life; it is also carefully aligned with what employers want. The American Association of College and Universities (AAC&U) surveys employers every few years to discover what knowledge and skills they most want to see from college graduates when they make decisions about who they will hire. Below are some of the findings from the 2018 survey of 1,000 executives and hiring managers from a wide variety of fields across the nation. You should be able to see substantial overlap between the information below and the Essential Skills and Transformative Experiences we emphasize here.

Employer Priorities on Select College Learning Outcomes

Intellectual and Practical Skills

- Oral communication
- Teamwork skills with diverse groups
- Written communication
- Critical thinking and analytic reasoning
- Complex problem solving
- Information literacy
- Innovation and creativity
- Technological skills
- Quantitative reasoning

Very important for recent grads

Executives

Hiring Managers

80%	90%
77%	87%
76%	78%
78%	84%
67%	75%
73%	79%
61%	66%
60%	73%
54%	55%

Personal and Social Responsibility

- Ethical judgment and decision making
- Work independently—set priorities, manage time/deadlines
- Self-motivated—ability to take initiative and be proactive

77%	87%
77%	85%
76%	85%

Integrative and Applied Learning

- Applied knowledge in real-world settings

76%	87%
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GC JOURNEYS

More likely to hire employees with these experiences:

Hiring Managers

<i>Internship/apprenticeship with a company/organization</i>	94%
<i>Field-based project in diverse community</i>	83%
<i>Research project done collaboratively with peers</i>	81%
<i>Service learning project with community organization</i>	78%
<i>Advanced, comprehensive senior project/thesis</i>	76%
<i>Multiple courses requiring significant writing assignments</i>	72%
<i>Study abroad program</i>	47%

More information on the AAC&U Employer Survey can be found [here](#).



What are Transformative Experiences?

Transformative experiences are educational experiences that, when done well, have been shown to have significant impact on learning, grades, graduation, and more. In short, these are the types of educational experiences that transform you.

[Learn more about Transformative Experiences at GCSU!](#)

Transformative Experiences in GC Journeys

While each student will take 5 of these experiences during their time at GCSU, they are divided into two categories: embedded experiences and optional experiences.

Embedded experiences are experiences that all Georgia College & State University students, no matter their major, will complete just by finishing their degree. The optional experiences mean that students can choose 2 of the 5 experiences to complete their journey.

Embedded Experiences

- [First Year Experience](#)
- [Career Planning Milestones](#)
- [Senior Capstone](#)

Optional Experiences

- [Community-based Engaged Learning](#)
- [Intensive Leadership Programs](#)
- [Internships](#)
- [Undergraduate Research](#)
- [Study Abroad/Study Away](#)



GEORGIA COLLEGE
TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

GC JOURNEYS



THE FIRST YEAR
EXPERIENCE (FYE)

First Year Seminars and Experiences

Part of what makes the curriculum at GC unique are the embedded courses such as the GCSU 0001 (FYAS) and GC1Y courses.

How To Complete Your Journey: First Year Experience

The First Year Experience is one of three embedded experiences that is built into the GC curriculum. To “Complete your journey,” for First Year Experience, students need to complete their GCSU 0001 (FYAS) and GC1Y courses. Your instructors can help you determine what to include in your portfolio.

Questions about your First Year? Contact: Lauren Easom, Executive Director of Student Success & Career Development, lauren.easom@gcsu.edu, 478-445-5384

GC JOURNEYS



CAREER PLANNING MILESTONES

Career Milestones

At Georgia College & State University, all undergraduate students are expected to complete a set of career planning benchmarks that follow a four-year career planning model. Known as the GC Career Planning Milestones, these benchmarks give students the opportunity to begin planning and preparing for their careers from their first day at GC.

How To Complete Your Journey: Career Planning Milestones

The Career Planning Milestones is the second embedded Transformative Learning Experience. To “Complete Your Journey:” Career Planning Milestones, students need to meet the Career Planning Milestones for each year (see info graphic below). The Career Center will track students’ completion of career planning activities. More information can be found here on how to complete the Career Planning Milestones: <http://www.gcsu.edu/career/milestones>. Career advisors will help you determine which artifacts best represent your capstone experience and should be included in your portfolio.

Tips:

The advisors in the Career Center are experts at helping students land their dream jobs, so visit them early and often. By working with your Career Center advisor *every year*, over time you will build the skills you need to determine the right career path for you and to ace an interview.

Contact: GCSU Career Center, career.center@gcsu.edu

GC JOURNEYS



CAREER PLANNING MILESTONES

A four-year career plan for
all undergraduate majors



Schedule an appointment today via Unify.
110 Lanier Hall | 478-445-5384 | career.center@gcsu.edu
gcsu.edu/career



GC JOURNEYS



Capstone

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork.

Complete Your Journey: Capstone

The Capstone is the final embedded experience built into GC Journeys. To "Complete Your Journey" for Capstone, you must successfully complete the capstone course for your program/major. Experiences will be determined by the requirements of your department/major. Faculty members mentoring such experiences will help you determine which artifacts best represent your capstone experience and should be included in portfolio.

Contact: Your academic advisor or your academic program head

GC JOURNEYS



Internships

Internships: Internships are typically one-time work or service experiences related to the student's major or career goal. The internship plan generally involves students working in professional settings under the supervision and monitoring of practicing professionals. Internships can be paid or unpaid and the student may or may not receive academic credit for performing the internship.

How to Complete Your Journey: Internship

Internships are one of the optional transformative learning experiences in GC Journeys. To "Complete Your Journey" for internships, you must sign up and complete an approved internship experience for academic credit at GCSU. These may be supported by the academic department or may be secured with assistance from GCSU's Career Center. The Career Center advises students to begin their internship search at least 4 – 6 months before their desired start date. The Career Center uses Handshake to promote local, regional, and national internship opportunities to students. By completing the Career Planning Milestones, GCSU students will have the advantage when they apply for competitive internships. Artifacts may include reflections, work products from the internship, supervisor evaluations, internship experience surveys, final projects, etc. Your internship coordinator/mentor will help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio.

Tips:

94% of hiring managers surveyed said that they would be more likely to hire employees who had completed an internship. In fact, in some programs, such as education and health sciences, internships are a requirement for the degree. What students don't always realize is that participating in an internship is a great option no matter what degree program they are in. Are there internships available for degrees such as English, history, or sociology? Absolutely! Just let the Career Center know you are interested.

Contact: [GCSU Career Center](#), (career.center@gcsu.edu), or your academic program head

GC JOURNEYS



MENTORED
UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH

Undergraduate Research/Mentored Undergraduate Research & Creative Endeavors

(MURACE)- Georgia College & State University aspires to graduate students with creative and problem-solving dispositions that prepare them to be the next leaders of the free world. Georgia College & State University connects teaching excellence with learning beyond the classroom to provide unique undergraduate research experiences for students.

How To Complete Your Journey: Undergraduate Research/MURACE

Undergraduate Research is one of the optional transformative learning experiences in GC Journeys. To “Complete Your Journey,” for mentored undergraduate research, please see your faculty member with whom you are conducting research. Ask about getting course credit for research (you should be able to even sign up for 0 credit hours if you are volunteering). You can seek out these experiences throughout your time at GCSU and even join an undergraduate research circle. Visit [MURACE](#) for more details or talk to your academic department chair or Dean. Mentors should help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio.

Tips:

When you hear the word “research” you may picture a research paper you wrote for a class in high school or college where you found resources on a given topic and synthesized them into a paper. This is SO not that! Mentored undergraduate research is where you can pose a research question no one knows the answer to and then do original research with a mentor here. You might study historical documents to write a biography or conduct a study with rats or with elementary school students. The idea is: you conduct actual research on a question you care about. And you don’t necessarily need to do mentored research in your major. If you have a side interest and you have the background knowledge needed for a mentor to take you on, go for it! You can also get assistance to publish your results or present them at a conference. Attend GCSU Research Day in your first year to get a feel for the work individuals are doing, and visit [MURACE](#) to learn more about how to find a professor to oversee your research.

Contact:

Office of Mentored Undergraduate Research & Creative Endeavors (MURACE) murace@gcsu.edu

Dr. Tsu-Ming Chiang (Director of MURACE) tm.chiang@gcsu.edu

Dr. Kevin Bucholtz (Associate Provost for Student Engagement and Academic Excellence) kevin.bucholtz@gcsu.edu

GC JOURNEYS



Study Abroad/Study Away

The International Education Center (IEC) facilitates and coordinates international academic study, research, and internship opportunities for all Georgia College & State University students, as well as partnerships and exchanges with institutions abroad. Students may study abroad on short-term programs - often with faculty in their majors - or through semester or even academic year-long programs at major universities throughout the world.

Attend a Study Abroad Info Session at the IEC to learn more! No appointment is needed! Visit <https://www.gcsu.edu/international/study-abroad> to find current info session dates and times.

How to Complete Your Journey: Study Abroad/Study Away

Study Abroad/Study Away programs are one of the optional transformative learning experiences available in GC Journeys. To “Complete Your Journey” with Study Abroad/Study Away, simply enroll in and complete a Study Abroad program. Artifacts may include itineraries, reflections, coursework completed for the study abroad course, journals, final papers and/or projects, digital stories, etc. Faculty members mentoring such experiences will help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio. For more information, visit the International Education Center in the Bone House, or at <https://www.gcsu.edu/international/study-abroad>

Tips:

One of the most common misconceptions about study abroad/study away is, “I won’t be able to afford it.” Seriously. Just GO THROUGH THE DOOR! Just walk into the Bone House and say, “I’m interested.” The great staff there will help you find the perfect program and show you just how affordable it really can be. Don’t forget to ask about the many scholarships available!

Contact: The International Education Center- Study Abroad
studyabroadinfo@gcsu.edu



COMMUNITY-BASED
ENGAGED LEARNING

Community Based Engaged Learning/Service Learning

At Georgia College & State University, Community-based Engaged Learning (CbEL) courses require student participation in service projects or community engagement (either on campus or through institutional partnerships with off-campus organizations) and integrate the service experience into course content.

How to Complete Your Journey: Community-based Engaged Learning (CbEL)

Community-based Engaged Learning is one of the optional transformative learning experiences available in GC Journeys. To “Complete Your Journey,” simply enroll and complete any faculty sponsored ENGAGE or CbEL course experience at Georgia College & State University. You are encouraged to seek out these special courses if you are interested in community service, civic engagement, and collaborative partnerships within your local community. Faculty members mentoring CbEL experiences will help you determine which artifacts to include in your portfolio.

Tips:

We use several different terms here: “community-based engaged learning,” “ENGAGE,” and “service learning.” They all mean essentially the same thing, so don’t let that confuse you. Your advisor is a great resource for helping you find a CbEL course that is right for you. But also note that CbEL is not the same as volunteering. Volunteering is a wonderful thing that you should absolutely do, but volunteering is just something you do out of the goodness of your heart, whereas CbEL is about *combining* learning about a course topic *with* benefiting the community. CbEL usually allows you to apply what you are learning in a course to a real-world community issue. What could be better? You get credit for a course you need AND get the opportunity to work on a local project.

Contact: Your academic advisor or academic program head

GC JOURNEYS



Intensive Leadership Experience

The Office of Leadership Programs maintains institution-wide responsibility for management, coordination, and development of all Georgia College & State University leadership programs and initiatives. Beyond GCSU's core leadership programs, which are directed and administered by the Office of Leadership Programs, the staff works collaboratively with members of GCSU's faculty and staff to develop affiliate programs. Affiliate Programs are courses and student programs that engage with leadership-related topics, including mentorship, civic engagement, social justice and inclusion, strategic thought, and global citizenship, and have as their goal developing students as citizens and leaders for the public good.

How to Complete Your Journey: Intensive Leadership Experiences

Intensive Leadership Experiences are one of the optional Transformative Leadership Experiences available in GC Journeys. To "Complete Your Journey," participate in a core or affiliate leadership program. Students may review their options and choose from a range of Georgia College & State University's leadership programs by visiting www.gcsu.edu/leadership. For questions about curricular and co-curricular leadership experiences, contact the Leadership Office.

Tips:

A common misconception about leadership experiences is that they are for outgoing, extraverted people, or that leadership is not for you. In fact, there are all kinds of leaders and leadership styles. Make an appointment with the leadership program team and they will help you find an experience that is right for you.

Contact: Dr. Harold Mock, Director of Leadership Programs (harold.mock@gcsu.edu)



Degree Works - How to Track Your Journey

STEP 1: Log into DegreeWorks, click on “What If”

STEP 2: Select “Transformative Experiences” from Degree drop down menu (do not select anything else)



STEP 3: Click the "Process What-If" button

This screenshot shows the 'What-If' page in the DegreeWorks system. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Catalog', 'FAQ', 'Help', 'Print', and 'Log Out'. Below this, a form contains fields for 'Student ID', 'Name', 'Degree' (set to BS), 'Major' (Exercise Science), 'Classification' (Sophomore), and 'Last Audit' (Today). A yellow arrow points to the 'Process What-If' button. The page is divided into sections: 'Choose Your Different Areas of Study' with dropdowns for Level, Degree, and Academic Year; 'Choose Your Future Classes' with fields for Subject and Number; and 'Chosen Areas of Study' and 'Courses you are considering' with empty boxes and 'Remove' buttons. A copyright notice at the bottom reads: 'Copyright 1995-2018 Ellucian Company L.P. and its affiliates.'

STEP 4: Scroll Down to Review Your GC Journeys Progress

This screenshot shows the 'Degree Progress' page in the DegreeWorks system. It features a progress bar indicating 'Requirements 7%' and a note: 'This is an estimation of your degree progress, which is based on the number of boxes that are checked below.' The main section is titled 'GC Journeys: Transformative Experiences' and lists various milestones and requirements. A table shows completed items like 'Freshman Year Experience: Freshman Seminar' and 'Career Planning Milestone 1'. Below this, a list of requirements is shown with checkboxes and 'Still Needed' status. At the bottom, a footer indicates 'Credits Applied: 63' and 'Classes Applied: 21'. A copyright notice at the bottom reads: 'Copyright 1995-2018 Ellucian Company L.P. and its affiliates.'



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