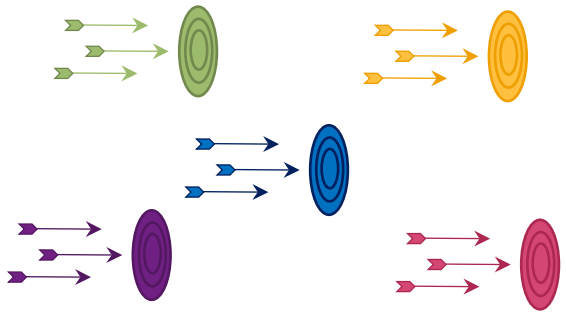
REAL Planning Guide

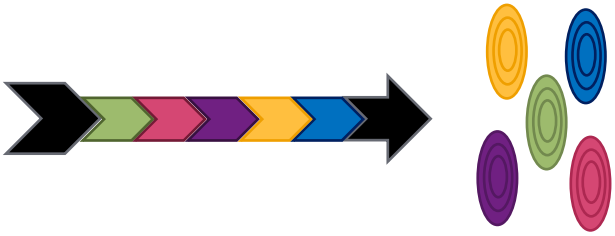
The First Step to Getting REAL.

REAL Basics

Traditional 'menu-based' General Education:
Hit targets using individual courses from menus.



REAL Curriculum:
Hit targets using degree programs
(the right combination of majors/minors).



The same targets are hit; however, this approach becomes more efficient as we are using the knowledge and skills that degree programs are already building. Students immediately ascribe value to their coursework, identify with their courses of study earlier in their academic experience, and get the chance to delve deeper into a subject so they can better apply what they learn after college. The traditional 'menu-based' approach is also built into the REAL Curriculum as an option for students (via REAL Studies minors).

The REAL Curriculum asks both students and faculty to think about programs of study differently. Faculty will want to create effective, relevant, and inspiring programming. Students will want to explore and discover different program options early in their academic careers to forge their own identities. Support services and activities will be developed for smooth and impactful implementation.

How Students Get REAL

STEP 1: ENVISION FUTURES. Students will explore program options at Radford University and identify their interests. An interactive website and activities in pre-Quest, Quest, advising sessions, and the first-year experience will help students make program selections.

STEP 2: SET FOUNDATIONS. Basic writing and quantitative skills are needed by all university students.

Foundational Math Requirement
Foundational Writing Requirement

Options satisfying these requirements include coursework, transfer credit, dual-enrollment credit, placement exams, and other methods for identifying competencies.

STEP 3: BUILD REAL. Students will select a combination of majors and minors such that the 4 learning areas in the REAL Curriculum are covered.

R – Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning

E – Humanistic or Artistic Expression

A – Cultural or Behavioral Analysis

L – Applied Learning

STEP 4: PLACE CORNERSTONES. Additional requirements in writing and personal/professional development help students complete the REAL curriculum.

Students select how they will complete a personal/professional development requirement. Students can do this through coursework options or through engagement activities.

Students are asked to select 2 writing-intensive courses. These courses may be requirements in their major, or their major department may have recommendations about which courses to take.

STEP 5: PATCH CRACKS. Keep in mind:

Students are required to complete 30 credit hours of 100-200 level coursework.
Students may not use the same course to fulfill more than one REAL area.

Program and Course Alignment

Designating Courses

Designations for individual courses include:

FW – Foundational Writing

FM – Foundational Math

R – Quantitative and Scientific Reasoning

E – Humanistic or Artistic Expression

A – Cultural or Behavioral Analysis

L – Applied Learning

PD – Personal/Professional Development Cornerstone

WI – Writing Intensive Cornerstone

To acquire a designation, a course will typically include the associated conditions, learning goals, and learning outcomes (see below). Note that courses will include ALL the associated learning outcomes and not just a portion of them.

Things to know:

1. Don't stretch too much. Awkward chains of logic as to why a course might deserve a designation may become a problem for you later when you try to create assessments.

2. Cornerstone requirements can cover other areas but not Foundation requirements.

3. Be strategic. Creating new courses with the sole intent to cover an area may prove to be an unnecessary burden on your department. You have to sustain these courses.

LEARNING GOALS, OUTCOMES AND CONDITIONS

Designation	Learning Goals	Learning Outcomes	Conditions
FW	To develop a student's understanding of the principles and elements of effective written communication through applied practice, self-evaluation, and revision.	(1) Students employ reading strategies to facilitate written communication. (2) Students engage in the recursive writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading to improve written communication. (3) Students use appropriate vocabulary, mechanics, grammar, and style.	An ENGL-prefixed course will be developed to fulfill this requirement.
FM	To apply the tools of mathematics to conceptualize and solve problems in everyday life.	(1) Students translate information among various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words). (2) Students successfully solve problems using appropriate mathematical tools. (3) Students draw appropriate conclusions based on mathematical evidence.	MATH-prefixed courses will be developed to fulfill this requirement.
R	To apply scientific and quantitative reasoning to questions about the natural world, mathematics, or related areas.	(1) Students apply scientific and quantitative information to test problems and draw conclusions. (2) Students evaluate the quality of data, methods, or inferences used to generate scientific and quantitative knowledge.	
E	To explore humanistic or artistic expression through inquiry or creativity.	(1) Students demonstrate understanding of diverse ideas, languages, products, or processes of humanistic inquiry or artistic expression. (2) Students critically evaluate, synthesize, or create forms of human expression or inquiry.	
A	To examine the context and interactions of culture(s) and/or behavior(s)	(1) Students describe behaviors, beliefs, cultures, social institutions, and/or environments. (2) Students analyze the interactions of behaviors, beliefs, cultures, social institutions, and/or environments.	
L	To explore professional practice through the application of knowledge, skills, and critical reflection.	(1) Students apply acquired knowledge and skills to develop professional identity or professional practice. (2) Students critically reflect on their learning, abilities, experiences, or role within professional contexts.	
PPD	To prepare students for lifelong success, students explore an area of physical, social, emotional, financial, scholarly, spiritual, cultural, and/or professional development.	(1) Students identify a personal or professional goal(s) through engagement in activities or coursework. (2) Students reflect on their progress in achieving a personal or professional development goal(s), including how it affects themselves and/or those around them.	
WI	Through instruction and feedback, students become more adept at producing appropriate and effective written work.	(1) Students demonstrate proficiency in the writing conventions of a discipline. (2) Students communicate through writing their understanding of disciplinary content and/or texts.	(1) Courses substantially integrate sole-authored student writing within the course objectives and assessments. (2) Courses use discipline-specific reading strategies to facilitate effective written communication. (3) Courses engage students in a recursive writing process that includes revision supported by consistent, detailed instruction and the incorporation of feedback.

Assessment Efficiency

Assessing

Now is a great time to update and innovate when it comes to assessment practices. When you claim an area or requirement in the REAL Curriculum, you will need to collect artifacts for assessment purposes. Evaluating the artifacts to ensure your students are meeting the learning goals and outcomes is paramount to your continued success, so it is important to do it effectively and efficiently.

Many faculty are used to collecting artifacts from activities done within a specific class (task X in class Z covers learning outcome Y, so task X is used for assessment). This option is always available, but other options now also exist. Don't forget, *PROGRAMS* cover areas and requirements! While covering an area or requirement partially involves declaring a set of relevant courses, you can collect assessment artifacts from many other places in your program (as long as it is done somewhere).

Some basic tips and ideas…

It's ideal to collect artifacts in required courses. You will want to make sure that every student in a program has a chance to be evaluated. Avoid relying on an elective course to collect artifacts.

You can't expect another department to collect artifacts for you (if using external courses to cover areas or requirements). Be careful to consider how you will assess students in your majors, minors, or certificates.

Collecting artifacts in the 300- or 400-level courses required for REAL area coverage may be efficient. Note that you can conduct assessment in some other required course in your program also (outside the courses used to claim areas).

Sampling can help with efficiency, especially if you have a large number of students to evaluate.

A 'signature assignment' that rarely changes can help with assessment (and also establish a shared identity among your students). Think capstone projects.

Use assessment outcomes to drive innovation and program development. The CITL may offer training programs to help with this. Always think: How can we help students excel?

Consider using or adapting assessment data collected for licensure or accreditation purposes. Double-dipping is encouraged as long as the assessments focus on the designated REAL areas.

Consider consulting with IE&QI as you design your degree program assessment.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Meeting Radford Expectations

As you designate your courses and align your program to the REAL Curriculum, it is important to identify how you will meet the expectations listed in the Radford University Strategic Plan.

Additional Learning Goals and Outcomes

- Students in your degree programs should complete program components which address critical thinking/reasoning skills, written and oral communication skills, and characteristics of professionalism. (Academic Excellence and Research Goal 1A, pg. 18). Think about how you intend to incorporate and assess these in your programs.

- Students should have the opportunity to learn creative problem-solving/reasoning skills through (1) collaboration across degree programs, (2) experiential/high-impact practice and (3) interprofessional experiences. (Academic Excellence and Research Goal 1B, pg. 18). Think about how you might provide these opportunities.

Academic Success

- Radford University students are expected to be independent, effective learners who disseminate knowledge, innovate, and solve problems creatively. Departments should be working towards increasing the number of students engaged in research, scholarship, and creative activities (Student Success Goal 1A, pg. 32). Think about how you might increase these skills.

- Departments should also monitor their courses' DFW rates and identify strategies for improving student outcomes (Student Success Goal 1C, pg. 32). Think about how you might resolve existing issues as you designate courses and align your programs.

- Ensuring courses and programs meet expectations associated with diversity, access, and equity is also important (Student Success Goal 1D, pg. 32). Think about how your existing programs and new programs might meet these expectations.

Breadth and Flexibility

Providing Options for Students

Traditionally, general education requirements help students gain a broader perspective of the world by asking them to take a diverse set of courses from across many disciplines ('breadth of learning'). This is still possible in the REAL Curriculum through the use of the REAL Studies minors. These design-yourself minors give students more flexibility in their programs while still covering REAL areas. Students can select *individual courses* with the proper designations (subject to certain conditions) to acquire a minor.

Minor in Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning. [R]	**Minor in Humanistic and Artistic Expression. [E]**
Minor in Cultural and Behavioral Analysis. [A]	**Minor in Applied Learning. [L]**

Each of these minors has the following requirements:

- Students select any 15 credits of courses with the associated designation, with at least 3 credits at the 300-400 level.
- Coursework must include classes with at least 2 *different* prefixes.
- Students cannot cross-credit courses to simultaneously complete both a 'general studies minor' and a traditional minor/certificate (e.g.: a student cannot use the same course to receive the Minor in Applied Learning *and* the Minor in Business Administration; the student will need to apply a different set of courses to each program).
- Students are allowed to cross-credit courses with major programs.

Departments may wish to inform students about these REAL Studies minors, particularly if acquiring a breadth of study is a part of its department brand.

Tip: Some departments may wish to inform their *major* students that some of the courses they are taking can cross-credit into these special minors. When doing this, it is potentially beneficial (though not required) to limit the number of cross-credits departments recommend applying so students can explore some courses from elsewhere on campus.

Fulfilling the R Area

Here's what you need:

1. At least 9 credit hours of R-designated courses built into your program, with 3 or more credits at the 300-400 level.
2. A plan for assessing the R-area learning goal outcomes.

Learning Goal: To apply scientific and quantitative reasoning to questions about the natural world, mathematics, or related areas.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students apply scientific and quantitative information to test problems and draw conclusions.
2. Students evaluate the quality of data, methods, or inferences used to generate scientific and quantitative knowledge.

Course 1:	Course 2:	Course 3:

Assessment Plan:

Tips:

1. If you are using courses from a specific department outside your own, you must request permission from that department.
2. Any courses you specify to claim the R area CANNOT be used to claim other REAL areas.

Fulfilling the E Area

Here's what you need:

1. At least 9 credit hours of E-designated courses built into your program, with 3 or more credits at the 300-400 level.

2. A plan for assessing the E-area learning outcomes.

Learning Goal: To explore humanistic or artistic expression through inquiry or creativity.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students demonstrate understanding of diverse ideas, languages, products, or processes of humanistic inquiry or artistic expression.

2. Students critically evaluate, synthesize, or create forms of human expression or inquiry.

Course 1:	Course 2:	Course 3:

Assessment Plan:

Tips:

1. If you are using courses from a specific department outside your own, you must request permission from that department.

2. Any courses you specify to claim the E area CANNOT be used to claim other REAL areas.

Fulfilling the A Area

Here's what you need:

1. At least 9 credit hours of A-designated courses built into your program, with 3 or more credits at the 300-400 level.

2. A plan for assessing the A-area learning outcomes.

Learning Goal: To examine the context and interactions of culture(s) and/or behavior(s)

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students describe behaviors, beliefs, cultures, social institutions, and/or environments.

2. Students analyze the interactions of behaviors, beliefs, cultures, social institutions, and/or environments.

Course 1:	Course 2:	Course 3:

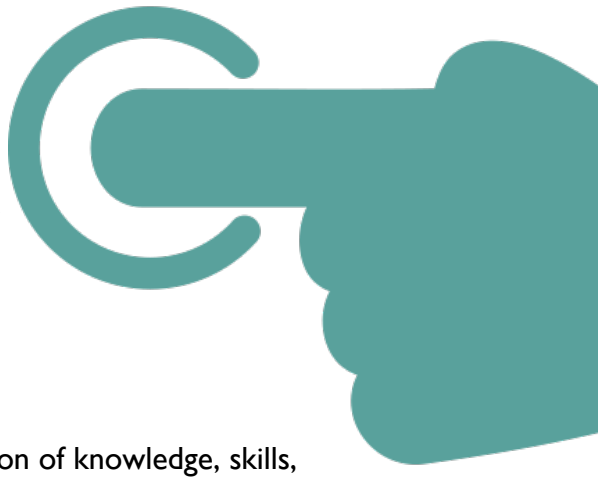
Assessment Plan:

Tips:

1. If you are using courses from a specific department outside your own, you must request permission from that department.

2. Any courses you specify to claim the A area CANNOT be used to claim other REAL areas.

Fulfilling the L Area



Here's what you need:

1. At least 9 credit hours of L-designated courses built into your program, with 3 or more credits at the 300-400 level.

2. A plan for assessing the L-area learning goal and outcomes.

Learning Goal: To explore professional practice through the application of knowledge, skills, and critical reflection.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students apply acquired knowledge and skills to develop professional identity or professional practice.

2. Students critically reflect on their learning, abilities, experiences, or role within professional contexts.

Course 1:	Course 2:	Course 3:

Assessment Plan:

Tips:

1. If you are using courses from a specific department outside your own, you must request permission from that department.

2. Any courses you specify to claim the L area CANNOT be used to claim other REAL areas.

Check Your Work

Be aware of the following conditions:

1. A major program can claim up to 3 REAL areas, unless all 4 REAL areas are required to be fulfilled by accreditation or licensure requirements.

2. A minor program or certificate program can claim up to 2 REAL areas.

3. A minor program and certificate program must include a minimum of 15 total credit hours to be included in the REAL Curriculum. In order to cover 2 REAL areas, a minor or certificate will need a minimum of 18 credits hours (9 for each, with at least three of those at the 300-400 level).

4. No degree program can cover more than 2 REAL areas using a single prefix. Majors that cover a 3rd or 4th area must include other prefixes in their area designation.

5. After areas are declared, the areas NOT covered by a degree program must be clearly communicated to students. Consider telling the student how their major requirements might fit into the REAL Studies minors, or identify complementary majors/minors/certificates in uncovered areas to recommend to your students.

6. You cannot use courses from the Foundational Math (FM) or the Foundational Writing (FW) to cover any of the REAL areas.

7. Have you ensured assessment is done properly?

    a. All students in a program will have the chance to supply artifacts or complete assessments. You have not relied on elective courses/activities to provide assessment artifacts.

    b. If sampling, the sample provides a representative snapshot of your students.

    c. You have not assumed other departments will collect assessment artifacts for you. You are collecting assessment artifacts from or conducting assessment of your own students. Consider consulting with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement for assistance.

HELP KEEP TRACK – ORGANIZE YOUR PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

Fill in the following tables to track how your program fits into the REAL Curriculum.

Program name: _____

Recommended courses to fulfill the Foundational Writing*

Recommended courses to fulfill the Foundational Math*

Courses to cover the R-area	Assessment Plan	Recommendations
Courses to cover the E-area	**Assessment Plan**	
Courses to cover the A-area	**Assessment Plan**	
Courses to cover the L-area	**Assessment Plan**	

Recommended courses/activities to fulfill the Personal/Professional Development Cornerstone**

Recommended courses to fulfill the Writing Intensive Cornerstone**

* An ENGL-prefixed course will be developed to fulfill the FW requirement. The learning outcomes for the FM requirement are associated with MATH courses and configurations. Students may use competency assessment, transfer, dual enrollment, or advance placement to complete these requirements. You only need to fill in this section if your program has requirements that students will use to satisfy the foundations.

** You can make specific recommendations, or simply inform students of required courses/activities within the program that satisfy the cornerstone requirements. Filling in this section is optional.