

ZMU Academics - General Education

IOC Concept and Program Structure

December 2025

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TRAINING AND EDUCATION
TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

This document provides an overview of the ZMU GenEd program in addition to its IOC concept, curriculum and refinements



- 1 Provide **overview of ZMU General Education (GenEd) Structure**
- 2 Define **IOC GenEd Concept**
- 3 Present **IOC GenEd Curriculum Overview**
- 4 Discuss **IOC GenEd Feedback and Refinements**

Agenda

1. GenEd Overview
2. IOC GenEd Concept
3. IOC GenEd Curriculum
4. IOC GenEd Refinements

General Education (GenEd) is a CAA requirement to ensure that students are equipped with common knowledge and skills

General Education Program Overview



DEFINITION BY CAA

General Education is a broad foundation that equips every graduate with **essential skills for the 21st century** through at least 18 credits across humanities, social and natural sciences, and UAE-specific studies

GenEd REQUIRES 6 COURSES (18 CREDIT HOURS)



1 Advanced English



2 Emirati Studies



3 Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Sustainability



Three Elective Courses

Domain

- Humanities
- Social and Behavioral Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Critical Thinking
- Health
- Sustainability
- Technology & Society



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ZMU



1 Align **course content** with **ZMU leadership priorities** while fully respecting Academic Partner (AP) **academic autonomy**



2 Build a shared **cross-Academic Partner curriculum** that strengthens **academic jointery and intellectual coherence**



3 Link GenEd course outcomes that build towards **one coherent leadership portfolio** unique to each cadet



4 Integrate **academic leadership** and skills content **with ZMU's Leadership Development System** (developed across capstone assessments)



GenEd at ZMU has been adapted to ZMU priorities to achieve the ambitions of a bespoke ZMU GenEd program

ZMU General Education Charter

Endorsed by ZMU Commandant
(Jun 2024)

Source: ZMU

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ZMU General Education (GenEd) Concept

ZMU GenEd

Foundational courses delivered to all cadets as part of the ZMU Academic Program - regardless of AP affiliation - based on a **ZMU-tailored curriculum** with defined learning outcomes aligned to a **military and defence context**

ZMU GenEd is in line with ZMU Core Guiding Principles



ZMU GenEd Concept Benefits

- ✓ Purpose-built **GenEd curriculum** meets the unique context of ZMU
- ✓ Centralized **partnership between ZMU and APs** on course content
- ✓ **ZMU has more agency** in defining the courses and expected course outcomes

ZMU GenEd concept has been aligned with the **Academic Partners** in May 2025 through **ZMU GenEd Working Group** (detailed in appendix)

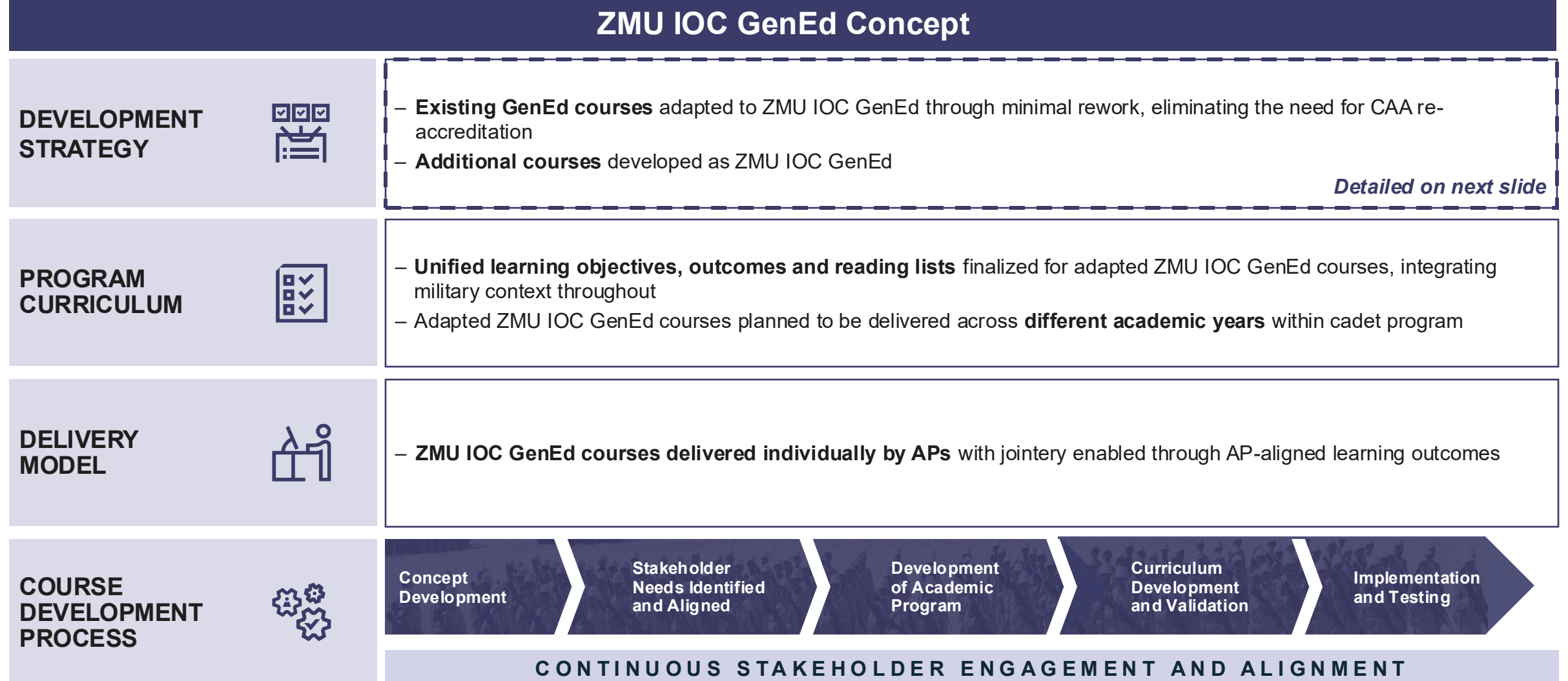
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- 2. IOC GenEd Concept**
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Development of ZMU IOC GenEd concept includes the list of courses with contextually relevant curricula and a process to develop courses

ZMU IOC General Education Concept Components

Non-Exhaustive



At IOC, two ZMU GenEd courses have been successfully implemented, and additional courses are being prepared for rollout

ZMU IOC General Education Development Strategy



Preliminary, Non-Exhaustive

ZMU IOC GenEd Courses	Progress Update	Military Context
English 1 – Writing <i>Implemented</i>	Course will be rolled-out across all three APs in 2026, incorporating feedback from 2025 pilot. Cadet and faculty review in Fall 2025	Focus on Leadership
English 2 – Writing <i>Implemented</i>		Focus on Leadership
Emirati Studies	SUAD assigned to design course in 2026 , to be piloted by all APs in 2027	Focus on Regional Awareness and National Understanding
Innovation and Entrepreneurship		Focus on Leadership and innovation in military relevant settings
Psychology		Focus on critical thinking in defence-adjacent environments
Philosophy		Focus on situational ethics with military relevance

ZMU IOC GenEd Courses		Cadet Cohort Teaching Year (<i>Preliminary</i>)								
		2025			2026			2027		
Activation Plan	English 1 – Writing	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y1	Y2	Y3
	English 2 – Writing	✓			✓			✓		
	Emirati studies	✓			✓			✓		
	Innovation and Entrepreneurship				✓			✓		
	Psychology							✓		
	Philosophy								✓	

☐ ZMU IOC GenEd Concept and Courses agreed to by RA, KU, and SUAD

✓ Offered across all APs
✓ Piloted by SUAD

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To ensure consistency and high-quality design, an overarching curriculum has been developed for each IOC GenEd course

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum Components

IOC GenEd Course Curriculum Components



CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

Learning Objectives

Knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by cadet during the course



E.g., Develop **clear and concise writing skills** for military reports, briefs, and formal communication, ...

Target Outcomes

Measurable results applied or performed by a cadet after course completion



E.g., Cadets will write **persuasively from evidence** in a variety of formats, ...

Suggested Reading List

Academic resources providing **foundational knowledge**, reinforcing course concepts



E.g., Kidder, Rushworth, Moral Courage, ...



Summary for each IOC GenEd course detailed below

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Teaching methodologies to be defined by **respective faculty** for each Academic Partner delivering the course

Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes are modified for a defence context ensuring ZMU GenEd supports cadets' military education (1/2)

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum Summary



Non-Exhaustive

English 1

English 2

Emirati Studies

Learning Objectives

- Develop **leadership focused** foundational and complex military **writing skills**
- Strengthen **early analytical reading** for leadership engagement
- Understand **academic integrity**

- Build clear, **evidence-based arguments** in written communication
- Adapt **writing for purpose and audience** in leadership and military contexts
- Interpret complex texts using **strong analytical reading skills**
- Apply **basic research** and **integrate sources** effectively in writing tasks

- Build **foundational understanding of UAE history** and **compare diverse representations** across sources
- Connect **Emirati identity and heritage** to responsibilities of future officers
- Explore how identity and values shape **early leadership instincts**

Learning Outcomes

- Express **leadership ideas** with clarity and analysis
- Conduct **analysis of leadership media and text**
- Accurately **summarize and paraphrase sources** using basic evaluation skills

- Produce **structured analytical essays** using clear claims, reasoning, and evidence
- Critically **assess sources** and **address assumptions** and counterarguments in writing
- Apply **persuasive and ethical communication** in military writings, including leadership

- Explain the **evolution of UAE development, governance, and social systems**, through differing sources
- Describe how **heritage and identity influence cadet attitudes** toward service and teamwork
- Synthesize course insights through **ZMU leadership development system “My Emirati Leadership Doctrine”**

Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes are modified for a defence context ensuring ZMU GenEd supports cadets' military education (2/2)

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum Summary



Non-Exhaustive

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Psychology

Philosophy

Learning Objectives

- Introduce **design thinking** to help cadets define service or defence problems clearly
- Strengthen skills in **problem definition, idea generation, and solution**
- Encourage **initiative, adaptability, and experimentation** with a **leadership mindset**

- Introduce core concepts in **cognitive, social, and developmental psychology** and link them to **real cadet experience**
- Strengthen cadets' understanding of **bias, motivation, self-regulation and interpersonal influence** to build leadership awareness
- Build ability to analyze **group dynamics, cohesion and communication patterns**

- Build **ethical reasoning skills** and examine **moral traditions and perspective** to **analyze dilemmas** in military context
- Develop competence in **applying ethical frameworks** to **assess moral dilemmas**
- Explore **emerging ethical challenges** to **strengthen reasoning** under future uncertainty

Learning Outcomes

- **Apply design-thinking process to identify needs** and generate solutions using feasibility and impact criteria
- **Demonstrate teamwork, communication, and project-planning skills**
- Connect a real challenge to a proposed solution through **ZMU leadership development system “Innovation for Service Project”**

- Explain, relate and apply **psychological processes** to demonstrate **leadership and decision-making**
- Analyze **group dynamics and behavior** using defined psychological concepts
- Integrate insights into personal identity through **ZMU leadership development system “My Leadership Behavioral Doctrine”**

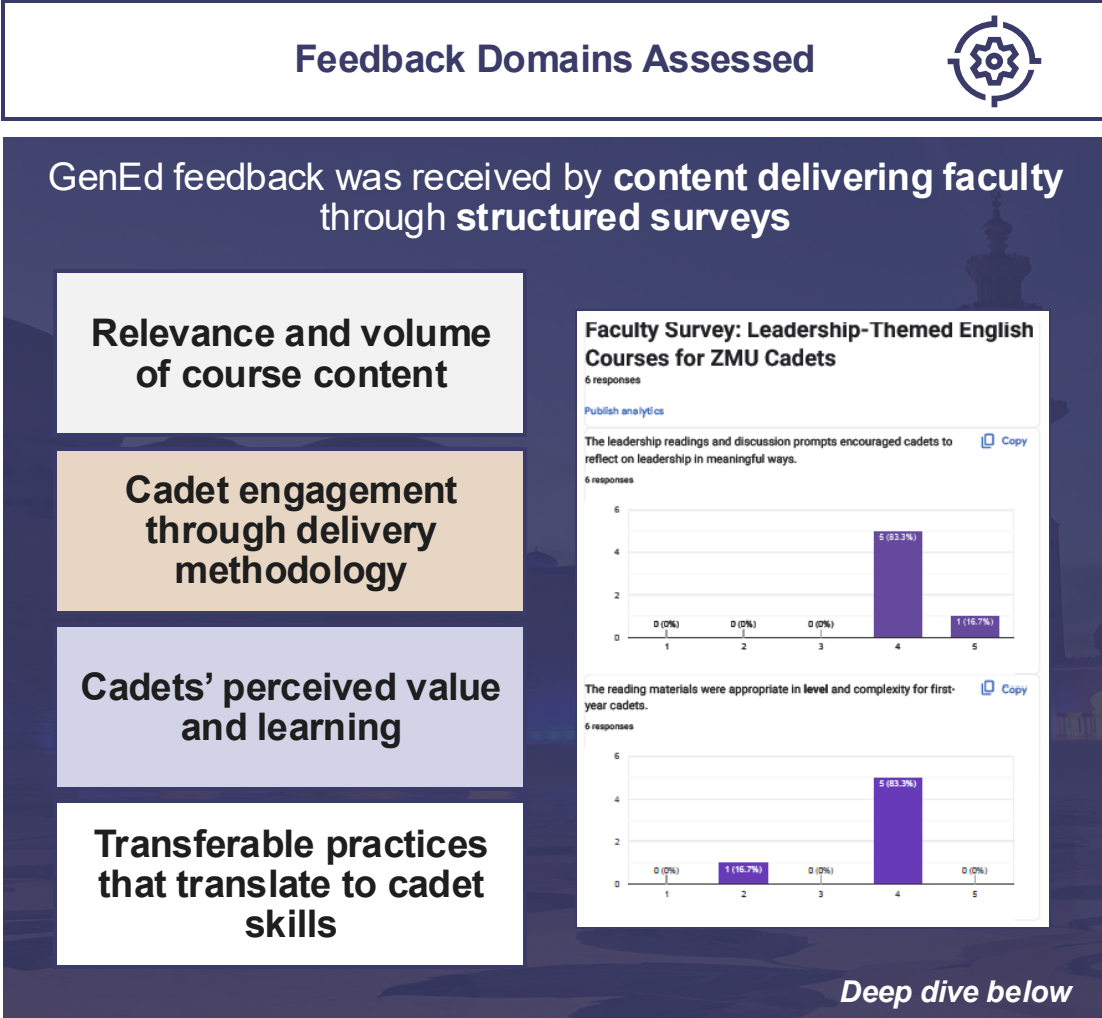
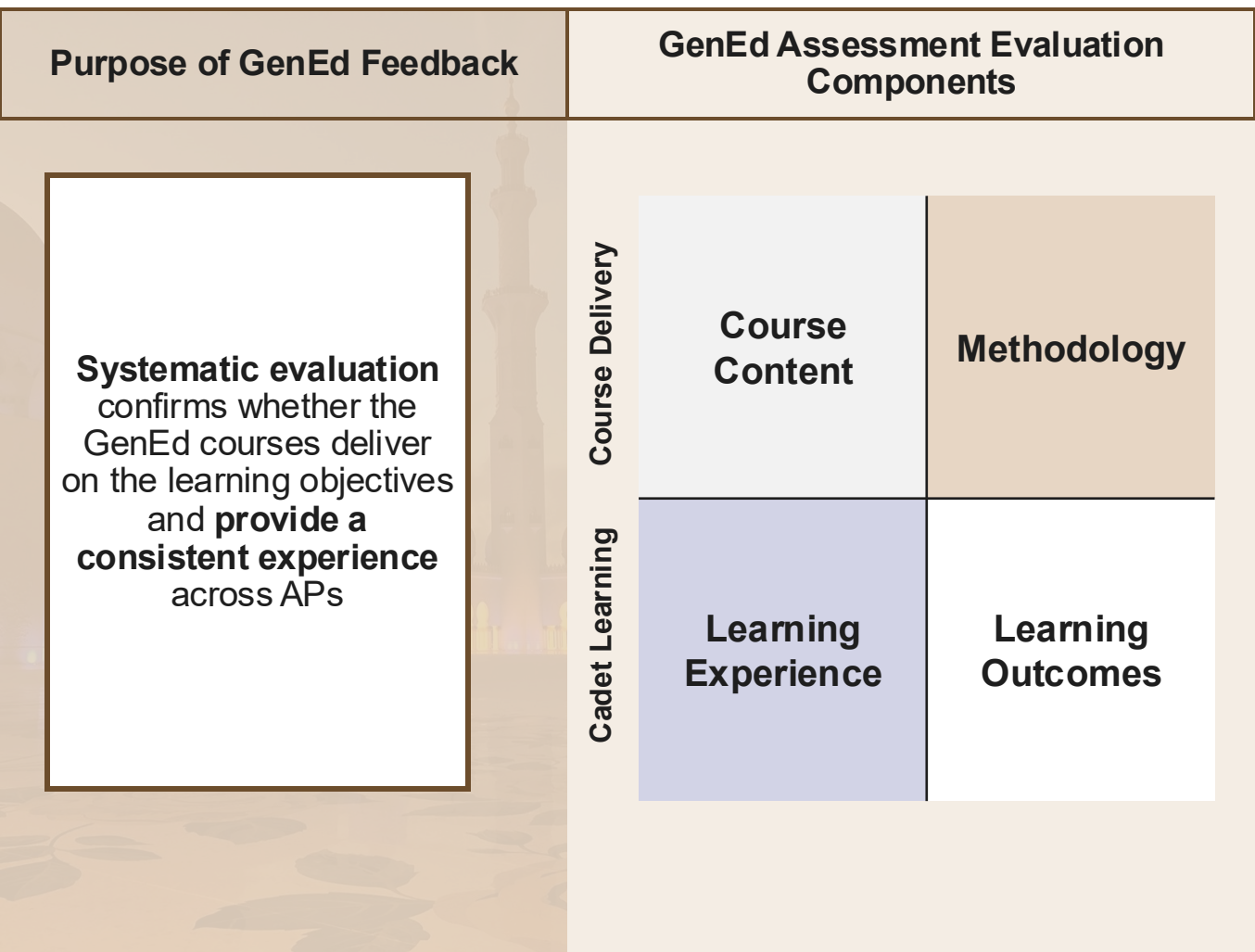
- Evaluate **arguments** and **assess competing moral claims** in leadership cases
- Apply **ethical frameworks** to **analyze dilemmas** involving conflict, pressure, or new technologies
- Synthesize course value into a personal identity through **ZMU leadership development system “Ethical Leadership Framework”**

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Systematic evaluation assesses whether the ZMU IOC GenEd courses deliver on their objectives

GenEd Feedback Approach





The Q4 2025 survey reflects successful course delivery and cadet learning practices and identifies proposed modifications for 2026

GenEd 2025 Survey Results

Source: ZMU, Academic Partners

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برنامج التطوير
في التدريب والتعليم

Course Delivery

COURSE CONTENT



- Cadets were drawn to **pragmatic topics** on leadership and military themes that led to personal reflection
- Volume and pace of course content was challenging for some cadets, with feedback that **UAE/MENA content was limited**

DELIVERY METHODOLOGY



- Using **multimodal materials** (case studies, podcasts etc.) **supported learning and writing development**
- Topics, such as transactional versus transformational concepts, were **disengaging for cadets when delivered as pure theory**

Cadet Learning

LEARNING EXPERIENCE



- Comprehension of complex leadership **topics benefited greatly from shorter readings** followed by group discussions
- **Limited alignment between cadet military training and course curriculum** presented a missed opportunity to unify cadets' overarching military experience

LEARNING OUTCOMES



- Faculty observed **consistency in argumentative writing, shared standard of academic integrity** and, analytical writing through practices like evidence-driven framework and structured paraphrasing
- **Cadets perceived limited practical application** due to limited contextually relevant materials

Proposed Modifications

- **Increase UAE/MENA materials**, military case studies, and pragmatic course content

- **Include additional visual aids** and interviews with UAE military officers to enhance cadet engagement

- **Introduce workshops between Military Training Wing and APs** to unify cadet learning outcomes

- **Include greater contextually relevant topics** like social media, technology etc. to increase cadet interest

Academic Partners have suggested increased cross-AP collaboration throughout course delivery for continuous alignment to address feedback throughout the semester

Next steps include briefing ZMU Leadership on IOC GenEd, updating ENG1 and ENG2 course curriculum and finalizing 2026 piloted courses curricula

Next Steps

Step
1

Brief **ZMU Leadership** on IOC
GenEd update and
refinements

Step
2

Finalize **English 1 and English 2
Curriculum** based on **faculty
feedback**

Step
3

Align with Academic Partners
on **final curriculum** for Emirati
Studies and Philosophy



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Appendix

- ZMU General Education Working Group Overview
- ZMU GenEd Course Curriculum

Appendix

- **ZMU General Education Working Group Overview**
- ZMU GenEd Course Curriculum

ZMU General Education Curriculum (GenEd) Working Group has defined objectives and membership from all Academic Partners

2025 ZMU GenEd Working Group

Source: ZMU

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ZMU GenEd Objective

*To develop and implement a unified **General Education (GenEd) framework** for **IOC and FOC** that designs core curriculum for ZMU officer cadets and develop an **assessment and feedback framework** for continuous improvement*

Membership

ZMU	KU	SUAD	RA	Other
– Dr. Shamma Al Naqbi (ZMU Directorate of Academic Affairs)	– Dr. Ted Burkett (Director, General Education Program)	– Proscovia Svard (Professor) – Celia Ouali (Professor) – Dr. Alexandra Dimitri (Project Lead ZMU)	– Dr. Deena Elsori (Program Chair, General Education) – Dr. Warren Chin (Program Chair, Defence and Security)	Permanent Members may invite additional functional representatives or other support as needed based on meeting agenda

Appendix

- ZMU General Education Working Group Overview
- **ZMU GenEd Course Curriculum**

English 1 builds clear, disciplined writing and early analytical skills essential for effective communication and leadership as future officers

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum – English 1



Non-Exhaustive

Learning Objectives



- **Build foundational academic and professional military writing skills** for clear communication as future officers
- **Develop leadership-focused expression**, helping cadets articulate ideas with clarity, purpose, considering military communication norms
- **Strengthen early analytical reading and source-evaluation habits** that support engagement with leadership and regional texts
- **Encourage revision, reflection, and structured argumentation**, preparing cadets for more complex writing, speaking, and briefing tasks in later courses
- **Understand key principles of academic integrity** in writing

Learning Outcomes



- **Express ideas with clarity and purpose across leadership genre**, demonstrating analysis through written formats including brief reflections, personal leadership statements, and short explanatory pieces
- **Analyze and contrast an array of writings** and media on leadership
- **Summarize and interpret texts** using accurate paraphrasing, key-idea identification, and **early source-evaluation techniques** appropriate for first-year cadets

Reading List for 2026



- “Sheikh Zayed: The Making of a Great Leader” (Gulf News, 2018)
- “In Praise of Followers” - Robert Kelley (HBR)
- “Why Emotional Intelligence Is Crucial for Effective Leadership” (Forbes)
- “Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe” - Simon Sinek (TED Talk)
- “Charisma in Politics” - Zsolt Feher (Science of Personality podcast)
- Excerpts from David Hackworth’s About Face
- Excerpts from Anton Myrer’s Once an Eagle

English 2 strengthens cadets' ability to construct evidence-based, leadership-relevant writing for academic and military contexts

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum – English 2



Non-Exhaustive

Learning Objectives



- Strengthen cadets' ability to **construct clear, logical arguments** supported by evidence and sound reasoning
- **Introduce rhetorical awareness and audience sensitivity** through leadership- and military-relevant writing tasks
- **Deepen analytical reading skills** by engaging with more complex texts, viewpoints, and varied source types
- **Develop disciplined research and source-integration practices** through applied assignments, including expository writing and leadership-focused tasks

Learning Outcomes



- **Write structured analytical essays** presenting clear claims, coherent reasoning, and well-integrated evidence across multiple sources
- **Produce writing that critically evaluates source credibility**, assesses assumptions, and responds to counterarguments with clarity and discipline
- **Apply persuasive and ethical communication skills** in leadership-oriented genres, including expository responses to military scenarios and decision briefs

Reading List for 2026



- “Sheikh Mohammed's 10 Important Rules for Leadership” (Khaleej Times, 2019)
- “Servant Leadership” - Admiral Linda Fagan, ReThinking with Adam Grant podcast
- “Great Teams Are About Personalities, Not Just Skills” (HBR)
- “Will Your Personality Make You a Successful Employee or Leader?” (Psychology Today)
- “Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership” (Economic Times)
- “The Study of Leadership Theories: Great Leaders Are Made, Not Born” (Law Practice Magazine)

Emirati Studies is a leadership-focused study of how Emirati identity, heritage, and national vision shape the responsibilities of future officers

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum – Emirati Studies



Preliminary, Non-Exhaustive

Learning Objectives



- **Build foundational understanding of UAE history, society, institutions, and values, through diverse sources**
- **Connect heritage, unity, and national vision** to the responsibilities of future officers
- **Develop historical-narrative analysis skills** by comparing how different sources represent the UAE and its national stories
- **Explore how identity and values inform early leadership instincts**, laying groundwork for later ethical, leadership, and strategic learning

Learning Outcomes



- **Explain how UAE development, governance, and social systems have evolved**
- **Describe how elements of Emirati history and heritage shape their early attitudes toward service**, teamwork, and responsibility as cadets
- **Analyze differing representations of Emirati identity** across various sources
- Synthesize course insights into a personalized **“My Emirati Leadership Doctrine,”** articulating their identity, values, and leadership philosophy, grounded in Sheikh Zayed’s legacy

Reading List



- “MOE Contemporary Emirati Studies Textbook” (2024 edition)
- UAE Vision 2021, We the UAE 2031, Centennial 2071
- Selected MOFA briefs on UAE domestic and foreign policy
- Excerpts from UAE leadership speeches on identity, unity, and service
- Government archival videos on UAE history, development, and heritage
- Curated national narratives from official media and international outlets

Preliminary Curriculum to be piloted in 2026 by SUAD

Innovation & Entrepreneurship course introduces cadets to design-thinking and problem-solving

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum – Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Preliminary, Non-Exhaustive

Learning Objectives



- **Introduce design thinking** to help cadets identify and define defence- or service-related problems with clarity and purpose
- **Strengthen skills in defining problems**, generating ideas, and evaluating solution pathways
- **Encourage initiative, adaptability, and thoughtful experimentation** in service-oriented contexts
- **Cultivate a leadership mindset** that links creativity, initiative, and service, with innovation

Learning Outcomes



- **Apply a structured design-thinking process to identify a service or defence need**, analyze constraints, and generate a solution
- **Demonstrate effective teamwork, communication, and project-planning skills** through collaborative problem-solving tasks
- **Evaluate solution options** using criteria such as feasibility, impact, alignment with UAE priorities, and
- Produce a final **Innovation for Service Project** that links a real challenge to a proposed solution and articulates how their approach reflects their emerging leadership identity

Reading List



- “Change by Design” - Tim Brown
- “Creative Confidence” - Tom Kelley & David Kelley
- “The Innovator’s DNA” - Jeff Dyer, Hal Gregersen & Clayton Christensen
- “The Art of Innovation” - Tom Kelley
- “Flashes of Thought” - H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
- “Design Thinking Comes of Age” - Jon Kolko
- “Start With Why” - Simon Sinek
- “Range: How Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World” - David Epstein

Suggested Curriculum – Pending finalization by SUAD

Psychology course provides cadets the core psychological tools essential for effective leadership by analyzing how people think and behave

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum – Psychology

Preliminary, Non-Exhaustive

Learning Objectives



- **Introduce core concepts in cognitive, social, and developmental psychology** that shape how individuals think, perceive, decide, and act
- **Strengthen cadets' understanding of bias, motivation, self-regulation,** and interpersonal influence to build foundational leadership awareness
- **Develop the ability to analyze group dynamics,** cohesion, and communication patterns
- Prepare cadets for advanced leadership training by **linking behavioral science to real cadet-life scenarios**

Learning Outcomes



- **Explain key psychological processes** - including bias, motivation, and emotion - and relate them to leadership and decision-making scenarios
- **Analyze team behavior and group dynamics** using frameworks such as self-efficacy, group development, and psychological safety
- **Apply psychological concepts to evaluate decisions** made under stress, uncertainty, or social pressure
- Produce a **"My Leadership Behavioral Doctrine"** that integrates course insights with their identity and responsibilities as future officers

Reading List



- "Mistakes Were Made (but Not by Me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions and Hurtful Acts" - Tavis and Aronson
- "Thinking, Fast and Slow" - Daniel Kahneman
- "Leadership and Self-Deception" - Arbing Institute
- "The Social Animal" - Elliot Aronson
- "Mindset" - Carol Dweck
- "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Chang" - Albert Bandura
- "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups" - Bruce Tuckman
- "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams" - Amy Edmondson

Suggested Curriculum – Pending finalization by SUAD

Philosophy course equips cadets with ethical reasoning tools to analyze various dilemmas and apply them on real-life military scenarios

ZMU IOC General Education Curriculum – Philosophy



Preliminary, Non-Exhaustive

Learning Objectives



- **Build foundational ethical reasoning skills** through analysis of dilemmas involving loyalty, responsibility, and uncertainty in military contexts
- **Examine diverse moral traditions and perspectives** to deepen understanding of virtue, character, and leadership
- **Develop competence in using structured ethical frameworks** to analyze dilemmas involving loyalty, responsibility, and uncertainty
- **Explore emerging ethical challenges** such as AI and climate change, developing the capacity to **navigate future uncertainty**

Learning Outcomes



- **Evaluate arguments, identify assumptions, and assess competing moral claims** in philosophical and applied leadership cases
- **Apply ethical frameworks to analyze moral dilemmas** involving conflicting expectations, group pressures, or emerging technologies, demonstrating clarity of reasoning
- Articulate a personal “**Ethical Leadership Framework**” synthesizing course readings, values, and cadet identity as future UAE officers

Reading List



- “The Coming Wave: AI, Power, and Our Future” - Mustafa Suleyman
- “Defining Moments: When Managers Must Choose Between Right and Right” - Joseph Badaracco
- “Just and Unjust Wars” - Michael Walzer (5th edition)
- “Revival of the Religious Sciences - The Formation of Character” - Al-Ghazali (Book XXII)
- “The Ethical Algorithm” - Kears and Roth
- “Moral Courage” - Rushworth Kidder
- “A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Chang” - Stephen M. Gardiner

Preliminary Curriculum to be piloted in 2026 by SUAD



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