

FIVE BIG IDEAS FOR DIPLOMA IN GENERAL STUDIES

If you are pursuing the **Diploma in General Studies** program, please note that this program offers a wide flexibility in the way that you, the student, design your own educational path. Given this, International Advising wants to assist you in some critical reflections on your course planning with 5 Big Ideas. Please take a moment to ponder these guiding questions for yourself:

1. **What do I want to get out of my education experience at KPU? What do I need to do to get there?**
2. **What skills or knowledge do I want to develop at KPU in order to achieve my career goals?**

Big Idea #1: Two credentials in 60 credits?

Did you know that with careful course selection, it may be possible to complete a certificate alongside the Diploma in General Studies? This is possible due to [Policy AC 14, 7 d, multiple credentials– Second Credentials](#).

What are some benefits of getting 2 credentials? While the Diploma in General Studies can be used for PGWP application, it does not provide a specialty. A specific certificate may assist you in learning industry-specific skills and demonstrate proficiency to a future employer.

These are 7 certificates that may fit well with the Diploma in General Studies:

1. [Certificate in Non-Governmental Organizations and Nonprofit Studies](#) – This [program](#) prepares students for voluntary and entry-level work at NGOs, drawing on courses from Arts, Business, and possibly Science which ensures familiarity with financial management and accountability, in addition to a background in the innovation and social values often associated with the sector. Check out this [video](#) and [career opportunities](#)!

If you started in a different diploma and have now changed to General Studies, you may have already started to meet some or all of the requirements of the certificate in the same field:

2. Diploma in Computer Information Systems → [Certificate in Computer Information Systems](#)
3. Diploma in Accounting → [Certificate in Accounting](#)
4. Diploma in Business Management, Business Administration, or Marketing Management → [Certificate in General Business Studies](#)
5. Diploma in Criminology → [Certificate in Criminology](#) – check out [career & volunteer opportunities](#)
6. Diploma in Fine Arts → [Certificate in Fine Arts](#) – if you wish to build an art portfolio
7. Associate of Arts Degree → [Certificate in Arts](#) – If you plan to do 2 ENGL courses

Even if you started directly into General Studies, it may be possible to complete a certificate with your Diploma. Explore the certificates above, and discuss your ideas with an Advisor. Your Advisor can assist you to carefully check important criteria to see if you might be eligible. <https://www.kpu.ca/international/advising>

Big Idea #2: Choosing Courses now for Future Programs

Do you have a C or better in your courses? You may want to consider an [Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies](#) over the Diploma in General Studies. The [Associate of Arts](#) is a recognized degree in the province of British Columbia, and may be helpful if you plan to continue to a Bachelor of Arts degree in the future. As well, if you are particularly interested in a field of Arts, you may wish to take the required courses in order to do an AA in another subject instead of General Studies. For example, AA in Criminology, Asian Studies, etc.

You may wish to discuss your ideas about education after your Diploma in General Studies with an International Advisor.

Big Idea #3: Select Courses based on a Theme or Topic

Did you know you can course plan according to the themes you want to explore in your KPU education. Use the “[Search Courses](#)” option on the left hand column of the [University Calendar](#) to search courses across departments that are related to a theme, topic, or idea.

For example, if you were interested in exploring Indigenous themes in your studies, you can type in “Indigenous” and the tool will pull up all courses that are related to this. As you can see below, courses on Indigenous themes span widely across departments like ANTH, CRIM, ENGL, and INDG, and more.

The screenshot displays the 'COURSE SEARCH' interface. On the left, the 'Search Courses' section has a search box containing 'indigenous' and a 'SEARCH' button. Below it is the 'ADVANCED SEARCH' section with three dropdown menus: 'Any Subject', 'Any Faculty', and 'Course Attributes'. On the right, the 'Search Results' section shows 'Found 32 courses' with a 'Reset Search' link. A list of course results is shown, including:

Course ID	Course Title
ANTH 2140	Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia
ANTH 2142	Indigenous Peoples in Canada
ARTH 2124	Indigenous Art
CRIM 4240	Indigenous Peoples and Justice
CRIM 4245	Indigenous Activism
ENGL 3390	Studies in Indigenous Literature and Cultural Expression
INDG 1100	Introduction to Indigenous Studies
INDG 3155	Indigenous Perspectives on Settler Colonial Societies

Big Idea #4: How far along are you in developing Essential Academic and Workforce Skills?

In your program, you are given opportunities to learn and demonstrate essential skills at an appropriate level. It is up to you, the learner, to make the most out of these activities. [Policy AC9](#) covers the **Essential Skills** in KPU curriculum:

- a. **Creative Thinking and Problem Solving Skills:** Recognizes problems and generates new ideas; devises and implements plan of action.
- b. **Oral Skills:** Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal/non-verbal messages and other cues. Organizes ideas and communicates orally.
- c. **Interpersonal Skills:** Works with others effectively.
- d. **Teamwork and Leadership Skills:** Participates as member of a team. Contributes to the group effort and success.
- e. **Personal Management & Entrepreneurial Skills:** Displays personal ethics, adaptability, sociability, and resource management skills.
- f. **Writing Skills:** Communicates written thoughts, ideas and information in appropriate documents.
- g. **Reading and Information Skills:** Locates, understands and interprets written information in a variety of formats.
- h. **Visual Literacy:** Organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects and other information.
- i. **Mathematical Skills:** Performs basic computations. Approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques.
- j. **Intercultural Skills:** Works well with people from diverse backgrounds. Respects individual differences.
- k. **Technological Skills:** Works with a variety of technologies.
- l. **Citizenship and Global Perspective:** Integrates an awareness of how social, organizational, and global issues are interrelated with individual and local concerns.

How can your educational choices influence your career and work opportunities? For one, it can help you develop transferable skills. Have a look at the World Economic Forum's Top 10 Skills of 2025 ([source](#)):

Top 10 skills of 2025

- Type of skill
- Problem-solving
 - Self-management
 - Working with people
 - Technology use and development

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-  Analytical thinking and innovation
 -  Active learning and learning strategies
 -  Complex problem-solving
 -  Critical thinking and analysis
 -  Creativity, originality and initiative
 -  Leadership and social influence
 -  Technology use, monitoring and control
 -  Technology design and programming
 -  Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
 -  Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation

Source: Future of Jobs Report 2020, World Economic Forum.

Big Idea #5: Take Advantage of Experiential Learning Opportunities

As a polytechnic university, one of the things that makes KPU special is the opportunity for experiential learning. The Faculty of Arts offers a number of courses where you do hands-on, real-life projects, and other engaging learning activities. Start exploring some of our unique courses here: <https://www.kpu.ca/arts/experiential-learning>

Surrey CityLab - <https://www.kpu.ca/arts/policy-studies/citylab>

Conclusion

You made it to the end! You may be excited about these opportunities, and International Advising looks forward to chatting with you soon. We highly encourage you to book an appointment with an International Advisor for course planning. If you are considering working on a certificate as well, it will be imperative that you discuss this with an Advisor. <https://www.kpu.ca/international/advising>