Courses satisfying in Area E need to address physiological/health, psychological, and social considerations and must draw on findings from the biological, behavioral, and social sciences. Appropriate Area-E courses do not spend inordinate amounts of time on college-specific topics or "study skills."

Physical activity courses (except for special-topics or directed studies courses) are acceptable in Area E, as long as the students move and are instructed/supervised/coached by the faculty member (or designee) when doing so.

Students may not, however, complete Area E using only physical activity or other skill-acquisition courses. All colleges that list physical-activity courses in Area E have, as they must, a limitation on the number of physical-activity units that can count toward Area E. While integration of instruction in physical activity into "courses with broader purpose" is preferred, the GE-Breadth Advisory Committee in 1982 explicitly allowed colleges instead to limit the amount of physical-activity credit applicable to Area E.

When a physical-activity course is submitted and accepted, the college is told, "This course is accepted in Area E with the usual unit limitation on physical-activity courses."