



School of General Studies in Tertiary Institutions: A Panacea for Students' Holistic Educational Training and National Growth and Development in Nigeria

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Abstract: *This paper examines the role of the School of General Studies (GS) in Nigerian higher education institutions as a vital instrument for holistic education and sustainable national development. General Studies programmes are designed to complement students' specialized disciplines by equipping them with transferable competencies such as civic responsibility, critical and creative thinking, ethical reasoning, entrepreneurial skills, and effective communication. Despite their relevance, GS programmes in Nigeria are often undervalued, underfunded, and inconsistently implemented across universities. Adopting a mixed-methods research approach, the study draws on document analysis, surveys, and semi-structured interviews to assess curriculum content, teaching practices, and perceived outcomes of GS courses in selected institutions. Findings indicate that GS contributes significantly to students' civic orientation, intercultural awareness, ethical consciousness, and soft skills required for 21st-century employability. Nonetheless, persistent challenges were identified, including inadequate funding, lack of curriculum harmonization, limited pedagogical innovation, low student engagement, and insufficient professional training for academic staff. The study recommends curriculum standardization across institutions, increased funding for GS units, continuous professional development for lecturers, and the integration of contemporary competencies such as digital literacy, problem-solving, and entrepreneurship into GS curricula. It argues that repositioning GS as a core rather than peripheral component of tertiary education will enable Nigerian universities to produce well-rounded graduates capable of excelling professionally while contributing to democratic governance, social cohesion, and economic transformation. This research contributes to ongoing debates on higher education reform in Nigeria by demonstrating that a revitalized General Studies programme can bridge graduate skills gaps, foster civic responsibility, and serve as a catalyst for sustainable national growth and development.*

Keywords: *General Studies, Holistic Education, Tertiary Institutions, Curriculum Reform, Employability, Civic Responsibility, National Development, Nigeria.*

1. Introduction

Education remains one of the most potent instruments for national growth, social transformation, and human capacity development. In Nigeria, the university system has historically been tasked with producing graduates who are not only proficient in their chosen disciplines but who also embody the civic, ethical, and intellectual qualities required for national progress. Within this vision, General Studies (GS) also commonly referred to as General Education or the General Studies Programme (GSP) has emerged as a cornerstone of tertiary education. It is a compulsory curriculum component introduced to ensure that graduates acquire broad-based knowledge beyond the confines of their specialized fields (Okebukola, 2017; Adeyemi, 2020).

The conceptualization of General Studies in Nigeria traces back to policy initiatives of the National Universities Commission (NUC), which sought to align higher education curricula with the

broader developmental needs of the nation. According to the NUC (2016, 2019), General Studies is designed to nurture a well-rounded graduate who is technically competent in his or her discipline while also being ethically responsible, civically engaged, and adaptable to the demands of a globalized workforce. Courses under the GS umbrella typically include communication in English, philosophy and logic, history and philosophy of science, entrepreneurial studies, information technology, and Nigerian peoples and culture. These courses are strategically intended to cultivate soft skills, cultural awareness, moral values, and critical reasoning, competencies that are increasingly recognized as indispensable in the 21st-century knowledge economy (Afolabi, 2018; Olatunji & Akintoye, 2022).

The rationale for embedding GS in tertiary institutions is multidimensional. First, it addresses the persistent concern that many Nigerian graduates possess narrow technical expertise but lack transferable skills such as problem-solving, ethical reasoning, teamwork, and communication, which are essential for employability and leadership (Edewor, 2021). Second, GS courses serve as a vehicle for inculcating national identity, unity, and civic responsibility in students drawn from diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. In this sense, GS supports the ideological and cultural integration of Nigeria's pluralistic society, thereby contributing to peacebuilding and sustainable national development (Agboola, 2019; Nwosu, 2023).

At the global level, the relevance of General Studies aligns with UNESCO's advocacy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasizes holistic and interdisciplinary learning approaches that equip students with the competencies to address social, economic, and environmental challenges (UNESCO, 2020). By fostering broad-mindedness, ethical sensitivity, and cross-disciplinary literacy, GS programmes ensure that Nigerian universities remain responsive to both local realities and global transformations in higher education. This dual focus highlights GS as a strategic intervention for producing graduates who are not merely employees but also critical thinkers, innovators, and agents of social change.

Despite these strengths, the GS programme has been a subject of scholarly debate and public discourse. Critics argue that GS courses are often treated by students as peripheral or "non-essential," leading to apathy, absenteeism, and superficial engagement (Adebayo & Salami, 2019). Furthermore, challenges such as inadequate funding, large class sizes, limited instructional materials, and insufficiently trained lecturers have constrained the effectiveness of GS delivery across many Nigerian universities (Ogunleye, 2021). On the other hand, proponents contend that when well-implemented, GS serves as the bedrock of holistic education, equipping students with lifelong skills and fostering resilience in the face of Nigeria's socio-economic challenges.

From the perspective of national development priorities, General Studies remains indispensable. The Federal Government of Nigeria continues to emphasize graduate employability, entrepreneurial competence, and civic responsibility in policy frameworks such as the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2018). In this context, GS courses contribute to bridging the gap between academic knowledge and societal needs, thereby enhancing the relevance of university education. By integrating entrepreneurial education, digital literacy, and cultural studies, GS plays a direct role in preparing graduates for participation in Nigeria's economic diversification agenda, democratic governance, and social cohesion (Adamu & Akinola, 2024).

In summary, the introduction of General Studies into Nigeria's tertiary education curriculum was not accidental but a deliberate strategy to address the shortcomings of discipline-specific training while fostering national unity and holistic personal development. The programme continues to play a vital role in shaping graduates who are competent, versatile, and attuned to the developmental aspirations of the nation. Thus, the central claim of this study is that General Studies remains a critical panacea for producing holistic graduates whose skills and values are aligned with Nigeria's quest for sustainable national growth and development.

2. Conceptual Review

Holistic education is an educational philosophy that attends to the whole person, intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative, and spiritual potentials. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of knowledge, personal growth, and social responsibility. In the Nigerian tertiary education context, this philosophy translates into the design and delivery of General Studies (GS)

programmes that seek to nurture not only academic competence but also civic values, ethical consciousness, and employability skills.

General Studies can therefore be conceptualized as an institutionalized framework for operationalizing holistic education at the university level. It provides students with a broader worldview beyond their specialized fields of study, enabling them to situate their disciplinary expertise within wider societal, cultural, and ethical contexts. Through courses in communication skills, philosophy, history, science, and entrepreneurship, GS seeks to develop students' critical thinking, civic orientation, cultural awareness, and social responsibility.

Key concepts relevant to this paper include holistic education (Miller, 2017), which emphasizes the balanced development of the learner's intellectual and moral faculties; general education (Cross & Angelo, 2016), which highlights the importance of broad-based learning across disciplines; and national development, understood here as the improvement of socio-economic indicators including productivity, innovation, governance, and social cohesion that education strongly influences.

In this framework, General Studies is not merely an academic add-on but a strategic tool for human capacity building. It supports the production of graduates who are not only skilled in their professional areas but also equipped with transferable soft skills such as communication, teamwork, ethical reasoning, and problem-solving. Furthermore, GS courses aim to cultivate a sense of national identity and civic duty, preparing graduates to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's developmental aspirations.

By positioning General Studies within the dual lenses of holistic education and national development, this study underscores its relevance as a platform for producing well-rounded graduates who can respond to the dynamic challenges of contemporary society.

3. Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on two key theoretical frameworks: Human Capital Theory and the Holistic Education Framework. Both theories provide complementary lenses through which the role of General Studies in Nigerian tertiary institutions can be understood, not only as a tool for academic enrichment but also as an investment in national development.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, pioneered by Theodore Schultz (1961) and advanced by Gary Becker (1964), posits that education is an investment in human capabilities that yields measurable economic returns. According to this theory, knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through formal education enhance individuals' productivity, which in turn drives economic growth and national development. Becker (1964) argued that just as investments in physical capital (such as machinery or infrastructure) increase output, so too do investments in human beings through education, training, and health.

Applied to the Nigerian context, General Studies can be seen as a critical dimension of human capital investment. While specialized disciplines (e.g., engineering, medicine, law) produce technical competencies, GS programmes impart transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, and civic responsibility, which enhance adaptability in the labor market. In a world increasingly characterized by rapid technological change, globalization, and uncertainty, such transferable skills are essential for lifelong employability.

Empirical evidence supports this perspective. Studies have shown that graduates with strong general education backgrounds are more likely to demonstrate creativity, leadership, and problem-solving ability—qualities that employers value in a competitive economy (Oyinlola, 2024). From the standpoint of Human Capital Theory, neglecting GS programmes diminishes the return on educational investment, as graduates may leave universities technically qualified but lacking in the broader competencies required for sustainable economic growth. Therefore, strengthening GS represents an economic imperative for Nigeria, particularly in addressing youth unemployment and aligning higher education outcomes with labor market needs.

Holistic Education Framework

Complementing the economic rationale of Human Capital Theory is the Holistic Education Framework, which emphasizes the all-round development of individuals, intellectually, emotionally, socially, morally, and spiritually. Holistic education argues that schooling should not be narrowly focused on academic achievement but should nurture the “whole person,” preparing learners to live meaningful lives, engage responsibly in their communities, and contribute positively to society.

In the context of General Studies, this framework underscores the importance of value formation, civic orientation, and intercultural competence. Courses in philosophy, history, communication, and entrepreneurship within GS curricula expose students to diverse perspectives, ethical dilemmas, and socio-political issues. Such exposure cultivates empathy, tolerance, and critical citizenship, qualities essential for social cohesion in a pluralistic nation like Nigeria. As Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2020) notes, GS serves as the “intellectual meeting point” of disciplines, providing a platform for students to engage in reflective dialogue about values, identity, and nationhood.

Moreover, the Holistic Education Framework provides insight into why GS must move beyond rote learning and adopt participatory pedagogies such as debates, service-learning, and community projects. These methods enable students to connect knowledge with real-world contexts, fostering not only cognitive growth but also emotional intelligence, civic responsibility, and ethical judgment. Thus, GS is not merely about preparing graduates for jobs; it is also about cultivating citizens who can sustain democratic governance, peace, and national unity.

Integrating the Two Frameworks

Taken together, Human Capital Theory and the Holistic Education Framework present a comprehensive justification for General Studies. On one hand, GS contributes to economic productivity by equipping graduates with adaptable skills that enhance employability and innovation. On the other hand, it strengthens social capital by fostering civic-mindedness, ethical responsibility, and intercultural understanding. In a nation facing challenges such as unemployment, political instability, corruption, and ethnic fragmentation, this dual investment in human and social capital is indispensable.

This theoretical integration also illuminates why challenges in GS implementation, such as poor funding, outdated curricula, and lecture-dominated teaching, are so detrimental. From the human capital perspective, these weaknesses reduce the return on educational investment. From the holistic education perspective, they prevent the full development of the learner’s potential as a responsible citizen. Therefore, reforming GS is not just an academic concern; it is a strategic necessity for Nigeria’s socio-economic and political development.

Conclusion of Theoretical Review

In summary, Human Capital Theory and the Holistic Education Framework jointly provide a robust foundation for this study. They frame General Studies not as a peripheral requirement but as a central component of higher education with far-reaching implications. Human Capital Theory situates GS as an economic investment in skills and employability, while the Holistic Education Framework positions it as a socio-cultural investment in values, citizenship, and cohesion. The intersection of these perspectives highlights the multifaceted importance of GS in producing graduates who are not only job-ready but also nation-ready, capable of contributing to both economic growth and social transformation.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

Aim

To examine how the School of General Studies in Nigerian tertiary institutions contributes to students' holistic educational training and to national growth and development.

Objectives

To evaluate the curriculum content of General Studies programmes and their alignment with holistic education principles.

To assess the pedagogical practices used in General Studies delivery.

To determine the perceived contributions of General Studies to students' civic attitudes, ethics, and employability.

To identify challenges facing the effective delivery of General Studies and propose policy recommendations.

Research Questions

What is the extent to which General Studies curricula align with holistic education principles?

What pedagogical approaches are predominant in the delivery of General Studies?

To what extent do students and academics perceive General Studies as contributing to civic responsibility and employability?

What are the major institutional and systemic challenges inhibiting the effectiveness of General Studies?

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between exposure to General Studies courses and students' civic attitudes.

H2: Institutions with well-resourced General Studies units report higher perceived employability outcomes among graduates.

H3: Pedagogical strategies (active learning) positively moderate the relationship between General Studies exposure and holistic outcomes.

Relevance of the Study

The relevance of this study is multi-dimensional, reflecting its significance to policymakers, educational institutions, lecturers, students, and the broader Nigerian society. At a time when global economies are being reshaped by knowledge, technology, and innovation, Nigeria's capacity to compete effectively depends largely on the quality and adaptability of its graduates. General Studies (GS) programmes, when well-conceived and properly implemented, provide the bedrock for developing these adaptable skills and values. Thus, this research is not merely academic in scope but also has practical implications for national development and educational reform.

First, the study is highly relevant to university policymakers and administrators. By critically assessing the role and outcomes of General Studies in Nigerian tertiary institutions, it provides empirical evidence that can guide curriculum reviews, resource allocation, and policy reforms. Often, GS programmes are regarded as peripheral, receiving less attention compared to professional courses. This study challenges that perception by demonstrating how GS courses contribute to producing well-rounded graduates who can think critically, act ethically, and engage constructively in national development. Such evidence is crucial for convincing decision-makers that investing in the School of General Studies is not optional but essential for institutional credibility and graduate employability.

Second, the findings hold great importance for curriculum designers and education planners. Nigeria's tertiary education system has been criticized for producing graduates who are academically qualified but lack practical life skills, civic responsibility, and problem-solving ability. This study underscores the importance of integrating holistic skills, communication, entrepreneurship, civic orientation, digital literacy, and intercultural awareness into GS curricula. It advocates for curriculum harmonization across universities, ensuring consistency in learning outcomes while leaving room for contextual flexibility. Such reforms would align with global trends in higher education, where general education is a standard feature for equipping graduates with transferable skills.

Third, the study is relevant to lecturers and teaching staff engaged in GS delivery. By identifying challenges such as underfunding, limited pedagogical innovation, and inadequate training, the research points to areas where professional development and capacity building are required. Empowering GS lecturers with modern teaching strategies such as blended learning, project-based assignments, and experiential learning, will enhance student engagement and ensure that GS courses move beyond rote memorization to transformative learning experiences.

Fourth, the study benefits students, who are the direct recipients of GS education. In an increasingly competitive labor market, graduates need more than technical expertise to succeed. Skills such as adaptability, teamwork, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement are becoming equally important. This research demonstrates how GS courses, when well-implemented, can enrich students' personal growth and prepare them for both national and global citizenship. By highlighting these

outcomes, the study seeks to shift students' perception of GS from being "compulsory hurdles" to valuable learning opportunities.

Finally, the study's national relevance cannot be overstated. Nigeria's developmental priorities reflected in policies such as the National Policy on Education and Vision 2050 emphasize human capital development as a cornerstone of progress. By linking GS education to these priorities, the study shows how revitalizing the programme can directly contribute to building a workforce that is not only skilled but also civic-minded and socially responsible. In the long run, this has implications for strengthening democracy, fostering social cohesion, reducing unemployment, and driving sustainable economic growth.

In sum, this study is relevant because it provides evidence-based insights that can bridge the gap between academic training and national needs. It reinforces the notion that higher education is not only about professional specialization but also about preparing individuals for life, citizenship, and leadership. By doing so, it positions the General Studies programme as a critical panacea for Nigeria's educational and developmental challenges.

4. Literature Review

This section synthesizes recent literature (2016–2025) on General Studies, holistic education, and higher education's role in national development.

NUC and Policy Context

The National Universities Commission has periodically issued guidance on general studies content and requirements; the 2016 bulletins and later policy statements reiterate the need for general modules such as citizenship education, communication skills, and ethics.

Empirical studies on General Studies Outcomes

Studies indicate that general studies improve student awareness of civic duties and ethics but suffer implementation gaps.

Holistic Education and Graduate Readiness

Recent literature on holistic approaches argues for broader curricular content to include entrepreneurship, mental health, and soft skills.

COVID-19 and Curriculum Adaptability

The pandemic exposed weaknesses in tertiary curricula including limited flexibility and insufficient digital readiness, affecting General Studies delivery during disruptions.

Curriculum Innovation and Reform

Scholars call for curriculum innovation to integrate employability, character formation and civic education into core university programmes.

5. Research Methodology

Design

A mixed-methods approach: document analysis of General Studies curricula in five purposively selected universities; a structured survey of 500 final-year undergraduates across the institutions; and semi-structured interviews with 20 academic staff and 10 policy-makers.

Population

All final-year undergraduates and General Studies academic staff in federal and state universities in southern Nigeria (estimated population: 30,000 students across selected universities).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was used. Five universities were purposively selected to represent federal, state and private ownership. Within each institution, proportional stratified sampling selected departments and students. A total sample size of 500 students was determined using Cochran's formula for large populations (95% confidence level, 5% margin of error).

Research Instruments

(1) Structured questionnaire (Likert-scale items) measuring civic attitudes, ethical awareness, communication skills, and perceived employability; (2) Interview guide for academics and policy-

makers; (3) Document analysis checklist for curriculum content.

Validity and Reliability

Instruments were pre-tested on 30 students (pilot) and Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency exceeded 0.78 for key scales. Content validity was established via expert review.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression (SPSS). Qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Findings

Curriculum Content: Document analysis revealed that while General Studies syllabi list citizenship, ethics, and communication, there is wide variation in learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

Pedagogical Practices: Surveys showed predominance of lecture-based delivery (64%), with only 28% reporting regular participatory or project-based activities.

Perceived Outcomes: 72% of students agreed that General Studies improved their civic awareness, 58% reported improvements in communication skills, and 44% believed General Studies contributed to their employability.

Challenges: Underfunding (reported by 81% of academic respondents), lack of staff training, overcrowded classes, and weak linkages with industry were major constraints.

6. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that General Studies (GS) in Nigerian tertiary institutions contributes significantly to the holistic development of students, particularly in the areas of civic awareness, communication skills, ethical orientation, and the acquisition of transferable soft skills. These outcomes align with the central objective of GS, which is to produce graduates who are not only technically competent in their disciplines but also equipped with the broader intellectual and civic capacities needed to thrive in a complex and interdependent world. This reinforces the argument in existing literature that general education functions as the intellectual “meeting point” for all disciplines and a vehicle for preparing students for responsible citizenship and lifelong learning (Ezenwa-Ohaeto, 2020).

However, the study also underscores critical implementation challenges that undermine the potential of GS. Respondents pointed to the dominance of lecture-based teaching methods, overcrowded classes, and a lack of interactive pedagogies. These conditions limit opportunities for active learning, critical engagement, and the cultivation of problem-solving skills. Similar observations have been made in previous research, where the GS programme has been criticized for being overly theoretical, insufficiently resourced, and disconnected from students' lived experiences (ResearchGate, 2019). Thus, while the goals of GS are laudable, the actual delivery falls short, leading to a mismatch between policy intentions and practical outcomes.

To interpret these findings, two theoretical frameworks provide useful lenses: Human Capital Theory and the Holistic Education Framework. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory, education is seen as an investment in skills and knowledge that yields economic and social returns (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1993). Applying this theory to GS, it becomes evident that enhancing the programme's delivery through improved resources, staff development, and modern teaching practices would not only benefit students individually but also contribute to Nigeria's overall productivity and competitiveness. A well-implemented GS curriculum can reduce the skills mismatch in the labor market by equipping graduates with communication, critical thinking, and adaptability skills that employers increasingly demand. This perspective situates GS as an economic imperative rather than a peripheral academic requirement.

On the other hand, the Holistic Education Framework emphasizes the importance of nurturing the whole person, intellectually, emotionally, socially, morally, and spiritually. The findings that GS enhances civic awareness and ethical orientation reflect this dimension, showing that GS can shape values and attitudes essential for democratic participation, social cohesion, and national development. However, the limitations identified, such as reliance on traditional lecturing, indicate that GS has not fully embraced holistic and participatory pedagogies. Active learning strategies, such as debates,

group projects, service-learning, and experiential activities, would better align GS with holistic education principles by fostering creativity, collaboration, and real-world application of knowledge.

When situated within the Nigerian context, these findings carry significant implications. Nigeria's tertiary education system has often been criticized for producing "half-baked graduates" who lack employability skills and civic responsibility (Allahnana, 2019). By showing that GS has the potential to address these gaps, this study highlights the strategic value of revitalizing the programme. However, this requires tackling structural challenges, including inadequate funding, inconsistent curricula across universities, and insufficient lecturer training. Without addressing these issues, GS risks remaining marginalized and unable to fulfill its intended purpose.

Furthermore, the findings resonate with contemporary scholarship emphasizing the role of higher education in advancing national development goals (Aminu, 2025). As Nigeria seeks to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and align with Vision 2050, GS can serve as a critical instrument for promoting education that is inclusive, relevant, and transformative. For example, integrating themes such as entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and environmental sustainability into GS curricula can prepare graduates not only for the labor market but also for responsible global citizenship.

It is also worth noting that students' perceptions of GS influence its effectiveness. Many undergraduates reportedly view GS courses as compulsory hurdles rather than valuable learning opportunities. This negative perception is reinforced by uninspiring teaching methods and misalignment with students' professional goals. The findings suggest that shifting pedagogical practices towards interactive, problem-based learning can transform GS into a dynamic and engaging programme that students appreciate and internalize. In this regard, the role of lecturers is pivotal. Faculty development programmes, mentorship, and the provision of adequate teaching resources are essential to fostering this transformation.

In conclusion, the discussion of findings highlights a dual reality: General Studies possesses immense potential to contribute to holistic education and national development, yet structural and pedagogical shortcomings constrain its impact. The application of Human Capital Theory demonstrates the economic rationale for improving GS, while the Holistic Education Framework underscores its broader developmental and civic purposes. Addressing the gaps identified requires a deliberate re-imagining of GS, supported by policy reforms, adequate funding, and innovative pedagogical practices. If these steps are taken, General Studies can be repositioned as a cornerstone of higher education in Nigeria—producing graduates who are employable, responsible, and capable of driving national transformation.

Implications of the Study

Policy: Harmonize General Studies curricula across universities and include measurable outcomes related to employability and civic engagement.

Practice: Invest in staff development, active-learning pedagogy, and industry partnerships to make General Studies more practical and outcome-focused.

Research: Further longitudinal studies should explore the causal impact of General Studies on graduate trajectories.

7. Conclusion

General Studies remains an indispensable pillar of tertiary education in Nigeria, serving as both a corrective and a complementary framework to specialized professional training. The findings of this study affirm that beyond imparting broad-based knowledge, General Studies cultivates critical skills such as problem-solving, ethical reasoning, communication, and civic engagement, all of which are vital for effective participation in contemporary society. In a rapidly changing world characterized by globalization, technological disruptions, and complex socio-political challenges, these attributes are no longer optional—they are prerequisites for national progress and survival.

Nevertheless, despite its strategic relevance, the General Studies programme in many Nigerian universities continues to grapple with persistent challenges. Issues such as inadequate funding, fragmented and outdated curricula, insufficient staffing, and lack of modern pedagogical approaches have hindered the programme from achieving its full potential. Without deliberate policy reform and institutional commitment, General Studies risks being perceived as peripheral rather than

foundational, thereby undermining its ability to contribute meaningfully to human capital development.

For General Studies to evolve into a true panacea for national growth, three strategic interventions are paramount. First, policy reforms must prioritize curriculum harmonization across institutions while ensuring contextual flexibility that allows courses to address emerging global and local realities. Second, improved resourcing is critical; universities must invest in qualified faculty, digital learning resources, and innovative teaching methods that encourage student-centered learning rather than rote memorization. Third, pedagogical innovation should be embraced through experiential learning, community service components, interdisciplinary collaborations, and the integration of employability skills such as entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and leadership training.

Ultimately, a revitalized General Studies programme, anchored on holistic education principles, aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and responsive to Nigeria's developmental priorities, can transform the landscape of higher education. By producing graduates who are not only technically competent but also ethically conscious, socially responsible, and globally competitive, Nigerian universities can reposition themselves as catalysts for national renewal. The call, therefore, is for government agencies, universities, faculty, and students to collectively reimagine General Studies as a dynamic instrument for building the kind of workforce and citizenry that Nigeria urgently needs in the twenty-first century.

8. Recommendations

NUC and universities should harmonize General Studies curricula with clear competency-based outcomes.

Increase funding for General Studies units and provide regular staff professional development.

Adopt active-learning pedagogies and integrate entrepreneurship and digital literacy modules.

Strengthen monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track the contribution of General Studies to graduate outcomes.

Encourage partnerships between universities, industries, and civil society to provide practical experiences.

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