

University Undergraduate General Studies Requirement

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General Studies Requirements

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A baccalaureate education should prepare students for a particular profession or advanced study and for constructive and satisfying personal, social and civic lives as well. In addition to depth of knowledge in a particular academic or professional discipline, students should also be broadly educated and develop the general intellectual skills they need to continue learning throughout their lives. Thus, the General Studies requirement complements the undergraduate major by helping students gain mastery of critical learning skills, investigate the traditional branches of knowledge and develop the broad perspective that frees one to appreciate diversity and change across time, culture and national boundaries.

Critical learning skills include proficiency in the use of language, mathematics and quantitative methods as tools for acquiring, renewing, creating and communicating knowledge. A broad education includes an understanding of the methods and concerns of traditional branches of knowledge — the arts and humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences. Developing perspective requires historical, global and cross-cultural examination of knowledge of all kinds.

The General Studies requirement is composed of courses in five core areas and three awareness areas. The courses are approved by the General Studies Council and are noted in the [course catalog](#) for each academic term. General Studies courses are regularly reviewed and are occasionally added to and deleted from the list. Students should always consult the [course catalog](#) each semester to see which courses currently meet the General Studies requirement.

A student receives the General Studies credit that a course carries during the semester in which the course is taken.

Five Core Areas (general studies)

L: Literacy and Critical Inquiry (three credit hours)

Literacy is competence in written and oral discourse. Critical inquiry is the gathering, interpretation and evaluation of evidence. The literacy and critical inquiry requirement helps students sustain and extend their ability to reason critically and communicate clearly through language.

Students must complete three credit hours from courses designated as L. Students must have completed ENG 101, ENG 105, or ENG 107 to take an L course.

The three credit hours required to meet the General Studies L requirement are in addition to the university level upper-division L requirement. See university graduation requirements for more information.

MA and CS: Mathematical Studies (combined six credit hours)

This core area has two categories. Mathematics (MA) is the acquisition of essential skills in basic mathematics. Computer/statistics/quantitative applications (CS) applies mathematical reasoning and requires students to complete a course in either the use of statistics/quantitative analysis or the use of a computer to assist in serious analytical math work.

This requirement has two parts: At least three credit hours must be selected from courses designated MA and at least three credit hours must be selected from courses designated CS, and all students are expected to fulfill the MA requirement by the time they accumulate 30 hours of credit in residence at ASU. Any student who has more than 30 hours of resident ASU credit and has not fulfilled the MA requirement must enroll in an MA course or an appropriate prerequisite and continue to do so every semester until the mathematics requirement is met. College officers may grant waivers to the immediate and continual enrollment requirement only when there are scheduling conflicts detrimental to the student's academic progress.

HU: Humanities, Arts and Design and SB: Social-Behavioral Sciences (combined 12 credit hours)

The study of the humanities and the disciplines of art and design deepen awareness of the complexities of the human condition and its diverse histories and cultures. Courses in the humanities are devoted to the productions of human thought and imagination, particularly in philosophical, historical, religious and artistic traditions. Courses with an emphasis in arts and design are devoted to the study of aesthetic experiences and the processes of artistic creation. They may also feature a design emphasis in which material culture is studied as a product of human thought and imagination.

The social-behavioral sciences provide scientific methods of inquiry and empirical knowledge about human behavior, within society and individually. The forms of study may be cultural, economic, geographic, historical, linguistic, political, psychological or social. The courses in this area address the challenge of understanding the diverse natures of individuals and cultural groups who live together in a world of diminishing economic, linguistic, military, political and social distance.

A total of 12 credit hours must be completed in the following two core areas: humanities, arts and design (HU); and social-behavioral sciences (SB). At least six credit hours must be taken in one of these two core areas.

The 12 hours required to meet the General Studies HU/SB requirement are in addition to the university level upper-division HU/SB requirement. Students should see university graduation requirements for more information.

SQ and SG: Natural Sciences (combined eight credit hours)

The natural sciences help students appreciate the scope and limitations of science and its contributions to society. Natural science areas of study include anthropology, astronomy, biology, biochemistry, chemistry, experimental psychology, geology, microbiology, physical geography, physics and plant biology. Knowledge of the methods of scientific inquiry and mastery of basic scientific principles and concepts are stressed, specifically in those that relate to matter and energy in living and nonliving systems. Firsthand exposure to scientific phenomena in the laboratory is important for developing and understanding the concepts, principles and vocabulary of science.

General Studies courses that satisfy the natural science requirement are given one of two classifications: quantitative (SQ) and general (SG).

Natural Science — Quantitative (SQ): These laboratory courses include a substantial introduction to the fundamental behavior of matter and energy in physical and biological systems.

Natural Science — General (SG): These laboratory courses cover aspects of scientific inquiry that lend themselves to more qualitative or descriptive discussions of science.

Eight credit hours of courses designated SQ or SG must be selected. Of these, at least four credit hours must be taken from the SQ category.

Three Awareness Areas (general studies)

Students must complete courses that satisfy three awareness areas. Courses that are listed for a core area and one or more awareness areas may satisfy requirements concurrently, up to a maximum of two of the awareness areas listed for that course. These awareness areas promote appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary U.S., the development of an international perspective and an understanding of current human events through study of the past.

1. Cultural Diversity in the United States (C)

The objective of the cultural diversity (C) requirement is to promote awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary U.S. This is accomplished through the study of the cultural, social or scientific contributions of women and minority groups, examination of their experiences in the U.S., or exploration of successful or unsuccessful interactions between and among cultural groups. Awareness of cultural diversity and its multiple sources can illuminate the collective past, present and future and also help students achieve greater mutual understanding and respect.

2. Global Awareness (G)

The objective of the global awareness (G) requirement is to help students recognize the need for an understanding of the values, elements and social processes of cultures other than those of the U.S. The global awareness area includes courses that recognize other contemporary cultures and the relationship of the American cultural system to generic human goals and welfare.

3. Historical Awareness (H)

The objective of the historical awareness (H) requirement is to help students develop knowledge of the past, which can be useful in shaping the present and future. History is present in languages, art, music, literature, philosophy, religion and the natural sciences, as well as in the social science traditionally called history.

Meeting the General Studies Requirement

All students enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program must successfully complete a minimum of 29 credit hours of approved General Studies courses. Many General Studies courses are approved as satisfying more than one requirement. The following conditions govern the application of courses toward the General Studies requirement:

- A single course may be used to satisfy one core area and a maximum of two awareness area requirements.
- A single course may be used to satisfy a maximum of two awareness area requirements.
- A single course cannot be used to satisfy two core area requirements, even if it is approved for more than one core area.

There is no limit to the number of advanced placement or College-Level Examination Program credits that can be used to meet the General Studies requirement, see [credit by examination](#). However, CLEP credits do not satisfy the natural sciences (SQ and SG) and literacy and critical inquiry (L) portions of the General Studies requirement.

Transfer Credit

Completion of ASU's lower-division general studies and composition requirements will be awarded to any transfer student who has completed the general studies and composition requirements at another domestic university as certified through completion of the AGEC from an Arizona community college or IGETC/CSUGE for California public community colleges, or the completion of an associate of arts degree at any regionally accredited community college or university in the United States. These students will still be required to fulfill lower-division program requirements and prerequisites within their college and major and minor area of study. Additionally, students must still take six upper-division credit hours (three for L and three for SB or HU) to complete the ASU university-level graduation requirements. If students transfer from Arizona community colleges without completing the AGEC or from other accredited postsecondary institutions, they receive credit for General Studies based on course-by-course equivalency. See [Arizona General Education Curriculum](#).

University Requirements

In addition to the 29 credit hours of lower-division general education coursework, university graduation requirements also require students to take six additional upper-division credit hours. Three hours with a Literacy (L) designation are required to be chosen from approved upper-division courses, preferably in the major. Three hours with either a humanities, arts and design (HU) or social-behavioral sciences (SB) designation should also be chosen from approved upper-division courses, preferably in the major.

College or School and Major Requirements

In addition to the General Studies requirement, students must also complete college or school and major requirements. Students are encouraged to work with their academic advisors to develop a program of study that efficiently meets all graduation requirements. A well-planned program should enable a student to concurrently satisfy requirements at the university, college or school levels and within their major.