
General Studies

A baccalaureate education should not only prepare students for a particular profession or advanced study, but 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.

To help students achieve these educational goals, the General Studies Program includes five *core areas* and three *awareness areas*. The five *core areas* help students acquire critical lifelong learning skills and guide their exploration of the traditional branches of knowledge:

1. literacy and critical inquiry;
2. mathematics studies;
3. humanities, fine arts, and design;
4. social and behavioral sciences; and
5. natural sciences.

The three *awareness areas* promote appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary United States, develop an international perspective, and foster an understanding of current human events through study of the past:

1. cultural diversity in the United States;
2. global awareness; and
3. historical awareness.

The courses approved by the General Studies Council (for the East and Tempe campuses) for meeting the General Studies requirement are noted in the “General Studies Courses” table, page 94; in the course descriptions; and in the *Schedule of Classes* each academic term. The courses approved for the West campus can be found in the *West Campus Catalog* and in the *Schedule of Classes*.

Meeting the General Studies Requirement

All students enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program must successfully complete a minimum of 35 semester 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:

1. A single course may be used to satisfy one core area and a maximum of two awareness area requirements.
2. A single course may be used to satisfy a maximum of two awareness area requirements.
3. 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 (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) credits that can be used to meet the General Studies requirement; see “Credit by Examination,” page 73. However, the natural sciences (SQ and SG) and literacy and critical inquiry (L) portions of the General Studies requirement are not satisfied by CLEP.

FIVE CORE AREAS

Literacy and Critical Inquiry (L)

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.

L Requirement (Six Semester Hours). Students must complete six semester hours from courses designated as L, at least three semester hours of which must be chosen from approved upper-division courses, preferably in their major. Students must have completed ENG 101, 105, or 107 to take an L course.

Mathematical Studies (MA and CS)

This core area has two categories: (1) Mathematics (MA) is the acquisition of essential skill in basic mathematics and requires the student to complete a course in college mathematics or precalculus or to demonstrate a higher level of skill by completing a course for which college algebra is a prerequisite; and (2) 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 the computer to assist in serious analytical math work.

MA and CS Requirement (Six Semester Hours). This requirement has two parts: (1) at least three semester hours must be selected from courses designated MA, and at least three semester hours must be selected from courses designated CS; and (2) 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 mathematics (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.

Humanities, Fine Arts, and Design (HU)

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 fine 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.

HU Requirement. The requirements for humanities, fine arts, and design (HU) are combined with the requirements for social and behavioral sciences (SB). See "Combined HU and SB Requirement," on this page.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (SB)

The social and 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.

Combined HU and SB Requirement (15 Semester Hours)

A total of 15 semester hours must be completed in the following two core areas: (1) humanities, fine arts, and design (HU) and (2) social and behavioral sciences (SB). Two conditions must be satisfied: (1) six semester hours must be taken in one of these two core areas and nine hours in the other core area; and (2) three of the 15 semester hours must be at the upper-division level.

Natural Sciences (SQ and SG)

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 methods of scientific

inquiry and mastery of basic scientific principles and concepts are stressed, specifically those that relate to matter and energy in living and nonliving systems. Firsthand exposure to scientific phenomena in the laboratory is important in 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 and general.

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.

SQ and SG Requirement (Eight Semester Hours). Eight semester hours of courses designated SQ or SG must be selected. Of these, at least four semester hours must be taken from the SQ category.

THREE AWARENESS AREAS

Students must complete courses that satisfy each of the three awareness areas. Courses that are listed for a core area and one or more awareness areas may satisfy each of these requirements concurrently, up to a maximum of two of the awareness areas listed for that course.

Cultural Diversity in the United States (C)

The objective of the cultural diversity requirement is to promote awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary United States. The objective is accomplished through the study of the cultural, social, or scientific contributions of women and minority groups, examination of their experiences in the United States, 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 to achieve greater mutual understanding and respect.

Global Awareness (G)

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

Historical Awareness (H)

The objective of the historical awareness requirement is to help students develop knowledge of the past that 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.