

One Stop Student Services

Policy: General Education Requirements

The General Education Requirements (also known as GER) provide structure to your education while giving you the freedom to design an individual academic program.

For more information on General Education Requirements and which courses qualify, go to uwm.edu/academics/ger.cfm

What are General Education Requirements?

The General Education Requirements are intended to give structure to each student's education while providing the student the greatest possible freedom to design an individual academic program. These requirements include two major categories, competency and distribution.

The **competency requirements** are designed to assure basic proficiency in oral and written communication, quantitative literacy, and foreign language. The GER quantitative literacy Part A and oral and written communications Part A requirements should be completed early in the academic career to ensure acquisition of critical skills for subsequent coursework. Many UWM schools/colleges require completion of part A of those competencies prior to advancing to the professional portion of the major. Completion of the relevant part A competency is also a prerequisite for some intermediate and advanced courses. The **distribution requirements** are designed to provide students with a broad body of knowledge in the areas of the arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences as a foundation for specialization.

Specific GER requirements are as follows:

Competency Requirements

Oral and Written Communication (OWC) Competency

OWC Part A: Completion of OWC Part A can be demonstrated by satisfying one of the following options:

- earning at least three credits with a grade of C or higher in English 102,* or

- transferring at least three credits with a grade of C or higher in a course equivalent to English 102 or higher level expository writing course,* or
- achieving an appropriate score on the English Placement Test (EPT).

OWC Part B: The OWC Part B is satisfied by completing an approved advanced course (at least three credits) with a significant written or oral communication component by students who have completed the Part A requirement.

Courses that count toward the OWC-B requirement may be offered in a variety of disciplines and students are encouraged to choose the course that matches their interests and helps them best meet the requirements of their degrees.

Quantitative Literacy (QL) Competency

QL Part A. Completion of QL Part A can be demonstrated by satisfying one of the following options:

- earning at least three credits with a grade of C or higher in Math 103 (formerly 106), 105, 175 or equivalent courses,* or
- achieving a placement code of at least 30 on the mathematics placement test.

QL Part B. The QL Part B is satisfied by completing at least one approved QL-B course (at least three credits) as decided by the major. QL-B courses make significant use of quantitative tools in the context of other course material.

*** These courses may not be taken credit/no credit if they are to be used to satisfy the OWC-A requirement or QL-A requirement.**

Foreign Language Requirement Completion of the foreign language requirement can be demonstrated by satisfying one of the following options:

- complete with passing grades, prior to enrollment at UWM, at least two consecutive years of high school-level instruction in a single foreign language, or
- complete with passing grades at least two consecutive semesters (minimum of 6 credits) of college level instruction in a single foreign language, or
- demonstrate foreign language ability equivalent to two semesters of college-level instruction by means of a satisfactory score on an approved placement, proficiency, departmental or other appropriate examination.

Exceptions to GER

Students who entered UWM as freshmen and/or earned transferable credit prior to September 2013 are not responsible for the Oral and Written Communication Part B or the Quantitative Literacy Part B.

Students who entered UWM as freshmen and/or earned transferable credit prior to September, 1999 are not responsible for the GER foreign language competency. However, individual schools and colleges may require completion of higher level foreign language courses; students

are strongly encouraged to check with their advisors and/or review their Academic Requirements report on PAWS .

In general, second degree candidates from an accredited institution and students whose first semester in a degree program at an accredited institution predates September 1986, are not subject to the General Education Requirements.

All degree programs have specific requirements beyond GER. Consult with an academic advisor to design an appropriate course of study.

Distribution Requirements

You can satisfy the distribution requirements by successfully completing courses in the following areas:

- **Arts:** Three credits in a course about the history, philosophy, theory, or practice of the creative and interpretive arts (e.g., visual arts, dance, music, theatre, creative writing).
- **Humanities:** A total of six credits in at least two courses.
- **Natural Sciences:** A total of six credits in at least two courses. At least one course must include laboratory or field experience involving the generation and testing of data, and the application of concepts and knowledge to the solution of problems.
- **Social Sciences:** A total of six credits in at least two courses.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Three credits in a course relating to the study of life experiences of African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians or Asian Americans. Many, but not all, courses which satisfy Cultural Diversity also satisfy one of the required distribution areas. (You will need to satisfy this requirement if you started attending UWM in fall 1989 or thereafter.)

Cultures and Communities (CC)

Students may choose the Cultures and Communities option to satisfy their GER distribution requirements. CC courses emphasize diversity and crosscultural literacy, multicultural arts, global studies, and the cultural contexts of science, health care, and technology. A Service Learning course is also required. Students who complete the CC program receive the Cultures and Communities Certificate upon graduation. For more information, contact the Cultures and Communities Program, cc.uwm.edu, 414-229-5960.

GER Course List

Courses which have been approved as satisfying the GER distribution requirements are listed on the Courses Approved for GER Distribution pages. A course can be counted in only one of the main distribution areas (Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences or Social Sciences), but may also satisfy the Cultural Diversity requirement if it is on the approved list.

Consult the Schedule of Classes to determine specific courses being offered this semester. Courses which satisfy the GER distribution requirements are annotated as follows directly below each course number:

- **(A)** = satisfies Arts requirement
- **(CD,A)** = satisfies Arts/Cultural Diversity requirement
- **(HU)** = satisfies Humanities requirement
- **(CD,HU)** = satisfies Humanities/Cultural Diversity requirement
- **(NS)** = satisfies Natural Sciences requirement
- **(NS+)** = satisfies Natural Sciences lab/fieldwork requirement
- **(SS)** = satisfies Social Sciences requirement
- **(CD,SS)** = satisfies Social Sciences/Cultural Diversity requirement

Consult with your academic advisor if you have questions about the General Education Requirements.