

General Education Requirements

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I. Introduction

The Special Task Force on General Education Requirements presented the following statement on the “Goals and Rationale of General Education,” in a preamble to its report to the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee:

General education should provide opportunities to develop a strong foundation of verbal and quantitative skills; to understand the roles of methods and processes and their constraining effects on thought; to gain cultural and historical perspectives on the world; to develop consciousness of self in relation to tradition; to appreciate creativity, including the creation, testing, and application of ideas; to see how ideas relate to social structures; and to understand how values infuse both action and inquiry.

In addition to the intellectual objectives of general education, there are career considerations. In a society of rapidly expanding knowledge, training for a special task or concentration in a specific skill, risks the obsolescence of that training. Only a broad grasp of method and of the nature of innovation and renovation can prepare a person for work today. University education should provide the basis for intellectual mobility, for continuing education, and for intellectual replenishment in mid-career. Of course, this must be done without sacrificing necessary depth: the environment of a university provides a unique opportunity to delve deeply into specific areas and thus to serve both the individual and society.

The general education curriculum must be embodied in and exemplified through disciplines. In order to achieve the objectives, the courses in that curriculum cannot deal with techniques in the narrow sense but must explore the foundations of knowledge: how the discipline establishes its concepts; how these concepts of choice are established with respect to alternative patterns of inquiry, modes of expression, or courses of action. General and specialized education are directly related.

General education provides a broad body of knowledge as context for specialization, and the general education emphasis on conceptual inquiry leads students to more comprehensive views of their specialties. In this way students learn to relate particular tasks to general areas and thus acquire sufficient agility of mind and mobility of skills to move from problem to problem as knowledge develops.

II. General Education Requirements

The General Education Requirements for UWM include two major requirement categories, the first designed to assure basic student competencies and the second designed to provide students with a broad body of knowledge as a context for specialization. The first set of requirements, competency requirements, includes the general areas of English composition, mathematics, and foreign language. The second set of

requirements, distribution requirements, includes the general areas of the arts, the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.

A. Competency Requirements

1. Oral and Written Communication (OWC) Competency

The oral and written communication requirement insures that students will be creative, flexible, and effective communicators, whether speaking or writing, and has two parts – Part A and Part B.

- a. OWC-Part A is satisfied by either:
 - i. earning a grade of C or higher in English 102 or an equivalent course; or
 - ii. a suitable score on the UW-System English Placement Test (or other appropriate test, as determined by the English Department).
- b. OWC-Part B is satisfied by completing an approved advanced course with a significant written or oral communication component by students who have completed the Part A requirement.

Courses that count toward the Part 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 meet the requirements of their degrees.

Students are expected to complete Part A of this requirement in the first year of their study.

2. Quantitative Literacy (QL) Competency

The Quantitative Literacy requirement ensures that students will have the ability to evaluate, construct, and communicate arguments using quantitative methods and formal reasoning. The requirements are in two parts – Part A and Part B

- a. QL-Part A is satisfied by any of the following:
 - i. a minimum of 2.5 credits with a grade of C or higher in any 100-level Math course (excluding 194 and 199) or Math/Philos 111; or
 - ii. a placement level of 30 or higher on the Mathematics Placement Test (or another appropriate test, as determined by the Mathematical Sciences Department).

QL-A skills must be broad-based in order that they have a positive impact on the readiness of students to take a QL-B course in a variety of disciplines. It is recommended that students complete the QL-A requirement within the first 60 credits earned.

- b. The QL-Part B requirement is satisfied by completing at least one QL-B course (at least three credits) as decided by the major according to the guidelines below. In general it is expected that a QL-A course is a prerequisite for a QL-B course. However, a course with a QL-A course as a prerequisite is not by definition considered QL-B.

To be certified as a QL-B course, a course must make significant use of quantitative tools in the context of the other course material and formally assess for proficiency in applying these quantitative tools.

3. Language Requirement

Based on the UWM mission's commitment to global and intercultural engagement, UWM requires that students demonstrate competency in a language other than English equivalent to completion of one year of college-level instruction.

Completion of the language requirement can be demonstrated by satisfying one of the following options:

- a. Prior to enrollment at UWM, complete with a passing grade at least the second year of high school-level instruction in a single language other than English; or
- b. complete the second semester or higher of college level instruction in a language other than English with a passing grade; or
- c. demonstrate ability at the level of completion of the second semester or higher of college level language other than English by means of a satisfactory score on an approved proficiency, departmental, or other appropriate examination; or
- d. document satisfactory completion of the equivalent of two years of study at a secondary institution OR two semesters of study at a post-secondary institution where the language of instruction is other than English, or
- e. satisfy the APCC-approved alternative GER Language Requirement, if any, stipulated by the student's particular degree program.

Completion of the Language Requirement is a prerequisite for graduation.

B. Distribution Requirements

1. The Arts

Three credits in a course on the history, philosophy, theory, or practice of the creative and expressive arts (e.g. visual arts, dance, music, theatre, and creative writing).

2. The Humanities

A total of six credits in at least two courses.

3. The Social Sciences

A total of six credits in at least two courses.

4. The Natural Sciences

A total of six credits in at least two courses. At least one must include laboratory or field experience illustrating the generation and testing of data and the application of concepts and knowledge to the solution of problems.

5. Cultural Diversity

A total of 3 credits from the list of courses approved for cultural diversity credit.

III. Procedural Matters

The following recommendations relate to the implementation and administration of general education requirements.

A. Governance and Administration

1. The Academic Program and Curriculum Committee has the responsibility for establishing policy in the area of general education. This responsibility includes: the approval of courses to be designated as fulfilling the requirements; the approval of all competency examinations and the setting of minimum scores; the establishment of policies pertaining to student appeals; and the general monitoring of the academic impact of the requirements.
2. The faculty of an individual school or college may request exemption from portions of the general education requirements for one or more of its programs. Such requests should be addressed to the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee and may be based on such grounds as excessive credit burden on majors, conflict with accreditation standards in the profession, or other academic grounds. Decisions of the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee may be appealed to the Faculty Senate.
3. The administration of the General Education Requirements should be handled by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Registrar's Office, and the separate schools or colleges, in accordance with present procedures. Individual student compliance will be monitored in the same manner as compliance with other curricular requirements, i.e., by school/college advisory staff and by the Registrar's Office. Student appeals will be handled in accordance with established department/school/university procedures. The Academic Program and Curriculum Committee will monitor compliance by schools and colleges.
4. Bulletin copy prepared under (1) and (2) above shall be approved under automatic consent or may be modified by the Faculty Senate before the General Education Requirements are published.

B. General Education Requirements and Admission Requirements

The APCC is charged with the task of working with the Admissions and Records Policy Committee to review admissions standards in relation to general education requirements.

C. Registration, Records, and Class Standing

The Senate should establish a single set of rules for advancement of class standing in all undergraduate schools and colleges.

Freshman – Admission

Sophomore – Semester after completion of 28 credits and removal of all admission deficiencies

Junior – Semester after completion of 58 credits

Senior – Semester after completion of 88 credits, including 18 credits of higher division courses

D. Effective Date

1. These requirements apply to all new students entering at the freshman level in fall 2013.
2. With the exception of Part II, item A.1.b. "OWC – Part B", Part II, item A.2.b "QL – Part B", Part II, item A.3 "Foreign Language," and Part II, item B.5 "Cultural Diversity," these requirements shall apply to new students entering at the freshman level in fall, 1986-87.
3. Part II, item A.3 "Foreign Language" shall apply to new students entering at the freshman level in fall, 1999-00.
4. Part II, item B.5, "Cultural Diversity" shall apply to students new to UWM as of fall, 1989-90.

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