

CHAPTER V GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

WSU students may fulfill their general education requirements either by completing the General Education Program or the University Honors Program. Further information about program policies and content can be found at <http://gened.wsu.edu/> and <http://honors.wsu.edu/>. The GOALS AND OUTCOMES for General Education are at <http://gened.wsu.edu/overview/goals-objectives/>

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The following is a summary of policy relating to the General Education Requirements.

All course proposals submitted for general education status will be evaluated in terms of criteria, policies, and definitions outlined at <http://gened.wsu.edu/>. In addition, judgments will be made about the appropriateness of academic standards, the methods of instruction and evaluation proposed, and the fit with the relevant knowledge domain(s). Occasionally, questions may be raised about resources committed to support a course or its fit with unit missions.

Course proposals for GER status should be approved by the department chair and dean and then forwarded to the General Education Committee, Thompson 310, campus zip 2634. The General Education Committee forwards its recommendations to the Faculty Senate, and proposals go through the usual channels for curriculum (Academic Affairs Committee and its Catalog Subcommittee) prior to submission to the Faculty Senate for action.

Requirements

(Faculty Senate 11/5/92)

Students who start their higher education Fall 1995 or later, at any higher education institution, are required to complete their WSU bachelor degree with the following distribution of credit hours, knowledge domains and tiers.

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Tier I</u> | <u>15 Credit Hours</u> |
| Writing [W] | 3 |
| World Civilizations [A] | 6 |
| Mathematics Proficiency [N] | 3 |
| Sciences [Q] | 3 |
| <u>Tier II</u> | <u>22 Credit Hours</u> |
| Communications [W] or [C] | 3 |
| #Arts and Humanities [H] or [G] | 3 or 6 |
| #Social Sciences [S] or [K] | 3 or 6 |
| Intercultural [I], [G], or [K] | 3 |
| *Sciences [B] or [P] | 7 |
| <u>Tier III</u> | <u>3 Credit Hours</u> |
| Capstone Course | 3 |
| Total Hours | 40 |

A total of 9 hours of [H] and [S], with a minimum of 3 in either.

Students in programs requiring 15 or more credit hours of basic science (i.e., science courses listed as GERs) together with 15 more credit hours of mathematics up to and including differential equations (i.e., Math 315 or equivalent) may elect to use an appropriate H or S capstone course (Tier III) to substitute for 3 hours of the required hours of H and S at Tier II.

Students taking science or technology-oriented majors [example engineering] are allowed to move directly into the required courses in their field, thus skipping Tier I sciences courses and fulfilling the science requirement in Tier II.

* At least 3 credits in [B] and 3 credits in [P]; a 1 hour lab credit in either.

+ The capstone course is the final course in the requirement to complete an Area of Coherence with a minimum of 15 credit hours.

Knowledge Domains

Toward the attainment of the educational goals of WSU's baccalaureate degrees, general education distribution requirements have been established across several knowledge domains. Most of those knowledge domains are defined below and appear in the *WSU Catalog*.

Arts and Humanities

[H, G] Requirements in the Arts and Humanities may be satisfied by courses which take a historical, critical, or appreciative approach to the study of human culture as manifested in literature, languages, philosophy, art, music, or drama. These courses should introduce the student to the record of human creativity and provide a basis for assessing its value and significance in human development.

Social Sciences

[S, K] Requirements in Social Sciences may be satisfied by courses with primary emphasis on the social, political, economic, and religious institutions of human society. These courses should expose students to data used by various disciplines to test, explain, or create the concepts, theories, principles, and laws underlying those institutions. These courses may focus upon how social sciences use these constructs to evaluate issues and how such knowledge enhances the understanding of human behavior within society's institutions.

Intercultural Studies

[I, G, K] Requirements in Intercultural Studies may be satisfied by courses which enlarge the student's international perspective or increase the student's sensitivity to cultural differences. These courses may employ a variety of methodologies and focus on diverse subject matter, but should emphasize non-Western cultures and may include ethnic minorities studies. Such courses should foster an awareness of the diversity of human values and present a coherent view of the cultures studied.

Sciences

[B, P, Q*] Requirements in Sciences may be satisfied by courses which acquaint the student with the basic physical and/or biological principles of the world. The student should gain an understanding of the scientific method, including experimentation and data interpretation involving biological, mathematical, and/or physical systems. The scientific literacy gained should enable the student to relate to scientific developments and to be able to evaluate as an intelligent lay person the significance of those developments and their association with other areas of human endeavor. Laboratory experience satisfying the laboratory credit requirement should focus on the interplay among hypothesis, observation, experiment theory, and understanding. [Q* designates Tier I sciences courses.]

Communication Proficiency

[C, W] Requirements in Communication Proficiency may be satisfied by courses emphasizing the improvement of communication skills in the English language through applied oral and written communication. Of 6 hours, 3 must be in written communications. The student's ability to more effectively express and set forth concepts and ideas will be the focus. Courses designed to improve writing and speaking skills primarily in a specific discipline or profession will not be acceptable for GER status.

Mathematics Proficiency

[N] The objectives of the mathematics requirement are to establish a foundation of understanding of mathematics beyond arithmetic and algebraic manipulations and to establish a foundation of understanding of the uses of mathematics in applications to real-world problems.

American Diversity

[D] Requirements in American Diversity may be satisfied by courses providing an overview of historical and contemporary issues related to cultural diversity in the United States. The course work introduces students to one or more issues and engages them in critical inquiry relating to cultural differences and commonalities and their complex interactions in American society. This requirement adds no new credit hours to the General Education Requirements as American Diversity courses will be double designated with another distribution category, such as Humanities, Social Sciences, or the Tier III course. **Note:** This requirement is in effect for students beginning post-secondary enrollment starting fall 2000.

Definitions of The Tiers

Tier I is designed to provide a common foundation for later learning to develop needed academic skills, to establish connections among the principal areas of scholarship, and to convey a sense of the fundamental issues and methods in these areas. Tier I consists of core courses (required of all entering freshmen) in World Civilizations and English composition, broad introductory courses in the sciences, and a selection of courses in mathematics. Tier I courses are numbered at the 100 level.

Tier II courses are typically introductions to disciplines and constitute the bulk of the distribution requirements in the several academic areas: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Intercultural Studies, Biological and Physical Sciences, Communications proficiency (oral and written). Some more advanced Tier II courses provide continued experience with representative scholarly approaches, methods and issues. Courses in this tier will commonly be taken in the student's first two years of study. While Tier II courses are designed to build on Tier I, the demands of scheduling may sometimes make it necessary to take courses from these two tiers concurrently. Thus, Tier I courses will not be absolute prerequisites for Tier II courses. Tier II courses may be designated at the 100, 200, or 300 level, as appropriate.

Certain courses in Tier II may be used to satisfy general education requirements in more than one Area of Coherence or knowledge domain. Students, however, may not use a course to satisfy requirements in more than one knowledge domain. Courses in or cross-listed with a student's major field may not be used to satisfy General Education Requirements, except for the written communication proficiency requirement.

Tier III provides the final component of sequential study in general education. Tier III courses are upper division (400 level) have as a general prerequisite 60 hours of course work; there may be additional prerequisites for specific courses. Tier III courses will have significant formal writing assignments equivalent to those required for Writing in the Major courses.

Tier I Science Courses

A Tier I science course should serve as an introduction to science and scientific thinking in general, including the historical development of science, its relationship to civilization, and its relevance to contemporary society. The course should explore the impacts of modern technology on the individual, society and the environment, including the benefits, problems and limitations of technology. How the scientific method can be used to solve some of these problems should also be addressed.

Courses should not be discipline specific except in the broadest sense. They should rather address topics and ideas that are common to all branches of science. Courses should preferentially integrate both the physical and biological sciences, but also focus on either, thus fitting into one of the three broad categories below:

1. an integrated approach, using both biological and physical sciences;
2. a physical sciences approach;
3. a biological sciences approach.

All courses should contain a writing component and should employ a "hands-on" approach which involves students actively in the collection, interpretation and presentation of data. While Tier I science courses may carry either 3 or 4 hours of credit, the "hands-on" component, including separately scheduled recitation sections, will not fulfill the Tier II laboratory requirement.

Since the scientific method will be a central and unifying theme in all Tier I science courses, they should also be designed to introduce the scientific literature.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

(Faculty Senate 10/11/90)

The original policy passed the Faculty Senate October 11, 1990, with the following principles. Implementation of the principles has been superseded by the policies identified in the sections which follow.

PRINCIPLE #1 Prior to enrollment in a freshman writing course at Washington State University, all students shall complete a writing examination for the purpose of placement in appropriate writing courses.

PRINCIPLE #2 The University's general education requirements will be such that all students will be required to take a designated number of courses which contain writing.

PRINCIPLE #3 Significant writing experience as determined by the department must be included in coursework in the student's major.

PRINCIPLE #4 Successful performance on a writing qualifying examination shall be a requirement for graduation.

Writing In General Education Courses (Principle #2)

Writing is an effective *tool* for learning. In the words of Ernest L. Boyer, writing can be used to "help to develop student's capacity to weigh evidence, integrate knowledge, and express ideas with clarity and precision." The purpose of writing assignments in the General Education Program courses is to assist the learning process as well as to reinforce and extend abilities fostered in the composition courses.

Writing assignments of various sorts can be used without the instructor becoming a "composition teacher" and without diluting the content or altering the focus of the course. Writing assignments should be designed to ensure adequate writing experience in a variety of formats and for a variety of purposes to maintain and to improve skills.

Writing in the general education courses will also be designed in part as a preparation for the **WSU Writing Portfolio** [formerly called the Writing Qualifying Examination], which will consist of a portfolio of papers from previous course work as well as a timed writing exercise. The General Education Office and the General Education Committee will, through periodic review of course content and overall program assessment, work to ensure the appropriate mix of writing experiences in the program.

Policy

(Faculty Senate 11/5/92)

1. All courses approved for GER status will have some appropriate writing (or speaking) assignment integrated into the material of the course.
2. Writing assignments may assume a variety of forms: for example, research synthesis, argument papers, proposals, technical reports, laboratory logs, memoranda, progress reports, journals, essay examinations, ungraded writing-for-learning exercises, etc.
3. Specific writing assignments in GER courses [apart from the composition curriculum] may be either formal or informal. However, writing assignments must in some way contribute to or figure in the calculation of grades.
4. Tier III courses will have significant formal writing assignments equivalent to those required for Writing in the Major courses.

Writing in the Major (Principle #3)

Policy

In 1987-88 the WSU Faculty Senate, Administration, and Board of Regents endorsed as one of the seven principles to underlie a new program the statement:

Significant writing experiences as determined by the department must be included in course work in the student's major.

The special purpose of this principle is to strengthen and verify students' mastery of the stylistic conventions prevailing in their own fields. The present document describes in some detail how the principle is to be executed.

Each degree-granting program will submit to the All-University Writing Committee a clear description of how writing competence in the major is to be developed and demonstrated. This description should include an account of how the process is to be monitored and of opportunities whereby students who do not initially meet standards can redeem themselves.

The process will ordinarily be based on one or more (3 credit) courses which, while being devoted primarily to further instruction in the major, will include significant writing components.

These courses will be designed and taught by faculty in the discipline. (It is intended that the university shall continue to provide workshops for faculty having, or expecting to have, these responsibilities.) Where necessary, teaching assistants should be used to bring the student/teacher ratio of approximately twenty to one. Writing experiences will be distributed over each course and not bunched at the end. The experiences may include not only formal writing but writing in such informal forms as journal-writing.

Each of these courses will include at least two papers that are drafted, criticized, revised, and edited. At least one of these papers will advance a topic by integrating material from several sources.

The formal writing for the course or courses should total at least 5000 words (approximately twenty double-spaced pages). Evaluation of the quality of the writing must contribute significantly to each student's grade for the course.

It is recommended that consideration be given to assembling a portfolio of samples of each student's writing for the major, and that each portfolio be reviewed before graduation. These portfolios could play an important role in monitoring the whole process.

Procedure

Departments submit requests for identifying [M] courses by completing a Writing in the Major Course Form (p. 81A) and a Major Curricular Change Form (p. 105A) for each [M] course being proposed and submitting them to the Office of General Education, (ZIP 2634).

Writing Qualifying Examination (WSU Writing Portfolio) (Principle #4)

Policy and Procedure

Successful performance on the Writing Qualifying Examination is a requirement for graduation at WSU. Students may take the examination, which involves submitting a Writing Portfolio consisting of three papers from previously assigned class work plus two timed and proctored writing exercises, any time after successfully completing English 101 or equivalent. Students must take this examination no later than the end of the first semester of upper-division standing (upon completion of 60 hours). Transfer students may elect to postpone the examination until they have completed at least a semester of work at WSU.

This requirement holds for students who have entered an institution of higher learning Fall 1991 or later. Since this is an upper-division graduation requirement, it applies even to transfer students who come with an AA degree.

A sample of course writing may be any completed assignment deemed suitable for the Portfolio by the instructor and signed off by the instructor as written at an acceptable level. Students should start collecting suitable samples early in their college career to make it easy for them to acquire the signature of the instructor.

If the Writing Qualifying Examination Board judges the full Examination as Exceptional (within approximately the top 10%), that rating will be entered permanently into the student's transcript. If the Examination is deemed unacceptable, the student will need to perform extra work to satisfy the requirement. Although in some cases the needed work will be a writing course, usually it will be a tutorial taken concurrently with an M course. Work will be designed to facilitate a student's normal progress toward a degree, assuming the timely completion of the examination.

UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE

The University Honors College (UHC) provides an alternate general education experience for academically-talented students. Students with outstanding test scores and academic records in either high school or college are invited to apply to join the UHC. Beginning in Fall 1995, students must maintain a 3.2 grade point average to remain in good academic standing in the UHC and to receive a certificate of completion of the Honors Program. An Honors Council, composed of faculty appointed by the president, oversee the operation of the UHC.

Currently, only students on the Pullman campus are eligible to participate in the UHP.

For Requirements of the former curriculum (students entering prior to Fall, 2009) and the new curriculum (students entering Fall, 2009 and later), see

<http://honors.wsu.edu/academics/courselistings/>

Additional information on the UHC Writing is a very important component of all Honors courses. The UHP expects that writing assignments in Honors classes will meet or exceed the guidelines for Writing in the Major courses. Honors students take the writing proficiency exam and complete writing portfolios.

Students must complete a minimum of 14 graded Honors credits to be eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion in Honors. Students who decide to drop the UHC are encouraged to contact the General Education Program Office to determine any remaining requirements. Currently, all Honors courses have GER designations.