

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Information to keep:

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What is general education?

General Education at the University of Maryland serves to unite the intellectual and creative goals that we have for our students and define the University of Maryland education.

Goals

The General Education program has the following goals for all students:

- Develop the skills necessary to succeed in academic careers and in professional lives by establishing habits and understanding of clear writing, effective speaking and presentation, and critical and analytic reasoning.
- Strengthen knowledge in major areas of study.
- Broaden knowledge of civilizations past and present.
- Establish the ability to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad understanding of the world in which they live and work.
- Define the ethical imperatives necessary to create a just society in their own communities and in the larger world

FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES

Fundamental Studies courses ensure that students have the basic skills in written and oral communication, in mathematical analysis, and in critical thinking that are important to their success across the curriculum and in their professional lives.

MATHEMATICS

The goal of the Mathematics requirement is to convey the power of mathematics, demonstrated by the variety of problems that can be modeled and solved by quantitative means. Ability in mathematics is a critical measure of how well students are prepared to meet the challenges they will face in their lives beyond school. *Must be attempted by 30 credits and successfully completed by 60 credits.**

ANALYTIC REASONING

Courses in Analytic Reasoning foster a student's ability to use mathematical or formal methods or structured protocols and patterns of reasoning to examine problems or issues by evaluating evidence, examining proofs, analyzing relationships between variables, developing arguments, and drawing conclusions appropriately.

If a student passes an Analytical Reasoning course that requires Fundamental Studies Math as a prerequisite, the Math requirement has also been fulfilled.

ACADEMIC WRITING

The Fundamental Studies Academic Writing requirement prepares students with a foundational understanding of the writing skills needed for success in further studies at Maryland and beyond. *Must be attempted by 30 credits and successfully completed by 60 credits. Students must earn a C- or better in Academic Writing.**

PROFESSIONAL WRITING

The Fundamental Studies Professional Writing requirement strengthens writing skills and prepares students for the range of writing expected of them after graduation.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

Human relationships, from the most formal to the most personal, rest in large measure on skilled listening and effective speaking. Skillful listening and speaking support success in personal relationships, educational undertakings, professional advancement, and civic engagement.

* No exemption is allowed for SAT scores. Scores on AP and IB exams may provide exemption. Refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for exemption information: <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/>

DISTRIBUTIVE STUDIES

Students learn about a variety of disciplines, the methods they use, the kinds of questions they ask, and their standards for judging the answers.

Requirements:

- Students must complete two courses in each area for a total of eight courses in Distributive Studies. One of the courses in the Natural Sciences must include a laboratory experience.
- Two of the eight courses must be Big Question courses. AP credit may not be used to satisfy the Big Question requirement.
- AP credit for Distributive Studies is limited to six of the eight courses.
- Coursework within one's major is permitted to satisfy both the major and general education requirements.
- A Diversity requirement may be fulfilled by a course that is approved for both a Diversity category and for a Distributive Studies category.
- One of the two Scholarship in Practice courses selected must be outside the student's major requirements.

Natural Sciences courses introduce the concepts and methods of studying the natural world. Courses include the traditional physical and life sciences, environmental science, animal and avian science, and plant science, among others. One of the two courses selected must include a substantial, rigorous laboratory experience.

History and Social Science courses introduce students to history and to the social science disciplines, with their combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. They include courses in criminology, economics, history, psychology, sociology, and other social sciences.

Humanities courses study the history and the genres of human creativity. They include courses in literatures in any language, art and art history, classics, and music and music history, as well as in the disciplines of linguistics and philosophy, among others.

Scholarship in Practice courses offer students the opportunity to apply their learning about a field in a meaningful, tangible way and to gain insider knowledge about the field. Such courses might, for example, give students an experience of what a writer does, what an engineer does, or what a researcher does by undertaking such work. Scholarship in Practice courses may include semester-long projects and team-based work allowing students to learn skills that are widely applicable. These courses are offered in all fields and at all levels (100-400).

Diversity

Rather than affirm or celebrate difference, courses in the Diversity requirement investigate the complexities of human difference and commonality. The Diversity requirement emphasizes the promises and problems of plural societies and the challenges that must be addressed to achieve

just, equitable, and productive societies. Courses in the Diversity requirement explore the struggles through which plural societies are established and maintained.

Two categories of courses comprise the Diversity requirement: Understanding Plural Societies and Cultural Competence.

Understanding Plural Societies courses recognize that life in the globally competitive society of the 21st century requires an ability to comprehend both theoretical and practical dimensions of human difference. From that perspective, Understanding Plural Societies is the centerpiece of the university's Diversity requirement. Courses in this category speak to both the foundations—cultural, material, psychological, historical, social, and biological—of human difference and the operation or function of plural societies.

Cultural Competence provides opportunities to gain an increased understanding of cultures and cultural practices, while learning to communicate effectively across cultural differences in a diverse society and world. This diversity category reflects a developmental, on-going process through which students learn about the lived experiences of individuals as members of socio-cultural groups and the complex interactions between groups.

Requirements:

- Students must complete two Understanding Plural Societies courses (6 credits total).

OR

- One Understanding Plural Societies course (3 credits) and one Cultural Competence course (1-3 credits).

Courses fulfilling the Diversity requirement may double count in an approved Distributive Studies category.

BIG QUESTION (formerly I-SERIES)

Big Question is the signature program of General Education at the University of Maryland.

Big Question courses are lively and contemporary. They speak to important issues that spark the imagination, demand intellect, and inspire innovation. They challenge students to wrestle with big questions, and examine the ways that different disciplines address them.

Big Question courses are not surveys of particular fields of knowledge. Instead, Big Question courses provide students with the basic concepts, approaches, and vocabulary of particular disciplines and fields of study, as well as an understanding of how experts in those disciplines and fields employ terms, concepts, and approaches.

Requirements:

Students must complete two Distributive Studies courses that are approved in the Big Question category.

*Note: Courses previously taken as I-Series courses count as Big Question courses.

STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Degree Completion Policy

The goal of the Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Policy is to promote undergraduate student success. The policy establishes a structured framework and criteria to guide all students to completion of an undergraduate degree within a reasonable period of time.

Full-time degree seeking students normally are expected to complete the undergraduate program in four years. Within this timeframe, all students are expected to demonstrate continuing progress in their majors by completing prerequisite or required courses with the appropriate grades, and by completing other requirements consistent with graduation progress or benchmarks established by their academic units. It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to meet these requirements.

- For the full policy: www.ugst.umd.edu/academicsuccess.html
- To review frequently asked questions about the policy: www.ugst.umd.edu/faqs-successpolicy.html
- To find the graduation plan for your major: www.ugst.umd.edu/4yearplans.html

FAQs

What is General Education?

The General Education program provides students with fundamental skills in writing, math and communication. It also allows students to experience a variety of academic disciplines including the humanities, social sciences and the natural sciences. All students must complete the General Education requirements.

Why do I need to take General Education?

General Education at the University of Maryland serves to unite the intellectual and creative goals that we have for our students and define the University of Maryland education.

What is Big Question?

Big Question courses make up the signature program of General Education at the University of Maryland. Big Question courses are lively and contemporary. They speak to important issues that spark the imagination, demand intellect, and inspire innovation. They challenge students to wrestle with grand challenges and examine the ways that different disciplines address them.

When a course has two Distributive Studies designations, why can't I fulfill two requirements with it?

Some Distributive Studies (DS) courses have more than one DS designations that provide students flexibility when selecting courses. Because students need a minimum of 8 DS courses, students are unable to use one course to meet two DS requirements.

What is scholarship in practice? Why do i need to take one outside my major?

Scholarship in Practice courses reinforce and enhance learning in the humanities, natural sciences, and history and social sciences with courses that put these areas of learning into practice.

Students have the opportunity to experience authentic work of a discipline; faculty will reveal the processes of their work whereby abstract knowledge is transferred into a tangible form.

In Scholarship in Practices courses, students will take risks, innovate, apply, collaborate, revise and perfect their work, communicate ideas, consider how work is affected by ideas of others, and produce an original product or analysis.

In order to provide students with an understanding of an applied discipline other than their own, students are required to take at least one of the Scholarship in Practice courses outside their major requirements.

GenEd@UMD Worksheet

Fill in Course used to fulfill, semester completed and grade

Fundamental studies (15 credits/ 5 courses)

Academic Writing (FSAW) 3 credits

- Attempt by 30 credits, complete by 60
- All students must earn C- or better in Academic Writing

Professional Writing (FSPW) 3 credits

Oral Communication (FSOC) 3 credits

Math (FSMA) 3 credits

- Attempt by 30 credits, complete by 60

Analytic Reasoning (FSAR) 3-4 credits

Distributive studies (25 credits/ 8 courses)

Natural Sciences w/lab (DSNL) 4 credits

Natural Sciences (DSNS) 3 credits

History and Social Sciences (DSHS) 3 credits

History and Social Sciences (DSHS) 3 credits

Humanities (DSHU) 3 credits

Humanities (DSHU) 3 credits

Scholarship in Practice (DSSP) 3 credits (outside major requirements) Scholarship in Practice (DSSP) 3 credits

BIG QUESTION (formerly I-SERIES) (6 credits/2 courses)*

I-Series (SCIS) 3 credits*

I-Series (SCIS) 3 credits*

DIVERSITY (4-6 credits/2 courses)*

Understanding Plural Societies (DVUP) 3 credits*

OR Cultural Competence (DVCC) 1-3 credits*

**All students must complete two Distributive Studies courses that are approved for Big Question courses. The Understanding Plural Societies and Cultural Competence courses may also fulfill Distributive Studies categories.*

