

**UNIVERSITY-WIDE GENERAL EDUCATION**  
COMPETENCIES, CONTENT AREAS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES  
(Revised - April 2002)

The General Education Program at the University of Louisville fosters active learning by asking students to think critically, to communicate effectively, and to understand and appreciate cultural diversity. Specifically, students will establish foundations in the following content areas: Arts and Humanities, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Oral Communication, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Written Communication. Additionally, in the competency area, students will acquire an understanding of Cultural Diversity through work in the content areas.

Students must complete 12 credit hours of General Education courses within the first 30 degree-applicable credit hours earned, and these 12 hours must include the successful completion of the first three hours in Written Communication; further, students must fulfill or begin working towards the Mathematics General Education requirement. Before completing 60 hours, the student must have completed 21 hours of General Education courses, including Oral Communication, Mathematics, and the second three hours of Written Communication.

Every course approved for General Education will address each outcome in every content and/or competency area for which it is approved.

**Content Areas:**

**Arts and Humanities** (6 hours: one course in Arts; one in Humanities)

Arts and Humanities are concerned with understanding texts of art, music, theatre, literature, philosophy, and religious thought. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Communicate an understanding of vocabulary, concepts, materials, techniques, and methods of intellectual inquiry within the arts and/or humanities;
2. Describe and evaluate texts using primary and secondary materials;
3. Analyze and synthesize texts, recognizing the diversity of cultures and historical contexts.

**Mathematics** (3 hours in Mathematics)

Mathematics is concerned with solving real-world problems through mathematical methods. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, and numerically;
2. Use arithmetic, algebraic, and geometric models to solve problems;
3. Interpret mathematical models, such as formulas, graphs, and tables;
4. Estimate and check answers to mathematical problems, determining reasonableness; alternatives; and correctness and completeness of solutions.

**Natural Sciences** (7 hours: lecture and lab in a single discipline; an additional 3 hours in a second discipline)

Natural Sciences are concerned with understanding the physical world through the scientific method. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Relate everyday observations of the world to physical principles;
2. Apply scientific principles to construct explanations of natural phenomena;
3. Communicate an understanding of scientific explanations of natural phenomena.

**Oral Communication** (3 hours)

Oral communication is the ability to convey ideas, emotions, and information through speech. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Speak publicly, in both formal and informal context, demonstrating skills such as appropriate selection of topic and materials, clear organization, effective presentation, and the ability to adapt to audience, setting, and occasion;
2. Participate effectively in discussion;
3. Analyze and critique the oral communication of oneself and others.

**Social and Behavioral Sciences** (9 hours: one course in the Department of History; the remaining 6 hours in two other disciplines.)

Social and behavioral sciences are concerned with understanding human behavior, human interactions, human environment, and the related social structures and forms. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Communicate an understanding of how social science knowledge is established and how and why it changes over time;
2. Evaluate evidence and apply it to solving problems through social science methods;
3. Communicate an understanding of a body of social science knowledge and its disciplinary perspective.

*History (3 credits)*

History is concerned with understanding change over time. Courses addressing this requirement cover a broad body of historical knowledge and compare Western and non-Western cultures. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Communicate an understanding of the process of historical change and the significance of place and time;
2. Communicate an understanding of the creation, development, and changing nature of historical knowledge and the importance of historical documentation;
3. Construct and communicate a historical argument employing historical facts.

**Written Communication** (6 hours: the first 3 hours must be a writing course in the Department of English or be an approved Honors course substitute)

Written communication is the ability to develop and express ideas, opinions, and information in appropriate written forms. To fulfill this requirement, students will complete a substantial amount of writing, including several texts that go through the writing process. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Understand and use writing processes, including invention, drafting, organizing, revising through multiple drafts, and editing;

2. Write clear and effective prose in several forms, demonstrating an awareness of audience and purpose;
3. Understand and use appropriate academic textual conventions of presentation, at sentence level and beyond;
4. Employ critical thinking processes, such as abstracting, synthesizing, and representing ideas, and developing complex structures for them;
5. Collect, select, and integrate material from a variety of sources into their writing, citing it appropriately.

### **Competency Areas:**

Students must take 6 hours in courses designated **Cultural Diversity (CD1 and CD2)**, at least 3 hours of which will focus on persons of African, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Native American ancestry (CD1 courses). **In many cases, these courses will also fulfill other Content Area requirements (e.g., a Cultural Diversity course may also count as a Social and Behavioral Science requirement).**

### **Understanding Cultural Diversity**

Understanding cultural diversity means students will have a broad exposure to a variety of social systems, cultures, and subcultures, both within the United States and the rest of the world. This portion of the curriculum encourages an appreciation of the realities of a racially and culturally diverse world. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

1. Recognize that social and cultural systems develop out of adaptation to environmental and historical circumstances;
2. Communicate an understanding of the ways in which race, ethnicity, and/or gender are socially constructed;
3. Communicate an understanding that different cultures may hold different views of the same issues;
4. Evaluate pertinent information and assertions for relevance, bias, stereotyping, manipulation, and completeness.

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