SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

In the tradition of its eighteenth-century founders, the College of Arts and Sciences (https://www.college.upenn.edu/) regards the enduring purpose of education as the liberation of the mind from ignorance, superstition, and prejudice. From its central position in an international research university, the College invites students to explore the broad spectrum of human knowledge and takes pride in its capacity to respond to the particular intellectual needs of those who join it. The College thrives on the diversity of scholars and students whose interests it sustains and whose intellectual goals it unites.

Study of the arts and sciences provides a solid basis for advanced scientific and scholarly research, for subsequent training in the professions, and for the informed exercise of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The College’s goal is to help students to become knowledgeable about the world and the complexities of today’s society, aware of moral, ethical, and social issues, prepared to exercise intellectual leadership, and enlivened by the use of their mind.

The College is committed to offering a broad education that will lay a durable foundation for critical and creative thinking. We believe that students should explore fundamental approaches to the acquisition and interpretation of knowledge through introduction to substantive bodies of current thought in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Equally important, they should learn to understand and evaluate the sources and methods from which this knowledge derives. In this way they can be led to appreciate the contingency of all knowledge and to participate in the ongoing excitement of intellectual discovery that is at the heart of the College.

We challenge our students to develop the skills of analysis and communication that will enable them to perceive pattern in complexity, render reasoned judgments, make wise choices under conditions of uncertainty, and join with others in the pursuit of common endeavors. They should, for example, be able to write and speak effectively and to use another people’s language as one means of access to the diversity of contemporary and historical culture.

A student’s emerging interests and talents find expression through an organized program of study in a major field. In the specialized context of the major, students investigate the traditions and contemporary status of an established branch of knowledge. The structured study of a discipline complements the general exploration of our intellectual heritage to provide the balance of educational breadth and depth to which the College is committed.

There is no single or easy path to the benefits of liberal education. A program of study must be shaped as a student grows. But the special strengths of the University of Pennsylvania—its combination of academic and professional excellence, its diverse and interdisciplinary tradition, its active community of scholars at all levels of experience—provide a setting in which the College can dedicate itself to nurturing honest, eager, and critical minds. The College welcomes those who seek to understand, appreciate, and contribute to the achievements of the human intellect.

The College of Arts and Sciences (https://www.college.upenn.edu/) is the full-time undergraduate division of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), which offers the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree. Other divisions include:

- The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences which offers the advanced degrees of Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.);