CURRICULUM

The Purpose of the Curriculum

A curriculum is often identified with a set of degree requirements: "What do I have to do to receive my degree?" But degree requirements are not themselves sufficient to define appropriate educational goals. One might fulfill all of the College's degree requirements and yet fail to get a good education. It would also be possible to acquire a good education but neglect to fulfill the degree requirements. Now, we certainly do want you to fulfill all of the degree requirements, and we will work with you to see that this happens. But you are not here fundamentally for the purpose of completing degree requirements. If you think of your education solely in those terms, the result will be dull and unsatisfying.

"Curriculum" comes from the Latin for "course," in the sense in which one might speak of the course of a journey. The term denotes a means rather than an end, but it suggests better than "degree requirements" what it is to become educated. It denotes a movement from a starting point to a destination, a movement that proceeds along some path. You are not left to your own devices to figure out how to get from here to there. But neither is the path straight and narrow. You will have many choices to make as you negotiate the course of your education, but they will be informed by the experience of the faculty, who in the curriculum offer their considered advice for your educational journey.

The College's curriculum draws you toward two distinctive goals: toward general education across the wide range of the arts and sciences and toward specialized education in a major. A commitment to holding these two—general and specialized education—together has been the genius of American higher education since the early part of the last century. We continue to believe that these two elements constitute an education best suited to enabling intelligent individuals to live humane, productive and fulfilling lives in the 21st century.

There are 3 benchmarks that every College student must meet to graduate:

1. Requirements:

Complete:

A. General Education Requirements (https://www.college.upenn.edu/gen-ed/) (Foundational Approaches and Sectors)

B. Major (https://upenn-preview.courseleaf.com/undergraduate/arts-sciences/curriculum/major/)

2. Total courses:

Complete the course units (c.u.) needed to earn the degree (32-36 c.u.), typically 20 courses outside the major, but no student is required to complete more than 36 courses. Please visit the individual major pages in the Catalog about the specific c.u. requirements by Major (https://upenn-preview.courseleaf.com/undergraduate/arts-sciences/curriculum/major/).

3. 16 courses in the Arts & Sciences outside the major:

Complete 16 c.u. in the Arts & Sciences outside of the primary major which include those courses used for general education requirements, minors, and second majors. Courses in Wharton, Nursing, Engineering (including CIS), and Design (FNAR, DSGN, ARCH) are not Arts & Sciences courses, and therefore do not count towards this 16 c.u. requirement. However, some DSGN, FNAR, CIS, NETS or STAT can be used for General Education Requirements. When that occurs, these courses can be counted toward the 16 A&S courses outside the major. Students who are pursuing dual degrees are required to complete 14 A&S courses outside of the primary Arts & Sciences major.

Policy Statement

These policies apply to Undergraduate students within the School of Arts and Sciences.

Foundational Approaches

- With the exception of the Language Requirement, none of these requirements may be satisfied with advanced placement credit (including A-Levels, I.B., and other similar credit based on external examination). In addition, credit awarded by departmental exam can also not be used to fulfill any Foundational Approach.
- The same course cannot be used to satisfy more than one Foundational Approach. However, courses taken to satisfy Foundational Approaches may also be used to satisfy the Sector Requirement and/or requirements for the major or minor.
- Non-Arts & Sciences courses used to fulfill the Foundational Approaches are counted as Arts & Sciences courses in calculating total credits needed for graduation.
- Courses taken to satisfy these requirements must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail.
- Each of the requirements that make up the Foundational Approaches is satisfied by taking a single course from a list of requirement courses, with the exception of the Language Requirement (which may require anywhere from 0 to 4 c.u. depending on the student's background in the given language).

Writing Requirement

Students fulfill the Writing Requirement by taking a critical writing seminar and are strongly encouraged to do so during their first year.

- Seminars must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail.
- Seminars may not be used to fulfill any other College General Education Requirement.

Transfer Students and the Writing Requirement

Students who transfer to Penn as juniors are eligible to request transfer credit for a writing seminar. The Critical Writing Program can help students determine how to fulfill the Writing Requirement and whether credit from a previous institution is likely to be applicable.

Language Requirement

- The Language Requirement is normally fulfilled by completing the fourth-semester level course in a particular language or by demonstrating equivalent competency through language placement. Policies may vary by language program; students with questions should contact the relevant department.
- The fourth semester of a Language Requirement course may not be used to fulfill any other General Education Requirement.
- Transfer credit, credit away and credit earned studying abroad may be counted toward the Language Requirement only when departments award credit using the number of a Penn course approved for the Language Requirement.
- All courses taken towards completion of the Language Requirement must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail.

Transfer Students and the Language Requirement

If not yet completed, students should plan to fulfill the Language Requirement as soon as possible. Language department websites provide information about placement exams for students who plan to continue with a previously studied language and/or receive credit for language courses taken at their previous institution.

Language Placement

It is recommended that students begin to satisfy the Language Requirement in their first semester and continue to take courses consecutively until the requirement is fulfilled. Students planning to continue with a language that they have studied previously should read about language placement below. Students who decide to start a new language at Penn should anticipate that it will require four full semesters of course work to achieve competency in the language and to fulfill the Language Requirement.

At the time they first enroll in a beginning- or intermediate-level language course, all students who have previously studied that language must have a placement score. The only students exempt from having a placement score are those who have never studied the language before. Credit will not be given for a language course taken at a lower level than a student's placement score indicates.

Some language departments offer online exams for placement in the summer or on a rolling basis. Other language departments offer in-person exams at the beginning of each year. Students should check the departmental and NSO websites for information on individual exams.

Students wishing to be evaluated in a modern language other than those taught by the language departments should consult the Penn Language Center.

Students who feel their placement scores do not accurately reflect their language level, or students who have other questions about their language study, should make an appointment to speak with the coordinator of their particular language program.

Language Requirement Substitution

Students who believe that they have a documented disability that precludes learning a language should contact the Disabilities Services Office. A member of their professional staff will explain the assessment procedure, which requires up-to-date neuropsychological testing.

If a student's disability is verified by Disabilities Services, the student should make an appointment to meet with the language substitution advisor in the College Office to confirm approval of the substitution and to select appropriate substitution courses. The number of courses each student will require will depend upon the number of language classes the student has completed before applying for the substitution. A full substitution will require four substitute courses.

Substitution courses are selected as follows: The student must choose one geographical area in the world where English is not the primary language and take at least one course in cinema or literature in translation from that country or region. The remaining courses will focus on the culture or literature of that same geographical area. If no language course has been taken at Penn, the student must also take one class in linguistics or anthropology of language. All classes for the language

substitution must be approved in advance by the language substitution advisor.

Courses used as part of the Language Requirement substitution may not also be used to fulfill any major requirement, nor to fulfill any other Foundational Approaches or Sector.

Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement

Students fulfill the Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement by taking a course from the list of approved courses.

- Transfer credit, credit away and credit earned studying abroad may be counted toward the Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement only when departments award credit using the number of a Penn course approved for the Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement.
- Courses taken to satisfy the Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail.
- A course used to satisfy the Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement may not be double counted toward any other Foundational Approach. However, a course fulfilling the Quantitative Data Analysis Requirement may be double counted with any Sector and also with requirements for a major or minor.

Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement

Students fulfill the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement by taking a course from the list of approved courses.

- Courses taken to satisfy the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail. Any passing grade, from A+ through D, is acceptable for a course to fulfill the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement.
- A course used to satisfy the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement may not be double counted toward any other Foundational Approach. However, a course fulfilling the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement may be double counted with any Sector and with requirements for a major or minor.
- Transfer credit, credit away and credit earned studying abroad may be counted toward the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement only when departments award credit using the number of a Penn course approved for the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement.
- Neither advanced placement credit nor credit by departmental exam may be used to fulfill the Formal Reasoning and Analysis Requirement.

Cross-Cultural Analysis Requirement

Students fulfill the Cross-Cultural Analysis Requirement by taking a course from the list of approved courses.

- Courses taken to satisfy the Cross-Cultural Analysis Requirement must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail. Any passing grade, from A+ through D, is acceptable for a course to fulfill the Cross-Cultural Analysis Requirement.
- A course used to satisfy the Cross-Cultural Analysis Requirement may not be double counted toward any other Foundational Approach. However, a course fulfilling the Cross- Cultural Analysis Requirement may be double counted with any Sector and with requirements for a major or minor.
- Transfer credit, credit away and credit earned studying abroad may be counted toward the Cross-Cultural Analysis Requirement. Advanced

Placement credit may not be used to fulfill the Cross-Cultural Analysis Requirement.

Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement

Students fulfill the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement by taking a course from the list of approved courses.

- Courses taken to satisfy the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail. Any passing grade, from A+ through D, is acceptable for a course to fulfill the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement.
- A course used to satisfy the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement may not be double counted toward any other Foundational Approach. However, a course fulfilling the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement may be double counted with any Sector and with requirements for a major or minor.
- Transfer credit, credit away and credit earned studying abroad may be counted toward the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement. Advanced Placement credit may not be used to fulfill the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. Requirement.

Sector Requirement

To satisfy the Sector Requirement, each major has a designated Sector course that will be auto-completed upon the declaration of the major. The remaining sectors must be fulfilled by non-major courses.

Courses Fulfilling the Sector Requirement

- Courses that fulfill the Sector Requirements can be found in Path@Penn.
- In addition to the courses listed in the various sectors, students may use designated first-year seminars and Benjamin Franklin seminars to fulfill the various sector requirements.
- Non-Arts & Sciences courses used to fulfill the Sector Requirement are counted as Arts & Sciences courses in calculating total credits needed for graduation.

Grade Types Fulfilling the Sector Requirement

Courses taken to fulfill the Sector Requirement must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail. Any passing grade, from A+ through D, is acceptable for a course to fulfill the Sector Requirement.

Advanced Placement and the Sector Requirement

The Sector Requirement may not be satisfied with advanced placement credit (including A-Levels, IB and other similar credit based on external examination). In addition, credit awarded by departmental exam cannot be used to fulfill the Sector Requirement.

Transfer credit, credit away and credit earned studying abroad may be counted toward the Sector Requirement only when departments awarding credit use the number of a Penn course approved for the Sector Requirement.

Double Counting and Auto-Completion between Sectors and Majors

For policies governing double counting Sector Requirement courses, *see Double Counting and Auto-Completion between Sectors and Majors on p.8.*

Major Requirement

All College students are required to complete a major in the School of Arts and Sciences. This requirement ensures that all graduates of the College develop a thorough understanding in at least one field of knowledge through concentrated study over several years in at least 12 c.u. Students are subject to the specific policies and requirements of a given major in effect at the time they declare that major, and they remain so even if the major requirements are subsequently changed. With the approval of the department or program, however, one may be permitted to abide by the new requirement structure.

Qualifications for Admission to the Major

- Students must have a g.p.a. of 2.0 in major and major- related courses already taken. Some majors require a higher g.p.a.
- Some departments and programs require specific coursework or other prerequisites before application to the major.

Transfer Credits to the Major

- Only the department or program advisors determine which credits transferred from another institution can count toward the major.
- At least half the course units in the major must be taken at Penn. Some departments require more.

Grade Type for Courses in the Major

All courses taken for a major must be taken for a letter grade, not pass/fail. Some departments have a minimum grade requirement for all courses within the major.

Double Counting and Auto-Completion between Sectors and Majors

For policies governing double counting major courses, *see Double Counting and Auto-Completion between Sectors and Majors on page 8.*

Declaring a Major

All College students are expected to declare a major by the spring of sophomore year.

When students are ready to declare their major, they should:

- Check the major department or program website in which they wish to declare for information about the process.
- Students should note that some departments and programs may require a meeting in order to complete the major declaration process.
- Complete the Declare/Update Field of Study form on Path@Penn.

School of Engineering second majors

SEAS students who would like to declare a second major in the College of Arts and Sciences should contact the relevant SAS department and follow the department's procedure for declaring a major.

Students in the College who would like to declare a second major in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences should *see page 10*.

Individualized Majors

Before contemplating an individualized major, students are advised to choose one of the available departmental or interdisciplinary majors in the College. Because the individualized major is grounded in arts and sciences, most of the courses used in the major must be within the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS). Highly qualified students are welcome to apply for an individualized major if they have first declared a standard major by the end of their sophomore year. In order for students to submit the proposal for the individualized major to the Committee on the Individualized Study (CIS) by the beginning of their junior year as required, it is necessary for students to obtain the recommendation of the undergraduate chair of their major department and the strong support

of two faculty members who recognize merit in the student's proposed individualized study and accept responsibility of acting as advisors. Please also know that designing a proposal for an individualized major requires considerable effort and time as well as a high degree of creativity. Students should understand that their proposal may not be approved.

As part of the applications students must:

- Make an appointment to speak with the Individualized Major advisor in the College Office no later than their fourth semester to discuss details of the major and the application process.
- Provide a concise rationale for their proposed major.
- Plan a tentative coherent course of study for the major, with at least 14 c.u. to culminate in a major research project which, upon completion, will be presented to the University community in a public lecture. (This should be done in consultation with two faculty advisors. See below.)
- Find at least one standing faculty member in the School of Arts and Sciences who recognizes merit in the proposed individualized study and accepts the responsibility of acting as the student's main advisor for the individualized major and for sponsoring and overseeing the thesis.
- Find another faculty member whose specialty is in some way related to the major but is different from the first ad
  visor's and who is willing to serve as a second advisor.

Electives Requirement

Electives, by definition, fulfill neither General Education Requirements nor the Major Requirement, but are counted toward the total number of course units required for graduation. Students have a required number of Arts and Sciences electives and depending on the major, there is room for exploration beyond the Arts and Sciences. Certain key courses in Computer Science, Statistics, Design and Fine Arts also play a substantial role in the Arts and Sciences Curriculum and count as Arts and Sciences electives. Students should consult with their pre-major advisor to discuss how their Electives fit into their overall curriculum, and how many they are likely to need.

A maximum of 8 c.u. of Electives outside the major and general education requirements may be taken on a pass/fail basis, though normally it is not recommended that students take that many pass/fail courses (two or three is more typical).

Double Counting Courses

Students may use a single course to fulfill more than one requirement across the curriculum. This is known as double counting. Different policies apply to different components of the curriculum.

Foundational Approaches

Courses may be double counted between a Foundational Approach and the Sector Requirement, and between a Foundational Approach and the major, but not among two or more Foundational Approaches.

This means that the Writing, Quantitative Data Analysis, Formal Reasoning and Analysis, Cross-Cultural Analysis, Cultural Diversity in the U.S. and Language Requirements must all be fulfilled using separate courses.

Double Counting and Auto-Completion between Sectors and Majors

- Each major has a designated Sector course that will be auto-completed upon the declaration of the major. The remaining Sectors must be fulfilled by non-major courses.
- One course cannot be used to fulfill more than one Sector (i.e., each of the sectors must be fulfilled using a different course.
- If a student declares a second major that auto-completes the same Sector as their first major, a major advisor will make an exception to auto-complete a different Sector.
- Students in majors that allow courses from both the Living World and Physical World to fulfill their major requirements will have both Sectors auto-completed. Majors which have two Sectors auto-completed include, but are not limited to, Neuroscience, Biology, Biophysics and Earth Science.
- Major departments may have additional rules limiting double counting between more than one major.
- There is no limit to the number of courses that may be double counted between General Education Requirements and requirements for a minor.
- Courses being used to fulfill the Language Requirement Substitution may not also be used to fulfill another General Education requirement nor any Major Requirement.

Courses for Submatriculation

In any submatriculation program, a maximum of 4 c.u. at the graduate level may be included toward both the B.A. and the M.A. These four courses may be part of the Major Requirement or the electives of the undergraduate program, but may not include courses in independent study. Some graduate programs may permit fewer than four courses to be double counted.