

# GENERAL EDUCATION AND ADDITIONAL BACCALAUREATE INFORMATION

A liberal arts education prepares students to think and communicate as professionals, to understand the social and global contexts of their lives, to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another, to recognize difference and make informed decisions using reasoning skills, and to balance the various dimensions of their personal and professional lives. WCU's General Education Program and Additional Baccalaureate Degree requirements provide opportunities for students to achieve these competencies.

## General Education and Additional Baccalaureate Goals Common to All Baccalaureate Curricula

West Chester University's General Education Program and Additional Baccalaureate Degree requirements strive to provide students with the experiences necessary to achieve the following goals, which support the competencies associated with a liberal arts education:

1. Communicate effectively
2. Think critically and analytically
3. Employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods
4. Demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries
5. Respond thoughtfully to diversity
6. Understand varied historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions
7. Make informed decisions and ethical choices

## General Education Program

Code	Title	Credits
<b>ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS:</b>		
	First Year Experience requirement	4
	English Composition requirement (WRT 120 / WRT 123 and 200-level WRT course)	6-7
	Mathematics requirement	3-4
	Interdisciplinary requirement (I)	3
	Diverse Communities requirement (J)	3
	Ethics requirement (ET)	3
<b>DISTRIBUTED DISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS</b>		
	Science requirement	6-8
	Behavioral and Social Science requirement	6
	Humanities requirement	6
	Arts requirement	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>43-47</b>

For more specific course information, see the General Education Requirements (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/>).

Courses that satisfy Distributed Disciplinary Foundation Requirements can also satisfy Diverse Communities Requirements (J) or Ethics Requirements (ET) but cannot satisfy Interdisciplinary Requirements (I).

Courses may carry more than one designation such as I, J, and ET and as such satisfy multiple General Education Program Requirements.

Under no circumstances will the numeric credit value of a course be duplicated. For example, a student may choose a Humanities Distributed Disciplinary Foundations course that also carries the Ethics (ET) designation. It would satisfy both of those Gen Ed requirements but only 3 credits would be earned toward the degree. In such a case, the General Education Student Learning Outcomes would be satisfied

and the student would need to take additional electives to reach the total credits required for the baccalaureate degree.

## Additional Baccalaureate Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS</b>		
	Writing Emphasis requirement for all baccalaureate degrees (W)	9
	Speaking Emphasis requirement for all baccalaureate degrees (SE)	9
<b>DEGREE REQUIREMENTS</b>		
	Language and Culture requirement for certain baccalaureate degrees	0-15
	Capstone	1-15

For more specific course information, see the Additional Baccalaureate Requirements (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/>).

Courses with W and/or SE designations can *also* satisfy General Education and other Additional Baccalaureate Degree Requirements.

Under no circumstances will the numeric credit value of a course be duplicated. For example, a student may choose a Languages and Cultures course that also carries the Writing Emphasis (W) designation. It would satisfy both of those Additional Baccalaureate requirements but only 3 credits would be earned toward the degree. In such a case, the Additional Baccalaureate Learning Outcomes would be satisfied and the student would need to take additional electives to reach the total credits required for the baccalaureate degree. Similarly, a student may choose a course that has both the Ethics (ET) and the Speaking Emphasis (SE) designation, and it would satisfy both the Gen Ed and Additional Baccalaureate Requirements, but only 3 credits would be earned toward the degree. In such a case, the Ethics and the Additional Baccalaureate Learning Outcomes would be satisfied and the student would need to take additional electives to reach the total credits required for the baccalaureate degree.

## Information and Definitions for the General Education and Additional Baccalaureate Requirements

### Grading Requirement

All General Education and Additional Baccalaureate Requirement courses must be completed with a minimum grade of D-, unless the student's major has a minimum grade requirement noted in the curriculum requirements.

### Information About Academic Foundations

#### First Year Experience (FYE)

The First Year Experience course introduces all 7 General Education Goals as a foundational approach to the degree program.

The First Year Experience is a four-credit requirement. The First Year Experience requirement applies to incoming first-year students, as well as transfer students with fewer than 24 college-level credits.

For transfer students with 24 or more college-level credits, the FYE requirement is waived.

The FYE requirement can be transferred in from another institution, if the student took a FYE course elsewhere *prior* to enrolling at WCU. If a student completed a three-credit FYE course at another institution, this course will fulfill WCU's FYE requirement. A student that receives FYE credit for a 3-credit course will need to make up the extra credit with additional coursework. Any FYE course from another institution that is less than 3 credits will not satisfy this General Education requirement.

Students should complete their FYE requirement within their first 30 credits at WCU.

Students receiving a grade of C- or lower in the FYE will be provided an opportunity to further develop their mastery of course competencies

via additional instruction no later than the beginning of the second subsequent regular (fall or spring) semester. The instructor of record for the additional instruction will have the ability to increase the original grade to no higher than a "C."

### English Composition Requirement

English Composition courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*) and Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*).

Students must earn 6-7 credits of English Composition to fulfill the General Education Academic Foundations requirement. Three to four credits of either WRT 120 or WRT 123 are required as well as 3 credits of 200-level WRT coursework. These credits can be completed via transfer credit. Students must complete prerequisite coursework prior to enrollment into a 200-level WRT course.

Students should complete their WRT coursework within their first 60 credits at WCU.

### Mathematics Requirement

Mathematics courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*) and Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*).

Students must earn 3-4 credits of college-level mathematics. These credits can be completed via WCU coursework or via transfer credits. Students must complete prerequisite coursework prior to enrollment into a college-level mathematics course. Some majors require a specific mathematics course that will be used to fulfill the General Education Academic Foundations requirement.

Students should complete their MAT Academic Foundations coursework within their first 60 credits at WCU.

### Interdisciplinary Requirement (I)

Interdisciplinary courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*), Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*), and Goal 4 (*demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries*).

Interdisciplinary courses question and offer an alternative to traditional knowledge production processes in that they seek to be integrative and holistic, rather than fragmented and compartmentalized. They use an inquiry rather than a disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approach. In sum, the interdisciplinary course emphasizes connections among three or more disciplines and integration of knowledge, themes, and ideas from these different disciplines. (Taken from the WCU *Handbook for Interdisciplinary Courses*)

Students must earn 3 credits of Interdisciplinary coursework.

Because interdisciplinary courses are, by design, treatment of a subject from different disciplines, interdisciplinary courses may not be used to fulfill the Distributed Disciplinary Foundations requirement. However, a course may simultaneously satisfy the interdisciplinary requirement and any other General Education Academic Foundation or Additional Baccalaureate requirement(s).

**NOTE: An Interdisciplinary designation may only transfer into WCU if the course from a student's prior institution has been submitted to and approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC). To receive credit for this type of course, students must submit a Course Substitution Request to the Office of the Special Assistant for Academic Policy.**

### Diverse Communities Requirement (J)

Diverse Communities courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*), Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*), and Goal 5 (*respond thoughtfully to diversity*).

Embracing the university's aim of graduating students who are committed to creating a just and equitable society, Diverse Communities (or "J") courses focus on historically marginalized groups (based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality,

and other forms of difference) and are framed by theories that lend understanding to the analysis of structural inequalities. These courses seek to foster an informed and reasoned openness to, and understanding of, difference. They also invite students to consider how marginalized groups resist oppression and have agency in spite of structural exclusion and discrimination.

Students must earn 3 credits of Diverse Communities coursework.

A Diverse Communities course may simultaneously fulfill another degree requirement or any other General Education Program or Additional Baccalaureate requirement(s).

**NOTE: A Diverse Communities designation may only transfer into WCU if the course from a student's prior institution has been submitted to and approved by the Diverse Communities Committee of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC). To receive credit for this type of course, students must submit a Course Substitution Request to the Office of the Special Assistant for Academic Policy.**

### Ethics (ET)

Ethics courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*), Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*), and Goal 7 (*make informed decisions and ethical choices*).

Ethics courses provide opportunities for students to engage in activities that encourage them to problem-see and problem-solve with an ethical lens; they expose students to discipline-specific (or general theoretical) ways to use ethical frameworks for ethical decision-making.

Students must earn 3 credits of Ethics coursework.

An Ethics course may simultaneously fulfill another degree requirement or any other General Education Program or Additional Baccalaureate requirement(s).

**NOTE: An Ethics designation may only transfer into WCU if the course from a student's prior institution has been submitted to and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC). To receive credit for this type of course, students must submit a Course Substitution Request to the Office of the Special Assistant for Academic Policy.**

### Information About Distributed Disciplinary Foundations

#### Science

General Education Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*), Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*), and Goal 3 (*employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods*).

The central concern of Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundation courses at WCU is to expose students to the world-views and toolset of traditional science disciplines. This includes teaching students to observe and to gather and analyze quantitative data, to gain experience with graphical or tabular presentations of quantitative information, and to use quantitative methods to support or refute a hypothesis, as they examine the natural or physical world. Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundation courses emphasize the cognitive skills of critical thought, creativity, analysis, and synthesis that are central to a foundation in general education, and have content directed largely toward the experimental study of the natural or physical world using the commonly accepted methods of science.

Students must earn 6-8 credits of Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundations coursework. Students must select courses from two different disciplines. Students must select courses outside of the student's major.

This requirement can be fulfilled via transfer credits.

## Behavioral and Social Science

General Education Behavioral and Social Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*), Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*), and Goal 3 (*employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods*) or Goal 6 (*understand varied historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions*).

The central concern of Behavioral and Social Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundation courses at WCU is to engage students in behavioral and social science scholarship and to develop students' ability to employ qualitative and/or quantitative methods in examining the patterns and processes of human activities and/or their ability to understand human activity in cultural and/or social context. Behavioral and Social Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundation courses emphasize the cognitive skills of critical thought, creativity, analysis, and synthesis that are central to a foundation in general education, and have content directed largely toward human behavior, systems that humans create, and the various forces at work in modern society.

Students must earn 6 credits of Behavioral and Social Science Distributed Disciplinary Foundations coursework. Students must select courses from two different disciplines. Students must select courses outside of the student's major.

This requirement can be fulfilled via transfer credits.

## Humanities

General Education Humanities Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*), Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*), and Goal 6 (*understand varied historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions*).

The central concern of Humanities Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses at WCU is to engage students in humanities scholarship, to develop students' ability to describe, analyze, imagine, and explore what it means to be human, and to understand varied historical, cultural, and/or philosophical traditions. Humanities Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses emphasize the cognitive skills of critical thought, creativity, analysis, and synthesis that are central to a foundation in general education. They have content directed largely toward the study of language, texts, thought, and culture; their definition, interpretation, and historical development; and their reflection of human values, beliefs, and traditions.

Students must earn 6 credits of Humanities Distributed Disciplinary Foundations coursework. Students must select courses from two different disciplines. Students must select courses outside of the student's major.

This requirement can be fulfilled via transfer credits.

## Arts

General Education Arts Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*), Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*), and Goal 6 (*understand varied historical, cultural, and philosophical traditions*).

The central concern of Arts Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses at WCU is to introduce students to art scholarship and to develop students' ability to think critically and analytically about form, function, and the creative process. Arts Distributed Disciplinary Foundations courses emphasize the cognitive skills of critical thought, creativity, analysis, and synthesis that are central to a foundation in general education. They may be theoretical or historical, comparative or integrative, will be supported by an applied component, and should emphasize interrelationships within the arts and connections to the humanities.

Students must earn 3 credits of Arts Distributed Disciplinary Foundations coursework. Student's must select courses outside of the students' major.

An Arts course cannot simultaneously fulfill the Language and Culture Cluster requirements.

This requirement can be fulfilled via transfer credits.

## Information About Additional Baccalaureate Requirements

### Writing Emphasis (W)

Writing Emphasis courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*) and Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*).

The curriculum structure for writing-emphasis at West Chester University consists of the requirement that graduating seniors will have taken three writing-emphasis courses prior to graduation. These three writing-emphasis courses are required in addition to the two introductory writing courses students take in the first-year writing program (WRT 120 or WRT 123; WRT 200 level). Unlike these first-year writing program courses, writing-emphasis courses are taught by faculty "across the curriculum" as opposed to only by writing specialists historically located in the English Department.

Students must earn 9 credits of Writing Emphasis coursework, 3 credits of which must be at the 300-400-level.

**NOTE: A Writing Emphasis designation may only transfer into WCU if the course from a student's prior institution has been submitted to and approved by the Writing Emphasis Committee of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC). To receive credit for this type of course, students must submit a Course Substitution Request to the Office of the Special Assistant for Academic Policy. For a course substitution to be granted, the substituting course must demonstrate not just that writing was assigned or completed by students in the course, but that writing was a significant part of course content, including opportunities for drafting and revision of written work, and that direct instruction in writing skills took place in the course. Ideally, a substituting course meets all of WCU's writing-emphasis designation criteria.**

All transfer students who enter with fewer than 40 college-level credits must complete 9 credits of Writing Emphasis coursework. Transfer students who enter with 40-70 college-level credits must take at least 6 credits of Writing Emphasis coursework, with at least 3 credits being at the 300-400 level. Students who transfer more than 70 college-level credits must take at least 3 credits of Writing Emphasis coursework at the 300-400 level.

### Speaking Emphasis (SE)

Speaking Emphasis courses address General Education Goal 1 (*communicate effectively*) and Goal 2 (*think critically and analytically*).

Speaking Emphasis courses are designed to develop students' oral/language-based communication skills in ways that are deemed important and desirable within a specific academic discipline or more generally across disciplines. The skills developed can range from performance-based speaker-audience interactions to one-on-one or group interactions based on the focus of the discipline. The emphasis of each SE course is to develop personal and professional advantages through the ability to put thoughts together and communicate effectively in a meaningful way.

Students must complete 9 credits of Speaking Emphasis coursework, 3 credits of which must be at the 300-400-level.

Courses in American sign language may meet the Speaking Emphasis requirement if they are designated as such.

**NOTE: A Speaking Emphasis designation may only transfer into WCU if the course from a student's prior institution has been submitted to and approved by the Speaking Emphasis Committee of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC). To receive credit for this type of course, students must submit a Course Substitution Request to the Office of the Special Assistant for Academic Policy. For a course substitution to be granted, the**



**substituting course must demonstrate not just that speaking was assigned or completed by students in the course, but that speaking was a significant part of course content and that direct instruction in speaking skills took place in the course. Ideally, a substituting course meets all of WCU's speaking-emphasis designation criteria.**

All transfer students who enter with fewer than 40 college-level credits must complete 9 credits of Speaking Emphasis coursework. Transfer students who enter with 40-70 college-level credits, must take at least 6 credits of Speaking Emphasis coursework. Students who transfer more than 70 college-level credits must take at least 3 credits of Speaking Emphasis coursework at the 300-400 level.

### **Languages and Culture Requirements for B.A., B.M., and Some B.S. Degrees**

West Chester University believes that college students require exposure to global cultures, and the University integrates this belief into courses and programs in various ways. The Language and Culture requirements can be completed in two ways, depending on the major curriculum.

1. Language Proficiency through the Intermediate level: Students must demonstrate a language proficiency gained by completing a second language to the intermediate year (202 level) of a language.
2. Culture Cluster Option: Students must demonstrate language proficiency through the elementary (102) level of a language and further acquire a cultural foundation by taking three Culture Cluster courses (9 credits) within the same language area. This option is available in the following languages: American Sign Language, Arabic, French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Russian, and Spanish.
  - a. Of the three required culture cluster courses, students who choose this option may take no more than two in the same department, except that only one may be taken in the department in which they major.
  - b. Students may not use a course to simultaneously fulfill a General Education Distributed Disciplinary Foundations requirement and a culture cluster requirement.

Course substitutions to the language requirement of a department will be granted if the student meets one of the following criteria:

1. The student is able to demonstrate proficiency through successful testing by the Department of Languages and Cultures.
2. The student holds a diploma from a secondary education institution in another country. This institution must be at least the equivalent of a U.S. high school, and instruction must be in a language other than English.
3. Students who may request course substitution because of a disability should refer to "Services for Students with Disabilities."

Second degree students who have not met the language requirement in their prior degree program will be required to do so if a language requirement is part of their second degree program.

### **Additional Notes on General Education and Additional Baccalaureate Requirements**

Students, both those matriculating as first year and transfer students, who have not completed the Academic Foundations requirements in Mathematics and English by the time they have earned 60 credits toward graduation must have the permission of the dean of their school or college (or their designee) to schedule additional courses.

A total of 43-47 credits of general education requirements must be completed for a baccalaureate degree. Those credits are allocated among English composition, mathematics, diverse communities, interdisciplinary studies, ethics, science, behavioral and social sciences, humanities, and the arts. Credit requirements for each area are provided in the chart under "General Education Program" above. Readmitted students are bound by the requirements in place for general education at the time of readmission.

Courses taken to satisfy General Education and/or Additional Baccalaureate Requirements may not be taken pass/fail.

Specific General Education and/or Additional Baccalaureate Requirement courses may be required by a major or minor program, but no course may have its numeric credits duplicated in any application. A student may use the course from one major to meet the requirements of a second major. In this case, the advisor will work with the student to determine which course(s) should be used to address any remaining credits. But in no case may a student graduate with fewer than 120 credits at the 100 level or above. Students should be aware that, although General Education and/or Additional Baccalaureate Requirements have been met, major degree requirements may necessitate a specific minimum performance level in general education courses, e.g., a grade of C- or better.

Consult your major degree program for guidance.

Students in the Honors College should consult the Honors College page (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/honors-college/honors-college/>) concerning General Education and Additional Baccalaureate requirements.

### **Pathway Certificates**

Undergraduate students have the option of completing 12-credit pathway certificates. Each certificate takes an interdisciplinary approach to incorporate the spirit of the general education curriculum, with a focus on specific themes, concepts, and content areas. As a result, students are provided more opportunities for applying information and learning approaches across multiple disciplines. Pathway certificates are completed at the student's discretion and do not take the place of normal gen ed requirements.

For more specific information about the curriculum for individual pathway certificates, see the Pathway Certificates section of the General Education and Additional Baccalaureate Requirements (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/>).

### **Applicable Catalog Year**

The West Chester University Undergraduate Catalog is produced annually in print and online versions. Regardless of the method of distribution, the catalog in effect for a student's year of admission dictates the general education requirements that the student must follow. Students are bound by the major, minor, and cognate requirements in the catalog for the academic year for which they are accepted into the major or minor. In some instances, accrediting, certification, and/or Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) standards necessitate the change in major, minor, and cognate requirements. In such situations, the respective college will formally inform each student that they must meet the new requirements. Readmitted students are bound by the requirements in place for general education at the time of readmission. Major, minor, and cognate area requirements are also bound at the time of readmission, except where permission is granted by the respective department.

### **Basic Proficiency**

Students who do not demonstrate basic proficiency in English or mathematics may be required to take developmental courses (Q00-level) as prerequisites of their degree programs. These courses do not count towards graduation.