

General Education Curriculum Categories

Using Ohio State University categories as a basis, this paper compares the GEC requirements of peer universities.

Categories

1. Writing & Related Skills
2. Quantitative and Logic Skills
3. Foreign Language
4. Natural Science
5. Social Science
6. Arts and Humanities
7. Historical Study
8. Diversity
9. Issues of a Contemporary World

Peer Universities (last revision of GEC – if known)

University of Arizona
UCLA (2002)
University of Illinois – Urbana
University of Minnesota
University of Michigan
University of Florida
University of Maryland (1990)
Pennsylvania State University
University of Wisconsin (1996)
University of Washington (1994)

Notes:

- **Calendar:** Only Ohio State University, UCLA, and the University of Washington are on quarters.
- **Writing:** All universities require a first-year composition course. A few schools allow waivers based on IB, AP. A few schools require additional writing that can be met by other writing intensive courses, or writing courses tailored to the student's discipline.
- **Foreign Language:** Most Colleges of Arts & Sciences require students to demonstrate proficiency of two years or more of a foreign language. Students may test out by exam or meet the requirement based on high school course work.
- **Natural Science:** Typically a student must take one course in Physical Sciences and one course in Life Sciences.
- **Social Science:** Typically a student takes two courses in this category, often called Social and Behavioral Sciences or Individuals and Societies.
- **Arts and Humanities:** Ohio State's requirements are within the normal range.
- **Historical Studies:** Many universities do not have an explicit history requirement, but it is often met in other areas (Humanities, individuals and societies).

- **Diversity:** Only UCLA and University of Washington do not require a cultural studies course. Several like Ohio State University require one in US Social Diversity and one in International Cultures/Issues.
- **Issues of a Contemporary World:** Only the University of Minnesota had a similar requirement.

Writing & Related Skills

If speech class is required it is noted explicitly, otherwise it is not a requirement.

University Q – Quarters S - Semesters	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Advanced Standing/ Placement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	10 credits	10 credits		
University of Arizona (S)	1 course	3 courses	First-year composition course may be waived. AP – 4 or higher	<p>First-Year English Composition. Additional English composition and writing requirements include the Mid-Career Writing Assessment (MCWA) and a Writing Emphasis Course. Mid-Career Writing Assessment is satisfied by earning grade B or better in second semester English composition.</p> <p>Tier One study areas must include writing and re-writing of paper.</p> <p>Being reviewed. Reviewing financial limitations and online opportunities.</p>
UCLA (Q)	1 course	2 courses	Writing 1 may be waived if: SAT II – 720 on writing AP- 4 or higher And English Proficiency by English Department exam.	<p>Entry level writing test in California given in high school. Student must pass that or take a remedial writing course.</p> <p>Must fulfill Writing II level course. First writing class may be waived. Second writing class may be fulfilled through General Education Cluster series.</p>
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)	1 course	1 course	No placement	Must fulfill Advanced Composition course. First composition course may be waived. Advanced Composition course may be taken within the major.
University of Minnesota (S)	1 or 2 first year writing courses	4 writing intensive	Placement based on high school information.	Students need to complete 1-2 first-year writing courses, depending on their college of enrollment, and 4 writing intensive courses. Two

	depending upon placement	courses	AP – 3 or higher IB – 5 or higher	of the writing intensive courses must be taken at the upper division level, 1 of which must be taken in the student's major.
University of Michigan (S)	2 courses	2 courses	Must take writing at Michigan	One First-Year Writing Course: May be taken within academic interest in small section. One Upper-Level Writing Requirement: Help them become proficient in communicating in their discipline.
University of Florida (S)	1 course (3 credits)	6 credits	AP – 3 gets 3 credits 4 gets 6 credits Dual Enrollment in high school	Liberal Arts requires 6 credits Graduates must meet 24,000-word writing requirement. The first-year composition course meets 6,000-word requirement. Additional courses that meet distributive requirements can be used. Courses are assigned the number of words each course meets.
University of Maryland (S)	1 course exemption by AP or SAT score	2 courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AP English Language and Composition test score of 4 or 5, or SAT verbal score 670 or above 	Introduction to Writing must be completed by 60 credits with some exceptions. Professional Writing course may be waived if student earns an A. (English 39x series) geared toward student major (i.e., science, legal, health professionals). College of Engineering requires Professional Writing.
Pennsylvania State University (S)	12 credits	12 credits	Cannot waive English Comp. Speech can be waived with AP or IB.	This includes speech (CAS 100), first-year writing and 3 credits of writing across the curriculum courses (a writing intensive course).
University of Wisconsin (S)	2-3 credits	5 or 6 credits	AP - 4	Literary Proficiency – first-year level can be waived. More advanced second course is required. Several courses at university fulfill this requirement. Written, Oral and Information Literacies
University of Washington (Q)	12 credits	15 credits	No waiver for composition credit.	1. One 5-credit English Composition 2. 7-10 credits of additional writing (not a composition course but throughout major) Different for business and engineering – they have specific writing courses

Quantitative & Logic Skills

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Advanced Standing/ Placement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	10 hours	15 hours		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic Computational Skills, 0-5 hours 2. Mathematical & Logical Analysis, 5 hours 3. Data Analysis, 5 hours
University of Arizona (S)	1 course	1 course		Very few majors would not require one math course. Some require more.
UCLA (Q)	1 course (C or better)	1 course (C or better)	SAT Math: 600 or higher SAT subject test: 550 or higher	Quantitative Reasoning: could be in other departments. Logic, bio stats, programming. May overlap with pre-requisites for their major.
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)	2 courses	4 courses	AP – 4 or 5 IB – 4 or 5	Quantitative Reasoning I: 1-2 courses Quantitative Reasoning II: 1-2 courses
University of Minnesota (S)	1 course		AP – 3 or higher IB – 5 or higher	Mathematical Thinking
University of Michigan (S)	1 course (QR/1)	3 courses (QR/2) and/or Mathematical & Symbolic Analysis	Cannot test out using AP credit	<p>Quantitative Reasoning 1 & 2 One QR/1 class or two QR/2 QR/1 (number logic for half of content (astronomy, physics...))</p> <p>Additional 3 credits of Mathematical and Symbolic Analysis may be used for Area Distribution Requirement.</p>
University of Florida (S)	6 hours	6 hours	IB or AP	Mathematical sciences 3 credits of pure math. Other 3 may come from statistics or other.
University of Maryland (S)	0 course	1 course	<p>Exemptions from the Mathematics Requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT Math score 600 or above; OR • AP score of 4 or above in Calculus AB or BC; OR 	<p>Fundamental Math or higher level math can get credit for fundamental and requirement for distributive studies.</p> <p>Mathematics and Formal Reasoning – no formal requirement.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP score of 4 or above in Statistics effective Fall 2004;OR • CLEP Calculus Exam score of 50 or higher. 	
Pennsylvania State University (S)	6 credits	6 credits	AP – IB -	Quantification: College of Science – 8 credits Liberal Arts -
University of Wisconsin (S)	3 credits	6 credits	AP – if score for calculus could satisfy both	Part A: 3 credits of mathematics, statistics, or formal logic. Students may be exempted from Part A by approved college coursework while in high school or by testing. 75% of students place out of this based on placement tests. Part B: 3 additional credits in quantitative reasoning. Calculus or quantitative reasoning, research methods (in variety of disciplines)
University of Washington (Q)	4 credits (one course)	5 credits (one course)	AP AB – 3 or higher – first quarter Calculus credit AP BC – 2 or higher – first quarter Calculus Stats – 3 or higher AP	Quantitative and symbolic reasoning

Foreign Language

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	0-20 hours		
University of Arizona (S)	Non-BA degree: second-semester skill	BA: Fourth semester skill level	Waived if student demonstrates proficiency through score on AP, IB or CLEP.
UCLA (Q)	One year of proficiency at Level 3	Level 3	3,4,5 AP language Latin – 4 or 5 AP High school courses do not count automatically. Must take placement exam.
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)	4 courses	Must take course through the 4 th semester. 4 courses	University – 3 semesters required College of LAS requires 4 (3 majors are exceptions and only

			require 3). May demonstrate proficiency in foreign language through placement exam.
University of Minnesota (S)	College of Liberal Arts B.A. 4 courses Recommended for all students but not required.	College of Liberal Arts B.A. 4 courses	Passing score on Language Proficiency Exam (LPE)
University of Michigan (S)	4 th course proficiency by placing out of course.	4 th course proficiency	Placement exam required. AP score of 600 or greater
University of Florida (S)	Students must demonstrate proficiency in foreign language. 8-10 credits (first year)	8-10 credits – two semesters	Students may place out through AP, IB, SAT or department placement test. Not university wide. College of Liberal Arts requires
University of Maryland (S)			Not a university requirement but is required for College of Arts & Humanities at the intermediate level. May be waived with high school transcript showing level 4 foreign language or proficiency exam for native speakers.
Pennsylvania State University (S)	12 th credit proficiency	12 th credit proficiency	Some majors require none, some 8 credits, and some 12 credits. Waived if student has 4 or more years of high school language or AP or IB scores.
University of Wisconsin (S)	Admissions requirement: 2 years of high school. Not General Education requirement. Required for College of Letters and Sciences 3 courses	4 or 5 courses (5 would be required for B.A. combination of third level of language and second level of another language)	BS: Third level of a language BA: Fourth level of language, or Third level of a language and Second Level of another language. High school courses can satisfy this.
University of Washington (Q)	0	15 (Mastery requirement) AP – 3 or higher for many languages Proficiency or placement test. Waived for native speakers of	Depends upon major. Required through third quarter for College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education, and the School of Social Work

		another language 3 years of language from high school	
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Natural Science

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	15 hours for BA 20 hours for BS		
University of Arizona (S)	3 courses	3 courses	1 course must be a more in-depth examination, known as Tier Two. GEC Requirement can be met for Bachelor of Science through courses in the major. For purposes of this discussion, a 3 course minimum is still required to fulfill the GEC.
UCLA (Q)	4 courses	4 courses	Four courses, two from each subgroup. One course from each subgroup must include a lab or demonstration or carry Writing II credit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Sciences • Physical Sciences
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)	2 courses	4 courses	Called Natural Sciences & Technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Sciences: 1-2 courses • Life Sciences: 1-2 courses
University of Minnesota (S)	8 credits (2 courses with lab or field experience)	8 credits (2 courses with lab or field experience)	One course with lab or field experience in the physical sciences One course with lab or field experience in the biological sciences
University of Michigan (S)	7 credits	10 credits	Natural Science
University of Florida (S)	13 credits	13 credits	9 is statewide requirement Liberal Arts requires 6 credits from Physical and 6 credits from Biological Sciences, plus 1 lab credit
University of Maryland (S)	10 credits (3 courses) One must be a lab 7 may be in science and 3 in math or none in math		Physical Sciences – at most two courses Life Sciences – at most two courses Mathematics & Formal Reasoning – at most one course – optional
Pennsylvania State University (S)	9 credits	9 credits	

University of Wisconsin (S)	Gen Ed: 4 – 6 credits with lab Letters and Science: 6 credits (BA)	Letters & Sciences: 12 credits (BS)	Letters and Sciences: Half of credits must come from Biological Sciences and half must come from Physical Sciences
University of Washington (Q)	10 credits	20 credits	The Natural World College of Arts and Sciences requires 75 (includes 15 credits of overlap)

Social Science

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	10 hours		
University of Arizona (S)	3 courses	3 courses	Individuals & Societies: 3 courses (one from Tier 2)
UCLA (Q)	1 course	2 courses	Social Analysis
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)	2 courses	4 courses	Social Sciences: 1-2 courses Behavioral Sciences: 1-2 courses
University of Minnesota (S)	6 credits	6 credits	
University of Michigan (S)	7 credits	10 credits	
University of Florida (S)	9 hours	9 hours	Called Social and Behavioral Sciences Required by state and College of Liberal Arts
University of Maryland (S)	6 credits (two courses)	6 credits (two courses)	
Pennsylvania State University (S)	6 credits	6 credits	Called Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of Wisconsin (S)	3 credits – General Education Letters & Sciences: 12 hours	12 hours	Social Studies
University of Washington (Q)	10 credits	20 credits	Individuals and Societies – would include history College of Arts and Sciences requires 75 (includes 15 credits of overlap)

Arts & Humanities

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	10 hours		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Literature, 5 hours Visual/Performing Arts, 5 hours Cultures and Ideas Additional Breadth, 10 additional hours from Natural Science, Social Science or Arts & Humanities – outside of major
University of Arizona (S)	2 courses	3 courses	1 Humanities course from Tier Two 1-2 Arts courses (3 units) from Tier Two
UCLA (Q)	3 courses	3 courses	One course from each: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Literary and Cultural Analysis Philosophical and Linguistic Analysis Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)	3 courses	6 courses	Literature and the Arts: 1-2 courses Historical and Philosophical Perspectives: 1-2 courses Western Cultures: 1-2 courses (This more closely adhered to Ohio State University’s Arts & Humanities requirement. U of Illinois uses a larger category called Cultural Studies, which includes study of Non-Western Cultures or U.S. Minority Cultures Western Cultures which is included in Diversity below)
University of Minnesota (S)	6 credits	6 credits	One course in literature One course in other humanities
University of Michigan (S)	Humanities: 7 credits Creative Expression: 3 credits	Humanities: 7 credits Creative Expression: 3 credits	
University of Florida (S)	9 credits	9 credits	Called Humanities State requirement and College of Liberal Arts
University of Maryland (S)	9 credits	9 credits	1 course must be from Literature, 1 must be from History or Theory of the Arts. Humanities is optional.
Pennsylvania State University (S)	12 credits	12 credits	Arts: 6 credits Humanities: 6 credits
University of Wisconsin (S)	Gen Ed: 6 credits	6 credits	Humanities, Literature, Arts

	Letters & Sciences: 12 credits (6 must be literature)		
University of Washington (Q)	10 credits	20 credits	Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts College of Arts and Sciences requires 75 (includes 15 credits of overlap)

Historical Study

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	10 hours		
University of Arizona (S)	2 courses	2 courses	Traditions and Cultures: both from Tier 1
UCLA (Q)	1 course	2 courses	Historical Analysis One course must include American History and Institutions – can be waived if student received a B in a related course in high school.
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)			
University of Minnesota (S)	1 course (3 credits)	1 course (3 credits)	
University of Michigan (S)			
University of Florida (S)			Found in Humanities but not explicit requirement
University of Maryland (S)	3 credits (1 course)	3 credits (1 course)	Social or Political History
Pennsylvania State University (S)			Would be in Humanities
University of Wisconsin (S)			
University of Washington (Q)			Found in Individuals and Societies but not explicit requirement

Diversity

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	1 course in Social Diversity 1 course in International Issues		Both requirements must be met, but the course may overlap with another GEC course or a course within the student's major
University of Arizona (S)	1 course	1 course	Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation or Non-Western Area Studies: May be fulfilled by another GEC category
UCLA (Q)	0	0	
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)	1 course	2 courses	Cultural Studies Non-Western Cultures or U.S. Minority Cultures: 1-2 courses (does not need to be one of each)
University of Minnesota (S)	2 courses	2 courses	One course of Cultural diversity One course of International perspectives
University of Michigan (S)	1 course	1 course	Race & Ethnicity
University of Florida (S)	6 credits	6 credits	Diversity (cultures within US) – 3 credits International – 3 credits
University of Maryland (S)	3 credits (1course)	3 credits (1course)	May be met by a distributed course.
Pennsylvania State University (S)	6 credits	6 credits	3 credits in both United States Cultures and 3 credits in International Cultures. Could be folded into other requirements.
University of Wisconsin (S)	3 credits	3 credits	Ethnic Studies –may be fulfilled by a course that meets another GEC requirement
University of Washington (Q)	0	0	

Issues of Contemporary World

University	Minimum Requirement	Maximum Requirement	Notes
Ohio State (Q)	5 hours		Required for BA but not for BS
University of Arizona (S)			
UCLA (Q)			
University of Illinois – Urbana (S)			
University of Minnesota (S)	2 courses (3 credits each)	2 courses	One course of Environment One course of Citizenship and public ethics
University of Michigan (S)			
University of Florida (S)			
University of Maryland (S)	0 hours	0 hours	Interdisciplinary and Emerging Issues (IE): Optional category
Pennsylvania State University (S)			
University of Wisconsin (S)			
University of Washington (Q)			

Physical Activity

Pennsylvania State University requires 3 credits of Health and Physical Activity. Class, lecture or activity.