

Source: The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Gazette, vol. 48, no. 4 December 7, 2016

The new General Education Requirements (GERs) will become effective with the class entering in September 2018, and students currently enrolled will have the option of completing the GERs in effect when they matriculated or switching to the new GERs.

The new GERs as amended and passed read as follows:

MOTION TO REVISE DIETRICH SCHOOL GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS (GERS)

Whereas: The General Education Curriculum for undergraduates in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences must provide a sound foundation for undergraduate programs that span the full range of the arts and sciences and must position students for success in a rapidly evolving and diverse world,

Resolved That: The General Education Requirements that became effective in 2001 be replaced by the Requirements below.

Dietrich School General Education Requirements: Foundations for Excellence

The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences is committed to providing the best possible education for its undergraduate students. This is best served through a clear and innovative curriculum that provides students with the skills, knowledge, and analytical skills, disciplinary understanding, intellectual curiosity, and creative opportunities that will allow them to engage and adapt in an increasingly diverse and rapidly changing world. Diversity and inclusion are part of the core mission of our school and the university and are key matters for our students and society. Of allied importance is the understanding of complex global issues and different cultures.

A. Writing

Written communication is central to almost all disciplines and professions. Developing writing proficiency is a lifelong process, and it is especially important that undergraduate education accelerates and directs that process toward the achievement of writing skills that will provide a base appropriate for professional or graduate education or for professional employment. The school requires that all students complete the following writing courses during their undergraduate career.

1. An Introductory Composition Course

This is a college level composition course such as Seminar in Composition offered by the Department of English or one of the approved freshman seminars. Students who need to strengthen their writing in preparation for the introductory course may be required to take Workshop in Composition and in some cases Workshop Tutorial, or they may be advised to take Composition Tutorial. Students who score 660 or above on the SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Section and a 5 on the Advanced Placement Exam may be exempted from the introductory composition requirement.

Given the importance of establishing a sound foundation for a student's writing, all students are required to pass their introductory composition course with a grade of C- or better by the end of the first two terms of full-time enrollment.

2. Two Writing-Intensive Courses

Writing intensive courses (W-Courses) are designed to teach writing within a discipline through writing assignments that are distributed across the entire term. In these courses, students will produce at least 20-24 pages of written work. A significant portion of this work should be substantially revised in response to instructor feedback and class discussion.

All students must complete two courses that are designated as W-Courses, or one W-Course and a second English composition course. Students must satisfy one element of this requirement within their major field of study. W-Courses may also be courses that fulfill other General Education Requirements.

B. Quantitative and Formal Reasoning

All students are required to take and pass with a grade of C- or better at least one course in university-level mathematics (other than trigonometry) for which algebra is a prerequisite, or an approved course in statistics or mathematical or formal logic in a department of the School of Arts and Sciences.

Students who qualify for placement in an upper-level course in mathematics are exempt from this requirement*.

** Unless otherwise exempted, incoming freshmen are required to complete the University's Writing and Mathematical Proficiency placement tests, which may determine the need for additional basic skills courses.*

C. Language**A Sequence of Two Courses in a Second Language**

All students are required to complete with a grade of C- or better two terms of university-level study in a second language other than English. Exemptions will be granted to students who can demonstrate elementary proficiency in a second language through one of the following:

1. Having completed three years of high school study of a second language with a grade of B or better in each course;
2. Passing a special proficiency examination;
3. Transferring credits for two terms or more of approved university-level instruction in a second language with grades of C or better;
4. Having a native language other than English.

D. Diversity

The Dietrich School will work to create a framework for pedagogical support for instructors who wish to build diversity into their courses, both to increase awareness of diversity across the curriculum, and to broaden the range of courses that might be offered to fulfill this requirement.

Diversity courses focus centrally and intensively on issues of diversity, and do so in a manner that promotes understanding of difference. They provide students with analytical skills with which to understand structural inequities and the knowledge to be able to participate more effectively in our increasingly diverse and multicultural society. The courses may address, though not be limited to, such

issues as race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religious difference, ability difference, and/or economic disparity.

All students must complete one course that is designated as a Diversity course but may take this course within their major field of study. Diversity courses may also be courses that fulfill other General Education Requirements.

E. Division Requirements in the Humanities and Arts, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences

Each student is required to take nine courses in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences distributed as below. Such courses allow students to pursue their own interests while they explore diverse views of a broad range of human cultures, modes of thought, and bodies of knowledge. The courses that fulfill these requirements are truly courses in the disciplines that draw on the unique resources of a research university.

1. A Course in Literature

By studying a range of literary and other texts in this course, students will be introduced to the techniques and methods of textual analysis and will develop critical perspectives on a variety of forms of cultural expression.

2. A Course in the Arts

This course introduces students to modes of analysis appropriate to music, theatre, or the visual and plastic arts. It may take the form of a survey, the study of a genre or period, or may focus on a particular artist.

3. A Course in Creative Work

In this course students are expected to produce some form of creative work, and they will also be trained in the techniques and modes of its production. The course could be situated in theatre, studio arts, writing, visual arts (including photography, film), music, and dance; or it may be a course that engages in innovative or original work in relation to written, oral, or visual material, new media, social media, and other contemporary forms of communication and representation.

4. A Course in Philosophical Thinking or Ethics

This course will emphasize close and critical reading of theories about knowledge, reality, humanity, and values. Courses could focus on human nature; scientific reasoning; theories of cognition and consciousness; human/social rights; competing systems of belief; morality; concepts of freedom; theories of justice; social obligations/constraints; or ethics, including applied or professional ethics.

5. A Social Science Course

A course that treats topics considered of significant importance in the social or behavioral sciences (including social psychology). Courses will introduce students to the subject matter and methodology of a particular discipline and will involve them in the modes of investigation, analysis, and judgment characteristically applied by practitioners.

6. A Course in Historical Analysis

In this course, students will develop skills and methods by which to understand significant cultural, social, economic, or political accounts of the past. The course may focus on pivotal moments of change, or important transitions over longer periods of time. Courses could explore developments in science, technology, literature, or art, and the ideas around them, or examine critical historical shifts by analyzing various data or cultural forms.

7. Three Courses in the Natural Sciences

These will be courses that introduce students to scientific principles and concepts rather than offering a simple codification of facts in a discipline or a history of a discipline. The courses may be interdisciplinary, and no more than two courses may have the same primary departmental sponsor.

F. Global Awareness and Cultural Understanding

Each student must complete three courses in global awareness and cultural understanding distributed as below.

1. A Course in Global Issues

This course will examine significant issues that are global in scale. Courses could address, for example: globalization; the global and cultural impact of climate change/sustainability; the effects of and resistances to colonialism; or worldwide issues related to health, gender, ethnicity, race, technology, labor, law, or the economy.

2. A Course in a Specific Geographic Region

This course will be an in depth study and analysis of a particular region or locality outside of the United States.

3. A Course in Cross-Cultural Awareness

This course, through cross-cultural perspective, will promote knowledge of and reflection upon the cultures of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, or the indigenous peoples of the world past and present. Students will develop an understanding of cultures, traditions, and societies that differ substantially from those that prevail in North America and Europe.