

University Studies Program Rationale

Core Components

Intellectual Community (I)

Definition: The Intellectual Community provides the skills and philosophy necessary for success as a student and as a life-long learner.

Rationale: The Intellectual Community will normally be academic, content-based courses which will be individually tailored to each discipline offering the course. Students will develop life-long learning skills by producing, rather than merely receiving, information; evaluating and cultivating learning styles and study strategies; and synthesizing information from a variety of sources. The orientation topics currently in the F1 should be covered during a special “welcome week” or other orientation format and thereby removed from the course.

Recommendation: Intellectual community courses may be approved for 1-3 credit hours to accommodate undeclared or transfer students or specific needs of programs and departments. All courses approved in this category must meet the criteria, regardless of credit hours.

Writing 1 (WA)

Definition and rationale: All baccalaureate graduates of UW should develop written communication abilities throughout their undergraduate experience, including exposure to current technologies used for communication. The writing courses will assist students to achieve competence in rhetorical knowledge, composing processes, knowledge of conventions, and critical thinking, reading, and writing.

Recommendations: A placement system should be established for the lower-division writing course, with supplemental instruction available as needed. Students may be able to fulfill their WA requirement by placing at the WB entry level, when such an instrument is available and viable. Lower-division writing will be a prerequisite for mid-level writing, and mid-level writing will be prerequisite for upper-division writing; prerequisites will be enforced. Writing 2 (WB) and 3 (WC) can be taught in any department. The mid- and upper-level writing courses may fulfill other University Studies or major requirements. Faculty development opportunities will be made available for faculty and lecturers interested in teaching the writing courses, and to facilitate student and program assessment.

Oral Communication (O)

Definition: Oral communication is the ability to compose, critically analyze, present, and deliver information through verbal interactions.

Rationale: Graduates of the University of Wyoming should develop oral communication abilities throughout their undergraduate experience, including exposure to current technologies used for

communication. Oral communication courses will assist students to achieve competence in composition, critical analysis, interaction, presentation, and delivery.

Recommendations: Entering students may meet this requirement by demonstrating the skills equivalent to the outcomes for Oral Communication through a placement exam, when such an instrument is available and viable. Faculty development opportunities will be made available for faculty and lecturers interested in teaching oral communication courses, and to facilitate student and program assessment.

Quantitative Reasoning 1 (QA) & 2 (QB)

The organization, analysis, and application of measurement, including data representation, number sense, variables, spatial relationships and chance, to both conceptual and applied problems.

Rationale: All baccalaureate graduates of UW should have a college-level experience in quantitative reasoning. The elements of this experience may include numerical, logical, geometric, and algorithmic thinking as well as the integration of these modes of analysis with students' verbal, creative, and critical-thinking skills. Since quantitative reasoning also encompasses a range of disciplines that are not purely mathematical, a more general designation of QA and QB requirements is proposed. QA Basic college-level quantitative skills fulfilled by Math 1000, 1400, 1405 or 1450, or placement above this level (based on the Math Placement Exam, ACT or SAT scores, or AP credit). All students must fulfill the QA requirement, either by placing into a QB or through successfully completing a QA designated course. QA is non-embeddable. QB Quantitative Reasoning. All QB courses must have a QA prerequisite.

Recommendations: Retain the current mathematics placement system. Students will retain the option of fulfilling QA via the placement exam. QB will often be fulfilled by courses with MATH, STAT, and COSC prefixes; however, approved courses through other departments or programs may also satisfy this requirement. Successful completion of the QA is a prerequisite for QB. Prerequisite requirement will be enforced. Students are required to satisfy both the QA and QB USP requirements.

Science (S, SB, SP, SE)

Definition: The body of pure and applied scientific knowledge pertaining to the natural world.

Rationale: All baccalaureate graduates of UW should have a basic understanding of the logic and methods of the natural sciences, and their relevance to the modern technological world. The Natural Sciences USP requirement recognizes the different needs of science and non-science majors; in keeping with the USP philosophy, exposure of non-science majors to broader, more integrated science courses may be more appropriate than traditional science major or non-major courses. Students may therefore fulfill the natural science USP requirement in one of three ways:

1. Student category 1: Non-science majors may meet the USP natural science requirement by taking any two course from the three categories: biological (SB), physical (SP), and earth sciences (SE). One of these courses must have a laboratory component (4 credits).
2. Student category 2: Non-science majors may also satisfy the natural sciences USP requirement by taking one four-credit integrated core course (S) as they become available in the UW curriculum. Courses designated (S) must have a laboratory component. It is envisioned that these courses will emphasize an integrated, interdisciplinary approach spanning across the traditional categories of the biological, physical, and earth sciences.
3. Student category 3: Science majors are expected to meet the USP natural science requirement through the normal course of their major requirements.

Cultural Context (C, CH, CS, CA)

Definition: Disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses emphasizing various aspects of the study of culture and the recognition of the complex traditions and practices of a diverse democracy.

Rationale: All baccalaureate students should engage the dispositions, traditions, and bodies of knowledge of the humanities (CH), social and behavioral sciences (CS), and fine arts (CA). Through these disciplines and interdisciplinary fields, students gain the ability to deal with complex issues, trace cultural traditions, recognize the viewpoints of others, function effectively in multicultural communities, recognize the responsibility to participate in democratic society, and communicate clearly in a civic environment.

Students may meet the USP requirement by one three-credit course from each of the three categories: humanities (CH), social and behavioral sciences (CS), and the fine arts (CA). Embedded written communication, global awareness, and U.S. diversity requirements may be satisfied by any of these courses if they meet the criteria as specified by all appropriate categories. Students may also satisfy the USP requirement by taking an integrated course (C) course as they become available in the UW curriculum, as well as two out of three of the CH, CS, and CA categories. It is envisioned that these integrated courses will emphasize an integrated, interdisciplinary approach spanning across traditional categories of the cultural context disciplines, and may also satisfy one or more embedded requirements.

U.S. and Wyoming Constitutions (V)

Definition: Constitution study presents a working knowledge of the various governmental systems and the context in which to understand them.

Rationale: In order to prepare students to be active citizens, a university education should provide graduates with an understanding of the history, cultural context, and principles of the institutions by which they are governed. Wyoming state statutes require this study, the USP endorses its importance for developing responsible citizenry.

Physical Activity and Health (P)

Definition: Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Wellness and physical activity for health constitutes one of the major components of a healthy lifestyle and general health promotion and protection.

Rationale: Graduates of the University of Wyoming should understand health and wellness and the impact physical activity and inactivity has on their health. The knowledge and experience gained from the wellness and physical activity course will enable students to make informed decisions about their own health as it relates to their quality of life and longevity.

Recommendations:

1. Students who have completed one of the two components (wellness lecture or physical activity) at another accredited post-secondary institution will only be required to complete the remaining component.
2. Students will have an opportunity to meet the wellness lecture component requirement during the first week of class through a placement exam.

Embedded Components

Information Literacy (L)

Definition: Information Literacy, as defined by the American Library Association, is a set of abilities requiring individuals to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.”

Rationale: Information Literacy entails developing the skills and abilities essential for adult learning, and it transcends disciplines, learning environments and levels of education. Courses should teach students about the general information available and specific information that is deemed appropriate to a particular discipline. This information will help students develop basic and advanced technological skills to access information through the library resources and evaluate and apply that knowledge to research assignments.

Recommendations:

1. The criteria for an information literacy course may be embedded in courses meeting the general curriculum requirements.
2. Basic information literacy skills will be provided in the freshman year.
3. Advanced information literacy skills will be taught within an upper-division course, preferably in the major or in a writing course.
4. The criteria are flexible and skill oriented.

Writing 2 (WB) & 3 (WC)

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Global Awareness (G)

Definition and rationale: The goal of the Global Awareness requirement is twofold. Because the human world is increasingly interconnected and interdependent, graduates of the University of Wyoming should have acquired knowledge of the global organization and interdependence of human societies. Because citizens ever more frequently encounter behaviors and practices based on beliefs, conditions, and assumptions different from their own, they need to understand the nature and function of culture. Our students should have an awareness of the multiple links that affect the living conditions and range of action of peoples of the world, including international systems of commerce, art, science, technology, politics, communication, belief, and justice, among others.

U.S. Diversity (D)

Definition and rationale: The goal of the U.S. cultural diversity requirement is to prepare students to recognize the continuing importance of categories of identity while at the same time understanding how historically contingent and unstable these categories are. In these courses students explore the complexity of cultural identities in the U.S. and interdependence of these cultures. Students will gain an understanding of the influences of categories such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and age on American behaviors, institutions, values, and beliefs.