

**Next Generation USP 2026**

*The University of Wyoming (UW)’s general education program, Next Generation USP 2026 is designed to develop students to engage with a dynamic, global, and digital world that will nurture their individual potential. This general education program will foster essential skills, knowledge, and mindsets that will prepare students to succeed in whatever field of opportunity they choose upon graduation. Effective holistic education—one that brings together skills, knowledge, and mindsets—readies students to pursue immediate career goals as well as to embrace opportunities for significant personal, cultural, and workplace changes that are hallmarks of a dynamic society. Thus, the Next Generation USP 2026 Program is designed to:*

* *Create a learning environment that values free expression, personal integrity, and mutual respect.*
* *Provide learning opportunities to broaden students’ horizons of knowledge to position them for success in future careers.*
* *Introduce students to pathways of thinking and understanding across disciplines to become critical thinkers, successful problem solvers, and effective collaborators and leaders.*
* *Promote the development of strong communication skills that will help students contribute to civic and personal success.*
* *Develop essential skills that prepare them to be productive and inclusive members of a diverse world and that are of value to the workplace, their local, national, and global communities, and to them as individuals.*
* *Prepare students to become life-long, self-aware learners.*

**Next Generation USP 2026 Categories (Total: 29-35 Credits)**

1. Saddle-Up (1)
2. First-Year Foundation (1)
3. First-Year Composition (3)
4. Foundations in Oral Communication (3)
5. Disciplinary and Professional Communication (3)
6. Quantitative Reasoning (3)
7. Physical and Natural Sciences (3-4)
8. Humanities and The Arts (3)
9. Social and Behavioral Sciences (3)
10. Constitutional and Civic Literacy (3)
11. Wyoming Constitution (0-1)
12. Digital Literacy (3)
13. Experiential Learning and Civic Engagement (0-3)

**Saddle Up:**

Saddle-up is a comprehensive and immersive experience that will help prepare you for the adjustment to college coursework at UW. This type of preparation programming has been shown to have a positive impact on college graduation rates as students transition from high school to a university. You will be guided through a week-long schedule with plenty of opportunities to connect with faculty, staff, and of course, classmates who will be part of your college journey over the next several years.

**First-Year Foundation:**

Following their learning in Saddle-Up, the one-credit First-Year Foundation course will introduce students to a tight-knit community of peers, student leader, and instructor. Through the twelve weeks of the course, students will engage with UW and Laramie in new ways, explore their chosen or possible major(s), and cultivate curiosity about the many paths they can choose at UW. This course takes a holistic approach to students’ learning and experiences, helping them to develop a sense of belonging and purpose. In addition, students will learn strategies for taking more ownership of their college experience, through guided activities and reflection on first-year transition topics: managing time and personal wellness, refining values, and goals, and designing their own future at UW.

**Communication-Intensive Courses: Draft Component Items**

Strong communication skills contribute to civic and personal success and are consistently identified among the top skills sought by employers and industry professionals. Through foundational courses and applied practice, students should develop, refine, and reinforce communication habits that will serve them throughout their lives. Key skills include the student’s ability to analyze and adapt to audiences for their work; employ active listening; use communication as a tool for learning and expression; synthesize and evaluate information; draw defensible conclusions; and compose and deliver well-organized messages.

At UW, students take three required communication-intensive courses: First-Year Composition (FYC), Foundations of Oral Communication (FOC), and Upper-Level Communication (ULC). Each course focuses on specific skills, knowledge, and habits to help students develop their expertise as effective communicators in oral, written, and multimodal channels. With a course cap of 24 students, C-I courses prioritize individualized instruction and feedback and provide opportunities for students to learn with and from their peers. Instructors for these courses undergo required training to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective learning.

**First-Year Composition**

As you move into and beyond college, you will encounter a variety of contexts that require you to engage effectively through written communication. Producing effective texts across those varied settings requires you to extend your understanding of audience expectations and possibilities for structures, evidence, and tone. The process of becoming a more nimble and self-aware writer should also reveal the power of writing to deepen your critical thinking and your understanding of others.

**Foundations of Oral Communication**

Effective oral communication—in terms of developing, delivering, and responding to messages—is invaluable in many civic and workplace contexts. Students who take UW’s Foundations of Oral Communication should come away with skills in analyzing audiences, designing effective communication structures, selecting appropriate evidence, and strategically using verbal and non-verbal communication elements. They additionally should be able to engage effectively with audiences through active listening and critically evaluating the messages of others.

**Upper-Level Communication**

Upper-level communication-intensive (ULC) courses are designed to engage students in developing and applying their rhetorical skills to communication tasks of increasing nuance and complexity. During the course, you'll engage in hallmark assignments designed to facilitate your growth and showcase your mastery. You'll deliver a formal presentation complete with supporting visuals appropriate to your audience. You’ll produce at least one formal written project that will immerse you in specific professional, disciplinary, or interdisciplinary. And the course also incorporates informal writing and speaking-to-learn activities into the curriculum, providing ample opportunities for you to deepen your learning through communication tasks. To support your journey, you’ll engage with reading materials and instruction on multimodal composition, audience analysis, and genre expectations relevant to the course.

**Quantitative Reasoning**

In the Quantitative Reasoning (Q) category of the University Studies Program (USP), students will reason about and solve problems from an array of contexts relevant to personal, civic, and professional life. Quantitative Reasoning encompasses logical, abstract, geometric, statistical, numerical, and algorithmic modes of understanding and analysis. All these modes contribute to a student’s critical thinking capacities.

**Physical and Natural Science**

In the Physical and Natural World (PN) component of the University Studies Program (USP), students will encounter the fundamental concepts and methods of scientific inquiry, including the formulation and testing of hypotheses and the application of scientific principles to observations to draw conclusions. PN courses enable students to think critically about empirical claims, to understand the relevance of scientific and technological thought to contemporary society, and potentially, to pursue further coursework in physical and natural sciences.

**Humanities and The Arts**

Courses in the arts and humanities support students in developing a critical understanding of human thought, arts, and culture. These courses explore questions of the human condition through philosophical, literary, religious, historical, artistic, and language-based perspectives. Awareness and understanding in the humanities and arts help students develop critical, creative, and interpretive skills needed to function in an increasingly diverse world and contribute to society as educated and culturally competent citizens.

**Social and Behavioral Sciences**

Courses in the social and behavioral sciences introduce students to institutions, cultures, and behaviors through the study of Society, local and global. Students will engage with a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives. Such courses acquaint students with fundamental concepts, theories, and methods of analysis used in the social and behavioral sciences. The social and behavioral sciences help students think critically about human culture and society and encourage them to demonstrate their knowledge through applying skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

**Constitutional and Civic Literacy**

The American tradition recognizes that the wellbeing of individuals and their families relies on the civic health of one’s community. This ethos underscores the importance of educating students to actively participate in bettering society. Studying citizenship and the U.S. and Wyoming Constitutions develops students' understanding of rights and responsibilities in our federal system. It cultivates civic mindedness to foster thoughtful contributions to communities, enabling the democratic experiment to thrive.

This curriculum focuses on the constitutions to build knowledge central to participatory citizenship. Analyzing the principles and structures of checks and balances, equality and representation fosters skills for the responsible exercise of freedoms of speech and expression, and decision-making beyond voting. Civic participation requires understanding how democratic institutions interconnect to sustain societal wellbeing.

Through the constitutional and civic literacy requirement, students will understand that American systems sustain society when individuals uphold social duties. They will learn that individuals secure personal success through informed, discerning participation that upholds constitutional ideals. This develops civic devotion in future generations, cementing the ethos that we must invest in society to reap shared success and recognize that progress emerges from dedication to community duties alongside exercising individual rights.

**Digital Literacy**

As the world continues to evolve into a digital landscape, students are encouraged to navigate a variety of tools, technologies, and skills to prepare them to be productive and inclusive members of a diverse world. Digital literacy looks to encourage students to explore not only an understanding of how digital technologies work but also to consider the ethical, legal, and critical uses of these technologies. It encourages students to explore and evaluate different digital technologies to better understand what resources will be useful within their fields and the world. It allows students to create and apply digital information, technologies, and skills within their professional lives and work. Digital Literacy includes a variety of skills and resources from understanding computational thinking, artificial intelligence, digital information including data, field-specific technologies, algorithms, social media, and understanding how to find and evaluate digital information.

**Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning involves students in ‘learning by doing’ through direct hands-on engagement in immersive real-world experiences. Students are encouraged to become active participants in applying knowledge and theoretical concepts gained in the classroom to problem-solving in practical situations and to reflect on, integrate, and transfer the new insights and skills gained to enrich and deepen their own learning and personal development.

Experiential learning can take place through a variety of curricular, co-curricular, or micro-credential pathways as a complement to a student’s program of study, including volunteerism, service learning, leadership, public service, or other forms of community engagement at local, national, or international levels; internships or entrepreneurship opportunities with non-profit organizations, businesses, corporations, government, and non-governmental organizations; participation in international study abroad, place-based learning, or domestic study away programs; or through other significant forms of experiential research, teaching, or creative activity.

By putting ideas into action through experiential learning, students are empowered as engaged and intentional learners and are offered a unique opportunity to develop high-level critical thinking and communication skills, better understand, analyze, and resolve complex real-world problems, and to build new relationships and transferable skillsets that will position them for success in their ongoing studies and future careers.