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General Education Curriculum of Mary Baldwin University

The general education curriculum at Mary Baldwin University develops the critical, creative, and reflective reasoning skills of its students, challenging them to ask important questions of themselves and others while growing in their awareness of diverse viewpoints.

General Education Core Requirements (36 hours):

- Two courses in the Arts (6 hours)
- Two courses in the Humanities (6 hours)
- Two courses in the Natural Sciences (6 hours)
- Two courses in the Social Sciences (6 hours)
- Two courses with International or Foreign Language focus (6 hours)
- English 102: College English (3 hours)
- INT 103: Information Literacy (1 hour)
- Civic Engagement (1 hour)
- Physical Education (1 hour)

No more than four courses may double count between the general education core and the major.

Additional Mary Baldwin requirements - Engaging diverse viewpoints and developing skills:

Courses in this category may “double count” with courses in the General Education Core, the major, minor or electives at MBU.

- Gender (3 hours)
- Race and Ethnicity in the United States (3 hours)
- Two courses in Quantitative Reasoning (6 hours)
- Writing (3 hours)
- Oral Communication Competency (3 hours)

The Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.) or Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (A.A.S. in Nursing) degree is accepted in fulfillment of all requirements listed above.

Each major at Mary Baldwin requires the following:

- A course carrying Research credit
- A senior capstone course

Adopted by Mary Baldwin University Faculty in December 2019, in effect beginning with the 2020-21 Academic year

Course characteristics and learning outcomes for General Education courses

I. General Education Core Requirements

1. *Students will demonstrate an understanding of the liberal arts and sciences through:*
 - a. Knowledge of the methods and theoretical approaches of the Arts, Humanities, Natural sciences, and Social sciences (A, H, N and S courses).
 - b. Appreciation of the languages, arts, literatures, cultures, or social or economic structures of peoples outside of the United States (I or F courses).
- Courses in these General Education Core categories award at least 3 semester hours of credit. Courses satisfying part *a* are usually appropriate for freshmen and sophomores who do not have a background in the subject. Courses satisfying part *b* may require more advanced preparation.
- Courses in these General Education core areas may also carry a single skills designation (Q, W, O or R) and/or Gender (G) or Race and Ethnicity designation (D). A course may not carry both G and D credit. A course may not carry both D and I credit. No course may carry more than three designations.
2. *Students will develop reflective reasoning skills, begin to develop university-level communication and research skills, and learn strategies for maintaining active, healthy lifestyles.*
 - Addressed through coursework in Civic Engagement, College English, Information Literacy and Physical Fitness.

Category definitions for General Education Core

Arts courses develop aesthetic awareness, offer practice in artistic skills, and/or promote analytical abilities through an introduction to the visual arts, music, dance, creative writing, film and theater. Students gain experience in the practice of an artistic form or learn to express their understanding of the arts and their critical sensitivity through the interpretation of diverse forms of art.

Humanities courses study human beings and their cultures through examination of their histories, philosophies, religions, and literatures. Students who complete humanities courses increase their knowledge of the critical methods used in these disciplines while developing their ability to interpret and analyze texts and primary sources as well as synthesize this information and effectively communicate their findings.

Natural Sciences courses study the natural world through inferences based on systematic observations and controlled experiments. Students who complete these courses increase their knowledge of the critical methods used in such disciplines as biology, chemistry, physics, and experimental psychology and develop a greater understanding of their physical environment, the laws that govern it, and the methods by which these laws are discovered.

Social Sciences courses seek to explore, describe, explain, and predict phenomena in human society through investigation of economic, political, and social behavior. Students increase their knowledge of the critical methods used in anthropology, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, and other social science disciplines. Students learn to evaluate the degree to which theories or conclusions about human

behavior and society are based on sufficient empirical evidence obtained from experimentation, systematic observation, interviews, and/ or surveys and questionnaires.

International / Foreign Language courses consist of foreign language study as well as courses that introduce students to contemporary cultures and social, political, and economic systems outside of the United States. A May term study abroad course could be awarded an International course credit if the course includes academic inquiry that develops this knowledge.

- A student who completes a full semester of study abroad (minimum of 12 weeks of coursework) fulfills the entire international requirement, regardless of the courses taken at their place of study.
- A student who completes a short course of study abroad (minimum of 6 weeks of coursework) fulfills one course of the international requirement, regardless of the courses taken at their place of study.
- International degree-seeking students at MBU automatically meet the entire requirement

Civic Engagement (C): As engaged citizens, MBU graduates will be actively involved in the communities where they live and work, contributing professionally and personally to enhance the common good. The objective of this requirement is to provide opportunities for experiential learning that connect course concepts with community issues. Courses and internships that provide opportunities for meaningful engagement with members of the larger community as an intentional way of deepening understanding of course content, bridging theory and practice, may meet this requirement.

Physical Fitness and Health (P): The physical fitness and health requirement provides students with the knowledge and ability to maintain active and healthy lifestyles.

II. Additional Requirements: Engaging diverse viewpoints and developing skills

Students will demonstrate an understanding of self in relationship to the broader community through coursework that exposes them to diverse viewpoints. Students will develop skills appropriate to a university graduate in quantitative reasoning and written and oral communication.

Race & Ethnicity in the US (D): Courses for this requirement build awareness of the role race and ethnicity have played and continue to play in the United States. The objective of this coursework is to broaden the perspective from which students understand American culture.

Gender (G): Students in an historic women's college should understand the role gender has played and continues to play in culture. The objective of this coursework is to critically identify and analyze gender/women's issues and their impact on society.

Writing (W) courses include frequent (usually weekly) formal and informal writing assignments and at least two formal writing assignments requiring multiple drafts and revisions based on feedback from the course instructor.

Oral Communication (O) courses provide multiple structured opportunities for students to explore and express ideas orally (e.g. class debates, presentations, leading peer discussion, etc.) and to receive feedback from the instructor. The course includes at least one assignment for which a substantial percentage of the grade is based on the quality of the oral presentation

Quantitative Reasoning (Q) courses offer instruction in quantitative analysis, logic, and/or mathematics, with frequent opportunities for students to interpret and understand the world using charts, graphs, probability and statistics, symbolic reasoning, logical deduction, and other quantitative measures.

III. Coursework required by all majors at Mary Baldwin University

Students will demonstrate mastery of subject matter, communication abilities, and the accumulation of the critical, creative, and reflective reasoning skills through the completion of a senior project.

Research (R) courses build on skills developed in INT 103 (Information Literacy) and prepare students for the Major Project course by refining the ability of students to locate, critically evaluate, and use information effectively. These courses require students to demonstrate an understanding of the research process, teach how to access information effectively from a variety of sources, provide guidance on evaluating information critically, and provide instruction on proper documentation and citation of sources.

Major Project (M): Students address an authentic problem in their major using techniques, theory, and evidence appropriate to their field of study. This requirement is usually met through a senior thesis, senior project, or an interdisciplinary Honors Thesis. Departments may not place skill designations (W, R, O or Q) in the Major Project course: students are expected to have acquired these skills before participating in the M course.

Process for obtaining General Education Credit – Information for faculty

The General Education and Academic Policies Committee (GEAPC) at Mary Baldwin University evaluates proposals for General Education credit. Faculty submit the following documents:

- The *proposal form*, which provides general information about the course, the General Education credit requested, the official catalog description of the course, rationale for the Gen Ed credit, and signatures of department members, the Dean, and other faculty affected by the credit (e-signatures are fine).
- A *detailed syllabus* that clearly demonstrates (through readings, assignments, feedback opportunities and other activities) how the content is developed throughout the course.
 - Although a course submitted for General Education credit might still be under development, faculty should endeavor to provide a large sample of likely readings and carefully describe how the course addresses the desired Gen Ed credit.
 - Faculty requesting a “skills” designation should provide details on how the skill is built and how feedback is provided at multiple points in the semester (and not solely demonstrated in a final project).

Content areas: additional details

Criteria for Civic Engagement designation:

A Civic Engagement course includes clearly articulated learning goals for the experiential learning component that align with course content. The community component is intentionally integrated into the course as one of the “texts” through preparation and orientation, guided reflection, written assignments, discussion, etc.

The course will include approximately 25 hours of content dedicated to community engagement goals.

- o 10-15 hours of interactions (in person or electronic) with off-campus individuals, groups and/or organizations and/or with/in off-campus settings; and
- o 10-15 hours of classroom content linking course topics with community experiences

Criteria for skills designations

Writing, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning and Research

Writing designation:

Writing courses require frequent writing practice. Writing courses are process, not product, oriented: they require students to write multiple drafts and revisions for at least two formal assignments after receiving instructor feedback. Through informal and formal assignments, students practice the critical thinking and recursive steps in writing (invention, writing, revision, and proofreading and editing). Writing tasks complement and facilitate the learning of course content and the rhetorical conventions of the discipline.

Writing courses will have the following components:

1. Frequent (usually weekly) formal and informal writing assignments
2. At least two formal writing assignments requiring multiple drafts and revisions based on feedback from the course instructor
3. The GEAPC will consider departures from these criteria if a rationale for their equivalence is provided.

A strong writing course proposal includes the following:

- A clear statement of expectations and goals pertaining to the writing in the course.
- Specific information describing opportunities for revision and frequent writing practice.
- Evidence that writing tasks are sequenced to reflect writing as a process (i.e., writing tasks early in the course prepare students for increasingly challenging writing tasks; help students move from informal to formal writing tasks; and/or break large tasks into smaller stages).
- Specific information about the basis upon which writing will be evaluated and/or assessed.
- Examples of informal writing assignments (graded or ungraded, frequent assignments)
 - o double-entry learning logs
 - o journal entries
 - o creative assignments: monologue, skit, proclamation, advertisement, etc.
 - o in-class free-writing
 - o blogs or Canvas discussion responses

- short reaction essays to out of class lectures, films, and other learning experiences
- Formal writing assignments (generally informed by research)
 - research papers, including writing assignments leading up to a research paper, for example, a prospectus, abstract, summary and evaluation essay, annotated bibliography, draft, etc.
 - critical essays or persuasive essays
- lab reports
- artist statements
- film or book critiques
- creative writing (scripts, plays, short stories)
- literature reviews
- reports (cost/benefit analysis, scientific, etc.)
- feature articles or creative non-fiction essays for publication

Oral Communication Competency Designation

To qualify for Oral Communications competency, a course (or set of required courses within a major) must address the two skills outlined below:

1. The ability to participate in discussion as both speaker and listener and be understood.
 2. The ability to identify and speak appropriately to the audience's needs, interests, and level of understanding.
- Oral courses should include a clear statement of the expectations and criteria pertaining to the oral portion of the course and should make clear the way those expectations and criteria will be addressed. This may be in the syllabus or it may be a rubric or other evaluation sheet.
 - Each student must have **more than one opportunity to present, receive feedback, and improve** on their performance. As a guide to improvement, every student must receive an evaluation of their presentation's content and performance that contains specific information with expectation that the student will use that feedback to improve.
 - Presentations appropriate for oral communications courses may include presenting proposals or research, delivering formal speeches, leading discussions, moderating a focus group, or leading a seminar. At least one presentation should provide for interaction with the audience.

Quantitative Reasoning (Q) Designation

Quantitative reasoning skills are broadly applied throughout the liberal arts curriculum. To qualify for the Quantitative Reasoning designation, a course must address the skills outlined below:

1. Q courses offer instruction in quantitative analysis, logic and/or mathematics
2. Q courses provide frequent opportunities for students to interpret and understand the world using charts, graphs, probability and statistics, symbolic reasoning, logical deduction and other quantitative measures
3. *At least 50% of the course content for Q courses must be drawn from at least two of the four broad content areas listed below* (Use, Interpret and Analyze Data; Operations and Calculations; Working With Data; Representation of Ideas). Examples of skills developed in each of these areas include the following:

Use, Interpret and Analyze Data

- Draw accurate conclusions from graphs, charts and tables.
- Distinguish between association and causation.
- Correct use of summary statistics, confidence levels, and statistical significance.
- Able to write clearly about data in graphs, charts and tables.
- Recognize limits of data analysis.

Operations and Calculations

- Correct calculation and clear expression of results.
- Can identify and use correct tools to solve a problem.
- Ability to use / solve algebraic equations.
- Ability to represent ideas using symbols.

Working directly with data using software

- Ability to use a spreadsheet, such as Excel, to do calculations and make charts.
- Skill in using advanced statistical software (Systat, SPSS, R).

Representation of ideas

- Ability to convert relevant information into another mathematical form (graphs, equations, diagrams, tables).
- Ability to manipulate geometric forms to explain outcomes (such as with D & S curves in market diagram).
- Ability to use logic (in making comparisons, categorizing causes and effects, drawing conclusions).

Research Designation (R)

1. The course will progressively teach the research process, including location and evaluation of sources, development of a thesis and research ideas, good use of resources, and current research standards and practices, all culminating in the synthesis of a final research project.
2. Students will be provided both guidance and feedback from the instructor at each stage of the process.
3. Students will learn current standards in source and citation documentation, along with any other formatting standards in the given field.