General Information

This document provides supplemental information that may be useful for identifying the General Education (Gen Ed) distribution and skills requirements that existing courses should satisfy. All Gen Ed courses must be taken for a letter grade, and passed with a D- or higher.

Distribution

For the Distribution requirement, students must pass a minimum of 12 credits in each of the three A&S divisions (Arts & Humanities [AH], Social Sciences [SS], and Natural Sciences [NS]). At least four different course prefixes must be represented in a student’s distribution requirement coursework.¹ No more than two lower-division (1000- and 2000-level) courses from a single unit may count toward the distribution requirement.² Distribution courses include all A&S courses that count toward a major, minor, or certificate in A&S, as well as other courses that are nominated and approved as Gen Ed courses.

NS Lab Requirement. As part of, or in addition to, the 36-credit distribution requirement, students must meet the Natural Sciences lab requirement. The lab requirement is satisfied with a stand-alone lab of at least 1 credit, or another course with a substantial lab component, as approved by the Natural Sciences division. The lab requirement is broadly defined to include different types of hands-on learning, including – but not limited to – bench work, field work, instrumentation, or data analysis.

Diversity Requirement. As part of, or in addition to, the 36 credits, students must meet the diversity requirement. The diversity requirement is satisfied with 6 credits from a list of courses that have been identified as fulfilling diversity learning goals. Students may double-count diversity courses for both the diversity requirement and the applicable distribution requirement.

Skills

Students must also satisfy the Written Communication, Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematical Skills, and Foreign Language skills requirements.

Written Communication

Students must pass 6 credits of written communication, including at least 3 upper-division credits.

Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematical Skills (QRMS)

Students must pass 3 credits of quantitative reasoning and mathematical skills.

Foreign Language

Students must satisfy the Minimum Academic Preparation Standards (MAPS) requirement in foreign language.

¹ A “prefix” refers to the abbreviation before the course number, e.g. CHEM, RUSS, PSCI.
² A “unit” refers to a department or program. 1-credit NS lab courses are excepted from the restriction to two lower-division courses from a single unit.
General Education Requirement: Arts and Humanities

To fulfill the Arts and Humanities General Education (Gen Ed) Distribution Requirement, students must pass a minimum of 12 credits in courses approved as Arts and Humanities Gen Ed courses.

Courses in the Arts and the Humanities explore the variety of human creative and intellectual experiences, as well as the history and foundations of culture, through the examination of human languages, literatures, and other artistic, material, social, cultural, and political products, the forms they have taken in different places and eras, and the way these have changed over time. As a result, these courses cultivate perspectives and intellectual skills necessary to comprehend and respond adeptly to the world in which we live, offering frameworks for thinking critically about the universe and the smaller societies we inhabit. In particular, these courses help students develop the ability to appreciate and evaluate human efforts to explain, translate, and transform their diverse experiences of the world, as these efforts take shape in language, literature, philosophical systems, historical contexts, religious experience, material culture, images, sounds, and performances.

The Arts and Humanities Gen Ed Distribution Requirement is meant to ensure that students:
- study the fundamental intellectual and ethical dimensions of human experience;
- investigate the relations between artistic, humanistic, and scientific inquiry and interpretation;
- understand and are prepared to navigate successfully the complex and ever-changing world in which we live.

Students who take approved CU-Boulder coursework to fulfill the Gen Ed Arts and Humanities Distribution Requirement must take each course for a letter grade and receive a passing grade of D- or higher.
**General Education Requirement: Natural Sciences (NS)**

To fulfill the Natural Sciences General Education (Gen Ed) Distribution Requirement, students must pass a minimum of 12 credits in courses approved as Natural Science Gen Ed courses, including a laboratory or field experience.

Natural Science courses examine the physical and biological world, exploring the nature of matter, life, and the universe. They are designed to demonstrate that science is not a static list of facts, but a dynamic process that leads to knowledge. By combining observation, experimentation, and theory, students learn to formulate interpretations and conclusions through unbiased, critical application of scientific principles. Through a combination of lecture courses and laboratory or field experiences, students gain hands-on experience with scientific research. They develop expertise in measurement techniques and data interpretation, and learn the relevance of this expertise to the formation and testing of scientific hypotheses. As a result, Natural Science courses cultivate perspectives and intellectual skills necessary to enhance knowledge of one or more scientific disciplines, and to probe scientific issues in the context of important past discoveries and new developments.

The Natural Sciences Gen Ed Distribution Requirement is meant to ensure that students:
- understand the evolving state of knowledge in at least one scientific discipline;
- gain experience in scientific observation and measurement, in organizing and quantifying results, in drawing conclusions from data, and in understanding the uncertainties and limitations of the results;
- learn sufficient general scientific vocabulary and methodology to acquire additional information, evaluate it critically, and make informed decisions.

**Laboratory or Field Experience:** The Laboratory or Field Experience requirement is satisfied with a stand-alone lab of at least one credit, or another course with a substantial lab component, as approved by the Natural Sciences division. The lab requirement is broadly defined to include different types of hands-on learning, including – but not limited to – bench work, field work, instrumentation, and data analysis.

Students who take approved CU-Boulder coursework to fulfill the Gen Ed Natural Sciences Distribution Requirement must take each course for a letter grade and receive a passing grade of D- or higher.
General Education Requirement: Social Sciences (SS)

To fulfill the Social Sciences General Education (Gen Ed) Distribution Requirement, students must pass a minimum of 12 credits in courses approved as Social Science Gen Ed courses.

Social Science courses examine the individual, social, ideological, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of human activities and behaviors. They address a broad range of topics through diverse theoretical and empirical approaches. As a result, these courses cultivate perspectives and intellectual skills necessary to apply qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry to issues of societal significance. Students in social science courses are taught to analyze and interpret data from many different sources, such as fieldwork, interviews, surveys, peer-reviewed literature, published and unpublished repositories, and electronic media. These courses also discuss applications of the social sciences, which range from developing fundamental theories of the social world to solving problems and informing advocacy and activism.

The Social Sciences Gen Ed Distribution Requirement is meant to ensure that students:

- explore the development of the institutions and functioning of human society;
- understand the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of social groups;
- gain experience with social science vocabulary, methods and tools in systematic studies of the social world.

Students who take approved CU-Boulder coursework to fulfill the Gen Ed Social Sciences Distribution Requirement must take each course for a letter grade and receive a passing grade of D- or higher.
Diversity Requirement
(Appendix B of the revised core proposal approved by faculty)

Students are required to pass a minimum of 6 credits in diversity courses. These courses may double-count toward distribution requirements.

The diversity requirement addresses the need to prepare students to navigate the complexities of living and working in a diverse and increasingly interconnected world. Diversity courses are designed to provide students with the necessary understanding and analytical skills to successfully function and lead in a multicultural, multiethnic, transnational, and global society. The courses promote historical and/or contemporary understanding of how social differences shape, and have been shaped by, political, economic, and cross-cultural relationships within the United States and the world. Generally courses will explore the ways in which marginalization has occurred, and the reasons for this marginalization.

The U.S. perspective (3 credits) will include courses that promote historical and/or contemporary understanding of how social differences have shaped social, political, economic, and cross-cultural relationships within the United States. Courses must substantially address one or more forms of diversity (for example: race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, religion, disability).

The global perspective (3 credits) addresses the need for students to learn and think critically about historical and/or contemporary global forces and transnational connections. Courses might: 1) focus in-depth on a particular country or culture outside the U.S., placing it within transnational and global context; 2) address a problem or phenomenon in the context of two or more countries, cultures, or regions; 3) examine global affairs through a comparative framework; 4) be part of a study abroad experience with a substantial cross-cultural component.

Courses nominated for inclusion in the diversity requirement are vetted by an A&S faculty committee. Existing courses in the "Human Diversity" category of the current core curriculum are grandfathered in for a period of 5 years, beginning the semester the new core is first implemented.
Written Communication Requirement
(Appendix C of the revised core proposal approved by faculty)

Students must pass 3 lower-division and 3 upper-division credits in courses approved to satisfy the written communication requirement.

Writing is a skill that is fundamental to all intellectual endeavors. In fulfilling this requirement, students hone their communication skills by writing for various purposes (informing, instructing, persuading) and audiences (academic, civic, professional). They learn to design their message ethically and effectively using appropriate evidence and technologies.

Students may satisfy the lower-division requirement by passing or receiving placement credit (as determined, for example, by scores on AP or IB exams) for one of the approved courses, or by earning a high school International Baccalaureate diploma. Students may satisfy the upper-division requirement by passing one of the approved upper-division courses, or by passing a written communication proficiency exam.

Courses nominated for inclusion in the written communication requirement are vetted by an A&S faculty committee. Existing written communication courses are grandfathered in for a period of 5 years, beginning the semester the new core is first implemented.
Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematical Skills (QRMS) Requirement  
(Appendix D of the revised core proposal approved by faculty)

Students must pass a minimum of 3 credits in courses approved to satisfy the QRMS requirement.

This requirement has two principal objectives. The first is to provide students with the analytical tools used in core curriculum courses and in their major areas of study. The second is to help students acquire the reasoning skills necessary to assess adequately the data which will confront them in their daily lives. Students completing this requirement should be able to: construct a logical argument based on the rules of inference; analyze, present, and interpret numerical data; estimate orders of magnitude as well as obtain exact results when appropriate; and apply mathematical methods to solve problems in their university work and in their daily lives.

Students may fulfill the requirement by passing or receiving advanced credit for one of the approved courses or sequences of courses, or by passing the CU-Boulder QRMS proficiency exam.

Courses nominated for inclusion in the QRMS requirement are vetted by an A&S faculty committee. Existing QRMS courses are grandfathered in for a period of 5 years, beginning the semester the new core is first implemented.