



Institutional Assessment and Compliance

Principles of Accreditation

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Core Requirement 2.7.3

In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses.

Judgment: Compliant**Response:**

The **general education core curriculum** provides the common learning experience for all University of South Carolina undergraduate students at the Columbia and Regional Campuses, and is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree. The general education core requires a minimum of 31 hours of liberal arts credits plus foreign language competency, and for most students this represents about one-quarter of total hours needed for the baccalaureate degree. (Most majors require 120 credit hours but a few require more.)

The general education curriculum is designed to provide students with exposure to general study in the arts and sciences to ensure a strong academic foundation for more specialized focus in the major program area. The broad-based curriculum also prepares students not just for what they will encounter in the years immediately following graduation, but for the increasingly complex world that will be theirs to comprehend, appreciate, direct, create, and leave to generations hence. The general education core requires at a minimum: English (6 credits), Numerical and Analytical Reasoning (6 credits in math, philosophy, statistics, or computer science), Liberal Arts (3 credits in history, 3 credits in fine arts, 3 hours in behavioral or social sciences, and 3 in other liberal arts courses), Natural Sciences (7 credit hours). In addition students must demonstrate in one foreign language the ability to comprehend written and spoken text (typically done through placement testing or 6 credit hours of class). Colleges and departments in which students are enrolled determine which courses meet these general education requirements and most colleges and department require more than this University minimum.

The learning outcomes, published in the **Undergraduate Bulletin**, provide focus and coherence to the general education curriculum. Upon completion of the general education core students will be able to:

- Communicate clearly in written English, demonstrating their ability to comprehend, analyze, and interrogate critically.
- Perform basic mathematical manipulations, display facility with the use of mathematics in framing concepts for mathematical analysis, and interpret data intelligently.
- Demonstrate an understanding of physical and/or life science phenomena and the use of scientific methods and theories.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the processes of human behavior and social and cultural interaction, as well as the use of social and behavioral science perspectives to interpret them.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of culture over time and its relation to the present.
- Communicate orally and in writing in another language.
- Demonstrate an appreciation of literary, visual or performing arts and their cultural context, as well as express informed personal responses to artistic creations.

The University of South Carolina is committed to maintaining a strong and coherent general education curriculum to prepare students to thrive in the 21st century. For that reason in 2005 University of South Carolina Provost Mark Becker called for a revision of the General Education curriculum. A taskforce of more than 100 faculty members considered new learning goals for a revised General Education curriculum. Building upon this initiative, in early 2008 President Sorensen appointed the General Education Committee to formalize the changes and to guide the process to implementation. The Committee (now called the Carolina Core Committee) oversees general education and provides for ongoing review and continuous improvement of the curriculum. A **general education website** was developed to provide information to faculty, students, and staff at USC Columbia and at the Regional campuses, as the revision process unfolds. This **Carolina Core Committee** refined the taskforce's draft learning outcomes and articulated the rationale, values, and guiding principles for the proposed curriculum revision.

The new core competencies and learning outcomes were presented at a **University Forum** in January 2009 as the Carolina Core. Faculty, staff, and students from USC Columbia and Regional campuses participated over two days as well as online to make suggestions and comments on the new proposal. The **rationale** for the new Carolina Core along with new learning outcomes were approved by the Faculty Senate on **April 1, 2009** and amended **April 28, 2009**.

In October 2009, an **appendix** was added to the original document in order to provide context statements about the new Core requirements. In December 2009, more than 140 faculty, staff and students participated in a third University Forum to provide comments on the new learning outcomes, the appendix, and proposed distribution requirements. In Spring 2010, the Carolina Core Committee membership was augmented by

nine faculty "content consultants" to assist in determining what is required for students to attain a foundational level of mastery in each learning outcome and how many credit hours are needed. Based on comments received from faculty, staff, and students, the Carolina Core Committee plans to present a proposal for distribution requirements to the Faculty Senate in September 2010. Currently, the Carolina Core Committee is in the process of developing policies and procedures for Carolina Core course approvals. Fall 2012 is the target date for implementation of the new Carolina Core curriculum. Individual college curriculum requirements will need review in order to balance college goals for their graduates with the new Carolina Core requirements.

Supporting Documentation:

Description	Source
General Education Core Curriculum	http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=1863#General_Education_Requirements
Undergraduate Bulletin	http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=1863#General_Education_Requirements
General Education Website	http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/
Carolina Core Committee	http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/committee.shtml
University Forum	http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/resources.shtml#recordings
Rationale for Carolina Core	http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/proposedcurriculumrevision.pdf
Carolina Core - Approval	http://www.sc.edu/faculty/senate/09/minutes/0401.minutes.pdf
Carolina Core - Amendment	http://www.sc.edu/faculty/senate/09/minutes/0428.minutes.pdf
Appendix Added	http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/CarolinaCoreAppendix_Oct2009.pdf
Content Consultants	http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/committee.shtml#consultants
Distribution Proposal	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/CarolCoreDistribProp.pdf

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