

General Education Requirement

General Education Curriculum "A"

1. The Distribution Requirement*

The distribution requirement asks students to distribute a total of 12 courses among six or seven broadly defined subject areas, each of which spans several different disciplines. The requirement is designed to insure that each CAS student develops a broad familiarity with the range of human knowledge. One area, for example, social and behavioral sciences, includes courses from such disciplines as anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology. The seven distribution areas, and the common elements linking the disciplines within each, are described below:

1. Courses in the arts focus on the creative process in such diverse expressive areas as architecture, literature, music, painting, sculpture, and theater, in order to promote an understanding of how artists perceive their universe and their place within it.
2. Courses in historical and cultural studies examine, reconstruct, and interpret the human past, both historic and prehistoric, literate and non-literate, and explore a wide range of cultures and civilizations around the world.
3. Courses in philosophical and humanistic studies examine methods of reasoning, and analyze social, ethical, religious, and political values and concepts, in order to apply such knowledge to human experience.
4. Courses in the social and behavioral sciences study the behavior of human individuals and groups, often applying the methods of science to the social environment, analyzing the world in terms of individual behavior, social interactions, and human institutions.
5. Courses in the natural sciences seek an understanding, through experiment and application, of the laws that explain natural phenomena; they approach the human world through study of its natural elements, structures, and processes.
6. Courses in mathematics and computer languages study these self-enclosed symbolic systems whose analytic pleasures and practical uses extend our awareness of the nature and processes of human thought, and the manageability of the real world.
7. Courses in foreign languages encourage an understanding of human thought, feeling, and culture through study of the structures, meanings, functions, and development of speech. Studying another language can improve students' command of their own, and contribute to an understanding of another culture.**

*Please note: The distribution requirement for students majoring in engineering physics

differs from what is described here. Please see the "Engineering Physics" section of this publication for complete information.

****Please note:** The Departments of Hispanic Studies and Modern Languages will exclude from elementary- and intermediate-level language courses students judged to have significant knowledge of that language. Students who demonstrate native or near-native proficiency in a language may apply for a waiver of the foreign language distribution requirement (See "Waivers of Graduation Requirements" below.)

With a few exceptions (indicated by a "Z" prefix; for example "Music Z131"), almost all 100- and 200-level CAS courses of 3 or more credits are assigned to one of these seven areas, and thus count toward fulfilling the distribution requirement. Of the 12 courses taken to meet the distribution requirement, a maximum of three may be counted in one subject area; a maximum of two may be counted in each of the other areas. Students have the option of eliminating one of the subject areas; in this case they would spread their 12 courses over six subject areas rather than seven. Students wishing to count foreign language courses as part of their distribution requirement must complete at least one semester beyond the 101 level.

Adapting Previous Requirements: Students who matriculated in the college of Arts and Sciences before 1988, and who are returning to complete their degrees after a hiatus, should consult with an advisor at the University Advising Center to work out equivalencies between their previous course work and these distribution requirements.

2. The Core Curriculum Requirement

The distribution requirement of twelve courses previously included "core courses," which offered in four of the distribution areas: the arts, historical and cultural studies, philosophical and humanistic studies, and social and behavioral sciences. Core courses were identified by a "C" prefix in the course number (for example, Philosophy C108).

All students who matriculated in CAS before fall, 2000 with fewer than 30 credits are required to have completed two core courses at the 100- or 200-level. Please note: Since core courses are no longer offered as of fall 2001, students falling under this requirement who have not completed it by that date must do so by taking one Intermediate Seminar (G200 course) in the new [General Education Curriculum \(see Curriculum "B," below\)](#).

Please note: No student may take more than five core courses. A core course emphasizes the nature of knowledge and the methods of investigation that characterize the disciplines within its distribution area. Core courses provide instruction and practice in such intellectual skills and habits of thought as analytical writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and research techniques.

Students should ordinarily have completed their core courses during their first two years

of study, before taking the [Writing Proficiency Examination](#).

3. The Writing Requirements

The ability to use the English language for the effective presentation of ideas in expository prose is essential to success in university-level study. Therefore, the college asks students to satisfy two writing requirements: the freshman writing requirement and the writing proficiency requirement.

The Freshman Writing Requirement

All CAS students must complete one year of Freshman Composition ([English 101](#) and [English 102](#), or the equivalent), unless they are granted a waiver. Together, these two courses focus on the fundamentals of expository writing and the presentation of research. The results of the English Placement Test require some students to take English 099 before 101. As of fall 1998, English 099 does not count for graduation credit.

The Writing Proficiency Requirement

Both the overall design of the Core Curriculum and the materials and methods of individual "C" courses assist students in acquiring critical skills. Foremost among these is the ability to present ideas clearly, correctly, and persuasively in English prose. For this reason, the college requires students to demonstrate proficiency in writing by either passing a proficiency examination or submitting a satisfactory portfolio of papers before the beginning of the junior year.

In order to fulfill the requirement, the student must write an acceptable essay based on 1) a set of readings and 2) a question designed to elicit evidence of both a thorough understanding of the readings and the ability to synthesize material, use evidence, draw inferences, and construct a well-organized response in good English. The examination is given twice a year, in January and June.

The portfolio is an alternative method of demonstrating writing proficiency, consisting of three course papers, acceptable in length and topic and certified for authenticity, and one paper written especially for the portfolio on a topic distributed by the Writing Proficiency Requirement Office. The portfolio may be submitted at any of the scheduled exam times and in October and March. In all cases, sign-up begins approximately six weeks in advance of the examination date or portfolio due date.

This requirement holds for all students who entered CAS as freshmen in September 1978 or thereafter and for transfer students who entered CAS in January 1979 or thereafter. Students absent from the college for two or more years and readmitted since fall 1985 must also pass the requirement. Failure to fulfill this by the time a student accumulates 90 credits entails mandatory restrictions of course schedule and suspension from the University.

Further information about the writing proficiency requirement, including sample exams

and descriptions of courses designed to assist students in fulfilling this requirement, is available at the college's Writing Proficiency Requirement Office in room 603 on the 4th floor of McCormack Hall. Information is also available on the University Web site at www.umb.edu/umb/wpr.

Please note that the Writing Proficiency Exam is not the same as the English placement test, which all students take on entering the college.

4. Diversity

To fulfill the diversity requirement, each student takes courses that touch on a range of human diversity including race, gender, class, sexual orientation, culture (including national origin, ethnicity, and religion), age, and disability. The requirement consists of two courses, one with a focus on diversity within the US, and one with an international focus. Students who enter UMass Boston with fewer than 60 transfer credits are required to take one course from each of the two categories. Students entering with more than 60 credits should take one course from either of the two categories.

Transfer Students and the General Education Requirements in Curriculum "A"

For all transfer students, courses taken at other institutions will be given equivalency credit whenever possible and will be assigned to the appropriate subject area so that they can be counted toward the distribution requirement.

Transfer students who matriculated during the period from fall 1985 through spring 1988 are required to meet the core curriculum requirement as outlined above. Some of their transfer courses may count toward this requirement.

CAS students (and others subject to the CAS distribution requirement) who matriculated at the University between fall 1988 and spring 2000, with fewer than 30 transfer credits, must, in addition to the writing and diversity requirements, satisfy both the distribution requirement and the core curriculum requirement. Their core courses must be taken at UMass Boston.

Those matriculating from fall 1988 through spring 2001 with 30 or more transfer credits must satisfy the distribution, writing, and diversity requirements, but not the core curriculum requirement.

The Writing Proficiency Requirement Office

This office (McCormack 4-603) is responsible for administering the core curriculum and the policies and procedures that govern the writing proficiency requirement, including the Writing Proficiency Examination or Portfolio. Faculty and staff in the office provide assistance to students seeking information about these requirements.

New General Education Requirements: Curriculum "B"

The new general education curriculum (Curriculum "B") builds on many of the strengths of the previous general education curriculum; it additionally incorporates specific attention to both quantitative reasoning and the use of technology as a tool for self-education and research. Teaching in the new curriculum also emphasizes collaborative and interactive learning.

The writing requirements (English 101-102 and the writing proficiency requirement) and the diversity requirement have been retained. The most current information on the present requirement is available from the [University Advising Center](#).

The new components of this curriculum, described below, are a Critical Analysis Requirement (which replaces the core curriculum requirement) and a Quantitative Reasoning Requirement.

The Critical Analysis Requirement

This requirement consists of two courses:

1. a First-Year Seminar (to be taken ideally in a student's first semester after matriculation but certainly before accumulating 30 credits) and
2. an Intermediate Seminar (to be taken after accumulating 30 but before 60 credits).

First-Year Seminars treat particular topics in some depth while simultaneously assisting students in developing the habits of thought and the range of academic capabilities necessary for success in their future course work and life experiences. Taught in small groups, these seminars emphasize careful reading, critical thinking, and clear writing, along with information technology and literacy, teamwork, oral presentation, and academic self-assessment.

Intermediate Seminars are also small in size, often thematic or problem-oriented and interdisciplinary in nature, with the main topic treated in a more complex manner than in first-year seminars. Academic capabilities and habits of mind are taught at a more advanced level than in first-year seminars.

Both first-year and intermediate seminars are offered by academic departments and may be identified in by the prefix "G" in front of the course number. First-year seminars receive G 100-level numbers, and intermediate seminars receive, G 200-level numbers.

The Quantitative Reasoning Requirement

The quantitative reasoning requirement is designed to enhance students' capacity to:

1. pose problems that involve quantitative relationships in real-world data by means of numerical, symbolic, and visual representations;
2. solve problems, deducing consequences, formulating alternatives, and making

- predictions;
- 3. apply appropriate technologies; and
- 4. to communicate and critique quantitative arguments orally and in writing.

Students may meet this requirement in various ways, but most will do so by taking specially designed courses offered in a range of disciplines across the curriculum. These 100-level courses are designated by the prefix "Q." Besides completing one of these courses, other ways a student may satisfy this requirement include:

- completing or transferring in the equivalent for: Mathematics 115, 124, or 125;
- placing into Math 129 or higher on the University's math placement test; or
- receiving calculus credit through either Advanced Placement or CLEP test.

Students Who Must Take Curriculum "B"

Beginning Fall 2000: Students Entering with Fewer than 30 Credits

All students in the college of Arts and Sciences who matriculate in fall 2000 and thereafter with fewer than 30 transfer credits must complete the following components of general education before they accumulate 30 credits or in their first two semesters:

- a First-Year Seminar,
- English 101 and 102, and
- the Quantitative Reasoning requirement.

Before they have accumulated a total of 60 credits, they must:

- complete an Intermediate Seminar and
- meet the Writing Proficiency requirement.

They must meet the diversity requirement and complete the distribution requirement in effect at the time they enter.

Beginning Fall 2001: Transfer Students Entering with 30 or More Credits

- A. All students entering CAS in fall, 2001 and thereafter with between 30 and 89 credits must complete an Intermediate Seminar during their first two semesters and must also satisfy the following requirements:
 - quantitative reasoning
 - English composition
 - writing proficiency
 - distribution and diversity.
- B. All students entering CAS in fall, 2001 and thereafter with 90 or more transfer credits must satisfy the quantitative reasoning and writing proficiency requirements by the end of their first semester. They must also complete the

distribution and diversity requirements.