

7. The institution:

- c. offers a general education program at the collegiate level that is (1) a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in 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. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for course equivalency.**

- Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Non-compliance

Narrative:

Essentially, the general education curricular elements required by VCU include the three areas specified in this Core Requirement: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. In some cases, more than one course in each of these three areas is required to meet the VCU general education requirement.

VCU's Undergraduate General Education Program represents those learning objectives deemed important for all undergraduate students regardless of their major area of study. The goal of the program is to ensure that students acquire the intellectual skills and breadth of knowledge that will contribute to the success of their undergraduate studies and prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century. The University has identified a series of broad educational commitments as well as seven specific curricular elements that constitute the Undergraduate General Education Program. These seven elements are:

1. **Communicating.** Students should demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills. Beyond the general basic knowledge of composition and rhetoric, the student should learn the standards of communication within the student's own discipline.
2. **Ethics.** Students should demonstrate an understanding of the main concepts and theories of ethics and the role they play in our public and private lives at both the professional and personal levels. Students should be able to examine their fundamental moral beliefs, to form rational

- arguments and judgments relative to ethics, and to enable them to act on their values to make ethical choices.
3. Quantity and Form. Students should be able to quantify or represent information symbolically. Students should be able to use such codified information with respect to questions of size, proportion or order, and to analyze it or manipulate it in a manner consistent with the standards of the student's own discipline.
 4. Science and Technology. Students should demonstrate some understanding of and experience with the processes and concepts of modern experimental science and the impact of science and technology on society.
 5. Interdependence. Students should be able to demonstrate an awareness of cultural, economic, informational and social interdependencies that exist among nations and cultures today.
 6. Visual and performing arts. Students should demonstrate an enhanced understanding of and experience in the various visual and performing arts which represent and express the complexities of the human condition.
 7. Humanities and social sciences. Students should demonstrate an appreciation of the varieties and complexities of human cultures and values as expressed through literary, religious, historical, and philosophical works. They also should demonstrate an understanding of individual and collective behavior as structured through political, economic, social, and cultural institutions.

The seven curricular elements appear in the 2002-03 [VCU Undergraduate Bulletin](#) (pages 6-7). A review of each undergraduate degree program listed in the Undergraduate Bulletin indicates the college and schools address each of these elements in their undergraduate programs. The decision of which specific courses will be acceptable to meet the Undergraduate General Education requirements is left to the discretion of the college and schools. Most general education courses in the various programs are required at the 100 and 200 level with some opportunity to select electives at higher levels.

The College of Humanities and Sciences offers the majority of the general education courses. The College set criteria for determining whether a course may be considered a general education course. These courses will:

- Offer a base of knowledge needed for lifelong learning;
- Encourage students to gain an awareness of connections among disciplines and the world beyond the classroom;

- Demand active student involvement in the subject matter, rather than passive reception of information;
- Create a sense of collaborative learning among faculty and students through small group settings, computer networks, and e-mail;
- Promote written and oral communication, critical thinking, computer literacy, and ethical thinking.

Each course that has passed the College's faculty review process is defined as a general education course. The College of Humanities and Sciences lists the courses that have met its criteria. The majority of the other academic units that offer undergraduate programs use the lists developed by the College of Humanities and Sciences as the [definitive list](#) of what courses they will use to meet general-education requirements. To assist students keep track of their program completion status, [OnTrack @ VCU](#) is available. This is a computerized academic progress report that tracks the completion of a student's degree by course and requirement, including general education requirements.

Since each school can define its own general education program around the seven elements listed above, the general education programs vary by school. For example, a review of the general education requirements for the [School of Allied Health Professions](#), the [School of the Arts](#), the [School of Business](#), and the [School of Nursing](#) will show the variety of ways that students enrolled in those schools can satisfy the general education requirement. Currently, the Task Force on General Education is studying the feasibility of a more unified university-wide general education requirement.