

Statement of Purpose for College of Charleston General Education Requirements

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS, ADVISORS, AND FACULTY

Graduates of the College of Charleston complete a challenging course of study that will prepare them to function intelligently, responsibly, creatively, and compassionately in a multifaceted, interconnected world. While their work in the major of their choice will give students specialized knowledge and skills in that discipline or profession, the College's core curriculum will equip each student, regardless of major, with crucial intellectual skills in analysis, research, and communication. Their coursework in the liberal arts and sciences will offer students a broad perspective on the natural world and the human condition, and will encourage them to examine their own lives and make useful contributions to their own time and place. Over the course of their undergraduate careers, all College of Charleston students will develop the following intellectual skills, areas of knowledge, and dispositions:

I. Research and Communication in Multiple Media and Languages, including proficiency in

1. Gathering and using information

Students should be able to

- a) Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
- b) Access the needed information effectively and efficiently.
- c) Evaluate information and its sources critically.
- d) Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.
- e) Acknowledge the use of information sources using an appropriate documentation style.

Requirement: 1 approved First-Year Experience

2. Effective writing and critical reading; oral and visual communication

Students should be able to

- a) Understand, analyze, and interpret intellectually challenging written texts and oral and visual presentations.
- b) Use writing and speaking to increase their own understanding of a topic and to communicate their point of view persuasively.
- c) Strengthen written and spoken work through the process of drafting, revising, and editing.
- d) Create formal papers and public presentations that are appropriate for the situation and audience.
- e) Produce well-organized papers and public presentations that convey substantive information and that conform to the conventions of edited American English.
- f) Interpret visual images and employ images to communicate ideas and concepts.

Students should complete rigorous writing and speaking assignments and receive significant feedback on their work in first-year courses and in other courses throughout their college career.

Requirement: 3 approved courses, 2 writing-intensive & 1 speaking-intensive

3. Foreign language

Students should be able to

- a) Read passages in a foreign language, understand the meaning of simple sentences on familiar topics and, with the aid of a dictionary, discern the meaning of an unfamiliar passage written for adults.
- b) Translate into grammatically correct English, with the aid of a dictionary, an unfamiliar passage written in an ancient or modern language.
- c) Communicate orally on straightforward topics, construct intelligible sentences, and ask and answer simple questions in the target modern language. (required only in the modern languages)
- d) Communicate in writing, construct simple sentences, and apply the rules of the basic grammar of the target language. (required only in the modern languages)

Requirement: Demonstrate intermediate competency (202 level) and complete 1 approved foreign language course at the College.

II. Analytical and Critical Reasoning , including

1. Mathematical and scientific reasoning and analysis

Students should

- a) Master some of the theoretical underpinnings of an area of mathematics relevant to society at large, and demonstrate an understanding of abstract mathematical objects separate from any particular application.
- b) Engage in college-level mathematical modeling of varied phenomena (i.e., applying the abstractions described above to concrete problems in a variety of disciplines), along with the quantitative, symbolic, and computational methods necessary to answer questions, understand the significance of the results, and judge their reasonableness.
- c) Read and comprehend mathematical arguments, formulas and graphical representations, and use these to clearly present and effectively justify mathematical conclusions and results.
- d) Demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the scientific method of inquiry.
- e) Acquire knowledge of the evidence, ideas, and models that scientists use to make judgments about the natural world.

Requirement: 2 approved courses in mathematical reasoning, 3 approved courses and 2 labs in natural science.

2. Social and cultural analysis

Students should be able to

- a) Use appropriate methodology to formulate questions and evaluate evidence relevant to topics concerning human society and culture.
- b) Make clearly reasoned interpretive judgments about human societies, cultures, and artistic and intellectual achievements.

3. Interdisciplinary analysis and creative problem-solving

Students should be able to

- a) Use multiple approaches to interpret complex phenomena.
- b) Understand the interconnectedness of knowledge that comes from separate disciplines.
- c) Develop new insight and/or innovations by viewing phenomena from multiple perspectives.

Requirement: 1 approved course.

III. Historical, Cultural, and Intellectual Perspectives, including knowledge of

1. Human history and the natural world

Students should develop knowledge of human history:

- a) Develop knowledge of the history of human civilizations, societies, and cultures and an awareness of historical experience through the study of the political, social, cultural, and intellectual aspects of ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern eras.
- b) Acquire knowledge of leading theories of historical change advanced by historians to evaluate developments in past civilizations, societies, and cultures.
- c) Learn how to situate primary historical records in their contexts and use these sources to construct historical arguments.
- d) Critically appreciate earlier eras of the human past so as to gain a greater understanding of the contemporary world.

Requirement: 2 approved courses in human history.

Students should acquire the following areas of knowledge of the natural world:

- a) The origin and evolution of the Universe and of Earth
- b) The nature of the physical world
- c) The nature of the biosphere and how it evolves over time
- d) The processes of inquiry in science
- e) The integrative and synergistic nature of scientific knowledge

2. Artistic, cultural, and intellectual achievements

Students should

- a) Study examples of artistic, cultural, and/or intellectual achievements.
- b) Use multiple areas of knowledge to interpret and evaluate these achievements:
 - i) Aesthetic criteria that may be used to interpret works of art
 - ii) Understanding of the achievement and/or the creative process, gained through analysis and/or creation of art
 - iii) Cultural, historical, and/or philosophical dimensions that influence and are influenced by these achievements
 - iv) Social and historical impact and/or ethical dimensions of these achievements and

the way they are interpreted and valued

Requirement: 4 approved courses from 3 different departments; must include 1 “arts” course.

3. Human behavior and social interaction

Students should

- a) Acquire knowledge of at least one of the following:
 - i) Characteristics of social organizations and institutions
 - ii) The role of factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, cultural background, economic status, and religion in influencing human behavior and social interaction
 - iii) Biological and environmental influences on mental processes and behaviors, based on human studies and/or animal models.
 - iv) Ethical dimensions of human behavior and the formation of social, cultural, and/or religious values
 - v) Sources and consequences of the transformation of human societies over time
- b) Understand and be able to develop generalizable explanations for human behavior and social interaction by using appropriate empirical evidence, systematic analysis, and models and ideas associated with the scientific method of inquiry.

Requirement: 2 approved courses from 2 different departments.

4. Perspectives and contributions of academic disciplines

Students should

- a) Employ the methods of inquiry appropriate to multiple academic disciplines and be familiar with the ways these disciplines organize and create knowledge.
- b) Develop in-depth knowledge in at least one academic discipline.

IV. International and Intercultural Perspectives, gained by

1. Knowledge of international and global contexts

Students should deepen their understanding of one or more countries outside the United States by doing one or both of the following:

- a) Develop knowledge of one or more countries outside the United States through analysis of examples of that country’s literature, culture and/or intellectual achievements.
- b) Develop understanding of interconnections between countries.

Requirement: 1 approved course.

2. Experiencing, understanding, and using multiple cultural perspectives

Students should

- a) Demonstrate understanding of perspectives and conditions that distinguish cultures and social identities from one another.
- b) Demonstrate awareness of beliefs and values of more than one culture or social identity.

- c) Use the framework of more than one culture as a means of interpreting phenomena or experiences.

Requirement: 1 approved course.

V. Personal and Ethical Perspectives, including experiences that promote

1. Self-understanding, curiosity and creativity

The College should encourage and recognize

- a) Experiences that promote awareness of personal temperament, approaches to learning that enable the student to succeed, and healthy ways to interact with others.
- b) Experiences that increase one's desire to learn more about a subject or problem.
- c) Experiences that generate creative expression or innovative approaches to problems.

2. Personal, academic, and professional integrity

Students should demonstrate

- a) Personal honesty and accountability.
- b) Understanding of all dimensions of the Honor Code, including the responsible use of knowledge in academic settings.
- c) Understanding of integrity in the professional setting or academic discipline relevant to their major.

3. Moral and ethical responsibility; community and global citizenship

The College should encourage and recognize

- a) Experiences that invite students to reflect on their own values and commitments and to understand why they hold them.
- b) Experiences in which students use their talents and/or education to serve others and learn to behave as responsible citizens.

VI. Advanced Knowledge and Skills in Major Area of Study, consisting of

- **1. Skills and knowledge of the discipline**
- **2. Sequence of coursework that fosters intellectual growth**
- **3. Coursework that extends and builds upon knowledge and skills gained from the core curriculum**
- **4. The ability to transfer the skills and knowledge of the major into another setting**