

## **BACCALAUREATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

There are several requirements that you need to be aware of when working toward a Baccalaureate or BA/BS degree.

### General Education Requirements

General Education requirements are those courses required of everyone graduating from a specific college. The majority of these requirements are met during the first two years (freshman and sophomore years) of school although some colleges have a small number of credit hours (3-9 quarter hours) that must be completed at the upper division (junior and senior) level.

Colleges sometimes refer to their general education requirements as “Degree Requirements”, “Goals”, “Baccalaureate Core” (Oregon State University), “Liberal Arts Core Curriculum” (Western Oregon University), “College Core” Requirements, “General Education Distribution”, “Freshman and Sophomore Inquiry” (Portland State University) or General Education. Private universities may have additional requirements. These requirements are designed to give students a broad general education and often do not directly apply to the chosen major. The general education usually includes courses from four categories of courses:

1. English Composition
2. Arts and Letter/ Humanities
3. Social Sciences
4. Math/Science

General Education requirements may include other requirements such as PE/Health, Religion, Fine Arts, Diversity Courses, etc.

College catalogs usually include which courses meet each of the General Education requirements. However, some colleges indicate in their class schedule which courses may be used for General Education.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) or Challenge Exams are accepted credit-by-examination program available at more than 2,900 colleges and universities. Pass any of the 33 CLEP exams and achieve your college and career goals and meet your first foundational credit requirements and accelerate your education. Each institution sets its own policy: It decides which CLEP exam it will grant credit for and how many credits it will award. Talk with your admissions officer, academic advisor or test center administrator to learn more about your institution’s CLEP Policy.

### Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Requirements

Usually students must make a choice of earning either a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree. However, within a university/college some majors do not allow this choice. For example, it is not uncommon for English departments to offer only a Bachelor of Arts degree.

The main difference between a B.A. and B.S. degree is a B.A. almost always requires third term (or second semester) second year foreign language. B.S. degrees generally require additional math, computer science, and science and / or social science. Sometimes the B.S. requirements are “built into” the major requirements.

It is important to learn what, if any, additional courses must be taken to satisfy the B.A. or B.S. requirements as these are usually met during the freshman and sophomore years.

### Major Requirements

The major is usually composed of approximately 45 to 73 quarter credit hours in a specific subject matter and supporting courses from other disciplines (such as mathematics, psychology etc.) Major requirements are usually listed in the college catalog in the section describing the major. Some departments utilize specific general education courses in their major. Examples of this are requiring two-hundred level biology sequences or two-hundred level chemistry sequences. If these are not taken as part of the general education requirement, they will use up some of the credit hours designated as electives; increase the number of courses you must take; or if the one-hundred level sequence of biology is taken and the two-hundred level is required, you may lose credits for the one-hundred level sequence. A few colleges do not allow a student to use the same course for both a major requirement and a general education requirement.

It is not unusual to be given a choice of taking one course out of a group of three courses at the upper division level. It is wise to make tentative choices of which courses you plan to take and then determine if prerequisite courses are required. Prerequisite courses often are best taken in the freshman or sophomore year.

### Minor Requirements

A minor is a group of related courses that are usually chosen to supplement the major or increase employment potential. Not all colleges offer minors, but some colleges require minors. Minors usually are composed of a group of courses totaling between 18 to 27 quarter or term credit hours.

Minor requirements are usually listed in the catalog following the major requirements for the specified major.

### Special Graduation Requirements

You may also find that there are additional course requirements that are listed as “special graduation requirements” or simply “graduation requirements”. An example of this would be a culture diversity requirement that may be met by courses you choose for the general education component of your degree. However, if you didn’t utilize general education courses to meet this requirement you will need additional classes.

### The “Numbers” Requirements

There are three requirements that involve numbers that are very important: graduation, upper division, and residency.

1. Graduation or degree requirements are the total minimum number of credits which must be earned. This usually is 180 quarter hours or 120 semester hours. Some degrees within a university may be much higher for one major than for another.
2. Upper division credits refers to the total number of credits in 300 and 400 numbered courses that must be earned in order to receive a degree. This is usually 60 to 72 in a quarter system.
3. Residency requirements when referring to degree requirements is the total number of credits which must be earned from the school granting the degree. This may be stated, for example, as the last 45 quarter hours or 45 of the last 60 quarter hours.