General Education Program Updates & Course Planning
What You Need to Know: Class of 2020

The Program in General Education – along with the concentration – is one of the two cornerstones of the Liberal Arts & Sciences curriculum, and thus lies at the heart of the intellectually transformative mission of Harvard College. General Education provides the opportunity to counter the narrowing effects of the concentration by helping you to make intellectual connections, to look inward to yourself and outward to the world, and to understand the deep and sometimes surprising importance of scholarly work to some of the most central aspects of life. Concentrations ensure that you know a lot about something; Gen Ed ensures that you understand how to take that knowledge with you into the world. Gen Ed, in other words, is the intellectual fuel for the personal transformation the College hopes to facilitate.

Current Requirements
One letter-graded course in each of eight categories below, one of which must engage substantially with the Study of the Past. This program (and these course categories) will remain in place through Spring 2018.

Requirements of the New Liberal Arts & Sciences Curriculum
A new program will take effect in Fall 2018. The new program will require one General Education course from each of four perspectives, one course from each of the three divisions within FAS (Natural Sciences/SEAS, Social Sciences, and Arts & Humanities), and one course demonstrating quantitative facility. There is no requirement for Study of the Past.

The Class of 2020 will switch to the new program upon its launch. To ensure that you can benefit from the spirit of the new program in the interim, you will be given greatly expanded flexibility in meeting your requirements during the transition. Details are on the following page.

Key Takeaways

- You will move to the new program in Fall 2018.
- Consider taking no more than one course in each of these paired Gen Ed categories: AI/CB, SLS/SPU, SW/USW.
  - If you take a second Gen Ed course in the same category or in its pair (for example: AI & AI, CB & CB, or AI & CB) prior to Fall 2018 it will count toward the distribution requirement.
  - You may also take departmental courses now to fulfill the distribution requirement. However, prior to Fall 2018 credit will not be given for the distribution requirement until a Gen Ed course is taken in one of the two paired categories.
    - For example: A student who took CB34 in Fall 2014 and English 141 in Spring 2015 will receive AI credit for English 141 since it is a departmental course in Arts & Humanities. A student who took English 141 in Spring 2015 but plans to take CB34 in Fall 2016 will not receive AI credit for English 141 until CB33 is complete.
  - Any Gen Ed courses taken in Fall 2018 or after will not count toward the distribution requirement.
- Courses may move into or out of the Gen Ed program during the transition. A course will count as it is designated during the time of enrollment. For example, if a Culture and Belief course taught by a Philosophy professor in Fall 2017 becomes a Philosophy departmental course in Fall 2018, students enrolled in Fall 2017 will receive Gen Ed credit while students enrolled in Fall 2018 will receive credit toward their distribution requirement.
- Students graduating in or after 2019 will have no Study of the Past requirement.

Questions? Contact gened_questions@fas.harvard.edu.
Current Requirements
Classes of 2017 & 2018

- AI: Aesthetic & Interpretive Understanding
- CB: Culture & Belief
- EMR: Empirical & Mathematical Reasoning
- ER: Ethical Reasoning
- SLS: Science of Living Systems
- SPU: Science of the Physical Universe
- SW: Societies of the World
- USW: United States in the World
- SoP: Study of the Past

Current Requirements with Flexibility

(1) AI or CB
   + (1) AI, CB, or Arts & Humanities Divisional Course

(1) EMR or Math, Applied Math, Statistics, or CS Departmental Course

(1) ER or approved departmental substitution*

(1) SLS or SPU
   + (1) SLS, SPU, or Natural Sciences and SEAS Divisional Course**

(1) SW or USW
   + (1) SW, USW, or Social Sciences Divisional Course

New Requirements
Class of 2019 & beyond

- Aesthetics & Culture (Gen Ed)
- Arts & Humanities (Divisional)
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Ethics & Civics (Gen Ed)
- Science & Technology in Society (Gen Ed)
- Natural Sciences & SEAS (Divisional)
- Histories, Societies, Individuals (Gen Ed)
- Social Sciences (Divisional)

*For more information, see Advice for Students on the Gen Ed website.

**Math, Applied Math, Statistics, and CS courses may not count toward this requirement.

***May be fulfilled with any course currently designated for SoP or most History, H&S, or HAA departmental courses. Students may also petition for another departmental course to count. Students graduating after Spring 2018 will not need to fulfill the Study of the Past Requirement.