

GENERAL EDUCATION PURPOSE STATEMENT

Widener University cultivates critical, creative, and independent thinking to develop undergraduates who demonstrate intellectual integrity, civic engagement, and potential for leadership. General education promotes awareness and synthesis of different strategies of knowing, questioning, and understanding. Through the integration of experiences both inside and outside the classroom, students learn to act as responsible citizens and to pursue knowledge beyond the boundaries of the university.

This is commonly referred to as a liberal education, which is defined as:

A philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind from ignorance, and cultivates social responsibility. Characterized by challenging encounters with important issues, and more a way of studying than specific content, liberal education can occur at all types of colleges and universities. "General Education" and an expectation of in-depth study in at least one field normally comprise liberal education. (www.aacu-edu.org/advocacy/what_is_liberal_education.cfm)

GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. A liberally educated graduate communicates effectively.
 - a. Gives clear presentations before a group.
 - b. Writes papers that require locating, analyzing, and formally referencing information sources to support conclusions.
2. A liberally educated graduate thinks critically.
 - a. Makes claims and draws conclusions that require the analysis and evaluation of evidence.
 - b. Synthesizes divergent content, methodologies, and models.
 - c. Makes and assesses ethical judgments.
 - d. Demonstrates an awareness of different points of view and analyzes how these are informed by factors that may include culture, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender identity, age, disabilities, language, religion, sexual orientation, or geographical area, among others.
3. A liberally educated graduate uses quantitative methods effectively.
 - a. Solves problems using mathematical methods.
 - b. Interprets, makes inferences, and draws conclusions from data.
 - c. Determines whether numerical results are reasonable.
4. A liberally educated graduate has developed a wide range of intellectual perspectives and methodologies.
 - a. Evaluates the workings of the natural and physical world using theories and models that can be tested by experiments and observations.
 - b. Evaluates social science theories and research methods related to questions of human behavior, mental processes, communication, social and cultural structures, and institutions.
 - c. Evaluates philosophical, historical, and aesthetic arguments, evidence, and artifacts.

DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT

All students are required to complete a minimum of 12 semester hours in each of the three areas of humanities, social science, and science/mathematics. A semester hour consists of one hour per week in the classroom per semester or two to three hours in laboratory or fieldwork per semester. This requirement is based on the conviction that a baccalaureate degree represents more than expertise in a specific field. Students broaden themselves by taking courses in academic areas that have traditionally been at the heart of an undergraduate education. Students should work closely with advisors in selecting courses appropriate to their interests and academic needs.

Courses taken on a pass/no pass basis may not be used to satisfy the university distribution requirement. Both semester-long and certain module courses may be used to satisfy distribution requirements.

The following subject areas satisfy distribution requirements:

Humanities

art history
art studio
creative writing
dance
English (excluding ENGL 100, 101, 111)
fine arts
history
humanities
modern language
music
philosophy

Science and Mathematics

anthropology 204
biology
chemistry
computer science (excluding CSCI 101–124)
earth and space science
economics 341
environmental science
mathematics (excluding MATH 101–110)
physics
psychology 355
science (excluding SCI 100)

Social Science

anthropology
criminal justice
economics (EC 201, 202 only)
communication studies (COMS 130, 180, 201, 213, 220, 230, 251, 267, 275, 277, 280, 290, 316, 330, 335, 340, 375, 380, 382, 390)
political science
psychology (excluding PSY 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 395, 409, 410, 419, 423)
sociology

DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES

Developmental courses enable students to master fundamental knowledge that they need to succeed in their curricula at Widener. Freshmen are placed in developmental courses based on their performance on a placement test, which is given during the summer prior to enrollment, and their overall academic profile. The following courses are designated as developmental:

CHEM 97	ENGL 100	ENGL 111
MATH 101	RDG 105	

Developmental courses do not satisfy distribution requirements. No more than three credits of developmental coursework may be counted toward graduation.

DUAL DEGREES AND DOUBLE MAJORS

Students may take two majors at Widener. To do so, students must be accepted in both and are required to complete all of the requirements for each major. This is done by choosing courses that apply to both and using electives toward fulfilling the remaining requirements of the other major. Students who choose majors in separate schools/colleges will earn two degrees, known as a dual degree. An example is the physics/mechanical engineering dual degree program with the College of Arts and Sciences and School of Engineering. Students who choose two majors within the same college/school will earn one degree that lists both majors. An example is the criminal justice/sociology double major with the College of Arts and Sciences.