

GENERAL EDUCATION: CARDINAL CORE REQUIREMENTS

Cardinal Core Purpose

Through the Cardinal Core program you will explore multiple areas of knowledge in new ways and develop core skills that will enable you to succeed in any degree program and prepare you to live and work in a dynamic, global society.

Cardinal Core Overview

The Cardinal Core program at the University of Louisville prepares students to do the advanced work needed for their baccalaureate degrees and prepares them to contribute to society throughout their lives through their professional work and civic engagement. The program emphasizes the development of key intellectual skills relevant to any career path: critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, effective communication, and the understanding of historical, social, and cultural diversity.

Students develop skills and acquire knowledge in the content areas of arts and humanities, historical perspectives, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, written communication, and the competency area of diversity in the United States and globally. Upon completion of the program, students are prepared to analyze complex problems and evaluate possible courses of action in an environment characterized by diversity and the need for sustainable solutions.

Students should demonstrate proficiency (through coursework or external credit) in the three skills areas (written communication, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning) before completing the first 30 degree-applicable credit hours earned at the University of Louisville. Within 60 hours, the student should have completed 21 hours of Cardinal Core courses.

The Cardinal Core program requires a minimum of 31 credit hours from approved course categories as outlined in the table below. Students must complete a minimum of 12 hours in the skills courses, a minimum of 19 hours in the disciplinary perspectives courses, and within the 31 hours, students must accumulate 6 hours in diversity credit.

Academic advisors can guide students in the selection of courses.

Cardinal Core Content Areas and Required Credit Hours

Area	Hours
Skills	
Written Communication (WC)	6
Oral Communication (OC)	3
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	3
Disciplinary Perspectives	
Arts & Humanities (AH) ¹	6
Social & Behavioral Sciences (SB)/Historical Perspective (SBH) ²	6
Natural Sciences/Natural Sciences Lab (S, SL, B) ³	7
Diversity	
U.S. Diversity (D1), 3 hours	

Global Diversity (D2), 3 hours

The Diversity requirement does not add hours to the total Cardinal Core Program. Diversity requirements will be met by taking courses in other Cardinal Core categories that also carry the D1 or D2 designation.

Total Hours Required

31

- ¹ Students must take at least 2 courses from different disciplines to satisfy the Arts & Humanities (AH) requirement.
- ² Students must take at least 2 courses from different disciplines—with a minimum of 3 hours in Historical Perspectives (SBH) coursework—to satisfy the Social & Behavioral Sciences (SB) and Historical Perspectives (SBH) requirement.
- ³ Students must take a lecture and lab in a single discipline and an additional 3 hours in a second discipline to satisfy the Natural Sciences (S, SL, B) requirement.

NOTE: Students may take only one dual content area course (OC, WC, QR, SB, SBH, AH, S, SL, B). Diversity attributes (D1, D2) are not included in this restriction. Taking a dual content course allows a student to meet two Cardinal Core distribution requirements while only earning 4 hours toward the overall Cardinal Core required total of 31 hours. These students will need to take an additional Cardinal Core elective in any category to bring their total overall Cardinal Core course credits up to 31 hours.

For a list of approved Cardinal Core courses, please visit the Cardinal Core website (<http://louisville.edu/provost/ger/>).

Cardinal Core Content Areas

Written Communication

Written communication is the ability to develop and express ideas, opinions, and information in appropriate written forms. To fulfill this requirement, students will complete a substantial amount of writing, including several texts that go through the writing process.

Requirement: 6 hours (WC). The first 3 hours must be a writing course in or credit approved by the Department of English.

Oral Communication

Oral communication is the ability to convey ideas, emotions, and information through speech.

Requirement: 3 hours (OC)

Quantitative Reasoning

Quantitative reasoning is concerned with solving real-world problems through mathematical methods.

Requirement: 3 hours in quantitative reasoning (QR)

Disability Resource Center Assistance with QR Requirement

A student who believes that his or her inability to complete a course that fulfills the quantitative reasoning Cardinal Core requirement is a result of a disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC), which will outline the process for documenting such a disability, explain what courses can be substituted if a disability is diagnosed, and will make clear to the student that such a substitution will make it impossible to take classes for which Cardinal Core quantitative reasoning courses are

prerequisite, thus greatly limiting the majors the student can elect. All such courses of action must be approved by the provost.

Arts and Humanities

Arts and humanities are concerned with understanding of art, music, theatre, literature, philosophy, and religious thought.

Requirement: 6 hours in the arts and/or humanities (AH), with at least two courses from different disciplines.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Social and behavioral sciences are concerned with understanding human behavior, human interactions, human environment, and the related social structures and forms.

Historical perspective (SBH) is concerned with understanding change over time. Courses addressing this requirement cover a broad body of historical knowledge and compare different societies and cultures.

Requirement: 6 hours (SB): At least two courses from different disciplines and 3 hours must be in Historical Perspective (SBH).

Natural Sciences

Natural sciences are concerned with understanding the laws of nature and the physical world.

Requirement: 7 hours: lecture (S) and lab (SL) or combined lecture and lab (B) in a single discipline; an additional 3 hours in a second discipline.

Competency in Diversity

Diversity refers to the difference that differences make. All courses in diversity will examine the ways in which components of identity and social and material stratification positively or negatively affect life experiences, opportunities, and sense of belonging in national or global contexts.

Students must take 6 hours in diversity, with 3 hours in U.S. diversity (D1) and 3 hours in global diversity (D2). The diversity requirements will be met by taking courses in other Cardinal Core categories that also carry the D1 or D2 designation. This requirement, therefore, does not add hours to the total Cardinal Core program.

- **U.S. Diversity**

Courses in U.S. diversity (D1) will broaden students' understanding of how the experiences and opportunities of individuals and groups in the United States are shaped by the various historical, cultural and social structures and processes of stratification. These courses will center on race, socio-economic status, and gender, and/or their interactions with other social demographics.

Requirement: 3 hours

- **Global Diversity**

Courses in global diversity (D2) will broaden students' understanding of how the experiences and opportunities of individuals and/or groups in non-U.S. societies are shaped by the various historical, cultural and social structures and processes of stratification locally or globally.

Requirement: 3 hours

Petitions for Diversity (D) Credit

Students may receive one diversity credit by petitioning the Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee under the following claims.

Diversity (D) Credit for Study Abroad Courses

Students may petition for diversity (D) credit for coursework undertaken as part of a study-abroad program prior to participation. Courses not previously approved for Cardinal Core credit will not be accepted for diversity (D) credit even if they are part of a university-approved study-abroad program. Petitions must be submitted to the committee through the Cardinal Core website.

Detailed instructions are available on the Cardinal Core website (<http://louisville.edu/provost/ger/diversity/>).

Diversity (D) Credit for Transfer Courses

A student may petition the Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee to evaluate transfer courses identified by the Admissions Office as not equivalent to any existing approved diversity (D) course. The student requesting the evaluation must provide a catalog course description and a syllabus of the course.

Information on submitting a petition for transfer credit is available on the Cardinal Core website (<http://louisville.edu/provost/ger/diversity/>).

Diversity (D) Credit for Military Experience

A student may petition for diversity (D) credit based on military experience. The petition must include an essay identifying which form of diversity (D) credit is requested, describing and explaining how the experience met the learning outcomes of the diversity (D) competency.

Petitions must be submitted to the committee. Detailed instructions (including specifications of the essay, criteria for assessment of the essay, submission deadlines, and limits on the petition period) are available on the Cardinal Core website (<http://louisville.edu/provost/ger/diversity/>).

Only one diversity credit (D1 or D2) may be earned by petition.

Cardinal Core Guidelines

These rules provide guidelines and available options for student course selection for completion of the Cardinal Core (general education) requirements (effective summer 2018). In alignment with university policy, the requirements, rules, policies, and the associated course listing for Cardinal Core in this catalog are for summer 2025 through spring 2026 and apply to all students enrolled in the university during this period.

Questions concerning these guidelines can be addressed to gecc@louisville.edu for the consideration of the committee.

Course Substitutions and Appeals

Students, departments, and units may not attempt to substitute for a Cardinal Core approved course any University of Louisville course not on the Cardinal Core approved list. The Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee will not accept any appeal for such consideration.

Transfer Students and Cardinal Core

Kentucky General Education Transfer Policy

Students who transfer between Kentucky's public institutions of higher education may qualify for certification of coursework meeting the Kentucky General Education Transfer Policy.

General Education Category Certified

Students who have completed some but not all of the five categories in the core component will be "category certified" for purposes of transfer. Individuals in this situation must fulfill all of the remaining general education requirements of the receiving institution that have not been satisfied through category certification. Students will still be required to complete 6 hours in courses designated diversity (D), with 3 hours in U.S. diversity (D1) and 3 hours in global diversity (D2).

Statewide General Education Core Categories

General Education Core Certified

Students who have completed all of the categories – the core component – with a minimum of 30 unduplicated credit hours will be "core certified" for purposes of transfer. A student admitted to the university as core certified is considered to have met all general education requirements of the institution with the exception of the Diversity competency. Students will still be required to complete 6 hours in courses designated diversity (D), with 3 hours in U.S. diversity (D1) and 3 hours in global diversity (D2).

General Education Fully Certified

Students who have completed a general education program, with a minimum of 30 unduplicated semester credit hours or the equivalent (may include an approved SACSCOC justification for fewer hours) which includes the core component and all additional institutional-specific general education courses, will be "General Education Fully Certified" for purposes of transfer. If the receiving institution's general education program requires a sum of hours that is less than the total the student has taken at the sending institution, the excess hours will be accepted for transfer by the receiving institution and evaluated for application toward degree requirements. There may be graduation requirements beyond general education requirements that a student will need to complete (e.g., senior year capstone experiences).

AA/AS Credit for General Education

Students who graduate from Kentucky public institutions with AA or AS degrees will be deemed to be General Education Fully Certified. Other students who present the transcript for an AA (Associate of Arts) and/or an AS (Associate of Science) degree from a regionally-accredited institution (not included in the Kentucky Public Transfer Policy) will be considered for General Education Core Certification. Transcripts for such consideration must show completion of at least one transferable course in each of the Cardinal Core content areas at the University of Louisville: Written Communication, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Arts and Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences (including Historical Perspective), and Natural Sciences.

General Education Requirements for Second-degree Students

For students already holding a baccalaureate degree but in residence to complete a second baccalaureate, the Cardinal Core requirements shall be considered fulfilled by the first baccalaureate degree.

Cardinal Core Assessment

Assessment of student learning outcomes is a national expectation in higher education and the expectations are calls for increased accountability. The Cardinal Core Curriculum Committee (CCCC) will conduct a systematic assessment of the Cardinal Core program for achievement of the student learning outcomes. In particular, the university-wide general education assessment program evaluates student performance in the key intellectual skills of the Cardinal Core program: critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, effective communication, and the understanding of historical, social, and cultural diversity. This process evaluates the effectiveness of the general education program and recommends changes for its improvement, as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation principles.