

9.3.a

General Education Requirements: Coherent Rationale

The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that:

- a. is based on a coherent rationale.

Judgment

Compliant Non-Compliant Not Applicable

Narrative

The general education requirements for the University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campuses are the same and referred to as the [Carolina Core](#). The Carolina Core requirements are published in the [University Bulletin](#) and are available on the [Provost Office website](#). The University of South Carolina prepares students to be nurses, entrepreneurs, managers, scientists, journalists, poets, and social workers—specialists in their chosen fields. But the University also prepares students more broadly to be active citizens in the world, adapting to new technologies, responding thoughtfully and resourcefully to economic and political challenges; and we prepare them to live meaningful individual lives as members of families and communities. Faculty not only teach students the skills and information students need today; faculty also teach students how to keep on learning throughout their lives. Faculty teach students how to know and measure the world through science and mathematics and how to wonder at its beauty and mystery through art; how to ponder the meanings of history and the extraordinary variety of human cultures, how to express themselves fluently in speech and writing, and how to honor truth as the value fundamental to all knowledge and communication.

The Carolina Core curriculum provides the common core of knowledge, skill, and academic experience for all Carolina undergraduates. The Carolina Core is required for all undergraduate degrees and was approved by Faculty Senate in December of 2010; this new general education core was the work of large number of faculty and intensive discussion (for a brief history, see [History of the Carolina Core](#)). In spring and summer of 2011, the Carolina Core Committee developed syllabus guidelines for courses in the new Core. Regular University Forums kept faculty, staff, and student participating in the process. The Carolina Core officially launched in Fall 2012.

The Carolina Core begins with foundational courses covering broad areas of knowledge and giving students the opportunity to develop general skills in interpretation of different kinds of information, communicate information and use different methods of analysis and continues with an integrative course in the major that combines one or more Carolina Core learning objectives with specialized knowledge in the major.

Code	Carolina Core Components	Caroline Core Learning Outcomes	Credit Hours
	I. Lower Division: Core Courses	Learning Outcomes to be met at foundational level of mastery	28-34 hours
CMW	Effective, Engaged, and Persuasive Communication: Written Component	Identify and analyze issues, develop logical and persuasive arguments, and communicate ideas clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes through writing and speaking.	6 Written component
ARP	Analytical Reasoning and Problem-Solving	Apply the methods of mathematical, statistical, or analytical reasoning to critically evaluate data, solve problems, and effectively communicate findings verbally and graphically.	6
SCI	Scientific Literacy	Apply the principles and language of the natural sciences and associated technologies to historical and contemporary issues.	7

GFL	Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Foreign Language	Communicate effectively in more than one language.	0-6 (depending on placement test)
GHS	Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Historical Thinking	Use the principles of historical thinking to understand past human societies.	3
GSS	Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Social Sciences	Use the principles of the social sciences to explore diverse cultural identities and to analyze political and environmental issues.	3
AIU	Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding	Create or interpret literary, visual or performing arts	3
	II. Lower Division: Stand-Alone or Overlay-Eligible Courses	Up to two of these three <i>Core</i> requirements may be met in overlay courses that combine learning outcomes from two <i>Core</i> courses.	3-9 hours (depending on whether these three outcomes are met with stand-alone or up to two overlay courses)
CMS	Effective, Engaged, and Persuasive Communication: Spoken Component	Identify and analyze issues, develop logical and persuasive arguments, and communicate ideas clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes through writing and speaking.	0-3 Spoken component
INF	Information Literacy	Collect, manage and evaluate information using technology, and communicate findings.	0-3
VSR	Values, Ethics, and Social Responsibility	Examine different kinds of social and personal values, analyzing the ways in which these are manifested in communities as well as individual lives.	0-3
Integrative	III. Upper Division: Integrative Course in the Major	Upper division course in the major program of study includes learning outcomes from the <i>Carolina Core</i> . Students should refer to their program major for more information.	N / A
	TOTAL Hours in Carolina Core		31-43 hours (depending on language placement tests and use of at most two overlay courses)

The Carolina Core has 10 Core components, each with learning outcomes and credit hour requirements. The Core begins with foundational courses early in the undergraduate experience, followed by one or more integrative courses near the end in which selected Core learning outcomes are integrated into the chosen major. Each of the ten Core components must be met with a Core-approved course. While most Core-approved courses fulfill a single Core component, a few courses, called overlay-eligible courses, have been approved to fulfill two Core components. Every student is required to complete a minimum of 31 credit hours of Core-approved courses. There are [ten Carolina Core Learning Outcomes](#) in the areas of Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding, Analytical Reasoning and Problem-Solving, Effective, Engaged, and Persuasive Communication: Written, Effective, Engaged and Persuasive Communication: Oral, Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding (Historical Thinking, Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Social Sciences, Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Foreign Language, Information Literacy, Scientific Literacy and Values, Ethics and Social Responsibility).

Transfer students who enter the University of South Carolina Columbia, Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, or Union are subject to the Carolina Core requirements. Any transfer courses that equate to Carolina Core courses will equate to both content and all outcomes associated with the University of South Carolina Course.

Carolina Core Components Context and Rationale

(CMW) Effective, Engaged and Persuasive Communication- Written

Students acquire these skills in *foundational courses* devoted to critical and expository writing. They build on them selectively in course work for the major, and may seek to refine them further, integrating them with selected other Carolina Core learning outcomes in an advanced level course.

A Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major might, for example, require students to write effectively about the environmental impact of economic policies, or about the ethical and political questions raised by new and emerging technologies.

(ARP) Analytical Reasoning and Problem Solving

Many of the complex problems facing individuals, families, organizations, communities, and society require both qualitative and quantitative analyses and responses. The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must be able to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods to recognize, analyze, and solve problems, and communicate findings and solutions verbally, symbolically, and visually.

Students must understand and apply, as appropriate, principles of analytical reasoning using as a foundation the knowledge of mathematics, statistics, logic, and/or algorithmic principles. They must be able to recognize and use connections among mathematical, logical, statistical, and algorithmic methods across disciplines. They must develop skills in identifying and describing problems using quantitative data and models, elucidating relationships among variables for descriptive or predictive purposes, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant data, evaluating the authority and accuracy of information, and assessing the appropriateness of quantitative methods for the available data. Ultimately, decisions must be made and defended through effective means of communication.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome teach students how to do some of the following: use analytical reasoning with appropriate technology to solve problems; test conjectures; formulate valid arguments; judge the validity of arguments; check answers to determine reasonableness; reflect on both the statistical and practical significance of findings; and communicate the reasoning and the results.

In a Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major, students might demonstrate, for example, the ability to distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, identify missing and faulty information, and determine appropriate and inappropriate means for gathering data and making inferences. Students might apply advanced methods to evaluate evidential and argumentative claims and propose solutions to complex problems

(SCI) Scientific Literacy

Some of the critical issues facing society concern sustainability, the environment, energy, biotechnology, health and medicine, food and water, security, and defense. Informed citizens must understand both the principles and manner of

thinking associated with technology and the natural sciences, whether chemical, physical, computational, environmental, or biological, enabling them to consider challenges and potential solutions and to engage in public conversations about these issues fully and thoughtfully.

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must acquire knowledge of the principles of the natural universe and be able to apply scientific methods (broadly defined to include research and inquiry, computational methods and/or empirical reasoning) in the quest to understand and engage in discussions and decision-making. Both acquisition of content and demonstration of skills are necessary. Students must be able to evaluate scientific information on the basis of its source and the methods and technologies used to generate it, to pose and evaluate arguments based on evidence, and to apply conclusions from such arguments appropriately.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome require students to understand and apply timeless principles and laws of science. Students must understand and describe natural phenomena, and formulate questions and determine answers using methods of empirical reasoning. Application of principles and methods must be illustrated using historical or contemporary issues. A Carolina

Core *integrative course* in the major might, for example, require students to consider scientific issues alongside other issues underlying international, national, or local decisions, and express positions that are scientifically and technologically informed.

(GFL) Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Foreign Language

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must be aware of contemporary world issues, with an appreciation for the historical context as well as the natural, material, and socio-cultural forces that shape these issues. They must recognize and appreciate diversity as a characteristic of South Carolina, the nation, and the world, and understand self within that context. Such perspectives underlie the ability to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The study of languages develops tools for global competency and provides a platform for understanding the traditions, cultures, and values of others. The ability to speak, write, and comprehend a second language alone is not sufficient for global competence but, when coupled with broad experience in the humanities, arts, and social sciences, it is a potent tool for investigating, comprehending, and responding to global issues and problems. Language study allows students to engage with cultures beyond their own, and to perceive their own culture through another's perspective.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome enable students to master essential language skills in the context of the culture that shapes and transmits the language.

A Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major might incorporate language and cultural study in a particular discipline area. Students might be expected to read specific disciplinary texts or portions of texts in a target language, participate in specifically designated discussion sections in a target language, or use a target language to conduct research. Students with more advanced level language skills might be expected to take disciplinary courses in a target language through study abroad.

(GHS) Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Historical Thinking

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must be aware of contemporary world issues, with an appreciation for the historical context as well as the natural, material, and socio-cultural forces that shape these issues. They must recognize and appreciate diversity as a characteristic of South Carolina, the nation, and the world, and understand self within that context. Such perspectives underlie the ability to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students engage in the study of history to gain a broader context for understanding local and global cultures. They must demonstrate an understanding of the methods of historical analysis, the techniques for enlisting a wide range of historical sources, and the application of historical frameworks to address contemporary questions and problems.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome enable students to apply the principles of historical thinking to understand relationships between human societies and their historical roots.

Through a Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major, students might apply historical principles as a means to understanding and solving contemporary problems.

(GSS) Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding: Social Sciences

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must be aware of contemporary world issues, with an appreciation for the historical context as well as the natural, material, and socio-cultural forces that shape these issues. They must recognize and appreciate diversity as a characteristic of South Carolina, the nation, and the world, and understand self within that context. Such perspectives underlie the ability to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The principles, methodologies, theories, applications, and knowledge base of the social sciences provide frameworks and insights for exploring the human condition. Drawing from interdisciplinary knowledge and methods, the social sciences offer a means for understanding the foundations of human behavior and societies, as well as social structures and interrelationships. Social scientific inquiry is a springboard for understanding and analyzing contemporary issues, from individual, local, and global perspectives.

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must be able to explain social and behavioral phenomena and apply social scientific inquiry to define problems, construct and test hypotheses, draw conclusions, and communicate findings. They must engage with issues within and beyond U. S. borders as preparation for global citizenship.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome enable students to apply social scientific inquiry and methods to address and analyze problems and issues.

A Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major might, for example, focus on the relevance of diverse cultural identities to the major field of study. The knowledge and skills drawn from study of the social sciences may be used to analyze political and environmental issues and person-environment interactions in the context of a specific field of study. Discipline-specific case studies, project-based learning, reaction papers, and video journals may be used across a variety of majors to extend competencies gained through study of the social sciences.

(AIU) Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding

The pleasure that comes from informed appreciation of artistic works and performances is crucial to the quality of an educated life. It leads to a deeper, more fully imagined sense of the human condition, sustains an openness to lifelong learning, and helps to foster understanding across cultural divides, encouraging full participation in the cultural life of society.

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students may demonstrate their understanding of the arts in a number of ways, whether by creating literary, visual, or performance art, or by studying diverse traditions and interpreting existing works.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome provide students opportunities to study and create works of literature and/or visual or performance art, analyze creative works and practice analysis skills, or discuss artistic or literary periods or styles and practice discussion skills.

A Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major might, for example, require students to demonstrate understanding of the relationship of the arts to the political culture of a country or region.

(CMS) Effective, Engaged and Persuasive Communication- Oral

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must be able to think critically, and to read, write, inquire, and converse as citizens in a diverse, democratic society. They must be able to identify and use appropriate technologies, genres, and media to communicate ideas to varied audiences in ways that are conventional as well as creative, informative as well as persuasive. And because communication is reciprocal, they must also be engaged, active listeners.

Students need these skills in order to address issues of public concern, both to South Carolina and to a global society. They also need them to articulate personal values and experiences, and to communicate thoughts and feelings clearly in more intimate settings.

Students acquire these skills in *foundational courses* devoted to critical and expository persuasive speaking. They build on them selectively in course work for the major, and may seek to refine them further, integrating them with selected other Carolina Core learning outcomes in an advanced level course.

A Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major might, for example, require students to speak effectively about the environmental impact of economic policies, or about the ethical and political questions raised by new and emerging technologies.

(INF) Information Literacy

In order to make informed decisions as citizens, the University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must be able to determine when information is needed. From the abundance of information available from many sources, students must then find, identify, understand, and critically evaluate information. Students must be able to use a variety of print and electronic materials and technologies to research and present findings on discipline-specific topics as well as those of concern to all citizens. Also, they must demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities inherent in the acquisition, development, and utilization of knowledge.

Skills in information literacy are necessary for distinguishing information that is reliable, authoritative, and current from that which is biased, misleading, and out-of-date. Such skills prepare students to adapt to new and evolving sources of information and the technologies that create and support them. These are lifelong skills, important to both professional and personal life.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome emphasize the research process and methods for using technology to locate, collect, manage, and present information from a variety of sources (e.g., print, electronic, experts). In such *foundational courses*, students select topics, conduct a literature review, evaluate and organize information, and present information in an annotated bibliography, research paper, presentation, or other appropriate form of communication.

A Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major might, for example, introduce students to the research methods and practices in the discipline, including information resources and comparisons to other fields. It might also emphasize professional literature in the discipline and how it is organized, archived, shared, and disseminated. An *integrative course* might focus on a research project that requires students to use key information sources for the discipline.

(VSR) Values, Ethics and Social Responsibility

The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students must demonstrate an understanding of the importance of values, ethics, and social responsibility in their own lives and in contemporary society. They must be aware of the source and function of values, both moral and personal. Students must reflect on the diversity of value traditions in contemporary societies and the ethical choices that these imply. As citizens of multiple communities, students must consider their various responsibilities, and the responsibilities of others, to embrace values, make ethical choices, and take action for the greater good.

Foundational courses that support this learning outcome enable students to identify sources of values and to evaluate ethical choices implied by values. *Foundational courses* require reflection as well as analysis of how different values manifest in one's own life and in the community.

A Carolina Core *integrative course* in the major might include examination of values, ethics, and social responsibility in the specific context of the discipline area. *Integrative courses* might include service-learning, internships, or other field experiences that foster study, reflection, and social action.

Tracking General Education Requirements for Students

All undergraduate students are required to meet with academic advisors each fall and spring semester before registration for the upcoming term. The University of South Carolina Columbia and regional Palmetto College campus students also have access to a number of [academic advising resources](#) that assists students with staying on track to meet general education requirements. Students and academic advisors are able to track student progress towards completion using a system called

Degree Works. [Degree Works](#) is the university's web-based, degree-auditing and tracking tool. Degree Works has modules that allow for the creation of a [degree plan](#) and degree audit to track [student progression](#). Academic advisors and students review the plan and audit during their meeting each term.

[Major Maps](#) is another tool that academic advisors and faculty have access to that assists with ensuring that student progress through the required Carolina Core course through to major courses. A major map is a [layout](#) of required courses in a given program of study, including critical courses and suggested course sequence to ensure a clear path to graduation. Major maps include universal terminology, a standard program of study, and a common 8-semester template. The [major map repository](#) stores all completed major maps and is updated regularly.

Carolina Core Course Development

Course development consists of the creation of new courses and the revision or termination of existing courses. Revisions may include changes to the bulletin, delivery method, or other viable edits to be approved through faculty governance. The faculty of the University has legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curriculum on the campus where they serve. Faculty governance committees on each campus review all requests to create, revise, or eliminate graduate and undergraduate courses to ensure that all offerings meet the academic expectation of the University. [ACAF 2.03 Creation and Revision of Academic Courses](#) is the University policy that provides procedures for the creation and revision of academic courses. Any member of the faculty is welcome to propose new Carolina Core courses or changes to previously approved courses. Faculty wanting propose a new course or changes begin by talking to the the Academic Program Liaison (APL) in their college or school. The APL has experience with academic program actions and provides guidance on how faculty can develop their idea and take it through the entire University Faculty Senate approval process.

Sources

-  [ACAF 2.03 Creation and Revision of Academic Courses](#)
-  [AIU Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [ARP Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [Academic Advising Syllabus](#)
-  [CMS Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [CMW Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [Carolina Core Committee Governance and Meeting Minutes](#)
-  [Carolina Core Components](#)
-  [Degree Progression](#)
-  [DegreeWorks Planner](#)
-  [DegreeWorks Planner Draft Script](#)
-  [GFL Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [GHS Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [GSS Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [History of the Carolina Core at UofSC](#)
-  [INF Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [Major Map Repository](#)
-  [Major Map Template](#)
-  [Major Maps](#)
-  [SCI Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)
-  [Student Advising Resources](#)
-  [UofSC Columbia Undergraduate Bulletin Carolina Core](#)
-  [VSR Syllabus Rubric Guide](#)