

**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT ERIE
THE BEHREND COLLEGE
DIVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES**

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: A BRIEF EXPLANATION
<http://www.pennstatebehrend.psu.edu/academic/dus/dusindex.htm>

Penn State, like most universities throughout the country, asks its students to become educated, well-rounded, thoughtful graduates and citizens. The goals of a Penn State education, therefore, greatly exceed "job training." In order to achieve its goal of educating young men and women, the Penn State Faculty has established a general education program. Under this program, students can in many cases select the types of courses they wish to study, based on their own interests, abilities, and knowledge base.

During our counseling and advising program, you'll hear much about general education at Penn State. The purpose of this paper is to give you a brief overview of the general education program. Here are some facts:

1. In a 4-year program, general education courses account for 46 credits. Most majors at the university require between 120 and 140 credits for completion.
2. Students work on their general education courses primarily in their first two years of college, prior to the majority of coursework for a specific major.
3. In certain majors, a general education course is also a course required for the major. This is particularly true in math, sciences, and engineering.
4. General education coursework is subdivided as follows:

A. **SKILLS**

The Writing/Speaking Component - 9 credits.

In this component, ENGL 15, ENGL 202, and CAS 100 are required courses for all majors.

The Quantification Component - 6 credits.

These are courses in math, computer science, statistics, and logic. Placement in the correct math course for you depends upon your test results and your interests in a possible major.

B. **KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS (Distribution Requirement)**

This area is subdivided into the five categories of coursework listed below.

HEALTH SCIENCES – 3 credits required

3 credits of Physical and/or Health Education are required. Students can take a combination of physical activities and classroom instruction.

NATURAL SCIENCE – 9 credits required

Choice is often dependent on anticipated major.

ARTS – 6 credits required

HUMANITIES – 6 credits required

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES – 6 credits required

General Education Requirements
Knowledge Domains (continued)

Particularly within the distribution component, the student has a wide selection of courses which will fulfill the requirements. Students should always make choices based on their interest in courses, expanding their knowledge base, and looking toward a possible major.

C. UNITED STATES CULTURES AND INTERNATIONAL CULTURES REQUIREMENT

In order to foster an appreciation and knowledge of the various cultures that comprise not only Penn State, but also the United States and our global world, Penn State requires its students to take one course that investigates United States culture (US) and a second that investigates global culture (IL). Most times these courses also “count” toward other areas of general education.

D. FIRST YEAR / FRESHMAN SEMINAR

In order to acclimate students to collegiate studies and to introduce topics within a particular field of study or major, Penn State requires students to take an introductory seminar course of their choice during either the first or second semester.

Penn State Behrend provides each student with a designated faculty advisor who can assist the student in appropriate course selection. The Division of Undergraduate Studies, likewise, will gladly answer questions and concerns for any Behrend student regarding the appropriateness of course selection.