

Changes to GER Requirements (Effective Autumn Quarter 2005-06)



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The General Education Requirements are an integral part of undergraduate education at Stanford. Their purpose is to introduce students to a broad range of fields and areas of study within the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, applied sciences, and technology. The General Education Requirements are divided into three areas; students are required to take a specified number of courses within each area. The courses must be designated as GER in the given area and taken for a letter grade.

During Autumn Quarter 2004-05, the Academic Senate approved modifications to undergraduate General Education Requirements that become effective Autumn Quarter 2005-06. The purpose of these modifications is 1) to give students a fuller and more articulate understanding of the purposes of the requirements and of the understanding of a liberal arts education that these requirements embody; 2) to make a place in the curriculum for ethical reasoning and to help make students aware of how pervasive ethical reasoning and value judgments are throughout curriculum; and, 3) to provide some greater freedom of choice by reducing the GERs by one course.

Students who matriculated Autumn Quarter 2004-05 or later will automatically be subject to the new General Education Requirements effective Autumn Quarter 2005-06. Students who matriculated Autumn Quarter 2003-04 or earlier will remain on the old General Education Requirements, but may elect to change to the new system. Students interested in electing the new GER system should contact the Office of the University Registrar. No further changes will be allowed once a student has elected to move to the new system.

The following is the new structure for General Education Requirements:

Introduction to the Humanities: Requirement satisfied by completing the three quarter sequence.

Introduction to the Humanities builds an intellectual foundation in the study of human thought, values, beliefs, creativity, and culture. These courses introduce students to methods of inquiry in the humanities: interdisciplinary methods in the fall and discipline based methods in the winter and spring.

Disciplinary Breadth: Requirement satisfied by completing a minimum of five courses; at least one course in each subject area.

Disciplinary Breadth provides students with educational breadth by giving them some experience in the areas of 1) Engineering and Applied Sciences, 2) Humanities, 3) Mathematics, 4) Natural Sciences, and 5) Social Sciences.

Education for Citizenship: Requirement satisfied by 1) completing a minimum of two courses in at least two subject areas; or 2) completing two Disciplinary Breadth courses which also satisfy two different Education for Citizenship subject areas.

Education for citizenship provides students with some of the skills and knowledge necessary for citizenship in contemporary national cultures and for participation in the global cultures of the 21st century. Education for Citizenship is divided into four subject areas:

1) Ethical Reasoning, 2) The Global Community, 3) American Cultures, and 4) Gender Studies.

NEW GER REQUIREMENTS (Effective 2005-06) OLD GER REQUIREMENTS (1996-97–2004-05)

IHUM—Introduction to the Humanities.....Area 1—Introduction to the Humanities

Disciplinary Breadth

DB-EngrAppSci—Engineering and Applied Sciences.....Area 2b—Applied Sciences and Technology

DB-Hum—HumanitiesArea 3a—Humanities

DB-Math—MathematicsArea 2c—Mathematics

DB-NatSci—Natural Sciences.....Area 2a—Natural Sciences

DB-SocSci—Social Sciences.....Area 3b—Social Sciences

Education for Citizenship

EC-EthicReas—Ethical ReasoningNew subject area: Area 4d—Ethical Reasoning

EC-GlobalCom—The Global Community.....Area 4a—World Cultures

EC-AmerCul—American CulturesArea 4b—American Cultures

EC-Gender—Gender StudiesArea 4c—Gender Studies

NUMBER OF COURSES REQUIRED (Effective 2005-06)

NUMBER OF COURSES REQUIRED (1996-97–2004-05)

Introduction to the Humanities = 3 Area 1 = 3

Disciplinary Breadth* = 05 Area 2 = 3

Area 3* = 03

Education for Citizenship* = 02 Area 4* = 02

TOTAL = 10 TOTAL = 11

*Under the old system, students could double count courses for Areas 3 and 4; the new GER system effective 2005-06 continues this practice for courses in the Disciplinary Breadth (Humanities and Social Sciences subject areas) and Education for Citizenship areas, provided the courses have been approved to count for both Disciplinary Breadth and Education for Citizenship.