

Ball State University Core Curriculum for the 21st Century

A. Preamble: Core Goals for Undergraduate Education

Graduates of Ball State University are individuals who realize their intellectual potential, who seek to add breadth and depth to their perspectives, and who maintain their physical well-being.

Graduates of the university command extensive knowledge and a mature repertoire of cognitive, practical, and technological skills. They exhibit integrity and responsible action in their social, professional, and civic lives. They respect the histories, cultures, and needs of others. They inform their decisions through critical, creative, and scientific reasoning, and they discern the consequences of their decisions and actions at the local, national, and global levels. They acknowledge responsibility for environmental well-being and for the civic engagement that a diverse democracy requires.

Employing scientific, critical, and creative thinking, Ball State graduates transform

Experience into **information** (*isolate discrete, recognizable and usable facts*),
Information into **knowledge** (*analyze facts within an intellectual framework, discover meaning in experience*),
Knowledge into **judgment** (*reflect on knowledge gained to make choices and direct what they think, say and do*),
Judgment into **action** (*take individual responsibility and contribute to the well-being of their communities*).

B. Goals and Objectives

To achieve this vision and accomplish these transformations, student learning experiences are guided by a recursive, intellectual development process inherent in the following goals:

1. **To transform experience into information, Ball State graduates are intentional learners who**
 - accurately observe and measure elements of the natural and social worlds,
 - are alert to the importance of context,
 - explore diverse ways of knowing,
 - develop strategies for reflecting on experience.

2. To transform information into knowledge, Ball State graduates are informed, flexible thinkers who

- analyze data to reveal existing patterns of information and to create new patterns;
- understand the various ways that information is incorporated into branches of knowledge;
- work independently as well as collaboratively to generate knowledge;
- develop an intellectual framework with which to synthesize information from multiple sources;
- adapt their intellectual framework to accommodate new information;
- develop the art of communication—oral, visual, and written--in more than one language (natural and/or symbolic).

3. To transform knowledge into judgment, Ball State graduates are critical and creative thinkers who

- use multiple sources of information and knowledge in forming judgments;
- evaluate strengths and weaknesses of arguments and actions;
- understand the ethical implications of possessing and using knowledge;
- take an inquiring stance toward the world while appreciating the contributions of tradition;
- consider and understand others' values as well as their own;
- value diversity in the social and natural world;
- develop effective decision-making strategies based on an awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses;
- understand how their actions affect the complex, interrelated systems that compose our environment.

4. To transform judgment into action, Ball State graduates are responsible learners who

- recognize the responsibilities of an educated person to self, family, community, country, and the world;
- accept the responsibility to act on their principles;
- adapt to change;
- work with others to overcome obstacles to communication, building consensus for action;
- communicate effectively—in oral, visual, and written modes, and in more than one language (natural and/or symbolic);
- adopt habits of mind for continuous inquiry about themselves, others, and the world;
- act responsibly given the dangers to and the fragility of the natural environment;
- make and act on a commitment to health and wellness.

C. Rationale for the Proposed University Core Curriculum for the 21st Century (UCC)

In keeping with the recursive nature of learning transformations and the goals stated in the Preamble and the Goals and Objectives, the core curriculum is designed to enable students to

- realize their intellectual potential,
- add breadth and depth to their educational experience,
- increase their personal well-being, and
- participate actively in their communities.

Moreover, the University recognizes its responsibility to ensure that students are conversant with ways of knowing, with criteria for judgment, and with types of information outside their majors. To succeed in the 21st Century, where work often requires a group effort by experts from multiple disciplines, university graduates will need to form, lead, or be members of problem-solving, brainstorming, or decision-making teams in a wide variety of professional settings. Thus the core curriculum requires students to engage disciplines outside the domains of knowledge in which their majors reside, to develop skills in written and oral communication, to become mathematically, scientifically, and historically literate, and to understand issues in the areas of physical wellness and personal finance. Any forward-looking curriculum must also address the mounting issues, problems, and opportunities in the areas of civic engagement, diversity, and international and environmental awareness.

The UCC has five distinguishing features:

- **Intellectual development:** As indicated in the Preamble and Goals and Objectives, UCC courses must have intellectual development goals, not simply content area requirements.
- **Exposure to multiple domains:** The UCC ensures that students will be able to distinguish among domains of knowledge based on their specific epistemologies and methods, as well as on the basis of content.
- **Integration of 21ST Century skills:** In addition to developing writing skills beyond those of the required course in English composition, the UCC asks students to engage issues related to civic life, diverse cultures, and the environment, not in separate courses for each of these areas, but in courses that address one or more of these areas either inside of outside the major, inside or outside the UCC. **Integration of Core courses and the major:** The UCC allows coursework in the major to count for as many as six hours in the Core as long as the courses in the major meet learning transformation requirements.
- **Experiential/immersion experience or similar learning experience:** The UCC envisions that students will demonstrate the ability to work successfully in the major (and related areas, as appropriate) **through experiences that are cumulative and** integrative, that include individual or collaborative reflective components, and that provide an opportunity to communicate, both orally and in writing, at a level expected of a college graduate.

- **Learning outcomes:** The UCC encourages participation by any department in the university because the acceptability of courses for the core depends on learning outcomes, as well as course content.

D. Requirements of the Proposed Undergraduate University Core Curriculum (UCC)

Foundations (18 hrs.)

Students will complete one course from each area identified below with the exception of Written Communication which requires two courses under **Foundations**. **Foundation** courses focus on the first two transformations in the intellectual development process given in the Preamble (*Experience into Information and Information into Knowledge*).

Foundations

- Written communication (6)
- Oral communication (3)
- Mathematics (3)
- History (3)
- Physical Wellness (2)
- Personal Finance (1)

Tier 1 (12 hrs)

Students will complete one course from each area under **Domains**. Tier 1 focuses on the first two transformations in the intellectual development process given in the Preamble (*Experience into Information and Information into Knowledge*).

Domains

- Fine Arts (3)
- Humanities (3)
- Natural Sciences (3)
- Social Sciences (3)

It is assumed that departments can, in the main, classify courses within one of the four domains in both Tier 1 and two domains Tier 2. For departments that are interdisciplinary, it is assumed that each course they wish to offer will fit roughly within one of the domains. This assumption does not grant primacy to the traditional domains; it is merely an organizing structure.

Tier 2 (6 hrs.)

Students will complete one course from each of the two *Domains* indicated below. Courses in Tier 2 must move students through the third transformation (*Knowledge* into *Judgment*) in the intellectual development process.

Domains

- Humanities/Fine Arts/Design (3)
- Natural Sciences/Social Sciences (3)

Tier 3 (No UCC hrs)

Students will complete capstone courses or immersion experiences, or similar learning experiences (e.g., internship, clinical work, student teaching, field work, study abroad, etc.) that require them to demonstrate the ability to move from *Experience* or *Information* through to *Action*. In addition, students must demonstrate their capability to write at a level of competence appropriate for college graduates and to reflect on their intellectual and personal development in Tier 3 experiences.

Writing and Diversity Requirements

All majors will include a required course in which writing within the discipline will be taught. A university-wide assessment process will be used to assess this requirement. All writing courses will be approved by the University Core Curriculum Subcommittee. All BGS degree programs must include at least one writing course in one of the minor or major areas of emphasis.

All majors will include diversity topics in at least one course required of each student enrolled in the major. Diversity is broadly defined to include respect for human liberty, international awareness, and diversity among peoples and cultures to name only a few. All departments will be required to designate at least one course in which these topics are covered and report that information to the University Core Curriculum Subcommittee.

Operating Assumptions for UCC

The following operating assumptions provide guidance in the development of UCC courses.

1. In a given domain, a Tier 1 course must be taken before a Tier 2 course may be taken. The pedagogy of Experience to Action makes such a requirement necessary.
2. UCC Courses may have pre-requisites.
3. Courses approved for a tier may include transformational goals beyond those specified for that tier.
4. The units responsible for Foundation courses are the following:
 - a. Written Communication—Department of English
 - b. Oral Communication—Department of Communication Studies
 - c. Mathematics—Department of Mathematical Sciences
 - d. History—Department of History
 - e. Physical Wellness—CAST
 - f. Personal Finance—MCOB, CAST, CSH
5. To conform to their unique expectations, modifications or exceptions may be needed for students in BGS degree programs.
6. It is assumed that the UCC-Subcommittee will be flexible with departments in approving a variety of experiences for Tier 3.
7. A student may count up to six credit hours from the department housing his/her major towards the Foundation, Tier 1, and Tier 2 courses, as long as the courses in the major have been approved as meeting core transformation goals. For example, English majors may count up to six hours of courses with the ENG prefix, philosophy majors courses with the PHIL prefix, etc. Should the majors include other prefixed courses they would not fall under this limitation. Tier 3 and the Writing requirement courses are **NOT** included within this limitation.
8. The Core Curriculum will include multiple measures of assessment. The assessment process will be outcomes based and used for program improvement.
9. Any Foundation, Tier 1, or Tier 2 Core course will be available for credit by examination.