



GUIDE TO THE
KU CORE

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF
KANSAS





Introduction

Nothing is more important at the University of Kansas, the state's flagship institution, than providing a world-class education and preparing our undergraduate students for successful lives and prosperous careers.

The KU Core, a comprehensive curriculum for all KU undergraduate students, meets this mandate.

This guide provides detailed information on the major aspects of the KU Core and is your resource when you visit **kucore.ku.edu**.

As we continue to work toward our vision of being recognized as a top-tier public international research university, the KU Core will be at the center of our transformation.



////// The KU Core

In fall 2013, the KU Core became the universitywide curriculum that all incoming undergraduate students complete as part of their degree requirements.

The KU Core spans our undergraduate experience. It comprises three general education goals and three advanced education goals.

The *Guide to the KU Core* outlines how students will achieve these six goals, details learning outcomes associated with each goal, and describes the KU Core curriculum.

////// Fulfilling the KU Core

The KU Core is all about flexibility.

Each of the goals and outcomes of the KU Core can be met through a variety of courses and educational experiences.

Fulfilling the requirements of the KU Core curriculum entails successfully completing 12 units across the six education goals.

What is a unit?

A KU Core unit can be

- A single approved course (3-5 hours)
- An approved educational experience
- An approved combination of course work and experiences

What is an approved educational experience?

Educational experiences include activities such as participating in substantial study abroad, completing an undergraduate research project, or engaging in service learning.

Lists of approved experiences and related information can be found at kucore.ku.edu.

What is an approved sequence?

In some cases, a unit may be achieved by taking a series of courses that together address all required components of a learning outcome.

Such a series of courses may be required to complete a major or meet multiple KU Core goals. Also, course work and other educational experiences such as service learning may be combined to complete a unit.

Lists of approved sequences can be found at kucore.ku.edu.

GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS



CRITICAL THINKING AND
QUANTITATIVE LITERACY



COMMUNICATION



BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE

ADVANCED EDUCATION GOALS



CULTURE AND DIVERSITY



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
AND ETHICS



INTEGRATION AND
CREATIVITY



Progression

General education goals will be best met early in a student's undergraduate career.

Advanced education goals are most appropriately acquired using the foundation of knowledge that is gained from the general education goals and progression through the major. In particular, the sixth goal, Integration and Creativity, can be considered a capstone experience.

By completing the KU Core, the successful graduate will

- Acquire essential skills
- Build a broad background of knowledge
- Have a stronger appreciation for cultural and global diversity
- Cultivate ethical integrity
- Generate the capacity and opportunity to blend and create ideas

THE KU CORE

FRESHMAN		SOPHOMORE		JUNIOR		SENIOR	
FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
CRITICAL THINKING AND QUANTITATIVE LITERACY							
COMMUNICATION							
BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE							
		CULTURE AND DIVERSITY					
		SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS					
				INTEGRATION AND CREATIVITY			

//// Distribution of the 12 Units

 <p>CRITICAL THINKING AND QUANTITATIVE LITERACY</p>	<p>Requires two units, one meeting criteria associated with Learning Outcome 1 and one meeting criteria associated with Learning Outcome 2.</p>
 <p>COMMUNICATION</p>	<p>Requires three units, two meeting the criteria associated with Learning Outcome 1 and one meeting criteria associated with Learning Outcome 2.</p>
 <p>BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE</p>	<p>Requires three units, one each meeting the stated criteria for the arts and humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.</p>
 <p>CULTURE AND DIVERSITY</p>	<p>Requires two units that may be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unit meeting Learning Outcome 1 and a unit meeting Learning Outcome 2, or • A unit meeting Learning Outcome 1 and a significant study abroad experience.
 <p>SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICS</p>	<p>Requires one unit meeting either learning outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single course, or • A combination of courses, or • Course work partnered with community-service work that takes students outside the classroom.
 <p>INTEGRATION AND CREATIVITY</p>	<p>Requires one unit meeting either learning outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single course, or • An approved educational experience, or • An approved integration of courses and/or experiences.

The University Core Curriculum Committee

The University Core Curriculum Committee (UCCC) sets guidelines and has final approval of the elements included in the KU Core.

The committee includes one voting representative from each of the five divisions of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and one from each of the professional schools with undergraduate programs. Three students serve one-year terms as voting members on policy matters.

Voting members of the committee are tenured or tenure-track faculty serving three-year renewable terms.

Three additional members include one representative each from the libraries, undergraduate studies, and undergraduate programs at KUMC who serve as ex officio, nonvoting members.

////// Nominate a course for the KU Core

Faculty may submit a course for the KU Core by entering a proposal in the Course Inventory Management system. The academic unit's curriculum committee reviews and nominates the proposal for consideration by the UCCC. Courses that are approved become part of the KU Core. Courses not approved are sent back to the department with comments for revisions and resubmission or withdrawal.

For more information about how to nominate a course for the KU Core, go to kucore.ku.edu/nominations

////// KU Core review

The UCCC reviews and recertifies all KU Core courses on a 6-year cycle, passing through different KU Core goals and learning outcomes each year.

The KU Core Course Review consists of two parts:

- Part 1: Recertification is a self-report by the department or program offering the course, certifying that the course complies with the required criteria of the KU Core goal and learning outcome for which it has been approved.
- Part 2: Assessment is a self-report by the department or program offering the course, measuring student achievement of the learning outcome.

Departments submit these reports in mid-September of the academic year the course is due for review.

For more information about how to submit a report for recertification, go to kucore.ku.edu

////// Approved educational experiences

Each educational experience that meets KU Core learning outcomes has clearly articulated requirements. For the most current list of approved educational experiences, go to kucore.ku.edu

////// Student petitions

Under exceptional circumstances, a student may petition the UCCC for a substitution to the KU Core. Lack of knowledge of KU Core requirements, either on the part of the student or through misadvisement, is not grounds for a petition to be considered.

For more information on how to file a petition, go to kucore.ku.edu/student-petitions

Build core skills of critical thinking and quantitative literacy



- Gather and evaluate information, analyze numerical data, raise relevant questions, build sound arguments, generate and test hypotheses
- Weigh alternative evidence, compare and interpret texts
- Analyze numerical data and apply mathematical principles
- Become rigorous, versatile, and agile thinkers

Developing the capacity for critical and quantitative reasoning helps students gather and evaluate information, raise relevant questions, build sound arguments, weigh alternative evidence and reasoning, generate and test hypotheses, compare and interpret texts, and become rigorous, versatile, and agile thinkers. With the ability to make informed choices, the experience of applying standards of evidence and principles of logic, and the confidence to question assumptions (their own and those of others), students will be better prepared to understand diverse perspectives, adapt to challenging situations, and perform effectively in society.

This goal requires two units.

One unit meeting Learning Outcome 1 and one unit meeting Learning Outcome 2

Learning Outcome 1: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to analyze and evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence, arguments, and forms of expression; select and apply appropriate interpretive tools.*

Students can meet this learning outcome through course work, through an approved educational experience, or by completing an independent research project.

Courses or educational experiences that meet this outcome must achieve all of the following:

1. Focus substantially on critical thinking as stated in the learning outcome.
2. Include assignments, projects, and/or tests that require students to
 - a. Form judgments about the assumptions or claims presented.
 - b. Analyze and synthesize information.
 - c. Make evidence-based arguments to support conclusions.

3. Evaluate student performance in the tasks above, and use this evaluation for a supermajority (at least 60%) of the final course grade.

Satisfying this outcome through a workplace or research experience must meet the following criteria:

1. Enroll in a special topics or undergraduate research course (either for credit or not).
2. Submit a report documenting how the experience meets the first two criteria above. The report must be submitted within a semester of project completion and must be accompanied by a letter of support from the student's faculty or professional mentor.

Learning Outcome 2: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to define a problem, analyze numerical information, apply mathematical principles, and integrate quantitative methods into problem solving.*

Students can meet this learning outcome through course-based instruction.

Courses that meet this outcome must achieve all of the following:

1. Focus on solving problems using functions and numerical techniques.
2. Require students to apply mathematical or statistical principles to organize or process numerical information.
3. Require students to use specific quantitative methods to solve problems and choose appropriate methods for given problems.
4. Evaluate student performance in the tasks above and use this evaluation for a supermajority (at least 60%) of the final course grade.

Strengthen written and oral communication



- Generate, explore, organize, and convey ideas
- Engage diverse audiences in writing and orally using language, media, and presentation skills
- Present thoughts and opinions clearly, confidently, and appropriately

Communicating with others, both in writing and orally, lies at the heart of personal and professional growth and success. The ability to engage with diverse audiences and ideas in writing and speaking supports personal relationships, educational development, professional advancement, and civic engagement. Using language flexibly and confidently supports critical and integrative thinking by allowing students to generate and examine fully their ideas and engage with multiple perspectives.

This goal requires three units.

Two units meeting Learning Outcome 1 and one unit meeting Learning Outcome 2

Learning Outcome 1: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to generate, explore, organize, and convey ideas in writing, using language and other media (for example, digital texts, images, and graphs) to present those ideas clearly, confidently, and in a manner appropriate to specific communication situations.*

This learning outcome requires six hours of university course work during the first two years, at least three hours of which require inquiry-based writing. Because it is important to develop written communication continually, three hours emphasizing writing in the major are highly recommended.

Each of the two three-credit hour courses that meet this outcome must achieve all of the following:

1. Include instruction that will require students to
 - a. Analyze how language and rhetorical choices vary across texts and different institutional, historical, and/or public contexts.
 - b. Demonstrate rhetorical flexibility within and beyond academic writing.
 - c. Revise and improve their own writing.

2. Require writing assignments (a minimum of 2,000 words/course) in English and include at least three different types of writing for different purposes, audiences, or media.
3. Deliver structured feedback to students that leads to revision and sequential improvement of their texts (for example, through the revision of successive drafts).
4. Evaluate the quality of students' written communication and use this evaluation for a supermajority (at least 60%) of the final course grade.

Learning Outcome 2: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to generate, develop, organize, and convey ideas orally, using language, presentation skills, and other media (for example, digital texts, images, and graphs) to present those ideas clearly, confidently, and in a manner appropriate to specific communication situations.*

This learning outcome requires three hours of university course work or university-approved equivalent (for example, active membership in the KU Debate Team or significant participation in organizations such as Toastmasters).

Courses or educational experiences that meet this outcome must achieve all of the following:

1. Include instruction that will require students to
 - a. Apply theory in the preparation and presentation of content in an organized manner and with a delivery appropriate to the audience.
 - b. Engage in active listening and participate in discussions in a respectful manner.
 - c. Analyze their own communicative behaviors in both interpersonal and public speaking.
2. Include assignments structured so that students complete at least three different types of speeches or presentations in English with different purposes or audiences.
3. Deliver structured feedback to students that leads to revision and substantial improvement.
4. Evaluate the quality of students' oral communication, and use this evaluation for a supermajority (at least 60%) of the final course grade.

GENERAL EDUCATION GOAL

Develop a background of knowledge across fundamental areas of study



- Acquire knowledge across a broad range of disciplines
- Gain a critical appreciation of the origin and depth of human achievement in diverse disciplines

Contemporary citizen-scholars comprehend and appreciate how knowledge across a broad range of disciplines is developed and have a fundamental understanding of the breadth of human achievement in diverse branches of knowledge and the arts. Participating in courses and experiences that establish such a breadth of knowledge takes students beyond the focus of their academic major(s), promoting the integration of ideas and knowledge and exposing them to possibilities for wider thought and action.

This goal requires three units.

One unit each meeting the learning outcome from

- The arts and humanities
- The natural sciences
- The social sciences

Learning Outcome: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to demonstrate basic competence in the principles, theories, and analytic methods used in each of the following: arts and humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences.*

Courses or educational experiences approved as meeting this outcome must achieve the following, as relevant to the particular field of study:

1. Include a curriculum for the course or experience that will move students from their current knowledge to a deeper understanding of specific concepts. Assignments must allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts.
2. Include learning activities that synthesize the development over time of the principles, theories, and analytical methods being taught. Assignments must allow students to demonstrate their functional understanding of the development of these principles, theories, and analytical methods.
3. Include learning activities designed to integrate the analysis of contemporary issues with principles, theories, and analytical methods. Assignments or activities must allow students to demonstrate their capability to analyze contemporary issues based on the principles, theories, and analytical methods in the academic area.



Respect human diversity and expand cultural understanding and global awareness



- Analyze and understand the world beyond immediate experience and culture
- Show consideration for diversity and reexamine lives in the global context

Participating in 21st century society means acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world beyond our immediate experience and culture, showing consideration and enhanced understanding for human and cultural diversity, and reexamining our own lives in a global context. Students will learn to analyze regional and international issues and perspectives, enabling them to engage with the languages, cultures, customs, beliefs, and/or behaviors from the world's various communities.

This goal requires two units that may be

- A unit meeting Learning Outcome 1 and a unit meeting Learning Outcome 2, or
- A two-course non-English language sequence that includes culture content, or a one-semester non-English language course and a significant study abroad experience, or
- An approved course or educational experience meeting the criteria for one of the two learning outcomes and a significant study abroad experience.

Learning Outcome 1: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to investigate the diversity of human experience within the United States, considering, for example, age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and social class, and appreciate the contributions of different social groups.*

Courses and educational experiences approved as meeting this outcome must achieve the following:

1. Devote a majority of content to ensuring student understanding of basic human diversity within the United States, such as biological, cultural, historical, linguistic, social, economic, sexual, and ideological diversity.

2. Generate discussion among students, leading to examination of students' own value assumptions in the context of various value systems within the United States.
3. Integrate other-cultural readings and academic research on cultural competency to define and analyze issues and other-cultural key words and concepts, and practices within the United States.
4. Evaluate student work that documents and measures their grasp of diverse cultures and value systems within the United States through reflective written or oral analysis.

Learning Outcome 2: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to examine a variety of perspectives in the global community, distinguish their own cultural patterns, and respond flexibly to multiple worldviews.*

Courses and educational experiences approved as meeting this outcome must achieve the following:

1. Devote a majority of content to other-cultural material in order to raise student awareness of, engagement with, and analysis of various elements of other-cultural understanding of communities outside the United States.
2. Develop the ability of students to discuss, debate, and analyze non-U.S. cultures in relation to the student's own value assumptions.
3. Sensitize students to various cultural beliefs, behaviors, and practices through other-cultural readings and academic research on cultural competency so that students may be better prepared to negotiate cross-cultural situations.
4. Evaluate student work that documents and measures their grasp of global cultures and value systems through reflective written or oral analysis.

Practice social responsibility and demonstrate ethical behavior



- Gain a strong sense of intellectual integrity and moral behavior
- Recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, have enhanced social and civic responsibility, and gain awareness for the physical and social environment

To lead productive and meaningful lives, students should develop within and across disciplines a strong sense of intellectual integrity and moral behavior, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, enhance social and civic responsibility, and gain an awareness of and sensitivity for their physical and social environment.

This goal requires one unit from either learning outcome that may be

- A single course, or
- A combination of courses, or
- Course work partnered with community-service work that takes students outside the classroom.

Learning Outcome 1: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to develop and apply a combination of knowledge and skills to demonstrate an understanding of social responsibility and ethical behavior.*

Students can meet this outcome through a single course or a combination of courses that must achieve all of the following:

1. Present and apply distinct and competing ethics theories, each of which articulates at least one principle for ethical decision-making. The combination of theories and principles should address the concept of social responsibility, including responsibility to the physical environment.
2. Include the presentation and application of ethical decision-making processes.
3. Include presentation and application, as appropriate, of particular ethics codes.
4. Include the application of principles, decision-making processes, and, as appropriate, ethics codes to specific ethical dilemmas (such as case studies) in which important values conflict.

An approved combination of courses must substantially address these four criteria. Within this combination of courses, each criterion must be a significant part of at least one course. A combination of such courses might be most easily achieved and coordinated within a particular major.

Learning Outcome 2: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to act on this understanding of social responsibility and ethical behavior to others in their local, national, or global community, and contribute positively via leadership, collaboration, or other direct action.*

Students can meet this learning outcome through an educational experience that meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. Complete an Alternative Break experience of a minimum of one-week duration and enroll for credit in the Alternative Break course.
 - a. The Alternative Break one-credit course must be reviewed to ensure the following:
 - i. The course must include significant content on the ethics of volunteerism/service.
 - ii. The course must require a reflection paper or similar assignment that includes the concepts of social responsibility and ethical decision-making.
2. Complete a Certificate for Service Learning.
 - a. The Center for Service Learning will administer this program and determine the criteria for earning the certificate. This designation appears on a student's transcript. The required reflection paper or similar assignment must include (1) content on the ethics of volunteerism/service, and (2) concepts of social responsibility and ethical decision-making.
3. Complete a departmental or school internship or practicum that meets a community need and addresses the following criteria:
 - a. The internship/practicum must require evidence that the student understands and has practiced ethical behavior and ethical decision-making.
 - b. The internship/practicum must require evidence that the student made a positive contribution to the population served.

Gain the ability to integrate knowledge and think creatively



- Make new discoveries, generate original ideas, and find new ways of perceiving and expressing by integrating an array of courses and experiences
- A culminating experience

A **successful education** promotes thinking within or across disciplines to generate original ideas, to be creative, and to find new ways of perception and expression. With such capabilities, students can make new discoveries that can effect major change and lead to innovation. Inherent in this goal is establishing integration across multiple courses and/or experiences as well as using an array of courses and experiences as the foundation for creative thinking. Thus, it is likely that this goal and these learning outcomes will be satisfied later in a student's career, after a solid foundation has been established.

This goal requires one unit completed at the junior or senior level and meeting either learning outcome.

Examples of compliance include approved certificate programs, capstone courses or projects, a combination of courses, and sets of courses/experiences that coordinate to produce an integrated learning experience.

Students can also meet this goal by completing a double major, a major and co-major, or a major and minor. In this option, students must develop a product to reflect integration and creative thinking across their majors, major/co-majors, or major/minors. These projects will be evaluated and certified by the student's faculty adviser on that product.

Learning Outcome 1: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to analyze and combine information from different areas within or across disciplines to approach and explain existing questions and problems from new perspectives, to pose new questions, and to generate new ideas.*

Learning Outcome 2: *Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to think, react, and work in imaginative ways that produce innovative expressions and original perspectives.*

Courses, sets of courses, programs, educational experiences, and combinations of courses/experiences that meet these outcomes must satisfy the following:

1. Lead to integration of knowledge within or across disciplines.
2. Include instruction or a project that explicitly involves integration of knowledge within or across disciplines.
3. Require a creative product (for example, a performance, paper, or presentation).
4. Be evaluated for integration and/or creative thinking.
5. Be completed at the junior or senior level.







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