

Carolina Core Distribution Requirements Proposal **Approved by Faculty Senate December 2010**

The new *Carolina Core* is a revised general education curriculum developed by USC faculty, staff, and students over the last four years. This has been in response to Provost Mark Becker's call for a revision (2005) in order to address the question, "What do our students need to know to thrive as well-educated citizens in the twenty-first century?" A task force of more than 100 faculty proposed new learning goals for a revised general education curriculum (2007) and President Andrew Sorensen then established a General Education Committee to continue work on the revision (2008). The Committee refined the learning outcomes and articulated a rationale, values, and guiding principles for the proposed *Carolina Core*; this was approved by Faculty Senate (2009). Currently the *Carolina Core* Committee is developing recommendations for distribution requirements (described below) as well as policies and procedures for *Carolina Core* course approvals.

The new *Carolina Core* has seven core components and nine learning outcomes. The current general education requirement mandates 31 hours plus foreign language and the proposed *Carolina Core* can be met in as little as 31 hours plus foreign language. The attached table shows the proposed distribution requirements and options for meeting these learning outcomes at the foundational level of achievement.

At the top of the chart the "Lower Division Core Courses" meet the first group of learning outcomes. This set of courses is similar to the existing general education requirements. Note however that the new Communication outcome includes a speech component not previously required of our students. This learning outcome is identified in the second grouping, "II. Lower Division Stand-alone or Overlay-Eligible Courses," as are information literacy and a values requirement.

The option of overlay courses is a new feature of the *Carolina Core*. Three of the learning outcomes, Speech (S), Information Literacy (IL), and Values, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (VESR), can be met through stand-alone or individual courses (as can be the first 6 learning outcomes) or they may be met through overlay courses. An overlay course meets one other foundational learning outcome as well as S, IL, or VESR. An overlay course could combine two learning outcomes from S, IL, or VESR (e.g., S and VESR). The overlay course must meet the learning outcomes for both *Carolina Core* requirements (as described in the Contextual Statements for each Core component that have been posted on the Carolina Core web site). The overlay course would have a distinctive course number since all sections of a course must cover the same learning outcomes. By judicious selection of up to two appropriate overlay courses, the *Carolina Core* distribution requirements could be met with as few as 31 credit hours (not including the upper division integrative course in the major) plus foreign language. (Note that SACS requires at least 30 hours of general education coursework.) We anticipate that courses approved to meet two learning outcomes would be especially popular with students, and so the Committee will encourage development of overlay courses. The Committee also anticipates a vigorous program of education and outreach to enable faculty and staff academic advisors to advise students most effectively.

The third component of the *Carolina Core* is the integrative course, which allows selected *Carolina Core* learning outcomes to be threaded into the major program area in an upper division course (of 3 or more hours). Although the integrative course is an addition in the new *Carolina Core* no additional hours are required because this requirement is met through an already required course in the major.¹ Most programs – even those currently without capstone courses – likely already offer a course or courses that thread *Carolina Core* learning outcomes through the curriculum. Students with more than one major would take an integrative course in each program major.

Note that all *Carolina Core* courses must be reviewed and approved by the *Carolina Core* Committee or a designated subcommittee prior to approval by the Faculty Senate Committee on Curricula and Courses. Like all academic programs, the *Carolina Core* program will be regularly assessed and necessary changes made as indicated by the assessment data in order to enhance student learning. Regular course review will be conducted on a 3 or 5 year cycle.

¹ Since the integrative course in the *Carolina Core* is "major-specific" and usually taken in the junior or senior year, the integrative course is appropriately not counted as part of the general education hours as defined in SACS Core Requirement 2.7.3.

Notes

1. The Committee expects that the *Carolina Core* curriculum can be implemented for Fall 2012. With sufficient experience and assessment data, the distribution requirements, “overlay” courses, and other components of the *Carolina Core* can be revised over time as appropriate.
2. Overlay courses must be approved as a *Carolina Core* course at the foundational level, to assure that the *Core* remains truly common across all degree programs.
3. *Carolina Core* courses and the learning outcomes must be common for USC Columbia, Lancaster, Union, Salkehatchie, and Sumter. Consequently, it is essential that communication about course proposals be clear and timely across campuses.
4. The integrative course must be taken within the USC system; transfer courses will not be accepted for this requirement in the major program area. Otherwise transfer students should not be adversely impacted by the change to the new curriculum.
5. The new curriculum will not affect Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit transfer, as the law requires that USC accept these courses.
6. By 2014 the new *Core* will have been in operation for two years; thus the *Carolina Core* Committee will be in a position to consider increasing the number of possible overlay courses from 2 to 3, which would allow the credit hours for the Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding (AIU) *Core* Component to increase from 3 to 6 with 3 hours specifically designated for the fine arts (without increasing the minimum *core* upward from 31 hours). At the present time (November 2010) no overlay courses exist; however, it is expected that by 2014 there will be sufficient overlay courses from which students may choose, making the three overlay rule possible. In the meantime, the Committee encourages colleges and schools to consider adding a fine arts requirement in their college *core* if they do not already have one because this will make the transition easier when the time comes.

Reference Documents:

Current General Education requirements:

http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=1687#General_Education_Requirements

Comparison of Current and Proposed General Education/*Carolina Core* Requirements:

<http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/curriculumcomparison.shtml>

Carolina Core Distribution Requirements
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Carolina Core Components	Carolina Core Learning Outcomes (approved by Faculty Senate April 1, 2009, and amended April 28, 2009)	Proposed Credit Hours in Carolina Core
I. Lower Division: Core Courses	Learning Outcomes to be met at foundational level of mastery	28-34 hours
Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding	Create or interpret literary, visual or performing arts	3
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
Effective, Engaged, and Persuasive Communication: Writing	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
Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding	Use the principles of the social sciences to explore diverse cultural identities and to analyze political and environmental issues.	3
Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding	Use the principles of historical thinking to assess the relationships between modern societies and their historical roots.	3
Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding	Communicate effectively in more than one language.	0-6 (depending on placement test)
Scientific Literacy	Apply the principles and language of the natural sciences and associated technologies to historical and contemporary issues.	7
II. Lower Division: Stand-alone or Overlay-Eligible Courses ■	Up to two of these three core requirements may be met in overlay courses.	3-9 hours (depending whether these 3 outcomes are met with stand-alone or up to two overlay courses)
Effective, Engaged, and Persuasive Communication: Speech (S) ■	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
Information Literacy (IL) ■	Collect, manage and evaluate information using technology, and communicate findings.	0-3 [■]
Values, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (VESR) ■	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 [■]
III. Upper Division: Integrative Course in the Major	Required upper division course in the major program of study; includes learning outcomes from the <i>Carolina Core</i> chosen by the program area.	N/A
TOTAL Hours in Carolina Core		31 – 43 hours (depending on language placement tests and use of at most two overlay courses)