

GENERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: Erie

Program Description

In this interdisciplinary major students may pursue broad interests and develop their own specialized programs when their interests are not congruent with established programs. The B.A. degree in General Arts and Sciences can be a terminal degree, or students can prepare for graduate school, professional school, or employment in business, government, or industry.

The Liberal Studies option provides the most flexible undergraduate degree program in the University except for the Bachelor of Philosophy degree. Students can use the Liberal Studies option to structure a program of study around their individual interests and career plans and can develop background in areas where Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, does not currently offer majors.

For further information and a complete list of courses, contact the head of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences.

What is General Arts and Sciences?

General Arts and Sciences is a liberal arts degree built upon study of the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, and liberal studies. It is a choose-your-own-adventure academic program with flexibility that allows students to design a major around their personal interests and career goals.

You Might Like This Program If...

- Your career goals are not met by an existing Penn State Behrend degree program.
- You want a flexible major that allows you to explore varied interests.
- You are a transfer or adult student who wants to maximize your previously earned college credits.
- You are a self-directed learner.

Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in General Arts and Sciences, a minimum of 124 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	19
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	36

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Per Senate Policy 83.80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of coursework in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned.

Requirements for the Major

Each student must earn at least a grade of C in each 300- and 400-level course in the major field.

To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn a grade of C or better in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Common Requirements for the Major (All Options)

Code	Title	Credits
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
Select 3 credits in each of the areas of arts, humanities, science/mathematics, and the social and behavioral sciences		12
Requirements for the Option		
Select an option		24

Requirements for the Option Humanities Option (24 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
Select 24 credits (at least 15 credits at the 400 level) in humanities from those listed under humanities in the Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirement list, with at least 3 credits in each of three areas.		24

Liberal Studies Option (24 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
In this option, the student shall submit a proposal to the adviser listing his/her choice of subjects beyond those required in the Supporting Courses and Related Areas category. In consultation with the adviser and the General Arts and Sciences program head, the student may choose from any B.A. course offering of the University. Option must be approved no later than the end of the sixth semester. (15 credits must be at the 400 level)		24

Science/Mathematics Option (24 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
Select 24 credits (at least 15 credits at the 400 level) in science/mathematics from those listed under science/mathematics in the Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements list, with at least 3 credits in each of three areas.		24

Social and Behavioral Sciences Option (24 credits)

Code	Title	Credits
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
Select 24 credits (at least 15 at the 400 level) in the social and behavioral sciences from those listed in the Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements list, with at least 3 credits in each of three areas.		24

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements**First Year Engagement**

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3

credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

Program Learning Objectives

- **Capstone Project:** Students should emerge with the abilities to read with comprehension, write with clarity and correctness, listen actively to the opinions and ideas of others, articulate clearly their own ideas

and opinions, evaluate evidence and logic, make moral judgments and ethical decisions, and think logically and critically.

- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Students should acquire a basic understanding of at least one non-western culture.
- **Writing Levels:** Students should also be able to use, evaluate, and integrate published scholarship into their own papers, reports, and essays.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

Erie

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Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2023-24 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition (Note: the archive only contains suggested academic plans beginning with the 2018-19 edition of the Undergraduate Bulletin).

General Arts and Sciences, B.A. at Erie Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
First-Year Seminar	1 General Education	3
ENGL 15 or 30H ^{††}	3 General Education	3
General Education	3 General Education	3
General Education	3 General Education	3
General Education	1.5 World Language (Level Two)	4

World Language (Level One)	4	
	15.5	16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
CAS 100 ^{††}	3 ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D ^{*††}	3
General Education	3 Other Cultures	3
General Education	3 General Education	3
General Education	3 General Education	3
World Language (Level Three)	4 General Education	3
	General Education	1.5
	16	16.5

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
BA Knowledge Domain	3 BA Knowledge Domain	3
BA Knowledge Domain	3 Option Requirement any level	3
General Education	3 Option Requirement 400-level	3
General Education	3 Elective	3
Optional Requirement any level	3 Elective	3
	15	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Option Requirement any level	3 Option Requirement 400-level [*]	3
Option Requirement 400-level [*]	3 Option Requirement 400-level [*]	3
Option Requirement 400-level [*]	3 General Education	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Writing Across the Curriculum "W Course"	3 Elective	3
	15	15

Total Credits 124

- * Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
- ‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
- # Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
- † Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures/>).

- 1 Arts, Humanities, or Social and Behavioral Science.
- 2 Student need 6 credits in GA, 6 credits in GH, and 6 credits in GS
- 3 Quantification or Natural Science
- 4 Students need 6 credits in GQ, and 9 credits in GN, one Natural Science (GN) course must include a laboratory component.
- 5 Foreign Language (Level One)
- 6 This Requirement is governed by a placement policy dictated by the number of levels of foreign language completed prior to admission to college.
- 7 BA Knowledge Domains
- 8 Students are permitted to complete all 9 credits in any one of six domains or a combination thereof, but courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. The six domains are Arts (GA), Humanities (GH), Social & Behavioral Sciences (GS), Natural Sciences (GN), Quantification (GQ), and Foreign Language if the coursework is in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit proficiency of the first foreign language.
- 9 Option Requirement any level.
- 10 GAS majors have four options to choose from: Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Sciences/Mathematics; Liberal Studies, allowing them to select 24 credits from a variety of courses to meet upper division requirements. This individual program must be approved by the faculty adviser to assure that each student's plans reflect serious thought and a coherent set of goal. See check sheet for more information about options.
- 11 Writing Across the Curriculum "W Course"
- 12 If not taken as a 400 level "W Course".

Additional Notes

GWS, GHW, GQ, GN, GA, GH, and GS are codes used to identify General Education requirements.

US, IL, and US;IL are codes used to designate courses that satisfy University United States/International Cultures requirements.

Both US (United States Cultures) and IL (International Cultures) must be completed within the degree requirements.

Program Notes: Students can double count US & IL requirements for general education courses but not for the Other Cultures requirement.

Academic Advising Notes: The course series listed about is only one of many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The number of electives required varies per students. Please be sure to consult with an adviser about your intended plan.

Career Paths

General Arts and Sciences graduates follow diverse career paths, paths as varied as the majors they designed. Some have moved directly into the professional world, while others have pursued graduate education. Penn State Behrend has a comprehensive support system to help you identify and achieve your goals for college and beyond. Meet with your academic adviser often and take advantage of the services offered by the Academic and Career Planning Center beginning in your first semester.

Careers

General Arts and Sciences graduates are self-starters who can show employers that they not only possess the skill sets of other liberal arts students, such as critical reading and communication, but also demonstrate a record of taking the initiative to design their own curriculum. Because of the major's flexibility, General Arts and Sciences graduates can work with potential employers to tailor their coursework to the employers' changing needs. This gives them a competitive advantage when applying for jobs.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE GENERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES PROGRAM (<https://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/academic-programs/general-arts-sciences/>)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

A B.A. in General Arts and Sciences is a broad degree, making it the perfect starting point for most post-baccalaureate programs. Your options are limited only by your imagination!

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://behrend.psu.edu/school-of-humanities-social-sciences/academic-programs/general-arts-sciences/>)

Contact

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