

Interdisciplinarity and Self-Assessment

This model for articulating and incorporating general education requirements into an undergraduate curriculum focuses on integrating interdisciplinary study and ongoing self-assessment into the student's undergraduate experience. It emphasizes outcomes and competencies, rather than inputs and divisions. The model features four main graduation requirements:

Graduation Requirements

1. **A major**

Students will choose one major, normally 5-7 units (or 10-12 courses).

Rationale: to develop in-depth knowledge and mastery of a methodology in one discipline or field. If the student chooses an interdisciplinary major such as International Studies, that student must then complete a minor in a discipline (e.g., English, Economics, or Biology), instead of an interdisciplinary concentration.

Students will complete a senior exercise in their major.

2. **An interdisciplinary concentration or a disciplinary minor**

Students who major in a discipline will choose one interdisciplinary concentration or cluster of interdisciplinary courses (chosen from a list of existing clusters or created by the student as a synoptic cluster), normally 2.5-4 units (5-8 courses).

Students who pursue an interdisciplinary major such as International Studies must complete a minor in a discipline.

Rationale: to make connections among bodies of knowledge and methodologies, and foster the ability to integrate courses taken across the curriculum. Whenever possible, students will integrate their interdisciplinary concentration or minor with their major in producing the senior exercise, as modeled by the existing joint majors.

- ❖ A joint major, such as in Asian Studies and History, fulfills the above requirements.
- ❖ Students must complete a senior exercise in their major.
- ❖ Students may petition the relevant departments or programs if they desire to complete a senior exercise that combines work done in the major and the concentration or minor, as modeled by the joint major.
- ❖ Students who desire to pursue two majors must petition and explain the rationale for the choice.

3. **A first-year seminar**

Taken in fall or spring of the first year, one course, in any department.

Rationale: to introduce students to intensive critical reading, writing and oral expression in college-level work.

4. **Portfolio** (see below for technical and evaluation mechanisms)

Every student will compile an online portfolio, which will be reviewed at the end of the sophomore year (by the first-year advisor) and senior year (by the major advisor and at least one other faculty member). Students must document completion of all required components of the portfolio in order to graduate.

The student owns the online portfolio and will take it with him or her after graduation. The online portfolio will evolve as a repository of the student's undergraduate work, and serve to showcase particular accomplishments that a student will be able to present to prospective graduate schools, future employers, and others. Self-assessment and competent faculty evaluation will be integrated into the portfolio as it develops over the student's four years at Kenyon.

Portfolio components include abilities and areas of knowledge designated as critical to an undergraduate education, and which the curriculum seeks to foster in students: the general education requirements.

In the portfolio, students will reflect on and demonstrate with concrete evidence how they have met and fulfilled (completed and mastered) the general education requirements through their course work, independent projects, co-curricular activities, and service or experiential learning work. The general education requirements, in conjunction with the major and interdisciplinary concentration or minor work and co-curricular elements of a student's program, constitute the categories of the portfolio (see below). Under each component, students will upload documentation (papers, projects, etc. in various media, accompanied by the faculty evaluation, comments, grade, etc.), provide reflective commentary, and seek faculty evaluation from the primary advisor and one other outside faculty member with relevant expertise (but who did not teach the class in which work done is being used to demonstrate a capability). The work that the student completes in the senior exercise will be incorporated into the portfolio in several ways, and may be used to demonstrate mastery in more than one of the following areas:

1. Written and oral expression (WO)

Normally demonstrated through documentation of output in the first-year seminar and an upper level writing intensive research or capstone seminar, involving written and oral presentation of original work resulting from individual and/or collaborative research or creative work.

2. Information literacy (IL)

Normally demonstrated through documentation of faculty-supervised work involving finding and evaluating information from a variety of

sources, in at least three courses and/or independent projects. Work done for the senior exercise in many departments can be used to demonstrate mastery of this area.

3. Quantitative and scientific reasoning (QSR)
Normally demonstrated through documentation of work completed in two (**three?**) courses (QR and SR),
Or, in one (**two?**) course (QR or SR) and an independent research project that makes substantial use of quantitative and/or scientific reasoning methods, supervised and/or evaluated by an expert faculty member.
4. Visual and spatial literacy (VSL)
Normally demonstrated through documentation of faculty-supervised work in a designated course (art history, art, **dance**, film, geology or geography, biology, physics, etc.),
Or through an independent research project that makes substantial use of visual and spatial data analysis, as supervised or evaluated by an expert faculty member.
5. Artistic creation and performance (ACP)
Normally demonstrated through documentation of faculty-supervised work in a relevant course (fiction writing, art, dance, music, drama, film, etc.)
Or through an independent research project that engages in substantial creative production, as supervised or evaluated by an expert faculty member.
6. Language and knowledge of other cultures (LOC)
Normally demonstrated through completion of point “a” below and documentation of either points “b” or “c” or both:
 - a. A placement score on the language proficiency exam equivalent to two semesters of college-level intensive language study at Kenyon or the completion of two semesters of intensive language study at Kenyon, with a grade of C or better;
 - b. One or more semesters of study abroad;
 - c. One or more courses in designated foreign area studies, anthropology, history, religious studies, English or MLL literature courses, sociology, etc.
7. Service or experiential learning (SEL)
(To be elaborated)
8. **Athletics or physical fitness**
(To be elaborated)

9. To be defined, as appropriate or desired, e.g., could link to the student's major department for further documentation of the student's work, including senior exercise.