

Yale University
Changes in the Undergraduate Course of Study and Graduation Requirements
Summary

The changes in the course of study and in graduation requirements since the early 1970's have been very limited. The following were the requirements for graduation in 1998-99:

Students must receive 36 course credits to graduate. A Freshman may take no more than four term courses in a single department, and no more than six term courses in a single distributional group. The student must take at least two term courses in group I and II and two term courses in group III and IV. To qualify for the major bachelor's degree, a student must receive credit for a total of at least 12 term courses drawn from outside the distributional group which includes the student's major. No more than six term courses in a single group may be employed to meet this requirement.

The following changes have occurred in the course of study and graduation requirements since the mid-1970's:

- In 1989-90, students must earn 12 course credits outside the distributional group which includes his or her major. At least three course credits must be earned in each of the other distributional groups by graduation. In group IV, two out of the three credits must be earned in the natural sciences.
- In 1983-84, students must demonstrate competence in a foreign language at the intermediate level before graduation, either by passing the appropriate class or by examination. In addition, any student who takes more than four course credits in language classes may offer as many as eight course credits in group I as credits counting toward the required twelve outside the distributional group, which includes the student's major.
- In 1979-80, entering freshmen must take two classes from each of the distributional groups by the end of their sophomore year.
- In 1976-77, freshmen taking a foreign language can take as many as seven group I classes per year, and freshmen taking a laboratory class can take as many seven group IV classes per year.

Note:

For purposes of distribution in Yale College, courses are classified into four groups according to the following general scheme:

Group I: language and literature, English and foreign, ancient or modern

Group II: architecture; art; classical civilization; film; history; history of art; history of science, history of medicine; humanities; music; philosophy; religious studies

Group III: anthropology; archaeology; economics; linguistics; political science; psychology; sociology

Group IV: astronomy; biology; chemistry; computer science; engineering; forestry and environmental studies; geology and geophysics; mathematics; molecular biophysics and biochemistry; physics; statistics.

Distributional Requirements published in the *Yale College Programs of Study, 1980-81* (Bulletin of Yale University, Series 76, Number 8, 30 July, 1980)

Distributional requirements for the freshman year and for the first two years. One of the chief objectives of these distributional requirements is to assure that in the first two years of their undergraduate education students elect courses from a variety of departments and in this way become exposed to different ideas and various ways of thinking. Many students come to Yale with advanced preparation in one or more fields. Early in their college careers, such qualified students ought to take advantage of any head start they may have in a subject to pursue it at a higher level than would otherwise be possible; a college course in a familiar subject at a more advanced level often discloses unfamiliar aspects of the subject. In addition, in disciplines like mathematics and languages, where the maintenance and improvement of skills greatly depend on continuity of application, students ought not lightly to consider interrupting the progress of their studies during their first years of college. During these years, nevertheless, they should also explore some subjects that they have never studied before. At the beginning of sophomore year students are expected to make at least a tentative choice of the department or program in which they will major; science majors must do so. In choosing freshman and sophomore courses, therefore, students should give attention to the prerequisites for any major in which they anticipate having a particular interest. But they should not close their minds to other possibilities. They should use the first year to explore, and then not hesitate to change their plans during the second year. Students who have selected courses wisely will have the groundwork to enter most majors.

1. Distributional Requirements for the Freshman Year.

Freshmen may take no more than four course credits in a single department, and no more than six course credits in a single Distributional Group (except that a student taking a course in a foreign language may take as many as seven course credits in Group I, and a student taking a laboratory course may take as many as seven course credits in Group IV). They must take at least two course credits in Group I or II and two course credits in Group III or IV.

2. Distribution Requirements for the First Two Years.

In meeting the Distributional Requirements for the bachelor's degree, the student must take at least two course credits in each of the four Distributional Groups by the end of the student's first four terms of enrollment.

3. Distributional Requirements for the Bachelor's Degree.

To qualify for the bachelor's degree, a student must earn at least twelve course credits drawn from outside the Distributional Group which includes the major. No more than six course credits in a single Group may be employed to meet this requirement. At least two course credits must be drawn from each one of the four groups.

For the purpose of distribution in Yale College, courses are classified into four Groups according to the following general scheme:

Group I: language and literature, English and foreign, ancient or modern.

Group II: architecture; art; classical civilization; history; history of art; history of science, history of medicine; music; philosophy; religious studies.

Group III: administrative sciences; anthropology; archeology; economics; geography; linguistics; political science; psychology; sociology.

Group IV: astronomy; biology; chemistry; computer science; engineering and applied science; geology and geophysics; mathematics; molecular biophysics and biochemistry; physics; statistics.

Distributional Requirements published in the *Yale College Programs of Study, 1999-2000* (Bulletin of Yale University, Series 95, Number 7, August 1, 1999)

Distributional requirements for the freshman year and for the first two years. One of the chief objectives of these distributional requirements is to assure that in the first two years of their undergraduate education students elect courses from a variety of departments and in this way become exposed to different ideas and various ways of thinking. Many students come to Yale with advanced preparation in one or more fields. Early in their college careers, such qualified students ought to take advantage of any head start they may have in a subject to pursue it at a higher level than would otherwise be possible; a college course in a familiar subject at a more advanced level often discloses unfamiliar aspects of the subject. In addition, in disciplines like mathematics and languages, where the maintenance and improvement of skills greatly depend on continuity of application, students ought not lightly to consider interrupting the progress of their studies during their first years of college. During these years, nevertheless, they should also explore some subjects that they have never studied before. At the beginning of sophomore year students are expected to make at least a tentative choice of the department or program in which they will major; science majors must do so. In choosing freshman and sophomore courses, therefore, students should give attention to the prerequisites for any major in which they anticipate having a particular interest. But they should not close their minds to other possibilities. They should use the first year to explore, and then not hesitate to change their plans during the second year. Students who have selected courses wisely will have the groundwork to enter most majors.

For these reasons, there are two sets of distributional requirements that students are expected to fulfill before the end of their sophomore year: one for the freshman year and one for the first two years.

1. Distributional requirements for the freshman year:

Freshmen must enroll for at least two course credits in Group I or II and two course credits in Group III or IV. They may elect no more than four course credits in a single department, and no more than six course credits in a single distributional group (except that a student taking a course in a foreign language may elect as many as seven course credits in Group I, and a student taking a laboratory course may elect as many as seven course credits in Group IV).

2. Distributional requirement for the first two years:

In meeting the distributional requirements for the bachelor's degree, the student must enroll for at least two course credits in each of the four distributional groups by the end of the student's first four terms of enrollment. (A student who lists the course on the course schedule and remains in it past midterm is considered to be enrolled in a course. See chapter III, section E, "Registration and Enrollment in Courses," and section F, "Withdrawal from Courses.")

Distributional requirements for the bachelor's degree. The distributional requirements for the bachelor's degree are intended to assure that by graduation all students are competent in a foreign language at the intermediate level and that their work, including their studies in their major programs, has been grounded in a sound acquaintance with a variety of fields of inquiry and approaches to knowledge. Yale does not require prescribed courses in specific subjects, but instead encourages undergraduates to design programs that best reflect their own intellectual interests, that open the maximum range of intellectual opportunities through which those interests can be expanded, and that direct their studies always to that most elusive of goals, a liberal education.

3. Distributional Requirements for the Bachelor's Degree:

To qualify for the bachelor's degree, a student must successfully complete at least twelve course credits drawn from outside the distributional group that includes the major. At least three course credits must be

earned in each one of the three distributional groups falling outside the major; in Group IV, at least two of these three course credits must be earned in the natural sciences. In addition, a student must fulfill the foreign language requirement by demonstrating competence in a foreign language at the intermediate level. Acceleration credits may not be employed to meet any of the distributional requirements for the bachelor's degree except for the foreign language requirement. For the sake of this requirement, "natural science" refers to Group IV courses (except mathematical, applied mathematical, and computational courses) in the following departments or programs: Applied Physics; Astronomy; Biomedical, Chemical, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering; Chemistry; Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; Engineering and Applied Science; Forestry and Environmental Studies; Geology and Geophysics; History of Science, History of Medicine; Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry; Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology; and Physics.

For the purpose of distribution in Yale College, courses are classified into four groups according to the following general scheme:*

(*Some courses may fall into another distributional group in addition to the one indicated in this classification. The group number of a course is the roman numeral in the data line of the course listed in chapter IV.)

Group I: language and literature, English and foreign, ancient or modern

Group II: architecture; art; classical civilization; film; history; history of art; history of science, history of medicine; humanities; music; philosophy; religious studies

Group III: anthropology; archaeology; economics; linguistics; political science; psychology; sociology

Group IV: astronomy; biology; chemistry; computer science; engineering; forestry and environmental studies; geology and geophysics; mathematics; molecular biophysics and biochemistry; physics; statistics.

Starting with those matriculating with the Class of 2001 and subsequent classes, a student may apply no more than one course credit earned on the Credit/D/Fail basis (see "Credit/D/Fail Option" in chapter III, section B) in any distributional group toward satisfaction of the distributional requirements for the bachelor's degree.

A student is required to demonstrate competence at the intermediate level in a foreign language either upon entrance or before graduation, preferably by the end of the junior year. This requirement may be met by presenting an appropriate Advanced Placement test score, or by passing an examination at Yale, or by passing intermediate courses in a foreign language at Yale. Languages currently offered at Yale in which a student may attain the required competence are: Arabic, Chinese, Czech, French, German, classical Greek, Hebrew, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Latin, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Yoruba, and Zulu. Information about appropriate Advanced Placement test scores, relevant courses, and the nature of the examinations in these languages is contained in chapter IV in the introductory statements of the departments offering courses in foreign languages.

Students who possess competence in a language other than those listed here (including American Sign Language), either because it is their native language, or because they learned it abroad or by study at another university, or by some other means, should consult the appropriate director of undergraduate studies or their residential college dean to arrange for an examination. Students who, for medical reasons, are not able to complete the language requirement may petition the Committee on Honors and Academic Standing for a waiver of the requirement. In granting such a waiver, the committee will normally require that a student complete six course credits in the study of a specific non-English-speaking culture. The committee may, in individual cases and on petition of the student's major program, partially or fully waive the requirement for sound and weighty academic reasons.

Source:

Yale College Programs of Study

Yale University Office of Institutional Research (12/6/00)
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