GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, EFFECTIVE FALL 2013

Students are responsible for compliance with the institutional graduation requirements stated in the Oberlin College Course Catalog in effect when they first matriculate at Oberlin, unless action by an appropriate faculty body specifically directs otherwise.

The Bachelor of Arts degree is conferred upon students who have successfully completed the following requirements:

1. **A major.**

2. **Three Full Winter Term projects.** See the Academic Policies section of the catalog.

3. **Minimum course requirement.** Students must successfully complete a minimum of 32 full courses or the equivalent, of which at least 30 must be full academic courses (two half academic courses\(^1\) will count as the equivalent of one full course). Up to 2 of the required 32 courses may be fulfilled by a combination of co-curricular\(^2\) credits. This minimum course requirement is subject to the requirements and limits below.

The following requirements must be satisfied with courses successfully completed at Oberlin College, with exceptions for transfer students (students who matriculate at another institution and then transfer to Oberlin College) as noted below.

a. **Curriculum Exploration requirement.** Students are required to complete two full academic courses or the equivalent in each of the three divisions of the college, Arts and Humanities, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, with courses in two different departments or programs within each division, as determined by the course prefix. For B.A. students, courses in the Conservatory will count towards the Arts and Humanities division. These courses must be completed at Oberlin College,\(^3\) with the exception of transfer students.

For B.A. students, one full academic course or the equivalent must be completed in each division by the end of four semesters. For double degree students, one full academic course or the equivalent must be completed in each division by the end of six semesters.

Students are also required to complete two additional full academic courses or the equivalent outside their maximal division (the division in which the greatest number of courses is completed). Courses that count towards fulfillment of this requirement must be completed at Oberlin College.

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\(^1\) Some labs, mini courses and modules, and some private readings will be half courses.
\(^2\) Co-curricular courses are courses such as Athletics, Creativity & Leadership, ExCo, Learning Assistance, and some others as appropriate.
\(^3\) For the purposes of this requirement, London Program courses will be considered courses completed at Oberlin College, since they are taught by Oberlin College faculty.
For transfer students, the following provisions apply: Transfer students may count towards this requirement up to one full academic course or the equivalent in each division, from the courses they transfer to Oberlin College. Transfer students must complete at least one full academic course or the equivalent in each division at Oberlin College. Collectively, the courses counted towards this requirement must be in two different departments or programs within each division, as determined by the course prefix.

Courses taken to meet the Cultural Diversity requirement, the Quantitative and Formal Reasoning requirement, and the Writing requirement may be counted simultaneously toward the Curriculum Exploration and Breadth requirement.

b. Cultural Diversity requirement. Students must complete at least three full academic courses with the CD (cultural diversity) designation. The three courses must be earned in at least two different departments or programs, as indicated by the course prefix. Students who study away in a full-semester, credit-bearing international program will receive CD credit equal to one course. Students who study away in a full-semester, credit-bearing U.S. program that directly addresses diversity may petition the Diversity Studies Committee to receive CD credit equal to one course.

Courses carrying the CD designation must fall into at least one of the following categories:

- courses whose primary focus of inquiry is on a disenfranchised group (or groups) in the United States
- courses whose primary focus of inquiry concerns national and/or transnational cultures outside the United States
- courses whose focus of inquiry includes substantial attention to methods of inquiry analyzing and interpreting cultural differences
- courses taught in a language other than English

These categories reflect the college’s longstanding commitments to foster a diverse community of scholars and to help students gain a rich humanistic education by learning about diverse cultures and the interactions among and between cultures in various disciplines across the curriculum.

c. Quantitative and Formal Reasoning (QFR) requirement. Students are required to complete two QFR courses, at least one of which must be completed by the end of the 4th semester (6th semester for Double Degree students). The QFR requirement can only be satisfied with courses completed at Oberlin College, with the exception that transfer students may petition to count one transferred course with a comparable focus on quantitative and formal reasoning.

In QFR courses, students spend a substantial amount of course time developing the ability to use tools, algorithms, or strategies to solve problems, make decisions, or evaluate evidence. Examples include: organizing and graphing data, performing and interpreting statistical tests, designing experiments and observational studies, and developing formal models (logical, computational, mathematical, or statistical). QFR skills also include formally critiquing and testing models and arguments and understanding the type of evidence needed to adequately evaluate them.

Key elements of QFR courses include:
• Developing the ability to use tools, algorithms, or strategies to solve problems, make decisions, or evaluate evidence. Examples include: organizing and graphing data, developing a computer model, performing statistical tests and inferring conclusions from them, designing an experimental or observational study or formal logical model, generating alternative hypotheses and deducing predictions from them.

• Developing the ability to formally evaluate models or sets of evidence. Examples include: debugging a program, testing the limits of a computational model, assessing the accuracy of a graph, recognizing and evaluating assumptions embedded in experimental design.

Criteria for QFR designation:

• Courses must explicitly include QFR content, as evidenced by emphasis of one or more QFR competencies.
• Students must demonstrate and use QFR reasoning, not just read about it or see it demonstrated for them (e.g., they have to do it, they can’t just listen to a lecture about it).
• At least 1/3 of students’ grade must be based on QFR skills. These grades can come from hands-on projects (e.g., doing problem sets, writing programs, designing studies, generating and evaluating data, formally critiquing empirical studies), as well as from exam questions that explicitly evaluate such skills (e.g., questions that require induction or deduction, questions that require critical evaluation of the available empirical support for a specific hypothesis or theory, etc.).

d. Writing requirement. Students are required to complete two Writing courses, either W-Intensive (W-Int) or W-Advanced (W-Adv) by the end of the second year of study if at all possible. A third writing course, W-Adv, is strongly recommended. These courses must be completed at Oberlin College, with the exception that transfer students may petition to count one transferred course with a comparable focus on writing.

Writing goals for all students:

By end of their Oberlin College career, students should be able to:
• communicate effectively in writing
• understand writing as a process
• engage in writing as a form of critical thinking
• demonstrate rhetorical flexibility by addressing various audiences and purposes in their writing
• demonstrate their awareness of the conventions and forms of particular Disciplines

Because early attention to the writing process can benefit students throughout their academic career, all students are strongly encouraged to complete the writing requirement by the end of their second year of study.

Criteria for W-Int courses

Writing-Intensive (W-Int) courses involve explicit instruction in writing, should be limited in size to allow such instruction, and require multiple writing assignments. These courses are designed to help students develop, compose, revise, organize and edit prose appropriate to the discipline or course.
• W-Int courses attend to the writing process. Faculty in W-Int courses should pay explicit attention to the writing process, including the elements of organization, composition, revision, and editing prose, each as is appropriate for the course or discipline. This does not mean that faculty will need to teach mechanics per se.
• Faculty in W-Int courses should provide mechanisms for students to get feedback on their work and to incorporate this feedback into their writing for the course. This feedback may be in the form of faculty response or peer-review, for example.
• W-Int courses must require multiple writing assignments that total 15 or more pages of writing. A single long paper at the end of the semester would not meet this criterion unless the paper was developed in stages and revisions over the course of the semester. Raw lab notes, unedited journal entries, or similar types of writing would also not meet this criterion.
• W-Int courses should generally be limited to 20 students where possible. Research indicates that this is the ideal limit. Faculty wishing to teach W-Int courses with enrollments above 25 students should plan to incorporate peer-review techniques and apply for Writing Associates.
• The Committee on Writing will review and approve all courses carrying the W-Int designation.

Criteria for W-Adv Courses

Writing-Advanced (W-Adv) courses are associated with the major and aim at helping students develop as writers within a discipline, employing the conventions and styles appropriate to that field and demonstrating the depth and engagement with disciplinary issues typical of knowledgeable practitioners. Students are encouraged to complete one course designated W-Adv in relation to their major field of study. In most cases, these courses will be upper-level or capstone courses geared to the major. Nonetheless, the department or program administering the major will determine which course(s) should have this designation, and which course(s) with this designation offered by related departments or programs would benefit their majors.
• W-Adv courses follow the same criteria as the W-Int courses, with particular emphasis on modes of writing and communication appropriate to advanced work in the discipline.
• W-Adv courses carry the expectation that a certain level of disciplinary knowledge is required to undertake the advanced writing in the field.
• The kinds of writing assigned to students are similar to the kinds of writing used by specialists in the field. This could include, for example, essays, extensive research papers, formal lab reports, and formal presentations.
• The Committee on Writing will review courses designated as W-Adv and work with individual faculty as well as departments and programs on the development of these courses, but will defer to departments, programs, or curricular committees for the designation of W-Adv Courses.

Additional limits:

Maximum Pre-Matriculation credit. Transfer credit earned before matriculation (AP, IB, pre-matriculation college credits) will be limited to 5 courses/20 credits for the BA. Advanced placement in courses on the basis of work completed prior to matriculation (AP and IB test scores, pre-matriculation college credit) will be determined according to individual department and program policies.
Maximum Post-Matriculation credit. Transfer credit earned after matriculation (excluding credit earned on an approved Academic Leave of Absence—Study Away Program and credit earned while Enrolled-Not-in-Residence) will be limited to 3 courses/12 credits for the BA.