

Catamount Core Curriculum  
General Education at the University of Vermont  
Policy Guidance, Processes and Procedures

Developed by Pablo Bose and John Sama on behalf of the Catamount Core Curriculum  
Committee  
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## **Overview**

The Catamount Core Curriculum is the University of Vermont's framework for a comprehensive general education requirement for all matriculating students at the institution. General education at UVM has traditionally taken the form of college-specific distribution requirements; beginning in 2006 the first campus-wide requirements were adopted beginning with the diversity (D1 = race and racism in the US and D2 = diversity of the human experience) requirements, followed by the adoption of foundational writing and information literacy (2011), sustainability (2013) and quantitative reasoning (2018) requirements. Following campus-wide consultations and engagement with faculty across a wide range of disciplines and colleges, the framework for a new set general requirements was developed to be applicable to all students. The goal is to provide all matriculating students with a common, consistent, coherent and comprehensive foundation upon which to build their particular disciplinary specialization(s). A framework for this Catamount Core Curriculum was approved in April 2020 by the Faculty Senate and the development and implementation of a suite of courses and processes began in earnest in Fall 2020.

An ad-hoc committee staffed by volunteer faculty and staff was constituted as a collaboration between Faculty Senate and the Provost's Office, chaired by the Provost's Faculty Fellow for the Catamount Core Pablo Bose and administered by John Sama. The Committee includes representation from across campus. It has functioned as an ad-hoc committee from 2020 through 2023 with a proposed transition to a standing committee of Faculty Senate by Fall 2024. In Fall 2021, following the first year of the committee's work, a series of revisions was submitted to and approved by Faculty Senate. The full curriculum is set to launch in Fall 2023.

The CCCC is broken up into subcommittees according to the various designation categories and the expertise of committee members. In general, subcommittees are comprised of three members with one taking the lead to report back their decisions on proposal reviews at CCCC meetings; however, all committee members may be asked to review any proposal submitted to the CCCC. The Catamount Core is meant to be accessible and understandable across all fields and disciplines; thus all committee members should be qualified to provide feedback and an evaluation of all components of the curriculum.

## **Requirements**

The Catamount Core is made up of 42 credits in courses distributed across three main areas: Liberal Arts (21 credits); Core Skills (9 credits); and Common Ground Values (12 credits). Students will be able to take courses that fulfill more than one category. However, they must take at least 40 unique credits of courses that have been approved to fulfill Catamount Core Curriculum requirements. This general education curriculum is designed to be flexible and adaptable to disciplinary requirements as well as student needs and interests. This means that there are no singular courses in each category that students must take; rather, they can choose from a range of different options. Courses can hold up to a maximum of 3 designations. This allows students to 'stack' certain requirements and better align with their disciplinary needs, especially in more tightly structured degrees, such as is often found in accredited or pre-professional programs.

## *Designation Categories*

### Liberal Arts

- Arts and Humanities (choose 2 courses)
  - AH1 – Arts
  - AH2 – Literature
  - AH3 – Humanities
- Social Sciences (choose 2 courses)
  - S1 – Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences (choose 2 courses)
  - N1 – Natural Sciences without lab
  - N2 – Natural Sciences with lab
- Mathematics (choose 1 course)
  - MA – Mathematics

### Core Skills (9 Credits)

- Quantitative and Data Literacy (choose 1 course)
  - QD – Quantitative and Data Literacy
- Communication 1 (choose 1 course)
  - WIL 1 – Foundational Writing and Information Literacy
- Communication 2 (choose 1 course)
  - WIL 2 – Writing and Information Literacy Tier 2
  - or
  - OC – Oral Communication

### Common Ground Values (12 Credits)

- Diversity 1 (choose at least 1 course)
  - D1 – Race and Racism in the US
- Diversity 2 (choose 1 course)
  - D2 – Diversity of the Human Experience
- Sustainability (choose 1 course)
  - SU – Sustainability
- Global Citizenship (choose 1 course)
  - GC1 – Global Systems and Problems
  - GC2 – Developing Global Citizens

Students must take courses across the Catamount Core Curriculum that fulfill the various requirements (13 total categories) and add up to at least 40 total credits. They can do this by

taking singular courses or by taking a mixture of courses that add up to that total including double- or triple-counting courses. The following provides three examples of such options:

<i>Student A</i>	<i>Student B</i>	<i>Student C</i>
AH1 – 3 credits	AH1 – 3 credits	AH2/D2 – 9 credits
AH2 – 3 credits	AH3 – 3 credits	AH3/SU – 3 credits
S1 – 6 credits	S1/D2/SU – 3 credits	S1 – 6 credits
N1 – 3 credits	N1 – 9 credits	N1/QD – 3 credits
N2 – 4 credits	N2/QD – 7 credits	N2 – 4 credits
MA – 3 credits	MA – 6 credits	WIL1 – 3 credits
QD – 3 credits	WIL1/GC1 – 3 credits	OC – 6 credits
WIL1 – 3 credits	D1 – 3 credits	D1 – 3 credits
WIL 2 – 3 credits	OC – 3 credits	GC2 – 3 credits
D1 – 3 credits		
D2 – 3 credits		
SU – 3 credits		
GC1 – 3 credits		
<b>Total = 43 credits</b>	<b>Total = 40 credits</b>	<b>Total = 40 credits</b>

### *Language for Syllabi*

Please see the appendix for the exact language we ask instructors to include on their syllabi regarding the ways that these courses fulfill Catamount Core objectives and outcomes.

### **Submission Process**

Instructors and units seeking to receive Catamount Core designations for their courses should consult with their unit and college curriculum committees to be mindful of internal expectations and deadlines. All proposals must include a course supplement form and a complete syllabus that includes the following information:

- Weekly schedule of topics, readings/materials and assignments
- Assignments and course objectives
- Language related to the specific designation(s) being sought

In the case of multi-section or multi-instructor courses, the CCCC requires 1 (one) instructor to fill out the course supplement form (ideally in conversation with all other instructors) and the submission of all syllabi being used to teach the course.

### *Timelines and important dates*

The Catamount Core Committee meets monthly (please see the CCCC website for exact meeting dates for each semester). All proposals must be uploaded to the Course Leaf system as part of course action form one month prior to the CCCC meeting for an upcoming month. There are also final deadlines for designations to be reviewed for the following semester:

- For Spring designations, submissions must be received no later than the October meeting
- For Fall designations, submissions must be received no later than the January meeting

A reminder that in order for any changes to be made to the following year's catalog, submissions must be received and approved by no later than February 15 which means that for the CCCC to review them they must be ready to review by no later than the January meeting. If the proposal needs to be revised, it may not be approved in time for the catalog deadline.

Once received, a proposal will receive a formal review by three committee members (usually within their subcommittee assignment). These reviews assess whether or not a submission meets or does not meet expectations in the following areas:

- Syllabus includes objectives/outcomes and weekly readings/assignments and a designation category description
- Adequately meets minimum number of the approval criteria for the requested designation
- Adequately addresses the minimum required number of Catamount Core category outcomes
- Includes relevant and sufficient course readings or materials
- Course assignments and activities clearly linked to approval criteria and outcomes
- Syllabus and supplemental information indicate how relevant learning outcomes of students will be assessed

These reviews are presented to and voted upon by the entire CCCC committee at its monthly meetings. All approved submissions are then forwarded to the Provost's Office through Course Leaf for the next stage of approval. Notifications are sent to units and instructors within two weeks of the CCCC's decision.

If a submission is flagged for revision, instructors and unit leaders are notified within two weeks of the CCCC's decision and provided with guidance for making revisions. Revisions will be re-assessed at the next CCCC meeting, depending upon when a resubmission is received. In rare occasions the CCCC may reject a submission outright and deem it to be unsuitable for a general education course.

#### *Supplemental forms*

Please see the appendix for the supplemental forms that instructors are asked to fill out to explain how their course fulfills Catamount Core objectives and outcomes. We also include rubrics for our evaluation of proposals.

#### **Review Process**

The health of any curriculum includes a robust review process to ensure that there are timely assessments of the content and structure of the portfolio of courses. The CCCC has been empowered by the Faculty Senate framework to undertake a five-year review of all courses in the Catamount Core Curriculum. The curriculum set to launch in Fall 2023 includes courses that have all been given a five-year approval date; thus, the first set of revisions is set to take begin in Fall 2028. Given the sheer number of courses in the CCCC's portfolio (upwards of 1000), we would suggest either staggering the reviews across several semesters and/or expanding the CCCC membership for the review period so as to more equitably share the workload of review. The staggering process might work well by beginning with the D1, D2 and SU courses, the bulk of which were already extant and reviewed in 2020-2022 prior to being incorporated within the CCCC portfolio.

The actual review process as the CCCC has developed it should require minimal work by either the units and instructors or the committee itself. For each course, the CCCC will send to each unit the course supplement form and syllabus we have on file. In return, each unit will send back to the CCCC the most recent syllabus (or syllabi in the case of multi-instructor courses) for the course and indicate if any changes have been made to the teaching of the course. If no substantive changes have been made, this can be indicated on an updated course supplement form.

### **Transfer Process**

There are two main ways in which courses taken at other institutions may count towards the Catamount Core Curriculum.

- 1) If a course is transferred into UVM as a direct equivalent of a UVM course, any Catamount Core designations attached to the latter will attach to the transfer credit.
- 2) If a course is transferred into UVM as a general (e.g. 00XX) course, it may receive Catamount Core Consideration upon consultation with either the Office of Transfer Affairs or the CCCC and after either/both have reviewed relevant syllabi and other materials.

The process for such reviews includes Transfer Affairs conducting the initial evaluation during their transfer credit audit. The CCCC will provide training to Transfer Affairs regarding the Catamount Core Curriculum requirements on an annual basis as needed. Upon determination that a transfer credit is accepted, the Office of Transfer Affairs will enter either the UVM equivalent course or the correct attribute to the student's audit, thus not requiring an exception to process. Please note the following:

- Transfer students can in theory fulfill all Catamount Core requirements via transfer credit if applicable
- Advanced Placement courses have received standardized recognition in certain disciplines and fields through UVM and those that carry Catamount Core designations would be recognized here
- European transfer credits can be utilized towards Catamount Core requirements as long as the Office of Transfer Affairs recognizes these as 3-credit equivalent courses

### **Exceptions and Agreements**

The following are some MOUs and understandings the CCCC has agreed upon with various constituent groups on campus as we implement the Catamount Core Curriculum.

#### *Honors College*

All previously reviewed HCOL "legacy courses" (D1, D2, SU, etc) will continue those designations in the CCC. They will, however, need to be re-reviewed **within the five years** of that designation. HCOL 1000 (the old HCOL 085) will have a WIL1 designation for Fall 2023. All of these courses will need to be reviewed before Fall 2024, however. Because HCOL courses are constantly rotating, new CCCC designations will be in place for five years. They will all need to be re-reviewed within that five year period, however. The HCOL Associate Dean will send a list of all HCOL courses being offered for the following academic year by February

15. Due to the nature of scheduling – including the reality of multiple last-minute cancellations in this college, the CCCC recognizes the need for flexibility.

#### *First Year Seminars*

The sheer number of First Year Seminars and the need to accommodate both a transition to four digit renumbering and the change from the TAP program to the FYS program has meant the need for a one-year exemption (for 2023-2024 only) for these courses. The exception is as follows:

- Any designation that is already carried and has been reviewed and renewed does not need any action
- Any FWIL designation (now WIL1) will for next year be given temporary status and does not need to be renewed at this time but WILL need to be renewed for 2024-2025 – all the LASP and FYS instructors to make sure they submit the appropriate paperwork in Fall 2023
- Any other Gen Ed designation will similarly be approved for one-year next year. For 2023-2024 the relevant unit will collect the list of designations desired by the instructors and inform the CCCC so that the registrar's office can code them for (again) one year only. These will need to have paperwork submitted and reviewed next year for permanent designation from fall 2024 onwards

#### *Arts and Performance Sequences*

While general education courses in the Catamount Core Curriculum are generally restricted to 3-credit courses, an exception will be made in the case of 1-credit sequences which are stacked into a 3-credit progression, as in the case of performance and music courses. These are already taken in a collective manner and will be recognized for the AH1 category. These sequences must be evaluated, approved and reviewed as a collective progression, not individually. The AH1 credit will be attached to the final course in this sequence and will not be received before completing all three courses.