

General Education (QuEST)

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Mission

The General Education program at Messiah University encourages the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of intellect, character, and faith that Christians use in lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation.

Purpose: Qualities Essential for Student Transformation (QuEST)

QuEST, Messiah University's general education program, serves as a curricular progression through which students develop skills, abilities and perspectives necessary to become collaborative agents in the contemporary workforce and society. This progression is intended to complement and parallel the academic majors in a way which allows students to respond with maturity to the world's complexities by raising important questions, exposing students to multiple perspectives and ways of knowing (i.e. arts, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences). In doing so, our curriculum encourages critical thinking and the application of knowledge from diverse disciplines, informed by faith and a sense of purpose, to relevant issues which shape our lives.

Program

QuEST offers an integration of courses and opportunities, appropriate for all students, which provides progression in developing competencies in the four General Education Learning Outcomes:

A. Abilities of the Liberal Arts foster the abilities to think, read, write and speak effectively.

Individuals who develop these abilities are more flexible and adaptable to the changes of the world across the spectrum of different fields and life experiences. (9 credits)

First Year Seminar (3 credits)

Created and Called for Community (3 credits)

Oral Communication (3 credits)

B. Knowledge of the Liberal Arts promotes awareness and insight of how people with different perspectives, beliefs and disciplines interpret reality and make meaning. Given that modern society

and the workplace involve increasingly complex and global issues, students must develop a breadth of knowledge and the capability for action informed by context and purpose. (26 credits)

Mathematical and Natural Sciences (9 credits)

Mathematical Sciences (3 credits)

Laboratory Science (3 credits)

Science, Technology, and the World (3 credits)

Social Sciences and History (6 credits) *One course from two of the following categories:*

Social Science (3 credits)

European History (3 credits)

United States History (3 credits)

Humanities and Arts (9 credits)

Arts (3 credits)

Literature (3 credits)

Religion (3 credits) or Philosophy (3 credits)

Languages and Cultures (9 credits) Messiah currently offers the following languages, which may be used to fulfill the General Education Languages and Cultures requirement: German, French, Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, and Chinese.

Two semesters of the same language (6 credits) **AND** a cross-cultural studies course (3 credits)

OR three semesters of the same language (9 credits)

C. Christian Faith encourages students to articulate and evaluate one's faith by gaining knowledge of the Bible's content and themes, including the biblical witness of service, leadership and reconciliation, and by understanding how different Christian faith traditions may shape beliefs. Students develop deeper commitments in service to God and to others as they explore connections between faith and learning. (6 credits)

Knowledge of the Bible (3 credits)

Christian Beliefs (3 credits)

D. Social Responsibility facilitates deepening self-awareness as students discern and develop their identity, gifts and vocation, as well as Christian character. These academic experiences empower students to act upon their knowledge and judgment through meaningful careers and lives that respond to the complexities of this world. (13 credits)

Wellness (1 credit)

Engaging the Pluralistic World (3 credits)

Ethics in the Modern World (3 credits)

World Views (3 credits)

Pluralism in Contemporary Society (3 credits)

Non-Western Studies (2-3 hours)

QuEST delivers an empowering education of broad knowledge as well as transferable and enduring skills which free students to integrate their faith and learning, and to critically think and apply their knowledge to contemporary issues. Students customize their learning by choosing from a wide range of course topics within the above-listed objectives. QuEST education gives students an opportunity to experience engagement with the world so they grasp the practical, personal and moral significance of what they are learning. This is the best kind of preparation for work and life.

Interdisciplinary Courses

Interdisciplinary (ID) courses provide areas of integrated learning in which students wrestle with and address complex questions that face our society, and are woven throughout the curriculum.

Throughout their QuEST, students will be challenged to answer these questions by examining different perspectives, theories and experiences in order to arrive at a more discerning conclusion. Students cultivate adeptness in navigating complexity and thinking holistically about these issues in order to reflect upon their own beliefs, as well as bridge values and assumptions of diverse perspectives. In turn, students are empowered to respond to unexpected and ever-changing realities they will encounter in life, work and society. Interdisciplinary courses include:

[IDFY 101/2](#) First Year Seminar

[IDCR 151](#) Created and Called for Community

IDNW 2xx Non-Western Studies

[IDCC 260](#) Cross-Cultural Studies

IDPL 3xx Pluralism in Contemporary Society

IDET 3xx Ethics

IDWV 3xx World Views

IDST 3xx Science, Technology and the World

Lists of specific courses meeting QuEST requirements, including those cataloged within specific departments which are approved to meet the ID course objectives, are identified in the course descriptions and are published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Course titles and content in each category may vary from semester to semester.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Effective writing is a distinctive of the Messiah University education. The Writing Across the Curriculum Program (WAC) at Messiah University is composed of a University-wide community of teacher-scholars committed to the principle that writing is a fundamental mode of self-discovery, intellectual understanding, and human interaction. Therefore, the program is further committed to the principle that both the teaching of writing and the use of writing to further and disseminate human insight into the world around us is the responsibility of every educator. Courses which have a

writing-enriched designation incorporate writing instruction and analytical assignments which require a minimum extent of pages as well as drafts to instill the skill of writing as a process.

The specific objectives of the WAC Program in terms of curriculum are outlined in other documents, but the fundamental mission of the WAC Program includes the following:

- To ensure that all students will graduate with abilities in writing that will enable them to communicate effectively with various audiences and in multiple writing situations.
- To encourage all students to understand and employ writing as a means of learning and self-discovery, and to encourage the use of writing as a means of life-long learning.
- To equip faculty members in their efforts to be more effective teachers of writing, and to promote the use of writing as a fundamental form of pedagogy across all disciplines.
- To nurture a culture of writing on campus that values and celebrates writing and reading in all areas of campus life.

The writing program at Messiah includes four classes: (1) a First Year Seminar, (2) a Writing Workshop course, (3) Created and Called for Community, and (4) a writing-enriched course developed for the major (major-w).

College Writing Workshop. Although not a course required of the majority of our entering students, basic writing is an important element in any writing-across-the-curriculum program. College Writing Workshop is designed to help those students who, after completing First Year Seminar, demonstrate the need for further writing instruction. The hours it represents fall under the “elective” category in the General Education/Major/Elective scheme. This part of the writing program, for those of whom it is required, may be satisfied by completing [IDWR 099](#) College Writing Workshop during the spring semester of the student's first year.

First Year Seminar. The seminar is the standard first-year writing experience in our program, and is consequently required of all students. While the content topics of each seminar vary widely, there is a substantially common approach to writing instruction and related assignments among the seminars. The requirement must be satisfied in the student's first year by completing one of the many First Year Seminars which are offered primarily during the fall semester. Students who do not complete First Year Seminar with at least a B- must take a writing assessment. Students who do not pass the writing assessment must take a 1 credit Writing Lab in the Spring semester.

Created and Called for Community. As part of Messiah's year-long sequence this course builds on the intellectual and writing skills developed during First Year Seminar in a common learning context. Students will complete assignments which use reflexive and transactional writing. The Writing Committee continues to give guidance to instructors teaching in Created and Called for Community. Transfer students who do not enter with an equivalent for FYS can waive the FYS requirement if they take CCC and demonstrate writing proficiency by earning an average of B- or better on the writing assignments.

Writing Enriched Course in the Major [Major-W]. The major course with writing emphasis is taken within the students' chosen disciplines and is intended for students to take subsequent to completion of First Year Seminar and Created and Called for Community; its primary purpose, in relation to writing, is to allow students to begin to acquire familiarity with the expectations of their

own professional discourse communities. There is considerable variation in the kinds of courses into which various majors incorporate the writing emphases; each department is responsible for addressing this requirement as part of the academic major.