

COVER PAGE

**Proposal to align the Bachelor of General Studies degree requirements to those of the
Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree in the College of Arts & Sciences**

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College of Arts & Sciences

Proposal to align the Bachelor of General Studies degree requirements to those of the Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree in the College of Arts & Sciences

Effective Date: Fall 2018

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this proposal is to align the Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) degree graduation requirements to those of the Bachelor of Liberal Arts (BLA) degree, including the cognate program of general education. The BGS program is a flexible degree that allows adult learners to earn a Bachelor's degree; it is issued by the College of Arts & Sciences and administered by the Division of Continuing and International Education. At present, the BGS degree is aligned to the university's previous general education requirements. This change would allow the BGS degree to provide more flexible opportunities for student growth, a wider array of higher-level course options available for BGS students, and a similar experience to that of our traditional undergraduate students.

PROPOSAL

Proposal to align the Bachelor of General Studies degree requirements to those of the Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree in the College of Arts & Sciences

The purpose of this proposal is to align the Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) degree graduation requirements to match the university's cognate program of general education. At present, the BGS degree is aligned to the previous general education requirements.

The BGS program is a completion degree that caters to non-traditional learners, allowing students to apply previously earned college credits to a flexible curriculum that meets their individual intellectual needs and career goals. In order to apply to the BGS program, applicants must be at least 22 years old and must be pursuing their first undergraduate degree, with a cumulative GPA of 2.2 on all previous college work.

Although the BGS degree is administered by the Division of Continuing and International Education (DCIE), the degree is awarded by the College of Arts & Sciences. No major or minor is required for the BGS degree. Similarly, the College of Arts & Sciences already awards a Bachelor of Liberal Arts (BLA) degree to students who elect not to declare a major or minor. Given that these two degrees are currently operating with different graduation requirements, it is preferable for BGS students to have the same general education requirements as other Arts & Sciences undergraduate students. This change will ensure that BGS graduates receive a well-rounded education with advanced knowledge in the Arts & Humanities, People & Society, and STEM.

Goals:

The BGS program currently offers evening, weekend, and online courses to meet the flexible needs of adult learners. To that end, we seek to align the BGS to the cognate model to continue to offer students the opportunity to construct their learning around their individual strengths, passions, and goals, and to provide our adult learners an equivalent experience to that of their traditional undergraduate counterparts. The College of Arts and Sciences currently offers a Bachelor of Liberal Arts (BLA) degree, which has already adopted the cognate model, and this proposal seeks to align the BGS degree to the BLA requirements, as outlined in the Academic Bulletin.

Proposed BGS Graduation Requirements (aligned to the existing BLA degree):

- Degree candidates must complete 120 credit hours with an overall GPA of 2.0 or above.
- At least 60 of the 120 credit hours must be in 300, 400, or 500-level courses.
- Of these 60 credit hours, 30 credit hours must be completed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

- No more than 40 credit hours in 300-level or higher courses may be earned in any one department, and no more than 52 total credit hours may be earned in any one department.
- Up to 30 of the 120 credit hours may be courses from other schools and colleges of the university except for those courses expressly excluded from recognition by the college.
- Degree candidates must complete at least four writing courses.
- No major or minor may be elected.

Credit Changes:

The proposed curricular change will not result in a change to the total number of required credits for the BGS, which already necessitates the completion of 120 credits. The only credit change will be a requirement for at least 60 of the 120 credit hours must be in 300, 400, or 500 level courses, encouraging for BGS students to enroll in courses of increasing rigor.

Demand:

The flexibility of the BGS program allows for students to take courses as their schedule permits, as most of our students are working adults, including many UM employees who attend thank to tuition remission. Adapting the BGS program to the cognate model increases the flexibility of the program, as well as aligning to the university's previously adopted general education requirements, providing BGS students with an experience similar to that of a traditional undergraduate student. For BGS students, adopting the cognate model to them allows them to tailor their credit completion experience to the university's unique variety of learning options. Specifically, this increased flexibility benefits our working adult students, who can modify their schedule to not only meet their schedule requirements, but to also pursue cognates that stimulate their curiosity and meet their learning and career advancement goals.