

**University of Colorado Denver**  
**Core Curriculum Oversight Committee**  
**CU Denver Core Policies and Procedures**

The University of Colorado Denver subscribes to a liberal arts philosophy of education in order to develop a broad set of academic skills for the baccalaureate student and to establish a foundation for lifelong learning. Since 1990, the CU Denver Core curriculum of general education has been a campus-wide program for all undergraduate students, independent of the student's major. The CU Denver faculty designed the Core curriculum to provide undergraduate students a high-quality academic foundation while still allowing flexibility based on students' individual backgrounds and specific career goals. The Core curriculum develops multiple literacies, stimulates creative thinking, and utilizes technology. The Core engages students in developing sensitivity to diversity and developing their place in an urban environment, as well as in the rapidly changing global environment. The Core provides an understanding of ourselves, ours and other cultures, and our environment.

The Core Curriculum Oversight Committee (CCOC) was established to oversee the Core Curriculum, as detailed in the CCOC Bylaws. The following policies and guidelines govern the Core under the purview of the CCOC, and any modifications of them require the approval of the CCOC.

1. Core Areas: The CU Denver Core consists of nine Core Areas that fall into three categories:

A. Intellectual Competencies Typical hours

- Composition (college writing) 6 semester hours
- Mathematics (quantitative literacy) 3-4 semester hours

B. Knowledge Areas

- Arts 3 semester hours
- Behavioral Sciences 3 semester hours
- Humanities 3 semester hours
- Natural & Physical Sciences 7-8 semester hours
- Social Sciences 3 semester hours

C. Diversity and Global Learning

- Cultural Diversity (upper-division courses only) 3 semester hours
- International Perspectives (upper & lower division) 3 semester hours

Typical total hours: 34-36

Note: The hours listed reflect the official CU Denver Core course list. Total Core hours for students using transfer credit to satisfy Core requirements may vary.

2. Core-Area specifications: Each Core Area may have different content and competency criteria, learning outcomes, and limiting rules.

- A. **Core-Area Learning Outcomes:** Every Core course must include in its syllabus and address the learning outcomes established by the CCOC for the Core Area to which it belongs.
- B. **Critical Thinking Competency:** All Core courses in all Areas are required to address the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) competency of Critical Thinking, which ideally will be integrated with the disciplinary content.
- C. **Writing Competency:** All courses in all Core Areas *other than those in Mathematics and Natural & Physical Sciences* are required to address the CDHE competency in Written Communication, which ideally will be integrated with the disciplinary content.
- D. **Reading Competency:** All courses in the Composition, Arts, and Humanities Core Areas are required to address the CDHE Reading competency, which ideally will be integrated with the disciplinary content.
- E. **Mathematics Competency:** All courses in the Mathematics and Natural & Physical Sciences are required to address the CDHE Mathematics competency, which ideally will be integrated with the disciplinary content.
- F. **Intellectual Competencies:** Courses in these two Areas must have one of these prefixes: ENGL, MATH. Students must earn a minimum letter grade of C- (1.7) in Intellectual Competencies to satisfy the Core Curriculum requirements. Students may not take these courses pass/fail (P/F).
- i. **Composition, specific criteria:** All undergraduates are required to take ENGL 1020 (or otherwise fulfill or place out of it) as well as ENGL 2030. This corresponds to the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) gtPathways requirement of a two-course composition sequence, CO1 and CO2. However, students who matriculate having completed CO2 but not CO1 may complete the two-course sequence requirement by taking a CCOC-approved upper-division composition or writing-in-the-disciplines course (CO3 level).
- G. **Knowledge Areas:** In general, the content-based learning objectives should cover discipline-specific content, historical perspective on the development of the discipline, research/scholarly methods used by the discipline, and the relevance and value of the discipline to general education.
- i. **Arts / Humanities:** As a general rule, undergraduates in all majors are required to take one Arts course and one Humanities course, but with this exception: Humanities majors may choose to take either one Humanities and one Arts course or two Arts courses, and Arts majors may choose to take either one Humanities and one Arts course or two Humanities courses. This exception may be approved on a case-by-case basis by academic advisors. A documented advisor decision on this exception will stand even if the student subsequently changes majors to outside Arts or Humanities.
  - ii. **Natural & Physical Sciences, specific criteria:** Courses in this Area must come from disciplines with these course prefixes: ANTH, BIOL, CHEM, CSCI, ENVS, GEOG, GEOL, MATH, PHYS, PSYC (though not all courses with these prefixes automatically qualify). Students must take one science course with a laboratory. The second course may be a science course with or without a laboratory, or may be a mathematics course, excluding the course used to satisfy the Intellectual Competencies mathematics proficiency. If a student passes the

lecture (3-hour) portion of a lecture-lab co-requisite course but does not enroll in or successfully complete the lab (1-hour) portion, then they may choose to count that toward completion of the non-lab-based science course requirement, though only if the lecture and the lab have different course numbers, not the same number.

**H. Diversity and Global Learning:** i. **Cultural Diversity, specific criteria:** Courses in this Area must focus upon both race/ethnicity and gender issues inside the United States.

**I. International Perspectives, specific criteria:** Courses in this Area must focus upon a nation(s) or region(s) outside of the United States. An approved study abroad experience may satisfy the International Perspectives (IP) requirement; the student receives a proficiency credit, which does not result in academic credit on a CU Denver transcript or produce a letter grade that influences a student's GPA. International students, as defined by an F1 visa or graduation from high school in a foreign country, are exempt from the IP requirement. See the "International Perspectives Proficiency Credit Guidelines" for the detailed approval criteria.

3. All departments and programs approved to offer undergraduate course work may submit courses for review and inclusion into the Core, subject to the Area restrictions listed above. Submissions must be made by the department chair or program director on behalf of the individual instructor.

4. Departments and program are restricted to the number of courses approved in the Core Curriculum:

- **Intellectual Competencies:** no MATH restrictions, up to three ENGL courses in composition.
- **Knowledge Areas:** up to four courses for disciplines that offer a major, and up to two courses for disciplines that do not offer a major. Academic units may petition for an exception to this limit if they can demonstrate a compelling reason why adhering to it systematically disadvantages one cohort or type of student relative to another cohort or type of student (for instance, if transfer students receive gtPathways credit for a course while native students do not).
- **Diversity and Global Learning:** International Perspectives – up to two courses per discipline. Cultural Diversity – up to two courses per discipline.

5. Departments and programs may redesign existing courses to fulfil the requirements of a Core Area and propose them to the CCOC using the same course prefix, but the course number must be changed if approved as a Core course in order to date the change in its status and to avoid confusion concerning its applicability to the requirement. Changing the course title also is recommended. If a course is removed from the Core by the academic unit or the CCOC, it either should be renumbered or should not be offered for the subsequent year.

6. Students may utilize Core courses defined by their major department to satisfy all Area requirements, subject to the other policies in this document. While "double-dipping" thus is

allowed, the CCOC strongly encourages all students to seek diversity and breadth in their educational choices.

7. Each course nominated in a Knowledge Area of the Core may be approved in only one Knowledge Area, which it is the responsibility of the proposing academic unit to determine in the proposal. Individual departments or programs may offer courses across Knowledge Areas if the course content meets requirements.

8. Core course proposals may be submitted at any time, but the semester in which those courses become official and can be offered as Core courses is determined by the date the course is approved by the CCOC (not submitted to the CCOC), according to the following guidelines:

- Courses approved between October 1 and March 1 become official in the next fall semester (example: approved by March 1, 2018, effective fall 2018).
- Courses approved between March 1 and October 1 become official in the next spring semester (example: approved by October 1, 2018, effective spring 2019).
- The CCOC updated Core-course lists will be provided to advisors and posted on the CCOC Webpage each academic year on October 1 and March 1.

9. Core courses are intended for all undergraduate students and, with certain approved exceptions, should be open to all regardless of the student's year or major. Content prerequisites may be imposed, but are discouraged at the lower-division level unless part of a discipline sequence. One exception is the Cultural Diversity Area, in which all courses must be upper-division and without prerequisites. Any Core-course prerequisites must be identified in the official course description, the CU Denver *Catalog*, the CU-SIS registration system, and the course syllabus.

10. Once a student has matriculated at CU Denver, CU Denver courses not approved by the CCOC for the Core Curriculum cannot be used to satisfy core requirements unless approved as an exception by the CCOC. The CCOC retains final authority over all exceptions but may delegate *initial approval authority* to schools/colleges or to the Registrar's Office in consultation with schools/colleges.

- Individual students may petition the CCOC for a specific course waiver or substitution.
- Students may petition on the basis of preexisting competency or mastery, as demonstrated by *documented* prior learning, completion of multiple courses or professional experiences that meet the spirit of a Core Area's requirements, or publicly recognized mastery in the content and skills characteristic of one of the Core Areas. Students must petition according to the addendum to this policy, "Guidelines for Student Petitions to the CCOC for Prior Learning." A student may petition only once and only for one of the Core requirements; second petitions will not be considered. If approved, the student will receive proficiency waiver, not credit hours (as in the case of proficiency credit for International Perspectives through living abroad).
- A school or college may petition CCOC for all students in a program or major.
- An individual school or college may exercise initial authority to approve a study abroad experience for International Perspectives using guidelines established by the CCOC. An

individual school or college may approve a petition for a Core waiver or substitution based on a documented disability.

11. Schools and colleges may not place restrictions upon the Core. They may not deny the applicability of a Core course or Core credit for a transfer course once approved. This does not impinge upon the prerogative of the academic unit to set major requirements and to require students to take courses for the major that belong to a CU Denver Core Area even if the student already has fulfilled the requirement for that Core Area.

12. Transferring courses that satisfy the CU Denver Core:

- Statewide gtPathways standards should guide decisions about Core credit for transfer courses wherever applicable. Any lower-division Core course not approved by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) for inclusion in the gtPathways program must be brought to the attention of the CCOC, but is not automatically removed from the CU Denver Core Curriculum. Transfer students are advised to confirm the gtPathways status of courses for transferability into and out of CU Denver.
- The CCOC has final authority over issues of transfer applicability for Core credit, though consultation with faculty with content expertise is advisable in cases of uncertainty.
- The CCOC, while retaining final authority, authorizes the Registrar's Office, in consultation with academic advising offices and in turn with faculty as appropriate, to exercise initial approval authority concerning the transferability of courses to fulfill Core-course credit.
- Students are allowed to transfer in courses that may be considered for Core credit *after* matriculation.
- The minimum number of credit-hours required for consideration for Core-course credit is 2.0 (including lecture-lab combinations).
- Unless otherwise specified, the standard for transfer credit for Core courses is reasonable comparability, not exact equivalency, which is more suitable as a criterion in consideration of courses for major credit. If a transfer student has completed a bachelor's degree at an accredited college or university in the United States and is pursuing a second bachelor's degree, then the CU Denver Core will be considered to have been completed as a proficiency. Review by the CCOC is required if the prior degree is more than 10 years old.
- For additional detail, refer to the CCOC 2012 policy, "Core Curriculum Transfer Credit Guidelines."

13. The CCOC may reject otherwise qualified courses submitted for review if:

- the program has attained the maximum number of Core courses allowed;

- the submitted course is cross-listed with another discipline;
- the submitted course is cross-listed at upper/lower division levels, or upper division/graduate levels;
- the submitted course is unstructured, without a specific Catalog description, such as independent study, internships, special/selected topics, etc.

14. If a course is approved by the CCOC as a CU Denver Core Curriculum course, the department or program is agreeing to the following set of conditions for the course and instructor:

- The Core course is taught on a regular basis, typically once per year. Core courses not taught on a regular basis are subject to CCOC review and possible removal from the list of approved courses.
- The syllabus for each Core course (section for multiple section courses) must be electronically available by census date to the CCOC for general education oversight review.
- The Core curriculum course instructor will be encouraged to participate in any CCOC workshops designed to enhance general education instruction.

15. Each Core course syllabus must contain:

- i. all appropriate features specified in the CU Denver "Syllabus" policy;
- ii. disclosure of Core-course status and identification of the Core Area to which the credit is applied;
- iii. course learning objectives, including learning outcomes established by the CCOC for the Core Area to which the course belongs;
- iv. evidence of teaching those learning outcomes;
- v. evidence of teaching Critical Thinking (all Core Area courses);
- vi. evidence of teaching Written Communication through the methods and in the styles appropriate to the course's discipline (all Core Area courses excepting those in Mathematics and Natural and Physical Sciences);
- vii. assessment and grading strategies and criteria;
- viii. recommended but not required: identification as an approved gtPathways Guaranteed Transfer course for a specific section of that program; for example, SOCY 1001 would be identified as "SS3" and MATH 1010 as "MA1."

16. First-30 Policy:

Students must demonstrate progress toward completion of the Core Composition requirement within their first 30 semester hours of attendance at CU Denver. All undergraduates, whether first-time freshman or transfer students, must within their first 30 credit hours at CU Denver successfully complete the highest level of Core Composition course for which they have the prerequisites upon entrance. Those who have not fulfilled or placed out of ENGL 1020 (gtPathways CO1) will start with that course. Students not complying with this policy may be prevented from registering for subsequent terms until they demonstrate compliance with an academic advisor.