Requirements for a Bachelor’s Degree

Completing a Major

Every student who earns a bachelor’s degree must satisfy the requirements of a major. A major is a structured curriculum, usually within the confines of a particular academic field. At Johns Hopkins, an option exists for students, under the guidance of a faculty member, to design an interdisciplinary major that draws upon the subject matters from several departments. Generally the requirements for a major provide a student with a broad over-view of the field through introductory courses, followed by more specialized courses tailored to meet the student’s interests in the field. The requirements for the major may also include courses in other disciplines that provide skills and information of importance to professionals in the major field. Courses required for the major must be taken for a letter grade. Many majors require a grade of C- or better in required courses.

Distribution Requirements

It is widely recognized that an undergraduate education must provide the groundwork for a student’s career and professional development. However, undergraduates are also expected to develop broad intellectual interests that will enrich their own lives and their contributions to society. In many institutions, this second goal is embodied in a required set of core courses taken by all students. At Johns Hopkins, students are given a choice in the matter.

Area designators represent an association between the course and a broad field of knowledge. In general, courses offered in a particular department tend to reflect the intellectual traditions and approaches of the discipline embraced by the department. Courses with area designators are expected to do more than employ basic techniques, they are to advance knowledge and increase a student’s understanding of the theory. Courses that are teaching a basic skill, and therefore do not expose the student to modes of analysis and scholarship that represent the essence of a given discipline, will not be assigned an area designator. If taught within a Homewood academic department, the department is responsible for assigning area designators to their courses. Courses not offered through Homewood academic departments will be reviewed by the appropriate deans’ office to review proposed designators.

All students are required to earn a minimum number of credits in academic areas outside their majors. The academic areas in the Hopkins curriculum are humanities (H), natural sciences (N), social and behavioral sciences (S), quantitative and mathematical sciences (Q), and engineering (E).

The area designations of courses (H, S, N, Q, and E) are included in the course information in the JHU catalog and in the online schedule of classes. The area designation also appears beside the course title on a student’s academic record. When a course has more than one area designation (HS, EN, EQ, etc.), students may use only one of the designations to satisfy the distribution requirement.

Only courses or other credit-bearing opportunities with area designations may be used to satisfy the distribution requirement. Area designators are not assigned to the following:

- Independent study
- Research
- Internships
- Music performance (unless taken as part of a music minor, in which case the course will be designated H)
- Dance performance
- Foreign language elements courses (see additional foreign language rules)
- Medical tutorials

Area designations can be assigned to courses taken elsewhere, to courses taken in other divisions of the university, or to graduate courses taken by undergraduates. These assignments are made by the appropriate deans’ office based on the course content and the recommendations of the faculty. The most useful criteria for determining an appropriate area designator will be the course description and a similar JHU departmental offering.

The following courses at the Peabody Conservatory have H or S designations:

Area Designators for Peabody Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designator</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>530.411</td>
<td>Keyboard Literature I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>530.412</td>
<td>Keyboard Literature II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>530.413</td>
<td>Keyboard Literature III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>530.414</td>
<td>Keyboard Literature IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>530.570</td>
<td>Constructive Listening &amp; Analysis /Jazz History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>610.311</td>
<td>History of Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>610.312</td>
<td>History of Music II</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>610.313</td>
<td>History of Music III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>610.314</td>
<td>History of Music IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>610.555</td>
<td>Music and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>260.215</td>
<td>Humanities Seminar I</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>260.216</td>
<td>Humanities Seminar II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>260.249</td>
<td>Film History: Sounds and Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>260.327</td>
<td>Literary Trials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distribution Requirements for Arts & Sciences Majors

Students must earn at least 30 credits in courses from areas outside their major area.

To assure that all students in the humanities or social sciences have some exposure to the sciences and math, at least 12 of the 30 credits required for distribution must be in N, Q, and/or E areas. Students in the natural sciences or quantitative studies must earn at least 18 in H and/or S areas.

In Arts and Sciences, courses taken for the distribution requirement may be taken for a letter grade or for Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory credit. Courses passed with a letter grade of D or better, or passed with a Satisfactory grade, may fulfill the distribution requirement. For any student whose first-semester grades are covered under the current first-semester grading policy, an earned D will satisfy the distribution requirement even though the grade will appear as Unsatisfactory (UCR) on the official record. Satisfactory grades (representing a C- or higher
letter grade) earned in a student’s first semester at JHU may satisfy the distribution requirement if they have the correct area designations.

Distribution Requirements for Engineering Majors (a heading smaller than “Distribution Requirements”)

Students in engineering must complete the following distribution requirements:

- 18-21 credits (6 or 7 courses at least 3 credits each) designated H and/or S. Although language elements courses do not carry an area designator, engineering students may use these courses as substitutes for humanities courses in meeting the distribution requirement.
- At least 75 credits earned in courses coded E, Q, or N, with at least 30 credits in courses coded N or Q, with no course counted twice. At least 30 of the 75 credits must be earned outside the student’s major department.

In Engineering, each department determines whether or not the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading option will be permitted for courses used to satisfy the distribution requirement. Satisfactory grades (representing a C- or higher letter grade) earned in a student’s first college semester at JHU may satisfy the distribution requirement if they have the correct area designations.

Writing Requirement

To encourage excellence in writing, across disciplines, the university requires all undergraduates to take a number of writing-intensive courses. A writing-intensive (W) course is one in which students write at least 20 pages of finished writing, distributed over multiple assignments, usually 3 or 4 papers, throughout the semester. Instructors respond to students’ work in written comments or in conference, or both; and students have at least one opportunity to receive their instructor’s feedback on a draft and then revise. A writing-intensive course guides students’ practice in writing and makes writing an integral part of the course. The writing-intensive requirement is administered by Patricia Kain, Director of the Expository Writing Program, 120 Greenhouse Annex.

Writing-intensive courses are indicated by a “W” in the JHU course schedule. An asterisk (*) denotes writing-intensive courses on a student’s transcript. Courses taken to satisfy the writing requirement must be taken for a letter grade and passed with a grade of C- or better. Writing-intensive courses taken to satisfy the requirements of a major or the distribution requirement may also count toward the writing requirement.

All students in the School of Arts and Sciences and candidates for a B.A. degree in the School of Engineering must complete 12 credits (four courses) in writing-intensive courses. Candidates for a B.S. in Engineering must complete 6 credits (two courses) in W courses.

Students who wish to receive writing-intensive credit for a course taken at another college or university must obtain written approval from Professor Kain. No more than 6 credits may be transferred to meet the writing requirement. Students must have a grade of B or higher in the course and must provide Professor Kain with the course syllabus. Please see the procedure for transferring writing credits (http://krieger.jhu.edu/ewp/writing%20requirement).

Students in the School of Arts and Sciences who enter the university with SAT scores below 600 on the SAT writing test or the SAT verbal test are advised to take during the fall term of their first year.

Number of Credits Required for Graduation

The Bachelor of Arts degree requires 120 credits. The Bachelor of Science degree, whether in Arts and Sciences or Engineering, requires from 120 to 130 credits, depending on the major. No program may require more than 130 credits. At least 60 of the total credits must be earned while a full-time student at Johns Hopkins. These 60 credits may include one course per semester taken at another division of the university or at one of the cooperative education schools. No more than a total of 12 transfer and summer credits from other schools may be applied toward graduation, whether earned before or after matriculation. Students earning a double-degree at Peabody must complete at least 48 credits on the Homewood campus in either the Krieger School of Arts & Sciences or the Whiting School of Engineering.

Minimum Grade Point Average Required for Graduation

Students must have a grade point average of at least 2.00 in the courses required for the major, i.e., not including elective courses or courses used only for the distribution requirement. University policy allows no more than 18 credits from courses with grades of D or D+ to be counted toward the credits required for graduation. Departments may set a lower limit on the number of permissible D or D+ grades for a specific major. Many departments do not accept any D or D+ credits for major requirements.

Number of Full-time Semesters in Residence Required for Graduation (Residence Requirement)

Students who enter the university from high school are expected to complete graduation requirements in eight full-time semesters, but may graduate earlier if all requirements have been met. All candidates for a bachelor’s degree in either the School of Arts and Sciences or the School of Engineering must complete a minimum of four semesters in residence as a full-time student in these schools. Prior to graduation, students must be in residence for at least two of the final four semesters, including the final semester prior to graduation.

All transfer students must complete at least four full-time semesters in residence at JHU. Transfer students may be required to complete additional full-time semesters and this will be determined at the time of matriculation at JHU. Transfer students must be in residence for at least two of their final four semesters, including the final semester prior to graduation.

Students who study abroad during the fall or spring semesters are not considered to be in residence in the schools of Arts and Sciences or Engineering while abroad.

Statute of Limitations

A student must fulfill all degree requirements for graduation within 10 academic calendar years from the date of matriculation at the university.