

Calvin University Core Curriculum

Calvin University's core curriculum is inspired by our vision of being a Christian liberal arts university with an expanded global influence.

At Calvin, we have long defined our conception of a liberal arts and sciences education in terms of our key commitments to God's world in all its diversity—across domestic, global, and natural environments. The core curriculum incorporates these commitments as crucial threads, which are woven throughout the core program and framed by the disciplinary breadth afforded by study of the arts and humanities, the natural and social sciences—all intended to prepare students for lives of Christian service.

Beginning in the Community and Commitments course, students explore how our Reformed intellectual heritage uniquely informs our community's commitments to justice, reconciliation, and renewal, including our dedication to environmental sustainability, our celebration of God's gifts in global regions and cultures, and our affirmation of diversity and difference. Subsequent courses provide opportunity for students to explore and deepen their understandings of these commitments within specific academic disciplines, to learn core competencies, and to develop broad understanding of the world, its inhabitants, and ourselves. These exposures to the breadth of the liberal arts and sciences, coupled with the in-depth study within majors, prepare students to engage in a cross-disciplinary exploration of a contemporary challenge or enduring question as a culminating liberal arts experience.

To provide disciplinary breadth, all students are required to complete eight courses from the Knowledge and Understanding section of the core. Students in B.A. programs complete eight of nine courses in this section, while students in B.S. and professional program complete eight of ten courses in this section (with the tenth course being an additional course in natural sciences). The overall core size of 40 to 50 semester hours is the same for all programs; however, the effective size of the core will be smaller for most students, since major program or cognate requirements may overlap with core requirements. Additionally, AP and transfer credit may satisfy some core requirements, and exemptions are available for some requirements.

FOUNDATIONS (9)	<i>The Foundations section of the core program invites students into a holistic vision of Christian thought and engagement at the heart of Calvin's mission.</i> One Foundation of Christianity course may be transferred in if it includes content reflective of a Reformed Christian orientation. At least one Foundations of Christianity course must be taken at Calvin.
Community and Commitments (3)	<i>A course that serves as invitation to Calvin's Reformed Christian theological heritage and its commitments to justice, reconciliation, and renewal and an introduction to Reformed Christian liberal arts education as equipping students for vocation and citizenship.</i> This course normally will be taken in the first semester of students' first year.
Foundations of Christianity I (3)	<i>Courses that introduce the content and theological teachings of the Bible as the standard of Christian faith and life, or to the content and development of basic Christian theology as the teachings of the church, with particular attention to the Reformed tradition.</i> This course normally will be taken in students' first two years.
Foundations of Christianity II (3)	<i>Courses that examine the basis, development, or elements of Christian thought within its philosophical, historical, biblical, theological, or literary dimensions, to deepen students' understanding of the context and meaning of Christian and Reformed theology.</i> This course must be taken in a different discipline than courses satisfying the Humanities requirement of the core curriculum.
COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS (5–13)	<i>The Competencies and Skills section of the core program ensures that students demonstrate at least minimal proficiencies in three key areas.</i> Transfer credit, AP credit, and exemption allowed.
Foundational Writing (3)	<i>Courses that provide a foundation for subsequent coursework by teaching students to evaluate information sources and knowledge claims, to think critically, and to communicate clearly and persuasively in writing.</i>
Health and Movement (2)	<i>Courses that introduce knowledge and enhance physical skills requisite for living healthy lives.</i> Students must complete one credit hour focused on fitness and wellness (which may be fulfilled via two years of participation in a Calvin varsity athletic program or ACHA hockey) and one credit hour focused on recreation, sport, and skill.
World Languages I (0–8) • Three years of HS-FL with B or higher = 0 hrs • Two years of HS-FL = 4 hrs (i.e., accelerated course) • One year of HS-FL = 4–8 hrs • No HS-FL = 8 hrs	<i>Courses that teach students to communicate at the "novice high" level (i.e., FL-102) in a natural language other than English and to understand the linguistic privilege afforded native speakers of English.</i> This category also may be fulfilled by native or near-native fluency, examination, completion of three years of high school world language study with a grade of B or higher, or completion of two years of high school world language study and two semesters of university-level study of another language in the World Languages II category.
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING (23–25)	<i>The Knowledge and Understanding section of the core program includes courses that establish a breadth of knowledge and understanding.</i> Students in B.A. programs must complete eight of nine courses, opting out of one course in one of the six categories, while students in B.S. and professional programs must complete eight of ten courses (with the option of an additional natural science course), opting out of one course in two of the six categories. Transfer credit, AP credit, and exemption by examination allowed.
World Languages II (3) • WL 201 or higher in a second language = 3 hrs • WL 101-102 in a third language = 8 hrs (in lieu of hours in World Languages I for some students)	<i>Courses that help students to explore cultural identities and the relationships between products, practices, and perspectives through the lens of another culture, their experiences, and their language.</i> Students must complete coursework in a world language at the "intermediate low" level (i.e., FL-201) or higher or in another world language at the "novice high" level (i.e., FL-102) or higher.
Arts and Rhetoric (5)	<i>Courses that introduce students to visual, performing, and rhetorical arts, attending to their productive, communicative, and receptive aspects.</i> Courses in this category must be taken in different disciplines.
Humanities (6)	<i>Courses that introduce students to historical, philosophical, religious, and literary texts and methods.</i> Courses in the Humanities and Christian Foundations II categories must be taken in different disciplines.
Mathematical Sciences (3)	<i>Courses that develop knowledge of algorithmic, analytical, computational, data-driven, statistical, or quantitative methods, and apply those methods to solve problems.</i>
Natural Sciences (4–7) • Students in B.A. programs may complete one course in this category. • Students in B.S. and professional programs may complete two courses in this category.	<i>Courses that examine fundamental entities, structures, and systems of the natural world and the methods of the sciences that study them.</i> Courses in this category must be taken in different disciplines. At least one course must include a laboratory.
Social and Behavioral Sciences (6)	<i>Courses that examine social systems and/or interactions between human persons and their communities and environments using social scientific concepts, theories, and methods.</i> Courses in this category must be taken in different disciplines.
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION (3)	<i>The Cross-Disciplinary Integration section of the core program includes courses that develop an integrative context derived from different fields of study.</i>
Engaged Citizenship Commitments (0) • Diversity and Difference • Environmental Sustainability • Global Regions and Cultures	<i>Courses intended to facilitate the development of civic competencies and habits of engagement, which underpin Christian citizenship.</i> Students must complete at least one tagged course in all three areas. A tag can be attached to a course in the core, in an academic program, or an elective course in which one credit hour of the course content is dedicated to the category's objectives and a dedicated assignment to the category's objectives is included.
Contemporary Challenges and Enduring Questions (3)	<i>Courses that provide a culminating liberal arts experience by applying cross-disciplinary perspectives to examine enduring questions or to address contemporary challenges and inviting students to begin living out their vocation in Christian witness to the world.</i>