

### 3.5.3

#### **Educational Programs: Undergraduate: Undergraduate program requirements**

The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (See the Commission policy "The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.")

#### **Judgment**

Compliance    Partial Compliance    Non-Compliance    Not Applicable

#### **Narrative**

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) publishes all current requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. Requirements for baccalaureate degrees are published in the Undergraduate Catalog, in accord with TTU Policy 260, "Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation" [1]. General education requirements and specific TTU courses that fulfill those requirements are also included in the Undergraduate Catalog, as are four-year curricula for each degree program, by concentration and option. The Undergraduate Catalog is published online and is continuously updated as changes to courses, curricula, and policies are approved.

To graduate, a student meets either the requirements of the catalog effective at the time he or she entered the curriculum, if graduation is within seven years from that entrance date, or those in the catalog in effect at the time of graduation. Catalogs from previous years are archived online to allow easy reference to requirements that apply to students graduating under a prior version of a degree program.

If a student is out of the University at least one full year, the student must meet with the departmental chairperson upon re-entering into the program to determine which catalog to follow. Degree requirements for all students, regardless of date of enrollment in their curricula, may be subject to change prior to the publication of a new catalog when the implementation of curricular changes is necessary to maintain quality programs. The designated catalog for graduation must be approved by the departmental chairperson if different from the one in effect when a student entered the curriculum or the catalog in effect at the time of graduation. Students entering a curriculum in the summer are expected to follow the catalog for the next academic year. A Tennessee public community college student may select the TTU catalog effective at the time he or she entered the community college if that student enrolls at TTU within six years and continues in the major chosen while in community college.

#### **General Education**

As described in Core Requirement 2.7.3, the general education requirement is designed to provide a common collective knowledge that enables students to communicate, to make informed decisions, and to participate fully as informed citizens in local, national, and global matters, all of which support the TTU mission. The General Education Core curriculum is organized around six major content areas: Communication (English composition and oral presentational communication), Mathematics, History, Humanities/Fine Arts, Social/Behavioral Sciences, and Natural Sciences [2].

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) General Education Committee oversees and supervises the structure and learning outcomes for all areas of the general education curriculum at all TBR campuses. The general education requirements for all baccalaureate degrees are approved by the TBR General Education Committee and the TTU General Education Committee, in accord with university curriculum policies. These requirements are published for each program of study in the Undergraduate Catalog

[3].

## College Degree Requirements

Each program has degree requirements, such as minimum grade point averages (GPAs), minimum credit hour requirements for courses at the 3000-level or above, and requirements for taking professional examinations in the final semester. The Undergraduate Catalog specifies the requirements for all degrees offered by the University.

## Major Program Requirements

Required and elective courses for each undergraduate major are published in the University Catalog. These courses provide an integrated understanding of the discipline and a coherent connection between the general education curriculum and the major. Major program requirements are defined by the faculty in the discipline. Proposals to add, delete, or make substantive changes in programs of instruction leading to undergraduate degrees are reviewed for approval by the University Curriculum Committee, which submits its decision to the Academic Council. New programs, the revision of 18 or more hours in an existing undergraduate curriculum, and the termination of existing programs must be approved at the state level by the TBR.

## Commonly Accepted Standards and Practices for Degree Programs

Undergraduate degree programs at TTU are designed to follow a logical progression from foundational courses either in the major discipline, including 2000- or 3000-level introductory and methods courses, or in the general education program with its aim of providing broad academic competencies and cultural understanding. For example, the BS in Sociology includes an introductory course (SOC 1010) in the first year, an introduction to methods in the discipline (SOC 3900) at the start of upper-division study, and an advanced methods course (SOC 4920 or 4930), along with several upper-division courses in the discipline [4]; likewise, the BS in Psychology includes a general introduction (PSY 2010) in the first year, foundational courses in developmental and social psychology in the second year (PSY 3200 and 3300), and training in statistical and experimental method in the third year (PSY 3010 and 3110), culminating in a senior research thesis (PSY 4930 and 4931) [5].

Faculty within the academic unit initiate the creation of a new program and are responsible for establishing that the degree is relevant to the field or discipline, has the appropriate level of rigor, includes a coherent course of study, and conforms to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. All academic programs are overseen by the faculty, approved through the shared governance process, and approved by the administration in compliance with TBR policies. Approval for an undergraduate program begins with a proposal initiated by the faculty and reviewed and approved by the faculty in the given unit. If approved, the proposal is referred to the appropriate college curriculum committee, the University Curriculum Committee, and the Academic Council. The Provost then sends the proposal to the TBR for final approval. This rigorous approval process, as well as systematic review by the faculty, ensures that the general education and major requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

## Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) publishes current requirements for all undergraduate programs in its Undergraduate Catalog, including general education and all other components needed to complete a baccalaureate degree. The Undergraduate Catalog is user-friendly, readily accessible online in PDF and hypertext formats, and systematically updated. TTU is therefore in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.5.3.

## Sources



[1] Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation\_Policy 260

 [2] General Education University Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree

 [3] Academic Organization and Programs of Study

 [4] Sociology BS

 [5] Psychology BS