# The Core Curriculum

A university expresses its most basic values in its Core Curriculum that is part of an undergraduate education required of all students. Santa Clara’s Core Curriculum explicitly integrates three traditions of higher education. As a Catholic university, it is rooted in the tradition of pursuing an understanding of God through the free exercise of reason. As a Jesuit university, it promotes a humanistic education that leads toward ethical engagement with the world. As a comprehensive American university committed to liberal education, Santa Clara seeks to prepare its students for intelligent, responsible, and creative citizenship. Reflecting these traditions, the Core Curriculum provides every undergraduate with the common learning that all students need to become leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion.

The distinctiveness of a Santa Clara education emerges in the Core Curriculum, both in its sense of purpose rooted in the University’s traditions and in its commitment to a breadth of learning for the 21st century that complements and supports all majors. The Core Curriculum opens students to the study and practice of the arts, humanities, mathematics, technology, natural sciences, and social sciences. It educates students for interdisciplinary understanding and ethically informed participation in civic life.

Opportunities for experiential learning foster the development of compassion and attention to the ways human suffering can be alleviated. Reflecting the University’s founding mission, the Core Curriculum includes a disciplined and critical reflection on the religious dimensions of human existence. In addition, because the Core Curriculum continually highlights the critical and compelling questions facing individuals and communities, the Core Curriculum supports students both in making professional career choices and in discerning their larger vocation—their life’s purpose in the world.

## Learning Goals: What will students learn in the Core Curriculum?

Because a liberal education in the Jesuit tradition is oriented toward particular ends, the Core Curriculum affirms a set of central learning goals. These goals are divided among three broad categories: Knowledge, Habits of Mind and Heart, and Engagement with the World.

### Knowledge

To be prepared for well-informed engagement in society, students must comprehend the forces that have shaped the world they have inherited and the ways the world is interpreted and understood. They must also understand how they might transform the world for the better. The Core Curriculum deepens students’ knowledge of the ideas and ways of knowing that emerge from the arts, humanities, and natural and social sciences.

**Global Cultures:** The intertwined development of global ideas, institutions, religions, and cultures, including Western cultures

**Arts and Humanities:** The production, interpretation, and social influence of the fine and performing arts, history, languages, literatures, philosophy, and religion

**Scientific Inquiry:** The principles of scientific inquiry and how they are applied in the natural and social sciences

**Science and Technology:** The formative influences, dynamics, social impacts, and ethical consequences of scientific and technological development

**Diversity:** Diverse human experiences, identities, and cultures within local and global societies, especially as formed by relations of power and privilege

**Civic Life:** The roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizens and institutions in societies and in the world

### Habits of Mind and Heart

To contribute to a rapidly changing, complex, and interdependent world, students must develop ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that allow them to educate themselves for the rest of their lives with passion and purpose. By attending to the cognitive and affective dimensions of human experience, the Core Curriculum enables students to think more deeply, imagine more freely, and communicate more clearly.

**Critical Thinking:** The ability to identify, reflect upon, evaluate, integrate, and apply different types of information and knowledge to form independent judgments

**Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning:** Analytical and logical thinking and the habit of drawing conclusions based on quantitative information

**Complexity:** An approach to understanding the world that appreciates ambiguity and nuance as well as clarity and precision

**Ethical Reasoning:** Drawing on ethical traditions to assess the consequences of individual and institutional decisions

**Religious Reflection:** Questioning and clarifying beliefs through critical inquiry into faith and the religious dimensions of human existence

**Communication:** Interacting effectively with different audiences, especially through writing, speech, and a second language

### Engagement with the World

To engage with the world in meaningful ways, students need opportunities to explore and refine self-knowledge in relation to others. The Core Curriculum enhances students’ understanding of the integrity of their own lives and the dignity inherent in the lives of others, especially the impoverished, suffering, and marginalized.

**Perspective:** Seeking out the experience of different cultures and people, striving to view the world through their eyes

**Collaboration:** The capacity to collaborate intellectually and creatively with diverse people

**Social Justice:** Developing a disciplined sensibility toward the causes of human suffering and misery, and a sense of responsibility for addressing them

**Civic Engagement:** Addressing major contemporary social issues, including environmental sustainability and peaceful resolution of conflict, by participating actively as an informed citizen of society and the world

Each course in the Core Curriculum addresses at least three of the learning goals listed above. Students have multiple opportunities to encounter, practice, and master each learning goal. In addition, specific learning objectives for each area of the Core Curriculum have been developed by faculty Core Curriculum committees. These learning objectives are associated with particular learning goals and describe the knowledge, skills, and values students will be able to demonstrate after completing the courses in the Core Curriculum. The learning objectives are posted on the Core Curriculum website.

**Structure of the Core Curriculum**

The structure of the Core features three phases designed to foster developmental learning and curricular coherence. The first phase, *Foundations,* consists of courses normally taken in the first year, introducing students to the processes and expectations for university-level education:

* Critical Thinking & Writing 1 and 2
* Cultures & Ideas 1 and 2
* Second Language (level required varies by major)
* Mathematics
* Religion, Theology & Culture 1

This phase helps students begin to set their own goals for learning, preparing them to make thoughtful choices in the Core Curriculum, their majors, and cocurricular activities.

The second phase, *Explorations*, offers students the opportunity to choose among courses that will expand and deepen their understanding of a broad range of subject areas needed for effective participation in contemporary life as well as satisfy requirements in students’ majors. *Explorations* requirements:

* Ethics
* Civic Engagement
* Diversity: U.S. Perspectives
* Arts
* Social Science
* Natural Science
* Science, Technology & Society
* Cultures & Ideas 3
* Religion, Theology & Culture 2
* Religion, Theology & Culture 3

Students in Arts and Sciences and Business satisfy their Core *Foundations* and *Explorations* requirements with one course per Core area. Engineering students may satisfy more than one Core requirement with a single course when the course has been approved for both Core areas. Students who double major across schools/colleges must complete the Core requirements for each of their programs.

The third phase, *Integrations,* consists of these requirements:

* Experiential Learning for Social Justice
* Advanced Writing
* Pathways

These Core components are often embedded in courses students take to fulfill other requirements. These courses offer students the opportunity to examine the connections between courses in different disciplines, between the classroom and the wider community, and between their coursework and the professions.

Student progress through the Core Curriculum is not strictly sequential, from *Foundations* through *Explorations* to *Integrations*. While some courses (e.g., Critical Thinking & Writing 1 and 2; Cultures & Ideas 1 and 2; and Religion, Theology & Culture 1, 2, and 3) must be taken in sequence, all students have the opportunity to discover other sequences that are best for their individual undergraduate experience while engaging in coursework designed to address the shared set of learning objectives for each component of the Core Curriculum. Furthermore, the *Integrations* components of the Core Curriculum help students experience requirements not only as individual courses but as related educational activities that help structure and integrate their entire experience of University study.

The [Core Curriculumwebsite](https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/) provides more detailed information about each component of the Core Curriculum, the learning goals and objectives associated with each component, the core policies, and the courses from which students may choose. Students are encouraged to check their degree audit in eCampus regularly to determine their progress in the Core Curriculum and other academic requirements.

### The Core Curriculum and the College of Arts and Sciences

Students in the College of Arts and Sciences should consult Chapter 3 for the requirements for their majors. The Undergraduate Core Curriculum is designed to provide both a foundation and supplement to major requirements.

### The Core Curriculum and the Leavey School of Business

Leavey School of Business requirements determine how students in the business school satisfy some Undergraduate Core Curriculum requirements—some Core Curriculum requirements are fulfilled with courses that also apply to the Business Core Curriculum.. Students in the Leavey School of Business should consult Chapter 4 for a complete list of requirements for their majors and the school. The [Core Curriculum website](https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/) provides additional information.

### The Core Curriculum and the School of Engineering

Students in the School of Engineering are allowed more flexibility in their completion of Core requirements. Students in the School of Engineering should consult Chapter 5 for a complete list of requirements for their majors and the school. The [Core Curriculum website](https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/) provides additional information for how engineering students complete their Core requirements.

### Transfer Credit and the Core Curriculum

All students must satisfy the following Core requirements at Santa Clara University: Civic Engagement; Science, Technology & Society; Religion, Theology & Culture courses; Advanced Writing; Experiential Learning for Social Justice; and Pathways. For all other Core requirements, it is possible for students to earn credit by taking Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, or by completing college-level courses prior to enrolling at Santa Clara.

Transfer credit earned from courses completed before enrollment at Santa Clara is governed by two sets of rules: one for students admitted as first-year students and another for transfer students.

Students admitted as first-year students must satisfy Critical Thinking & Writing 1 and 2, Cultures & Ideas 1 and 2, and Religion, Theology & Culture 1, 2, and 3 with courses completed at Santa Clara University.

In contrast, students admitted as transfers are encouraged to complete Critical Thinking & Writing 1 and 2, and Cultures & Ideas 1 and 2, before their first quarter at Santa Clara. Information about possible substitutions for Critical Thinking & Writing and Cultures & Ideas courses is available in the Office of the Registrar.

Transfer students who enter the University with fewer than 44 units and incomplete CTW or C&I sequences must take both courses in the Critical Thinking & Writing 1 & 2 sequence and/or in the Cultures & Ideas 1 & 2 sequence. Students matriculating with 44 or more units of transferable college credit, which does not include any AP or IB test credit, and have completed the first course in the sequence, will complete the sequence with an advanced course (either Cultures & Ideas 3 or Advanced Writing, depending on the sequence).

Transfer students who enter the University with fewer than 44 units must take all three Religion, Theology & Culture courses in sequential order. Students matriculating with 44 or more units of transferable college credit, which does not include any AP or IB test credit, must complete two courses from the Religion, Theology & Culture sequence in any order.

Transfer students must declare their Pathways by the end of their third quarter at SCU. Transfer students in the College of Arts and Sciences and Leavey School of Business who matriculate with fewer than 44 units must take four courses (minimum of 16 units) toward the Pathways requirement. Transfer students in the College of Arts and Sciences and Leavey School of Business who matriculate with more than 44 units must take three courses (minimum of 12 units) toward the Pathways requirement. All transfer students in the School of Engineering must take three courses (minimum of 12 units) toward the Pathways requirement. All seniors write an integrative essay to complete their Pathway requirement. More detailed Pathway guidelines are available on the [Pathways website](https://www.scu.edu/provost/core/pathways/).

Transfer credit earned from courses completed after initial enrollment at Santa Clara may not be used to fulfill Core Curriculum or other requirements.

Students who transfer to Santa Clara University should consult Chapters 7 and 8 as well as the chapter(s) relevant to their school or college.