

**REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO IMPLEMENT A
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN GENERAL LETTERS
AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
PREPARED BY UW-MILWAUKEE**

ABSTRACT

The University of Wisconsin (UW)-Milwaukee proposes to establish a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) in General Letters. The establishment of this major responds to the needs of two student audiences: traditional students who have amassed nearly 120 credits but have faced a significant obstacle in completing a major and returning adult students who have earned some college credit but who have not yet completed a first undergraduate degree. The College of Letters and Science (L&S) has decades of success in educating college students in traditional programs. In recent years, thousands of undergraduates having completed B.A. or BS degrees in one of the college's 46. The proposed program aims to broaden access to a UW-Milwaukee liberal arts degree to students who have needs that are not met by traditional programs. It will renew the L&S tradition of a general degree that prepares students to work or advance in an array of occupations. According to the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU), bachelor's degree holders are half as likely to be unemployed as their peers who only have a high school degree and they make \$1.2 million in additional earnings on average over their lifetime.¹

The degree will consist of 120 credits in general education and L&S degree requirements, coursework with international content, a significant number of upper-division credits so students develop expertise, a culminating portfolio experience, and the option to complete minors, certificates, and/or microcredentials within the degree. With the flexibility of curriculum and counseling from L&S advisors, students will be able to tailor their degrees to their interests, which will be especially appealing to returning students seeking completion degrees relevant to their careers. Standard UW-Milwaukee undergraduate tuition pricing will apply.

PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

University Name

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Title of Proposed Academic Program

General Letters

¹ APLU. How does a college degree improve graduate' employment and earning potential? Retrieved from <https://www.aplu.org/our-work/4-policy-and-advocacy/publicvalues/employment-earnings/>

Degree Designation(s)

Bachelor of Arts

Proposed Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code

30.0000 – Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, General

Mode of Delivery

Single university, both via face-to-face and 50% or more distance education

Department or Functional Equivalent

College of Letters & Science

College, School, or Functional Equivalent

College of Letters & Science

Proposed Date of Implementation

January 2024

PROGRAM INFORMATION**Overview of the Program**

The B.A. in General Letters will emphasize breadth across several disciplines beyond the usual UW-Milwaukee General Education Requirements (GER). These requirements would align with the L&S degree distribution requirements beyond the GER requirements and would include six additional credits each in Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences and nine credits to satisfy the L&S International requirement. The proposed program would maintain a standard of excellence by requiring 45 credits in upper division courses (300-level and above). Students may complete the B.A. in General Letters in combination with one or more minors, certificates, and microcredentials. Students may not complete a second major.

Students will engage in a culminating portfolio experience. Students will select three papers: summative assignments from two of their 300-level or above courses taken at UW-Milwaukee and a reflection paper in which the student discusses their learning across the degree with reference to those papers. The portfolio will provide students with an integrative learning experience in which they can connect learning across coursework, as well as reflect on how that learning can be transferred or applied to different context. When a student declares this major, they will be provided the information about the portfolio and a prompt for the reflection paper. When a student completing this degree applies for graduation, they will be asked to submit their portfolio.

Projected Enrollments and Graduates by Year Five

Table 1 represents enrollment and graduation projections for students entering the program over the next five years. Potential students will be recruited through outreach to former students who were previously enrolled but departed prior to completion and current students who have earned significant credit but have 'stalled' in their progress. These students may not be able to complete another major or doing so would cost them significantly more time to completion.

Table 1: Five-Year Enrollment and Completion Projections by Headcount

Students/Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
New Students	5	15	15	15	15
Continuing Students	10	15	19	20	21
Total Enrollment	15	30	34	35	35
Graduating Students	8	15	17	18	18

Previously enrolled returning students are counted as new students, even if they very recently enrolled at UW-Milwaukee prior to departing. This is because these students may not have returned to UW-Milwaukee if it weren't for the proposed program. Enrollment projections of these students are based on L&S Student Academic Services records. Students will be recruited through direct contact by university staff. New student projections also include returning adult learners who completed a significant number of credits at UW-Milwaukee and/or other institutions of higher education. This figure is based on a market analysis conducted by Ruffalo Noel Levitz.² It is expected that no traditional new students would enter this program. As a completion degree, it is expected students will enter the program as juniors or seniors. Given it will take some time to complete outreach to former students, it is estimated that five returning 'new' students will enroll in Year 1 and 15 returning 'new' students will return each subsequent year. These estimate are conservative, as marketing efforts may produce greater enrollments.

It is also expected that, on average, 10 continuing UW-Milwaukee students will change majors into this program each year based. This projection is based on two decades of enrollment records and represent students with some barrier to complete another major or who have sought to complete a B.A. Committee Interdisciplinary major without a clear topic or project. These students are counted as continuing because they would be new to the major but not new to UW-Milwaukee. Continuing students also count students entering and counted as new who and continue from a prior year. Factoring in graduation and retention, the average student retention rate is projected to be 80%. This rate is based

² Ruffalo Noel Levitz, LLC. (2022). Bachelor's in General Studies Market Analysis, Program Prioritization and Positioning. Prepared for University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, September 2022.

on these students already having completed a substantial number of credits and the flexible nature of the degree.

It is expected graduation rates for this program to rise more quickly than for the traditional B.A. or BS because students entering the program would have junior or senior standing. Therefore, it is projected that 5 students will complete the program by the end of the first academic year, though this may be underestimated. By the end of Year 5, it is expected 115 students will have enrolled in the program and at least 76 students will have graduated from the program.

Tuition Structure

For students enrolled in the B.A. in General Letters, standard tuition and fee rates will apply. For the current academic year (Fall 2023), residential tuition and segregated fees total \$5,010.05 per semester for a full-time student enrolled in 12 credits per semester or \$417.51 per credit. Of this amount, \$4,227.60 (\$352.30 per credit) is attributable to tuition and \$782.45 (\$65.20 per credit) is attributable to segregated fees. Nonresident tuition and segregated fees total \$11,009.93 per semester for a full-time student enrolled in 12 credits per semester or \$917.49 per credit. Of this amount, \$852.29 is attributable to tuition and \$65.20 is attributable to segregated fees. It is likely that some returning students will study part-time. For a student taking 3 credit hours per semester, residential tuition and segregated fees total \$1521.89 per semester, of which \$1056.90 is attributable to tuition and \$464.90 attributable to segregated fees.

Students who opt to complete this major online. will also be required to pay per course online fees. Based on Fall 2023 rates, additional instructional technology fees would equate to \$30 per credit.

Student Learning Outcomes and Program Objectives

The B.A. in General Letters will prepare students to integrate their learning across disciplines. Students will expand and elevate their skills and proficiency around the essential learning outcomes featured within the UW-Milwaukee general education program. The general education learning goals are based on aspects of learning and competencies identified by employers as essential workforce skills. Thus, graduates of this program will be prepared to work or advance in an array of occupations. Upon completion of the program, students will:

1. Demonstrate oral and written communication skills. Students will be able to communicate clearly, analyze the communication context, and adapt content and style for different audiences across disciplines.

2. Demonstrate information literacy skills. Students will be able to locate, compile, evaluate, and responsibly apply and share information relevant to a problem at hand.
3. Employ methods from at least two disciplines to explore, argue, solve, and/or analyze course content and transfer learning to a new context.
4. Demonstrate self-awareness regarding learning. Students will be able to evaluate their own learning across disciplines
5. Compare and contrast content across subject areas/disciplines and make connections among ideas.

Program Requirements and Curriculum

There are no unique admission requirements for this degree, as it is a completion degree. The majority of students selecting this major will be (1) students facing a barrier to completion of their initially selected major despite completing a large number of credits toward their degree, and (2) returning students seeking a completion degree who have previously enrolled at UW-Milwaukee and/or other institutions of higher education and have earned credits they can transfer.

Table 2 illustrates the program curriculum for the proposed program. The program requirements comprise 120 credits, of which 42-46 credits are general education requirements, and 90 credits are in College of Letters & Science courses. The program requirements are similar to other L&S academic degree programs. Students must complete four courses each in the Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences; nine credits in courses with over 75% international content. Students enrolled in the B.A. in General Letters must complete 45 credits in courses at or above the 300-level, which exceeds the upper-division requirement for other L&S degree programs. This allows students the option to take courses across an array disciplines. Furthermore, the structure of the curriculum will allow students seeking specific professional skills to complete existing certificates or minors, or potential micro-credentials and then apply earned credits and learning to the B.A. in General Studies degree requirements.

As a means of integrating learning across disciplines, students enrolled in the B.A. in General Letters must complete a culminating experience in which the student assembles a portfolio. The portfolio will include (1) a summative assessment assignment from each of two of their 300-level or above courses in two subject areas (two assignments), and (2) a reflection paper in which the student discusses that assignment in relation to their learning across the degree. L&S advisors in collaboration with the Director of Curriculum and Governance will work with students on the portfolio.

Students completing the B.A. in General Letters must complete at least 15 credits in residence at UW-Milwaukee. The College of Letters and Science requires that students attain at least a 2.0 GPA in all credits in the major attempted at UW-Milwaukee. In addition,

students must attain a 2.0 GPA on all major credits attempted, including any transfer work.

Table 2: B.A. in General Letters Program Curriculum

General education courses required for graduation:	
Oral and Written Communication	6 credit(s) ²
Quantitative Literacy	6 credit(s) ³
Humanities	6 credit(s)
Natural Sciences	6 credit(s)
Social Sciences	6 credit(s)
Arts	3 credit(s)
Language other than English	6-10 credit(s) ⁴
Cultural Diversity	3 credit(s)
Academic degree program or major course requirements:	
L&S International requirement	9 credit(s)
L&S Humanities	6 credit(s) ⁵
L&S Natural Sciences	6 credit(s) ⁵
L&S Social Sciences	6 credit(s) ⁵
L&S courses numbered 300 or above	45 credit(s) ⁶
Electives at any level in L&S	9 credit(s)
Total Credits	120 credit(s)

² The OWC-A course English 102 is in L&S and therefore counts toward the student's 90 credits in L&S.

³ QL-A courses are in L&S and therefore count toward the student's 90 credits in L&S.

⁴ With the exception of ASL, all language other than English courses are in L&S, so transfer credits could count toward the student's 90 credits in L&S.

⁵ So long as the student's GERs are taken in L&S courses, or transfer in as L&S courses, this would be 6 credits. If those GERs are taken outside of L&S and cannot transfer in, this would be 12 credits.

⁶ These 300 and above courses may also be used to satisfy the L&S distribution courses in Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, in which case a student may take more than 9 credits in electives.

Collaborative Nature of the Program

No collaborations beyond UW-Milwaukee are planned. L&S will work with the College of General Studies (CGS) to improve the process for CGS courses to transfer as L&S courses. This will provide students who complete the Associate of Arts and Science degree in CGS an additional pathway to a bachelor's degree and would enable them to use as many of their CGS courses as possible toward this degree. No other colleges at UW-Milwaukee currently award an associate degree.

Projected Time to Degree

For a full-time student who is continuously enrolled, the B.A. in General Letters may be completed in eight semesters. However, given the program is a completion degree and

students will likely enter the program with significant prior credit, the projected time to degree will vary and will be dependent on several factors including the number of credits the student previously earned, whether the student has completed the GER requirements, and the student's enrollment status (part-time or full-time).

Accreditation

This proposed program requires no special accreditation or approvals beyond that provided by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

PROGRAM JUSTIFICATION

Rationale

The UW-Milwaukee select mission reflects how the university places value in "[...] opportunities for open inquiry to support the positive transformation of individuals (students, faculty, and staff), institutions, and communities" and in "[...] diversity in all of its definitions, including who we are, how we think, and what we do."³ The proposed B.A. in General Letters supports the university mission by permitting students to pursue open inquiry through a broad general education with a balance of coursework across the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. It will support the positive transformation of students by creating a path to degree completion for traditional students facing obstacles to completing a major, and foster diversity by offering a completion degree for non-traditional students.

Three factors prompted the development of this program. First, L&S advisors consistently have requested that the L&S dean and faculty consider re-establishing a version of the B.A. General degree program that was previously offered by the but was discontinued. Former students indicated it was a valuable degree. Second, L&S advisors tracked the files of students who encountered obstacles to completing a traditional major. Their findings indicated that 10-15 students each year might be able to complete a degree if a general degree were available. Last, this proposed degree can also serve as a completion degree for returning adult learners in the Milwaukee area and the region who are close to but have not completed a bachelor's degree.

The proposed program aligns to elements of the UW-Milwaukee 2030 plan that focuses on becoming a student-centric university. The B.A. in General Letters responds to the needs of students who experience academic and administrative obstacles to completing a traditional major, those students who explore widely before selecting a major and thus have completed a large number of credits, and students who have left the university prior to completing a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, given students have the option to complete program requirements via distance education, the proposed program will align

³ The UWM Vision, Values, and Mission Statement is located at <https://uwm.edu/mission/>

with the provost's office's interest in creating an online completion degree, and will leverage the wide array of online courses already offered in the College of Letters & Science. There are no faculty or staff appointments needed to implement this degree. Existing courses will be utilized and existing College of Letters and Science staff, specifically the L&S Office of Curriculum and Governance in cooperation with L&S Student Academic Services, will handle administrative support for the degree.

University and Systemwide Program Array

UW-Milwaukee currently offers a B.A./B.S. Committee Interdisciplinary (CI) major. The CI major curriculum is a student initiated and self-design interdisciplinarity major. Students declaring the major must form a faculty committee that includes at least two faculty members from two or more different departments. Students create their focus of study, finalize a description for their major, and select major courses. The major is designed for students who have specific learning goals and plan of study that cannot be studied in depth under any other existing major. Thus, the CI major is not well suited as a completion degree.

Most UW institutions offer an individually designed degree. The design of these degrees are similar to the CI major, in that students proactively identify one or more areas of emphasis. The provision of such degrees are important to supporting student success and completion. In the southeast region of the state UW-Whitewater offers a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Science via distance delivery and at its Rock campus. UW-Parkside offers a B.A. in Liberal Studies, which is online only.

Need as Suggested by Student Demand

A ten-year review of the Committee Interdisciplinary Major identified that 10-15 students every year found themselves unable to complete their selected major in L&S despite having done most of the coursework. Discussions with the L&S advisors about the data on the Committee Interdisciplinary Major revealed the following pattern:

- A student might struggle to identify a major that is appropriate for them, then amass credits and fulfill GER and L&S requirements except for the major.
- A student might need to repeat a class to achieve a certain grade or to meet the required GPA in the major but cannot repeat again after three attempts or is unable to repeat it because the class is no longer offered.
- A student in either situation might then select a new/different major but be unable to complete it in under 165 credits.

Many students facing such difficulties were turning to the Committee Interdisciplinary Major ("CI Major") to complete their degrees. The CI Major oversight process has been changed to maintain its focus on student initiative to self-design a truly interdisciplinarity major. As discussed in the array section, the CI major is not designed as a

completion degree. Thus, for students facing the kinds of obstacles listed above, another pathway to completing a solid degree is needed.

Many returning students face similar challenges. They may have amassed dozens of credits but cannot find a major that is appropriate for them, or their previous coursework does not transfer or apply well to an existing L&S major. The flexibility of the proposed degree requirements would allow students to apply more coursework and transfer credits and will allow them to focus on completing the upper- division courses in L&S that meet their needs and interests.

UW-Milwaukee Online shows there is demand nationally for completion degrees, especially when the degree can be completed online. The proposed degree will serve students seeking a completion degree with greater flexibility. Furthermore, the structure of the program is unique in that students seeking specific professional skills will be able to complete existing certificates or minors, or potential micro-credentials and then apply earned credits and learning to the B.A. in General Studies degree requirements. Thus students can complete credential that provide them immediate value in the workforce, while pursuing their bachelor's degree. Credentials include those such as Quantitative Data Analysis, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Death Investigation, Digital Arts and Culture, Spanish for Health Professionals, or Geographic Information Sciences.

Need as Suggested by Market Demand

Providing a route for students to complete a bachelor's degree who otherwise would not have been able to attain one will have a significant positive affect on their financial future. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports on earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment. As of the reporting in 2021, median weekly earnings for those with an associate degree were \$963, whereas weekly median earnings for those with a bachelor's degree were \$1,334, a 39% boost. The unemployment rate for those with a bachelor's degree was 3.5%, compared with 4.6% for those with an associate degree. According to the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU), bachelor's degree holders are half as likely to be unemployed as their peers who only have a high school degree and they make \$1.2 million in additional earnings on average over their lifetime.⁴

⁴ APLU. How does a college degree improve graduate' employment and earning potential? Retrieved from <https://www.aplu.org/our-work/4-policy-and-advocacy/publicvalues/employment-earnings/>

COST AND REVENUE PROJECTIONS NARRATIVE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN GENERAL LETTERS

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

The University of Wisconsin (UW)-Milwaukee proposes to establish a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in General Letters. The BA in General Letters will serve as a completion degree for current and returning students. As such, any students who declare the program will not be 'new' students in the conventional sense. First-year students are not the audience for this degree. Instead 'new' students to the program will be students returning to the university after stopping out. The other students expected to select this program are continuing students facing some barrier to completing a major. These students are generally expected to enter the program with enough credits to have junior or even senior standing; therefore, they may graduate in relatively few semesters after entering this program.

COST REVENUE NARRATIVE

Section I – Enrollment

This program will first accept continuing students at UW-Milwaukee who have been identified as having obstacles to completing a traditional major. There are approximately 5 to 15 such students identified in the College of Letters & Science each year. A mean of 10 is used in the projections. The second audience for this degree is returning students who left UW-Milwaukee because they faced some barrier to completing their major in under 165 credits. These students are recorded as 'new' students in their first year, and continuing students in subsequent years.

Section II – Credit Hours

Credit hours generated by this program will consist of additional enrollment in existing course sections. There is no anticipated need to develop new courses. Existing courses will be sufficient to meet demand for the foreseeable future. Credit hours include only sufficient courses to complete the degree, which for continuing students may be several upper-division courses, and for returning students, only a few upper-division courses. Credit hours were calculated as follows:

1. For year 1, continuing students were assumed to take 12 credits per term and new (returning) students 3 credits per term.
2. In the following years, continuing students include 30% of the previously enrolled students (assuming attrition rate of 20% and graduation of 50%, given their high number of credits on declaring this program), plus the estimated average of 10 additional continuing students (continuing at UWM but changing to the proposed degree from original major). Only students who at already at UWM and change to

the General Letters degree are assumed to take 12 credits per term, and that is assumed only for their first year in the program. All new (returning) students in a given year, plus all students already in the program who have not yet graduated, are assumed to take 6 credits per year. This method should yield a conservative estimate.

Section III – Faculty and Staff Appointments

There are no faculty or staff appointments needed to implement this degree. Existing courses will be utilized and existing College of Letters and Science staff - specifically, the L&S Office of Curriculum and Governance in cooperation with L&S Student Academic Services, will handle administrative support for the degree.

Section IV – Program Revenues

The proposed program requires no additional or unique support, but by offering a completion degree to returning students should yield tuition revenue.

Tuition Revenues

Tuition revenues were calculated for all students, including those students currently enrolled at UW-Milwaukee. The inclusion of these students is reasonable given there is a high likelihood that these students would depart UW-Milwaukee unless a degree completion program like the one proposed becomes available.

Tuition was calculated using the Fall 2023 rates for 3 credits per semester for residents.

This method yields a conservative calculation. Actual revenues may be higher if (1) continuing students take more than 6 credits per semester even a year after declaring the BA in General Letters; or (2) the proposed degree is marketed beyond UWM as a completion degree with the possibility of being completed online, but we have insufficient data to address that possibility in these calculations. Also, although 'stopped out' students and returning students may take only 3 credits per semester, in that case they may take a longer time to graduate, which would lower early revenue but increase the length of time of the incoming tuition revenue, and yield no major net difference over time.

Program/Course Fees

This degree involves no specific fees. There may be online course fees for returning students seeking to do a completion degree online, but we have no basis on which to calculate those.

Grants/Extramural Funding

There are no expected grants.

Program Revenue (PR)

There will be no program revenue from other units as none is needed.

General Program Revenue (GPR)

No GPR will be allocated from other units.

Section V – Program Expenses

This program will create no additional costs to the university.

Salary and Fringe Expenses

This degree does not need additional faculty nor instructional academic staff.

Facilities and Capital Equipment

This degree requires no facilities nor capital equipment beyond existing facilities, and will use those minimally. The only resources needed are Microsoft 365 for administration and Canvas for assessment.

Other Expenses

Again, this program will not generate additional expenses.

Section VI – Net Revenue

Although the main goal of this proposed degree is to meet student need, if stopped-out students return, and if students unable to complete a traditional major continue to take courses to complete this degree, it may generate net revenue. Our conservative calculations are based on continuing students taking 12 credits per semester, and 'new'/returning students taking 6 credits per year.

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee						
Cost and Revenue Projections For Newly Proposed Program						
	Items	Projections				
		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
I	Enrollment (New Student) Headcount	5	15	15	15	15
	Enrollment (Continuing Student) Headcount	10	15	19	20	21
	Enrollment (New Student) FTE	1.25	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
	Enrollment (Continuing Student) FTE	10	12	14	15	15
II	Total New Credit Hours	30	90	90	90	90
	Existing Credit Hours	120	147	173	181	183
III	FTE of New Faculty/Instructional Staff	0	0	0	0	0.00
	FTE of Current Fac/IAS	0	0	0	0	0
	FTE of New Admin Staff	0	0	0	0	0
	FTE Current Admin Staff	0	0	0	0	0
IV	Revenues					
	Tuition (352.30 per credit)	\$52,845.00	\$83,495.10	\$92,690.13	\$95,448.64	\$96,276.19
	Additional Tuition					
	Fees (indicate type)					
	Fees (indicate type)					
	Program Revenue (Grants)					
	Program Revenue - Other					
	GPR (re)allocation					
	Total Revenue	\$52,845.00	\$83,495.10	\$92,690.13	\$95,448.64	\$96,276.19
V	Expenses					
	Salaries plus Fringes					
	Faculty Salary					
	Instuctional Academic Staff					
	Administrative and Student Support Staff					
	Other Staff					
	Fringe Faculty and Academic Staff					
	Fringe University Staff					
	Fringe Other Staff					
	Facilities and Capital Equipment					
	University buildings and space					
	Capital Equipment					
	Operations					
	Other Expenses					
	Other (please list)					
	Other (please list)					
	Total Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Net Revenue	\$52,845	\$83,495	\$92,690	\$95,449	\$96,276

Provost's Signature:

Date:

Chief Business Officer's Signature:

Date: