

General Education and Exploratory Programs



General Education Program

General Education, the Human Community, is an essential part of every undergraduate degree program offered here at James Madison University. Its learning outcomes are organized into five areas of study. Courses in each area have been designed by JMU faculty to meet the specific outcomes associated with that area.

The goal of the General Education program is to ensure students understand the historical and contemporary distinctions and interconnections among people, institutions, and communities that create, preserve, and transmit culture and knowledge in the arts, sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and humanities.

Program Structure

In order to graduate, each student must complete fourteen requirements across all five areas, which typically comprise one-third of a student's coursework - about 41 credit hours.

- Madison Foundations
- Arts and Humanities
- The Natural World
- American and Global Perspectives
- Sociocultural and Wellness Area

Visit jmu.edu/gened for more General Education information including program requirements, goals and more.

Exploratory Program

Students who are undecided on their intended field of study should consider the JMU Exploratory program. The goal of this program is to assist individuals in finding their best academic path through the exploration of different majors, minors and career options.

Intentionally choosing the exploratory program provides students the time to discover and explore their interest areas. This exploration takes place through general education coursework, various assessments and opportunities to explore courses of interest. Exploratory students also work closely with their specially trained academic advisors to develop an effective plan to stay on track for a timely graduation.

Exploratory Areas of Interest

The Exploratory program offers eight Areas of Interest for students to select from with the goal of helping them find their best-fit major:

- Arts: For those who believe aesthetics are important and like to solve problems in creative ways.
- Business: For those who are achievement oriented and like to use data to make informed decisions.
- Education: For those who enjoy breaking down complex information to others in fun and engaging ways.
- Health, Wellness and Medicine: For those who believe health is important and desire to be a health advocate for other individuals.
- Humanities: For those who think critically and want to broaden their worldview.
- Social Sciences: For those who enjoy learning about society, people, culture and politics and want to use the scientific method to explore human and animal behavior.
- STEM: For those who want to pursue mathematics, computers or other technology to solve complex problems that affect our world.
- Exploratory: For those who are unsure of their interests and/or are not ready to narrow down their area of study.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the Exploratory program.

For more information, contact
University Advising
Student Success Center, Room 4045
540-568-7350

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