

Matrix of the Bachelor of Arts Degree

The BA Degree Matrix

A BA is a BA at York University in terms of the characteristics, academic objectives, learning expectations and fundamental structure of the *degree*. The core criteria of the degree has been articulated in complementary qualitative and quantitative frameworks to ensure the defined characteristics of a Bachelor of Arts are achieved regardless of the Faculty offering - or planning to offer - the degree. The degree matrix also provides clarity for curriculum committees in assessing the creation of new BA programs, as well as to those who assess Faculty Transfer to and within BA programs.

Qualitative Framework

In its most basic definition, a BA consists of a major program of study and different types of breadth of knowledge, as indicated in the two main rows in the table. Specific description of these two elements details their *General Characteristics, Academic Objectives, Expectations*, and basic *Structures* within the degree. In colloquial terms, it seeks to articulate for the major and breadth what they are, what they do, what do they give (or what students may get from them), and how can they be realized.

The Qualitative Framework recognizes that General Education courses are one way of realizing breadth of knowledge as a foundational principle of university-level learning as well as in specific cases a foundational¹ element of major programs. As one principled way of achieving breadth that is Faculty specific and pedagogically distinct, *General Education* is realized differently in the BA depending on the Faculty and the nature of its majors. Similarly, the terminology of "Electives" is not standardized across the Faculties. There are "elective" elements in major programs as well as in the Degree as a whole. "Electives," therefore, are a way of achieving different types of breadth. Breadth in the major is defined in ways and structures pertinent and relative to a specific discipline or field of study. Breadth outside of the major is defined in terms of diversity of knowledge and skills, and is realized in various structures of the degree. The main difference of a BA from any other type of degree is the character and quality of its breadth, which must be realized in "the Arts," as the name Bachelor of Arts indicates. Since a BA may be offered by any Faculty at York University, and the qualitative character of the Degree does not necessarily pertain to the major program in itself and on its own the irreducible defining feature of the BA is breadth in the traditional Arts disciplines (which at York are interpreted as the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences and others, e.g., fine arts; environmental studies, etc.)

Finally, foundational educational enrichment is a principle of the BA to which York University is uniquely committed. It is promoted in the major and the different elements of breadth, achieving different but related identities in each. Its broadest and York-unique realization in terms of inter- and multi-disciplinarity is found in courses designed specifically to promote General Education. These seek to establish foundational enrichment of knowledge and skills as ends in themselves, yet as simultaneously providing supportive grounds and contexts for successful learning in any major discipline or field of study. Necessarily, these courses vary in content and design as they are tailored to promote breadth and foundational enrichment in light of the different disciplines of the various Faculties. This is to say that while the Gen Ed course content and credit minima may differ across the Faculties, the courses themselves and the principle of their combination have similar objectives and seek commensurable learning expectations. There is also, however, an element of foundational enrichment within any major program of study as realized, for instance, in introductory courses that establish appropriate foundations for further study in the discipline or field. "Majors" and "minors" are programs designed in more or less regulated ways (e.g., pre- and co-requisites) relative to appropriate year-level progression.

Quantitative Framework

A pan-university degree credit minimum has been established to ensure that the introductory, core, and upper year-level breadth and depth of knowledge elements of the BA degree are achieved. The *Qualitative* Framework references the minimum standards for major and minor credit requirements, outside the major requirements and general education requirements. The detailed *Quantitative* Framework for each element of the degree is attached in a separate table.

¹ The use of the term *foundation* in this context is not to be interpreted as a reference to "Foundations" courses.

Qualitative Structure of the BA Degree

	General Characteristics <i>(What is it?)</i>	Academic Objectives <i>(What is the value of it?)</i>	Expectations <i>(What can they "get" from it?)</i>	Structures <i>(Where and how is it realized?)</i>
Major Program	<p>Focused, in-depth study in a discipline or field in which students seek to develop their interests, knowledge and proficiency for intrinsic purposes, self-development, and the potential of related employment.</p> <p>Coherent organization in terms of development and relation of courses within a discipline or field in which there is a recognized body of scholarly research that explores and develops core texts (in a variety of forms, be they in written or spoken languages, images, sounds, symbols, dimensional shapes, etc.) theories, issues, and applications of one form or another. Majors comprise a body of methodologies, techniques and approaches specific to the discipline or field, which can be taught, practiced, and applied.</p> <p>Introduction and development of foundational knowledge and enrichment within the discipline, including reinforcement of critical intellectual, creative and communication skills, and instruction in those specific to the discipline or field.</p>	<p>A core focus of study within and around which students can make informed choices to develop additional breath and depth of education both within and outside of the discipline or field of study.</p> <p>Organized and where appropriate, sequenced exposure to and instruction in fundamental ideas, issues and questions, texts and contexts in the discipline or field of study from introductory to increasingly specific and sophisticated levels to achieve depth of disciplinary knowledge.</p> <p>Provision of significant exposure, coherent training and skills development, practice and application in the fundamental issues, theories, methodologies and approaches of the discipline or field from introductory to increasingly specific and sophisticated levels.</p> <p>Intellectual growth and the development of independent and creative thought within the field, the ability to recognize and develop broader connections and implications beyond the discipline or field, and evolve independent scholarly/ creative research skills.</p>	<p>Breadth and depth of knowledge in key texts, images, works, theories, and criticism in the discipline or field of study.</p> <p>Ability to understand foundational and derivative or specialized concepts, theories, and influences in the discipline or field, their development and relationship.</p> <p>Proficiency in both knowledge and use/application of methodologies, approaches, and techniques necessary to the discipline or field of study.</p> <p>Ability to recognize and develop broader connections and implications beyond the discipline or field.</p> <p>Development of intellectual and communication skills relevant to the major discipline or field of study and its applications, methodologies, etc.</p> <p>A sense of the magnitude of the discipline or field, the limitations of one's knowledge within it, and recognition of areas of potential future study.</p>	<p>The following pan-University minimum structural requirements are intended to support the objectives and learning outcomes of BA majors and minors, particularly in relation to depth and breadth within the major or minor. The depth of knowledge component of the degree is met through 4000 level credit requirements.</p> <p>Individual Faculties/programs may establish program requirements that are greater than the minimum standard and/or additional structural requirements/ components.</p> <p>Minimum Number of Major or Minor Credits, By Degree Option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized Honours BA – 54 credits, including 12 credits at the 4000 level in the major; • Honours BA – 42 credits, including 12 credits at the 4000 level in the major; • Honours Double Major BA – 42 credits, including 12 credits at the 4000 level in each major; • Honours Double Major Interdisciplinary BA – 36 credits, including 6 credits at the 4000 level in each major; • Honours Major/Minor BA – 42 credits, including 12 credits at the 4000 level in the major, and 30 credits, normally including 6 credits at the 4000 level, in the minor; and • BA – 30 credits, including 12 credits at the 3000/4000 level in the major.

	General Characteristics <i>(What is it?)</i>	Academic Objectives <i>(What is the value of it?)</i>	Expectations <i>(What can they "get" from it?)</i>	Structures <i>(Where and how is it realized?)</i>
Breadth	<p>There are three main characteristics of breadth:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) disciplinary, which provides the development of knowledge (amplitude, depth, complexity and sophistication) beyond the foundations of the discipline or field; 2) interdisciplinary, which brings together the knowledge and analytical methods of two different disciplines in the approach to an issue or problem, such that the ways and means of one can be used to further inquiry and analysis beyond the limit point of the other, and vice versa; 3) multidisciplinary, which brings an array of discourses from different disciplines to bear on a particular issue/problem for analysis, potential solution, and recognition of the implications within and across the different disciplines. <p>Breadth incorporates instruction in critical intellectual and communication skills applicable to all types of study, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) critical reading/ listening/ viewing/ performing: the ability to ascertain and understand information from written, oral, visual and performance texts and to question and assess it rationally; 2) critical thinking: the ability relate the product of #1 with one's own knowledge in order compare, contrast, and combine information so as to develop, test (critique and revise), then assert new ideas; 3) critical communication: the ability to convey one's ideas in a well organized, clear, and effective manner in the appropriate language(s), whether scholarly or creative, in forms appropriate to a variety of audiences. 	<p>Establishes both a foundation and supportive, diverse contexts for university-level study by providing exposure to and instruction in fundamental ideas, issues and questions, texts and contexts, methodologies and approaches in the arts and sciences writ large. Such exposure not only provides knowledge and skills for the degree as a whole, but also for a life of learning to come.</p> <p>Amplifies, augments, and diversifies students' knowledge, skills, perspectives, awareness and understanding within and beyond the major program of specialized study. Such diversity allows students to explore and examine issues in new ways, recognize the limitations of disciplinary perspectives, and become aware of new relations and applications of knowledge across disciplines. It strengthens students' ability to make sound judgments and to trust in the integrity of those judgments.</p> <p>Provides the potential for intellectual and personal growth, expanded range of thought, perspective, awareness, recognition and appreciation, applicability and, above all, creativity and innovation.</p>	<p>General intellectual growth and the ability to think rationally, creatively and independently.</p> <p>Meta-cognitive understanding of the process of learning, which establishes a basis for life-long learning.</p> <p>Knowledge of and competence in the means of study (modes of reasoning and research methods) to develop and explore disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary questions and issues.</p> <p>Ability to employ critical intellectual, creative research and communicative skills in inter- and multidisciplinary settings to approach issues and problems, recognize and determine elements of importance, analyze content material, synthesize appropriate responses, develop the implications of such responses.</p> <p>Ability to recognize the limitations of disciplinary knowledge and to apply inter- and multidisciplinary approaches to move beyond those limitations.</p>	<p>There are three component areas of the degree in which breadth can be pursued and achieved, each of which comprise credit minima:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the foundational enrichment of general education, which includes critical intellectual and communication skills; 2) elective courses in disciplines and fields outside the major, which include exposure to discipline specific critical skills; 3) elective courses within the major that broaden the core knowledge and methodologies of the discipline or field. Such breadth occurs as part of the major program requirements; however, students may choose freely additional courses within their major field of study that do not count toward the major requirements specifically if they so desire, and/or follow program recommendations, depending on the major program chosen. <p>The following pan-University minimum quantitative requirements are intended to support the objectives and learning expectations of BA degree type, particularly in relation to breadth outside of the major. As is noted above, individual Faculties may establish credit minima that are greater than those outlined below and/or additional structural requirements/components.</p> <p>General Education Requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 credits, including six credits from three of the following four areas: humanities, modes of reasoning, natural science, social science. <p>Outside the Major Credit Requirement (for single major programs only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 18 credits outside the major.

Quantitative Structure of the BA Degree

Degree Option/Requirement	Minimum Credit Requirement
Minimum Number of Major or Minor Credits (including, where applicable, iBA options):	
BA major	30 credits; including 12 credits at the 3000 or 4000 level
Honours BA major	42 credits; including 12 credits at the 4000 level
Specialized Honours BA major ²	54 credits; including 12 credits at the 4000 level
Honours Double Major BA major	42 credits; including 12 credits at the 4000 level in each major
Honours Double Major Interdisciplinary BA	36 credits; including 6 credits at the 4000 level in each major
Honours Major/Minor BA	42 credits, including 12 credits at the 4000 level in the major and 30 credits, normally including 6 credits at the 4000 level in the minor
Upper Level Requirements:	
90 credit BA	18 credits at the 3000 or 4000 level including 12 credits in the major as above.
120 credit Specialized Honours BA and Honours BA degrees	36 credits at the 3000 or 4000-level including at least 18 credits at the 4000-level. This includes the 3000 and 4000 level credits in the major and minor listed above.
General Education Requirement	
	18 credits, including 6 credits from three of the following four areas: humanities, modes of reasoning, natural science, social science at the 1000 or 2000 level (1000 level for natural science).
Outside the Major Discipline Requirement(s)	
	At least 18 credits outside the major ³ Not applicable to double major and major/minor programs.
Residency Requirement	
	A minimum of 30 course credits and at least half (50 per-cent) of the course credits required in each undergraduate degree program major/minor must be taken at York University ⁴

² Exception: Specialized Honours programs in the Faculty of Fine Arts. Such degree options will be phased out coincident with the introduction of a new degree type.

³ Non-major courses taken in French instruction to meet bilingual requirements at Glendon may be counted towards the *Outside the Major Discipline* requirement.

⁴ Exception: At least half (50 per-cent) of the course credits required in the bilingual or trilingual degree program major/minor at Glendon College must be taken at Glendon.