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# A Student's Guide to the Baccalaureate Degree

*Non Scholae Sed Vitae Discimus*  
“Education not for a living, but for life.”

We the faculty at Missouri Southern believe that you achieve a complete education through an interrelated program of study which includes the **Core Curriculum** and your **major**, as well as the extra-curricular opportunities that complete the total collegiate experience. We realize that over a lifetime many of you will change occupations and careers several times. While specialized knowledge in your field is essential, we believe that certain lifelong thinking and learning skills and a common body of knowledge are critical for an understanding of yourself and your larger community and for career advancement in the 21st-century marketplace. Specifically, we are committed to assist you as an undergraduate to:

- Acquire knowledge, both in breadth and depth, through exposure to a wide variety of disciplines and through majoring in your chosen field.
- Communicate with precision and style and to think clearly and critically.
- Achieve competence in quantitative skills.
- Know the methods of inquiry and thought necessary for understanding nature, society and self.
- Sharpen your awareness and appreciation of other cultures with their differing values, traditions and institutions.
- Develop lasting intellectual and cultural interests.
- Learn more about yourself and demonstrate mature decision-making skills.
- Achieve greater social maturity and tolerance for human diversity through the experience of working closely with a wide variety of fellow students and faculty members.

## Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum at Missouri Southern is a carefully designed series of courses that all students earning a bachelor's degree must complete. It is our effort to furnish you a liberal education. But why? What about the Core is so important that it constitutes nearly half of the credit hours necessary for your degree?

One way to answer that question is to reflect on another: What does it mean to be well-educated? While the question has generated much debate and there is no simple answer, most agree that a well-educated person possesses certain fundamental intellectual skills, a broad knowledge of the world, and a deep knowledge of a particular subject. While pursuit of a major field of study furnishes knowledge in depth, it is the Core Curriculum that seeks to arm you with the intellectual skills and the breadth of knowledge that characterize well-educated individuals.

## Goals of the Core Curriculum

The College accepts four intellectual skills as essential for well-educated people:

**Communicating:** Well-educated people develop effective use of the English language and quantitative and other symbolic systems essential to their success in school and in the world. Students should be able to read and listen critically and to write and speak with thoughtfulness, clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness.

**Higher-Order Thinking:** Well-educated people develop the ability to distinguish among opinions, facts, and inferences; to identify underlying or implicit assumptions; to make informed judgments; and to solve problems by applying evaluative standards.

**Valuing:** Well-educated people develop abilities to understand the moral and ethical values of a diverse society and to understand that many courses of action

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are guided by value judgments about the way things ought to be. Students should be able to make informed decisions through identifying personal values and the values of others and through understanding how such values develop. They should be able to analyze the ethical implications of choices made on the basis of these values.

**Managing Information:** Well-educated people develop abilities to locate, organize, store, retrieve, evaluate, synthesize, and annotate information from print, electronic, and other sources in preparation for solving problems and making informed decisions

The College accepts seven broad areas of knowledge as necessary for well-educated people to understand and function effectively in today's complex and changing world.

**Social and Behavioral Sciences:** Well-educated people develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them through study of content and the processes used by historians and social and behavioral scientists to discover, describe, explain, and predict human behavior and social systems. Students must understand the diversities and complexities of the cultural and social world, past and present, and come to an informed sense of self and others.

**Humanities and Fine Arts:** Well-educated people develop an understanding of the ways in which humans have addressed their condition through imaginative work in the humanities and fine arts. They deepen their understanding of how that imaginative process is informed and limited by social, cultural, linguistic, and historical circumstances; and to appreciate the world of the creative imagination as a form of knowledge.

**Mathematics:** Well-educated people develop an understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts and their applications. Students should develop a level of quantitative literacy that would enable them to make decisions and solve problems and which could serve as a basis for continued learning.

**Life and Physical Sciences:** Well-educated people develop an understanding of the principles and laboratory procedures of life and physical sciences and cultivate their abilities to apply the empirical methods of scientific inquiry. Students should understand how scientific discovery changes theoretical views of the world, informs our imaginations, and shapes human history. Students should also understand that science is shaped by historical and social contexts.

**International Cultural Studies:** Well-educated people develop an understanding of how cultures and societies around the world are formed, sustained, and evolve. Students should understand world affairs, international issues, and cultures other than their own as seen through the history, geography, language, literature, philosophy, economics, or politics of the cultures. Students will acquire empathy for the values and perspectives of cultures other than their own and an awareness of the international and multicultural influences in their own lives.

**Health and Wellness:** Well-educated people develop the knowledge and self-management skills that will assist them in adopting healthy lifestyles. This encompasses all areas of wellness: physical, emotional, spiritual, social and intellectual. Students will understand the relationship between lifestyle management, quality of life, and societal health and productivity.

**Economics:** Well-educated people develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them through study of the fundamental interaction between wants and resources in shaping human experience. Students must understand how the science of economics can be used to discover, explain, and predict human behavior and social systems both past and present.

These eleven goals have shaped the faculty's design of your Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum is more than an array of courses from which students choose. The word *core* is derived from a root that means heart. We believe that your experience in our Core Curriculum is the heart of an excellent education. It also provides the foundation for your study of your major.

Three major strands are woven through the college's curriculum in both the Core and the major: writing, computer literacy, and international education. First, because writing is among the most crucial skills, Southern ensures that writing permeates the total course of study, starting in freshman composition courses and continuing through



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writing intensive courses in each major. Second, no one unfamiliar with computers will be prepared to face the 21st Century, so Southern has devised a computer literacy program to enable all its graduates to use these powerful tools. And third, as detailed elsewhere in this catalog, Southern has a special emphasis in international education. An awareness of other peoples, languages and cultures is becoming increasingly necessary. In every possible course, the curriculum includes a global perspective.

## Your Major

The College offers more than 100 majors in a wide variety of fields. Your pursuit of your major will furnish you with the knowledge in depth that is also characteristic of a well-educated person. Some students come to Southern with a clearly defined idea of their major; others come uncertain, relying on their exposure to the Core Curriculum and on experimenting with a few elective courses to help them choose.

In either case, when you emerge with your baccalaureate degree, you will have mastered a body of knowledge that sets you apart from well-educated people in other fields. Often it is your mastery of a particular discipline that makes you of great value in the workplace. Not only do you emerge knowing a great deal, but you also emerge armed with the power to learn more, to extend your knowledge.

## Special Features of Missouri Southern

A comprehensive education fostering life-long learning is the aim of our liberal arts curriculum. Southern strives to present the best in higher learning. The following features distinguish our college.

**Emphasis on Teaching:** The heart of Missouri Southern is that of an undergraduate college where the interaction between teacher and student is of primary importance in the learning experience. Here you will be taught by professors with degrees from the most prestigious universities across the nation.

**International Mission:** The world is changing rapidly and dramatically. The future will belong to those who have an understanding and appreciation for the world beyond the boundaries of our country. That is why Missouri Southern has chosen to emphasize a global perspective throughout our entire curriculum and wherever possible to add an international dimension to our courses.

**Assessment of Outcomes:** Missouri Southern continually assesses the effectiveness of its programs, including the Core Curriculum and all the majors. The assessment information helps us revise and improve our programs. In this way, we ensure our curriculum is dynamic and up-to-date.

**Enrichment Programs:** Your opportunity for total education is enriched through a variety of special programs including the Honors Program, internships and independent study opportunities, and "themed" semesters that focus on a country, continent, or section of the world. Study abroad opportunities include Oxford University and Cambridge University in England, the Summer in Sweden art program, language immersion programs in France, Germany, Mexico, and Spain, and semester-long exchange programs around the world.

**Total Collegiate Experience:** A great deal of college education happens outside the classroom. An array of extracurricular activities is offered to meet almost every academic and social interest. In addition, a variety of services are available for the student to meet educational and personal needs.

**Diverse Student Body:** Students at Southern represent a wide variety of ages and places of origin. The sizable enrollment of nontraditional students (those over 25) and international students is a great advantage. On our campus, students come to see each other as friends and allies and learn to develop healthy and supportive relationships with a variety of people.

**Flexible Class Scheduling:** The Division of Lifelong Learning provides a variety of forms of access to education to meet the needs of today's students. Access to educational opportunities is provided through televised, Internet, cd/video tape correspondence and weekend hybrid classes.

More complete information on each of these features is found in the catalog. And of course, our faculty and staff are always willing to help you to make the most of your college experience. Don't hesitate to ask. We're here for you!