



## *USF St. Petersburg SACS Accreditation*

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### **VII. CORE REQUIREMENT SEVEN**

#### Statement

#### The institution

(a) offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; or at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides written justification and rationale for program equivalency.

(b) offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated purpose and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

(c) offers a general education program at the collegiate level that is (1) a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for course equivalency.

(d) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia, where appropriate. The institution itself, however, provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees, or provides an alternative approach to meeting this requirement. The alternative approach is approved by the Commission on Colleges. In all cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program.

The degree-granting programs at USF St. Petersburg support its mission by providing distinctive undergraduate and graduate programs in the arts and sciences, business and education. The interdisciplinary Programs of Distinction engage in wide-ranging collaborative research, supporting that portion of the mission that recognizes the

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institution's active role in meeting societal needs. The careful development of such distinctive programs ensures USF St. Petersburg's complementary contribution to the greater USF, a multi-campus premier national research university.

At present, USF St. Petersburg offers 24 full undergraduate degree programs and 10 full master's degree programs ([Attachment Z](#)). See supporting document USF SP #14: USF St. Petersburg Degree Program Requirements for descriptions of USF St. Petersburg's degree-granting programs and their objectives. This information is also published in the USF St. Petersburg Undergraduate Catalog ([USF SP #3](#)) and the USF St. Petersburg Graduate Catalog ([USF SP #4](#)).

USF St. Petersburg's general education requirements ensure a broad liberal arts grounding for students that stresses competence in written expression, historical and social perspectives, scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and cultural sensitivity. All new or returning USF St. Petersburg students are required to successfully complete 45 semester hours to meet General Education and Exit requirements.

Thirty-six of the forty-five hours apply to courses in seven academic clusters: English composition (6 hours); quantitative methods (6 hours); natural sciences (6 hours); social sciences (6 hours); historical perspective (6 hours); fine arts (3 hours); and African, Latin American, Middle Eastern or Asia perspectives (3 hours).

A number of these and other courses meet the so-called "Gordon Rule" requirements which specify that students demonstrate skills in communication (12 hours) and computation (6 hours). Gordon Rule requirements follow in [Attachment BB](#). Full-time students usually complete their General Education coursework within the first two years of study, then concentrate on satisfying the requirements in a major.

Additionally, USF St. Petersburg stresses continuation of liberal arts education throughout each student's academic experience, with nine hours of the forty-five required as "exit" study. Seminar-size classes taken under the exit requirement enable undergraduate students in their junior and senior years to integrate knowledge from study in their disciplines within a broader, liberal arts context. Courses approved by the university to accomplish the objective incorporate consideration of values and ethics, race and ethnicity, gender and environmental perspectives.

Six hours under the exit requirement apply to classes designated as "major works and major issues" that emphasize interdisciplinary approaches to topics. The remaining three hours come from classes designated as "literature and writing," with students producing written assignments amounting to at least 6,000 words. The 6,000 word standard also meets a statewide Gordon Rule requirement in writing skills.

The exit requirement constitutes a capstone experience that complements and enhance the education students receive at USF St. Petersburg, preparing them for roles in business professions, teaching and society.

USF St. Petersburg also encourages competence in at least one foreign language, which may include American Sign Language, as a means of enriching communication and cultural skills. Not all majors, however, require post-secondary foreign language as a prerequisite for the bachelor's degree.

USF St. Petersburg provides instruction for all coursework required of each degree program, although legislative mandate provides that students may choose to enroll at other USF campuses for the same courses.

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**Minimum Documentation Required**

- 1. Catalog containing information regarding the institution's degree programs.**
- 2. A description of each degree program, the number of hours required for each, and the minimum and maximum period of time which a student has to obtain each degree.**
- 3. A justification and rationale for program equivalency if appropriate.**
- 4. A statement of objectives for each degree program.**
- 5. A list of courses in the required general education core and the number of hours required.**
- 6. Identification of at least one required course in each of the three categories: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; mathematics/natural sciences.**
- 7. Justification of an alternative approach to offering courses in degree programs, if applicable.**

**Supporting Documentation:**

<a href="#">Attachment Z</a>	Degrees Awarded at USF St. Petersburg
USF SP #15	USF St. Petersburg Program Requirements and Objectives
<a href="#">USF SP #3</a>	USF St. Petersburg Undergraduate Catalog
<a href="#">US SP #4</a>	USF St. Petersburg Graduate Catalog
<a href="#">Attachment BB</a>	Gordon Rule

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