Design I

The Program:

• The Foundation
  – 32 courses + 2 short term units
  – Major
  – Writing and other forms of expression and communication (3 courses)
  – Formal, quantitative, and scientific reasoning (3 courses)

• 16 Courses outside major field
  – Students take at least sixteen courses from outside their major department or program. This requirement is designed to guard against overspecialization.

The Rationale:

Flexibility allows students to pursue a course of study directed by their individual backgrounds, preparations and interests. Freedom of choice enhances students’ initiative, independence, responsibility, and creativity as learners and thinkers. With the guidance of faculty advisors, students design programs of study within the parameters of the minimal set of explicit requirements.

Most colleges with a so-called “open curriculum” nonetheless have established certain requirements, including participation in a first-year seminar or tutorial, proficiency in writing and quantitative analysis, the declaration or design of a major, and the stipulation that no more than half the units for graduation can be in the major field. Some add a thesis or senior project.
Design II

The Program:

• The Foundation
  – 32 courses + 2 short term units
  – A Major
  – Writing and other forms of expression and communication (3 courses)
  – Formal, quantitative, and scientific reasoning (3 courses)

• 2 General Education Concentrations

Students complete the prescribed work in two general education concentrations (GECs) of four courses each. Both GECs must be in fields other than that of their major, and at least one must be drawn from a division outside that of their major.

The Rationale:

Students should balance academic depth and breadth by avoiding both overspecialization and a scattered or superficial course of study. The general education program should provide incentives for students to pursue actively all aspects of their education at progressively more sophisticated levels throughout their college careers. It should also encourage students to cross the boundaries of established disciplines and reflect on the nature and scope of those disciplines. This process enriches students' awareness of the variety of methods, strategies, and perspectives that can be employed, and how these choices affect one's conclusions.

The Details:

General Education Concentrations (GECs) may be drawn either from majors offered at the college and/or from one of the designated areas of inquiry.

• GECs in areas currently offered as majors are defined by the department or program offering the major.

• Areas of inquiry are designed collaboratively by sets of faculty members and cover a topic or a field of study not offered at Bates as a major.
Design III

The Program:

- The Foundation
  - 32 courses + 2 short term units
  - A Major
  - Writing and other forms of expression and communication (3 courses)
  - Formal, quantitative, and scientific reasoning (3 courses)

Breadth—4 pairs of courses, each pair drawn from a different department or program, and no more than two pairs drawn from a single “division” (Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, Interdisciplinary Programs)

Systematic study in courses from different divisions and programs achieves the goal of exposure to a broad variety of knowledge bases and methods of inquiry. Study beyond the introductory level encourages students to think at more complex levels. Coupled with specialization in a major field of study, this distributional approach achieves breadth and depth of inquiry in the liberal arts.

Laboratory Experience—one course involving data collection and analysis in the natural, environmental, or social sciences.

Students should understand how the reliability of conclusions drawn from experiments is influenced by experimental design and measurement quality. Students develop this understanding by making their own measurements and analyzing the results.

Contextual Awareness—two courses designated as “linked” that highlight the similarities and differences among peoples, environments, and cultures locally, nationally and internationally.

The experience of learning about and reflecting on differences and relations among peoples, environments and cultures encourages Bates students to deepen their awareness of their own social location, biases and perspectives.

Interpretive and Creative Processes—1 course

Students should be familiar with the ways that literature and the fine and performing arts reflect the experiences and thoughts of humanity. This is best achieved by critical study of the works of others, or by participation in the fine arts.

Non-course-based Learning Experiences - Activities that students undertake which include sustained intellectual engagement or leadership may be used to replace a requirement in this general education plan. Examples may include: teaching assistantships, internships, AESOP leaders, volunteer work, service learning, conference presentation, civic engagement, performance, publication, portfolio, technology competition, etc.
All of the designs share the following components

32 COURSES + 2 SHORT TERMS. Bates students complete 32 courses (for at least 64 quality points) and 2 Short Term units.

The course load at Bates should be challenging enough to keep studying and learning as the primary occupation for students, while allowing for sustained focus in individual courses.

MAJOR Students complete all prescribed work in a major, including a senior thesis or a comprehensive exam, as determined by the major department or program.

Students at Bates should achieve a depth of knowledge within a discipline or area of study, becoming acquainted with its scope and methods. An important part of this specialization is the chance for students to work intensively on a particular topic within their major field, an experience that not only fosters academic confidence but also provides an understanding of the nature and limits of expertise.

FORMAL, QUANTITATIVE, AND SCIENTIFIC REASONING (FQSR) – Students must successfully complete 3 FQSR courses, 1 by the end of their sophomore year. These courses may come from various departments and programs, including, but not necessarily restricted to, offerings in mathematics, logic, statistics, natural and social sciences.

Students should be familiar with formal, quantitative, and scientific reasoning. They should be numerate, adept at problem solving, and able to comprehend, organize, and communicate quantitative information. They should understand the roles and connections among experimentation, observation, models, and theories. They should be able to use data to support or refute hypotheses, and be able to employ inductive and deductive reasoning appropriately. They should be able to use language and symbolic expression in a disciplined way. In preparation for a capstone experience students should be able to accumulate and evaluate evidence, and use it to formulate cogent arguments.

WRITING AND OTHER FORMS OF EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION – 3 courses.

Students obtain 3 “W” credits: 1 at the first year level, 1 at the sophomore or junior level, and 1 at the senior level. These courses may be counted towards the major. The following may be designated as providing “W” credit at the specified level:

(a) First year level: A First Year Seminar; an entire course; a section of a course; or a subset of a large course or section that is not otherwise writing intensive.
(b) Sophomore or junior level: An entire course; a section of a course; or a subset of a large course or section that is not otherwise writing intensive.
(c) Senior level: A senior thesis or senior seminar that emphasizes writing.

With the consent of their major department or program, students may substitute one course or experience that emphasizes oral, graphic, or other modes of expression or communication.

Students should develop the ability to express and present ideas and information logically and clearly at progressively more sophisticated levels. This enhances students’ capacity to evaluate critically both the presentation and content of ideas, while developing a mastery of writing mechanics.