

SACS Definitions Relating to the Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences

- 2.7.3 In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is 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. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. (General Education)

The term *natural science* is ... used to distinguish those fields that use the scientific method to study nature from the social sciences, which use the scientific method to study human behavior and society; from the formal sciences, such as mathematics and logic, which use a different (*a priori*) methodology and from the humanities.

Natural science is one of three divisions of science, the other two being the social sciences — psychology, sociology, economics, etc. — and the formal sciences — mathematics, logic, and statistics. The natural sciences are astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth science, and physics.

"Social science" is commonly used as an umbrella term to refer to a plurality of fields outside of the natural sciences. These include: anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, linguistics, political science, international studies, communication, and, in some contexts, psychology.