

THE TRINITY COLLEGE ‘R’ CODE

From the Curriculum 2000 Report:

“We seek for our students to move beyond being the passive recipients of knowledge that is transmitted to being an active participant in the discovery, critical evaluation, and application of knowledge and understanding.”

“[T]he research process develops in students an understanding of the process by which new knowledge is created, organized, accessed, and synthesized. It also fosters a capacity for the critical evaluation of knowledge and the methods of discovery.”

From the bulletin

“As a research university, Duke seeks to connect undergraduate education to the broad continuum of scholarship reflected in its faculty. Such a rich setting provides students with opportunities to become involved in a community of learning and to engage in the process of discovery and move beyond being the passive recipients of knowledge that is transmitted to being an active participant in the discovery, critical evaluation, and application of knowledge and understanding. Engagement in research develops in students an understanding of the process by which new knowledge is created, organized, accessed, and synthesized. It also fosters a capacity for the critical evaluation of knowledge and the methods of discovery. This is important not only for undergraduates who wish to pursue further study at the graduate level, but also for those who seek employment in a rapidly changing and competitive marketplace.”

What is student research?

Academic research involves

- Pursuing a line of inquiry
- Engaging with what others have written about a text, problem, or issue
- Articulating a position, finding, or point of view

How these things are done varies across the disciplines, but academic research is never generic. Student work in an R-coded class should involve a disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approach, rather than the writing of a generic “term paper.” The student product should be modeled on a type of work actually produced by scholars in the field. Also, students should be engaged in the *intellectual* work of the project as well as in any physical work; for example, students conducting empirical research should be expected to become familiar with the relevant literature *before* doing lab or field work and they should write about their findings in the context of that literature.

To help the Course Committee approve your proposal for an R code:

- Describe the kind of research students will be doing (e.g., Students will “do laboratory research in organic chemistry using ...,” “do fieldwork conducting interviews with ...,” “locate relevant contemporary cases and apply theories of...”).
- State whether students will be learning research methods in this course or if you expect them to draw on such learning from prior courses? If the latter, which courses?

- Describe the length and type of document students will produce as specifically as you can. If students will be producing a product other than a written document (e.g. a documentary film, a curated exhibit, a choreographed performance), be sure to explain how this work is the equivalent of a substantive written document.

Example:

Describe the nature of the research that satisfies the requirement:

Students will study key American foreign policy debates through extensive research of scholarly and policy literature including journal articles, books, media sources, and government documents from a range of countries and international organizations. Synthesizing a range of sources and taking into account diverse points of view, students will employ critical and independent thinking to make arguments contributing to these debates.

Describe the nature and expected length (in number of words or double-spaced pages) of the major document or its equivalent:

Major research paper that culminates in an original policy proposal. Length: 25-30 pages text (plus tables, bibliography, notes, etc.)