November 29, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jim Potchen, Chairperson 
Executive Committee of Academic Council

FR: Gillian Bice, Chairperson, University Committee on Curriculum (UCC)

RE: Request to Change the Minimum Number of Credits in a Minor

The University Committee on Curriculum (UCC) made a recommendation to specify that a minimum of 15 credits be required for a minor. The recommendation was reviewed by the University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP) and based on discussions at the UCAP October 25 and November 8 meetings, and according to the guidelines adopted by UCAP for the 2007-8 academic year, the UCAP conducted an e-mail vote on this issue from Nov. 9 - 15, 2007. UCAP endorses the UCC recommendation.

The UCC submits the following motion for consideration by Academic Council:

Motion for Academic Council

The minimum number of credits required for a minor is 15.

Rationale

Currently the guideline states that minors “require no less than one-third and no more than two-thirds the number of credits required for its major.” This guideline is ambiguous in the case of Departments or Programs with multiple versions of the corresponding major; the requested change eliminates this confusion, and is consistent with minor guidelines at other major universities.

Attachments

Draft revision of minor guidelines and academic program terminology
POLICY AND PROCEDURES
FOR
MINORS
Michigan State University

Definition:
"A secondary field of study at the undergraduate level" - Academic Programs catalog

Minors:
- are a coherent set of courses that provides students with an understanding of the major concepts of the field of inquiry represented by the minor;
- are an introduction to the breadth and in-depth knowledge of a field of inquiry;
- are supplementary to the student's major;
- must carry the same name as the major.

Target Student Audience:
The targeted audience for a minor:
- is students who are not majors in the field of study represented by the minor.
- may be students from a wide variety of majors.
- may be limited to students from particular majors or colleges.
- is students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs.

Credits and Requirements:
- The minimum number of credits for a minor is 15.

PROCEDURES

Transcriptability:
A minor is "transcriptable" (eligible to be listed on the student's transcript).

Certification:
Consistent with other Association of American Universities (AAU) institutions, the Associate Dean of the college responsible for administering the minor will inform the Office of the Registrar when the student has completed the requirements for the degree program.

Relationship to Other Award Types:
What is the relationship between a major and a minor?
- A major and a minor are separate components in a student's undergraduate degree program.
- All students are required to select a degree program in the major of their choice. A major is a primary field of study with its own set of requirements.
- A minor is a secondary field of study with its own set of requirements.

How is a minor different from a specialization?
- A specialization is an interdisciplinary program of thematically related courses separate from an academic major.

How is a minor different from a teaching minor?
- A disciplinary teaching minor consists of specific courses that fulfill the State Department of Education Standards for content suitable for preparation to teach the subject area and must be approved by the Michigan Department of Education as a program at MSU leading to teacher certification.

Request to Establish or Change a Minor:
Minors must be approved and/or changed via the academic governance system using the Request for a New Academic Program or Request for Changes in an Academic Program form.
- Each unit responsible for any course included in the minor must be given the opportunity to approve or not approve the inclusion of said course in the minor.

Departments, schools, and colleges with administrative responsibility for offering degree programs may decide to offer a minor in a particular field.
- The department, school, or college may specify admission requirements for the minor.
- The minor must carry the same name as the major. For example, if there is a B.A. in Xology, then a Minor in Xology may exist.

More Information: See the University Curriculum and Catalog web page: [www.reg.msu.edu/ucc/ucc.asp](http://www.reg.msu.edu/ucc/ucc.asp)
# Michigan State University - Academic Program Terminology

This terminology is used to describe majors, minors, specializations, teacher certification and sub-categories within them as noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Transcriptable (listed on student's transcript)</th>
<th>Trackable in SIS (Student Information System)</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Relationship to major</th>
<th>Requires separate approval/certification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAJORS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>A primary field of study named as a specific degree program.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students who select and meet specific admission criteria for a field of study as a major preference.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>A set of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses within a major.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students enrolled in specific majors.</td>
<td>Available for majors that provide multiple paths to completion.</td>
<td>Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognate</td>
<td>A set of related disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Students enrolled in specific majors.</td>
<td>Requirement complementary to the major.</td>
<td>Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MINORS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>A secondary field of study at the undergraduate level. (minimum of 12 credits)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students who select and meet specific admission criteria for a field of study as a secondary preference.</td>
<td>Coherent set of courses supplementary to the major.</td>
<td>Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.</td>
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<td><strong>SPECIALIZATIONS</strong></td>
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<td>Specialization</td>
<td>An interdisciplinary program of thematically related courses. Guideline: 12 to 18 credits.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students enrolled in any major unless specified.</td>
<td>Distinct from an academic major.</td>
<td>Final approval is concurrent with the degree certification process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHER CERTIFICATION</strong></td>
<td>A set of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students enrolled in specific majors.</td>
<td>Integral to an academic major.</td>
<td>Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Emphasis</td>
<td>(Exclusively for Teacher Certification Programs)</td>
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<td>Teaching Minor</td>
<td>A group of single subject or group subject courses required by the State of Michigan.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Students admitted to teacher certification programs.</td>
<td>Teaching Minors are available for elementary and/or secondary certification. Certain teaching minors are only available for specified majors.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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