

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

October 9, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Douglas Estry, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education
and Dean of Undergraduate Studies

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

RE: Request to Change the Minimum Number of Credits in an Academic Minor
For Transmittal to the University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP)

The request referenced above is being sent to you for action by the University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP).

UCAP Response Requested:

Please ask the UCAP to consider the request referenced above at its meeting on October 25, 2007. Please mail the related materials referenced under the heading Attachments at the end of this memorandum to the members of the UCAP.

The University Committee on Curriculum (UCC) is requesting to change the minimum number of credits in an academic minor. Specifically to:

- Specify that the minimum number of credits required for an academic minor is 15.
 - Rationale:
 - Eliminate the significant confusion caused by defining the number of credits required for a minor in terms of percentages of the number of credits required for the major in the associated field of inquiry. Currently the guidelines state that academic minors "require no less than one-third and no more than two-thirds the number of credits required for its major."
 - Specify that at least 12 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's minor must not be used to fulfill the requirements for that student's major.
 - Rationale:
 - Document the fact that the completion of a minor requires additional work beyond the major to be listed on the Michigan State University transcript as a distinct body of completed work.

UCAP Action Required:

Does the UCAP approve of the UCC's recommendation to specify that the minimum number of credits required for an academic minor is 15? Does the UCAP approve of the UCC's recommendation to specify that at least 12 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's minor must not be used to fulfill the requirements for that student's major?

If you have any questions about this memorandum or the attached materials, please call me at 5-8420.

Thank you for your help.

Attachments:

1. Policy and Procedures for Academic Minors
2. Academic Program Terminology chart – (underlining = proposed change)
3. *Academic Programs* catalog language

Cc: Dr. Linda O. Stanford, Associate Provost for Academic Services

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POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR MINORS

Michigan State University

Definition:

"A secondary field of study at the undergraduate level" – *Academic Programs* catalog

A Minor:

- is a coherent set of courses that provides students with an understanding of the central concepts of the field of inquiry;
- is an introduction to the breadth and in-depth knowledge of a field of inquiry, and must carry the same name as the major associated with that field of inquiry;
- is supplementary to the student's 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:
- At least 12 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's minor must not be used to fulfill the requirements for that student's major.

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 proposed in the minor must be given the opportunity to approve or not approve that inclusion 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

Michigan State University - Academic Program Terminology

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

| Name | Definition | Transcriptable (listed on student's transcript) | Trackable in SIS (Student Information System) | Eligibility | Relationship to major | Requires separate approval/certification |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| MAJORS | | | | | | |
| Major | A primary field of study named as a specific degree program. | Yes | Yes | Students who select and meet specific admission criteria for a field of study as a major preference. | N/A | Final approval is integral to the degree certification process. |
| Concentration | A set of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses within a major. | Yes, if requested, by program. | Yes | Students enrolled in specific majors. | Available for majors that provide multiple paths to completion. | Final approval is integral to the degree certification process. |
| Cognate | A set of related disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses. | No | No | Students enrolled in specific majors. | Requirement complementary to the major. | Final approval is integral to the degree certification process. |
| MINORS | | | | | | |
| Minor | A secondary field of study at the undergraduate level. <u>(minimum of 15 credits)</u> | Yes | Yes | Students who select and meet specific admission criteria for a field of study as a secondary preference. | Coherent set of courses supplementary to the major. <u>At least 12 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's minor must not be used to fulfill the requirements for that student's major.</u> | Final approval is concurrent with the degree certification process. |
| SPECIALIZATIONS | | | | | | |
| Specialization | An interdisciplinary program of thematically related courses. Guideline: 12 to 18 credits. | Yes | Yes | Students enrolled in any major unless specified. | Distinct from an academic major. | Final approval is concurrent with the degree certification process. |
| TEACHER CERTIFICATION | | | | | | |
| Area of Emphasis (Exclusively for Teacher Certification Programs) | A set of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses. | Yes | Yes | Students enrolled in specific majors. | Integral to an academic major. | Final approval is integral to the degree certification process. |
| Teaching Minor (Exclusively for Teacher Certification Programs) | A group of single subject or group subject courses required by the State of Michigan. | Yes | Yes | Students admitted to teacher certification programs. | Teaching Minors are available for elementary and/or secondary certification. Certain teaching minors are only available for specified majors. | Yes |