

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 Clarify the Relationship between a Specialization and a Major
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 clarify the relationship between a Specialization and a Major. Specifically to:

- Specify that at least 6 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's specialization must not be used to fulfill the requirements for that student's major.
 - Rationale:
 - Document the fact that the completion of a specialization requires additional work beyond the major to be listed on the Michigan State University transcript as a distinct body of completed work.
 - Note: the Policy and Procedures for Specializations recommend that specializations be 12 to 18 credits. No change in credit range is proposed.

UCAP Action Required:

Does the UCAP approve of the UCC's recommendation to specify that at least 6 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's specialization 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 Specializations
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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UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM and CATALOG

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POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SPECIALIZATIONS Michigan State University

Definition:

"An interdisciplinary program of thematically related courses" distinct from the major.
– *Academic Programs* catalog

At Michigan State University specializations:

- are courses that comprise a specialization are drawn from several department, schools, or colleges.
- are designed to complement approved departmental or interdepartmental majors or to provide an interdisciplinary perspective on a topic of interest.

Target Student Audience:

The targeted audience for a specialization may be:

- open to students from a wide variety of majors.
- limited to students from particular majors or colleges.
- designed for either undergraduate or graduate students.

Credits and Requirements:

The recommended number of credits for a specialization is twelve to eighteen credits.

- Students are more likely to complete the specialization if the credits do not exceed eighteen.
- ~~Credits~~ At least 6 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's specialization must not be used to fulfill the requirements for that student's major. ~~earned toward a specialization may also be counted toward requirements for a major or degree program, unless indicated otherwise.~~

PROCEDURES

Transcriptability:

A specialization is "transcriptable" (eligible to be listed on a student's transcript).

Certification:

- The Associate Dean of the college responsible for administering the specialization will inform the Office of the Registrar when the student has completed the requirements of the specialization. Certification will happen at the time of degree.

Relationship to Other Award Types:

What is the relationship between a specialization and a major?

- A specialization and a major are separate components in a student's 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 specialization is designed to complement approved departmental or interdepartmental majors or to provide an interdisciplinary perspective on a topic of interest.
- A specialization has 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. A minor is a secondary field of study available for students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs.

Request to Establish or Change a Specialization:

Specializations 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 specialization must be given the opportunity to approve or not approve that inclusion in the specialization.

Departments, schools, and colleges with administrative responsibility for offering degree programs may decide to offer a specialization.

- The department, school, or college may specify admission requirements for the specialization.
- Any approved Michigan State University courses may, with the approval of the unit offering the course, be included in a specialization.

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.	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.	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. <u>At least 6 credits counted towards the requirements for a student's specialization must not be used to fulfill the requirements for that student's major.</u>	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