

Curriculum Definitions

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I. Degrees

A. Undergraduate Programs

1. Bachelor's Degree

The bachelor's degree is awarded to a student by a university for satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study (South Dakota Regental System minimum of 128 semester credits). It is verified by a diploma and transcript signifying a measure of achievement. The bachelor's degree enables a student to acquire a certain amount of general learning and to also become proficient in a particular field of study or a profession. The curricular structure of a bachelor's degree program includes the system general education core curriculum, institutional graduation requirements, major courses, support courses, and electives.

2. Associate Degrees

a. Associate of Arts Degree

An Associate of Arts (AA) degree is typically a two-year transfer degree, which indicates the completion of a student's lower division general education requirements and forms the foundation for baccalaureate degree programs. Up to 16 credit hours at the 300 and 400 level may be required. More than 16 credit hours at the 300 and 400 level may be required if specified by an accrediting agency.

b. Associate of Science Degree

An Associate of Science (AS) degree is typically a two-year terminal degree. However, it is transferable when a specific degree articulation agreement exists between a given AS degree and a specific baccalaureate degree. Unless program exceptions have been approved, students who have earned an Associate of Science degree from any Regental campus will be deemed to have fulfilled the general education courses specified of both the sending and the accepting campus (BOR Policy 2:26:2:A and C). Up to 16 credit hours at the 300 and 400 level may be required. More than 16 credit hours at the 300 and 400 level may be required if specified by an accrediting agency.

c. Associate of Applied Science Degree

An Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree is a non-transferable degree. Coursework for such degrees may be transferable only when a specific articulation agreement exists. (BOR Policy 2:25:4A.)

3. Certificates

A Certificate is an award certifying the completion of a postsecondary instructional program. Typically certificate programs are a subset of the curriculum offered in degree programs. Courses are included to develop a very specific knowledge base or skill set. Certificate programs may be developed at the entry level, advanced undergraduate level and graduate level. Certificate programs designed to develop a specific knowledge or skill set require 12 credit hours or fewer. In some few cases, standards for licensure will

state explicit requirements that will lead to certificate programs that do require more than 12 credit hours. If certificate programs of this type are proposed, detailed justification needs to be included with the proposal.

B. Graduate Programs

1. Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Science Degrees

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and the Doctor of Science (DSc) programs are designed to prepare a student to become a scholar, that is, to discover, integrate, and apply knowledge, as well as communicate and disseminate it. A well-prepared doctoral graduate will have developed the ability to understand and evaluate critically the literature of the field and to apply appropriate principles and procedures to the recognition, evaluation, interpretation, and understanding of issues and problems at the frontiers of knowledge. The graduate will also have an appropriate awareness of and commitment to the ethical practices appropriate to the field.

A central purpose of scholarship is the extension of knowledge, and students in a doctoral program become scholars by choosing an area in which to specialize and a professor with whom to work. Individualized programs of study may then be developed and committee members selected cooperatively as course work is completed and research undertaken. When all courses have been taken, the research finished, the dissertation written, and all examinations passed, the graduate should have acquired the knowledge and skills expected of a scholar who has made an original contribution to the field and has attained the necessary expertise to continue to do so.

2. Professional Doctoral Degree

The professional doctoral degree is earned by two or more years of professional study past the baccalaureate degree. This degree prepares an individual for entry into the practice of a recognized profession. Examples of professional doctorates are the M.D., Pharm. D., JD, DVM, Ed. D., AuD, and DPT degrees.

Educational Specialist (EdS)

The Education Specialist degree/certificate is a post-master's award that recognizes the completion of an organized program of study beyond the master's degree that does not meet the requirements for a doctoral degree.

3. Master's Degree

In broad terms, the master's degree indicates that the recipient has mastered a program of advanced, specialized study in a particular field. Normally, degree titles indicate one of two major categories. The Master of Arts and Master of Science are academic degrees designed to provide an introduction to scholarship activities and research. These degrees often serve the needs of individuals teaching in public schools or community colleges and/or preparation for further graduate study. The second category leads to professional master's degrees, such as the M.Ed. or MBA. While similar to the MA and MS, these programs tend to emphasize professional practice.

Despite differences in titles and objectives, all master's degrees share common characteristics. The degree normally requires one to two years of full-time study (or equivalent) and the completion of a minimum of 30 semester hours of credit, depending

on the plan of study. The degree is awarded upon completion of a coherent program which is designed to assure mastery of specified knowledge and skills, rather than a random accumulation of credits beyond the baccalaureate degree. The basic components of the degree may vary in emphasis, but generally include a common core in the discipline; a concentration in a subfield of study; cognate courses outside the department as a means of broadening the curriculum or to provide needed skills, an integrative experience to synthesize the program's content and/or to translate theory into practice such as seminars, practicums or internships, etc; and a summative experience to measure achievement and intellectual growth such as a thesis, research paper, and/or comprehensive examination.

II. Plans of Study Within Degrees

A. Academic Major Requirements

An academic major or primary area of study within a degree program enables students to make an in-depth inquiry into a discipline or a professional field of study. It is organized around a specific set of goals and objectives that are accomplished through an ordered series of courses, whose connections define an internal structure and whose sequence advances levels of knowledge and understanding. At the undergraduate level, a major introduces students to a discipline or field of study and related area through a foundation of theory and method. At the graduate level, the curriculum builds on this undergraduate foundation, focusing on in-depth study and research. A major that focuses on a specific discipline draws its courses predominantly from one department. A major that encompasses a professional field of study or is interdisciplinary usually obtains its courses from more than one department.

The number of credit hours required for a major and its organizational structure will vary, depending on whether it aims at disciplinary or professional preparation. Variations are due to the demands of accrediting agencies, certification requirements, professional competence and expectations.

Undergraduate majors in the traditional liberal arts commonly require 30-45 credit hours within the discipline. In addition, these majors typically require a specified set of support courses or the completion of an academic minor. When combined, these requirements rarely exceed 64 credit hours and, once core requirements and other institutional requirements are excluded, the total credit hours of "unique" requirements should not exceed 64 credit hours. Students majoring in these fields therefore have opportunities to complete additional structured or elective studies. While programs currently in place may not meet this guideline, proposals to establish new programs as well as proposals to modify existing programs must recognize and fall within these limits.

In some cases, an undergraduate major may be combined with a specific set of supporting courses to develop what has at times been referred to as a "composite" major. Programs in this category, such as most programs in secondary education, should be viewed as a major plus a minor or, in some cases, even a double major. Requirements for offerings in this category therefore should follow from the larger pattern being set out in these guidelines. Specifically, those developing composite majors should demonstrate, if

possible, that the major as a whole establishes a program of study with requirements comparable to those at other universities. Further, all proposals of majors that fall in this area must establish that the separate parts are in line with the requirements for separate programs. As an example, for a university proposing an offering in math education, the math requirements for this major should be similar to or less than those required of students pursuing the BA/BS in mathematics. Further, the requirements in education should be comparable to those of the other secondary education programs on campus. While programs currently in place may not meet this guideline, proposals to establish new programs as well as proposals to modify existing programs must recognize and address these limits.

Undergraduate majors in professional fields require a range of credit hours. In some cases, accreditation standards may establish expected ranges. In other cases, licensure or certification requirements may set these standards. However, in all cases, comparisons with other programs in the same professional field establish limits that need to be recognized and followed. Proposals for new professional majors or proposals to modify existing professional majors must address the specific impacts of accreditation/licensure requirements as well as the comparative requirements established and commonly followed at other colleges and universities. While programs currently in place may not meet this guideline, proposals to establish new programs as well as proposals to modify existing programs must recognize and must address these limits.

B. Academic Minor Requirements

An academic minor within a degree program enables a student to make an inquiry into a discipline or field of study beyond the major or to investigate a particular content theme. It too should be organized around a specific set of objectives that are achieved through a series of courses. Minors are intended to provide a broad introduction to the subject and therefore develop only limited competency. Course offerings in a minor may be centered in a specific department or drawn from several departments as in the case of a topical or thematic focus. In some cases all coursework will be proscribed while in others, a few courses may form the basis for a wide range of choices. Regental undergraduate minors typically consist of 18 credit hours. Minors are established by Board of Regents action. While minors currently in place may not meet this guideline, proposals to establish new minors as well as proposals to modify existing minors must recognize and must address this limit.

C. Specialization

A specialization is a designated plan of study, within an existing degree program. It provides a student an alternative to the primary format of the major or it may be one of several tracks within a broad major. It contains courses within the discipline(s) of the existing program. It is specified in the institutional catalog and is designated on the transcript. Specializations are established by Board of Regents action. Majors that do offer specializations typically have one-third to two-thirds of the credits in common with the remaining course work fulfilling the requirements of the specialization(s) offered.

D. Emphasis

An emphasis is a concentration within a major and is accomplished by individual student choices within a plan of study. For example, within a major on adult health the student may focus on the older adult. An emphasis is not regarded as a separate program. It may

be described in the catalog, but not detailed as a specific plan of study. It is not specified on a transcript.

NOTE: THESE GUIDELINES SERVE AS AN INTERNAL WORKING DOCUMENT AS PROGRAMATIC DEVELOPMENT AND MODIFICATION OCCURS. JUST AS THESE GUIDELINES DO NOT PROSCRIBE SPECIFIC LIMITS WHICH CAN NOT BE ABROGATED WITH JUSTIFICATION, THEY ALSO DO NOT PROVIDE LICENSE TO MEET THESE THE UPPER LIMITS ESTABLISHED IF COMMON PRACTICE IS DIFFERENT. IN SUM, THESE GUIDELINES BEGIN THE PROCESSES BUT THE COMMON PRACTICES AND THE COMMON REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACADEMY PROVIDE EQUALLY COMPELLING LIMITS.