



Executive Policy Chapter: Chapter 5, Academic Affairs
Executive Policy: EP 5.205, Academic Programs Definitions and Guidelines
Effective Date: XXX 2022
Prior Dates Amended: March 1996, November 2014
Responsible Office: Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy
Governing Board of Regents Policy: RP 5.201 Instructional Programs
Review Date: XXX 2026

I. Purpose

- A. To establish definitions and broad guidelines for degrees, academic majors and minors, certificates, and concentrations.
- B. To identify campus responsibilities in the development of policies and practices designed to ensure academic standards and consistent practice in the use of degrees, certificates, academic minors, and concentrations.

II. Definitions

A. General Definitions

1. Degree: A degree is a type of credential that typically takes two or more years to complete.
2. Credential: A credential is a general term that can be used to describe a degree, certificate, or other form of institutional-based acknowledgment.
3. Concentration: A focus or specific area of emphasis within a specific academic major of an associate, baccalaureate or graduate degree. Must fit within the structure of the associate, baccalaureate or graduate degree and may not exceed the required number of credits for the degree. Should include a minimum of nine credits.
4. Academic Major: An area of inquiry that leads to a degree through coursework that represents cohesive and extensive study in a subject area in which a student develops depth of knowledge, competency, and understanding. It requires at least thirty credits. Majors beyond sixty credits require approval by the chief academic officer or their designee. Majors are identified with a CIP code in compliance with institutional and federal reporting requirements. A student may have more than one major.
5. Academic Minor: Recognition of work completed in select credit courses as a student's secondary declared academic field of study. Minors generally

contain fifteen to eighteen hours of coursework with at least nine hours of upper-division coursework within or among Board-approved programs. An academic minor once declared shall be a part of a student's program of study. Community colleges do not use academic minors except for the Baccalaureate degree programs offered by community colleges.

B. Definition of Degrees

1. Associate Degree: The associate degree generally consists of sixty semester credits and provides students with skills and competencies essential to transfer to a baccalaureate-level program or for gainful employment in a career and/or technical education area. Any associate degree cannot go beyond sixty credits except with approval from the chief academic officer or their designee.
2. Baccalaureate Degree: There are a variety of baccalaureate degrees, which include the Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS), among others. The baccalaureate degree generally consists of 120 semester credits and includes the completion of University-wide core requirements, individual college or school requirements, and an academic specialization comprising a major. Any baccalaureate degree cannot go beyond 120 credits except with approval from the chief academic officer or their designee.
3. Graduate Degree: An advanced academic degree in a specialized field of study pursued after one has obtained a baccalaureate degree. Included are various master's and doctoral degrees. May be pursued in conjunction or overlapping with a bachelor's degree in some cases.

C. Definition of Certificates

1. Certificate: A certificate is a type of credential that can be earned in less than two years. Community College policy defines certificates awarded by community colleges.
2. Graduate Certificate: Recognition of work completed in select credit courses taken within or among existing Board-authorized graduate degree programs.
3. Undergraduate Certificate: Recognition of work completed in select credit courses taken within or among existing Board-authorized undergraduate degree programs.
4. Standalone Certificate: Recognition of work completed in select courses not housed under an existing major or degree. May require Board approval if it requires significant resources.

III. Executive Policy

- A. Authority to create new degrees defined in this policy is described in EP 5.201.
- B. Authority to confer degrees as defined in this policy is described in EP 5.101.
- C. Degrees that exceed the generally accepted credit hours defined in this policy must be approved by the chief academic officer or their designee.
- D. Reporting Requirements
 1. Campuses will maintain policies related to academic degrees, majors, minors, concentrations, and certificates.
 2. Campuses will notify the Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy of the approval of all new certificates, concentrations, and minors including documentation of approval by the appropriate approving authority (e.g. Chancellor/Provost or Vice President for Community Colleges).
 3. Campuses will provide an annually updated list of certificates, including effective date, to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy.
 4. Campuses will maintain an internal record of baccalaureate programs offering minors, including effective date.
 5. The Office the Vice President for Academic Strategy is responsible for maintaining an annually updated list of all University curricula including Board- and unit/conferred credentials.
- E. Banner Codes for Degrees
 1. IRAPO and Banner will develop procedures to create the necessary program, major, and subject codes in Banner.
 2. Campuses will provide the necessary documents to facilitate this process.
 3. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Strategy will work with campuses to ensure that new certificates are created in accordance with this policy.

IV. Delegation of Authority

There is no policy specific delegation of authority.

V. Contact Information

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VI. References

RP 5.201 Instructional Programs
EP 5.201 Approval of New Academic Programs and Review of Provisional
Academic Programs

Approved:

Signed

David Lassner Date
President