

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Steering Committee

**FROM:** Committee on Academic Programs (CAP)

**RE:** Final Recommendation on policy on Types of Majors and Minors Defined  
(Programmatic nomenclature defined)

**DATE:** February 28, 2018

### **Background and Charges:**

As part of a larger charge last Spring (2017), CAP determined that the policy on Types of Majors and Minors Defined should be amended to a) include a definition of Interdisciplinary Minors, and to b) clarify that in the case of dual majors, two courses taken as part of a student's majors may count towards a minor. To complete the larger charge from 2017, CAP needed to revise the policy and solicit campus testimony.

Steering also gave CAP a separate charge to reconsider the requirement that minors consist of 2 300-400 level courses, at the request of the School of Arts and Communication Curriculum Committee.

CAP decided to address both charges in a single revision to the existing policy.

### **Method:**

After discussion, CAP approved a Preliminary Recommendation that added a separate category of Interdisciplinary Minor and clarified that for dual majors, two courses taken as part of students' majors may count towards a minor. CAP obtained campus testimony (Tier 3) on this revised policy via a survey and oral testimony and from Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government. Most feedback on the interdisciplinary minor definition was neutral. Some individuals asked why only dual – but not double – majors could count two major courses towards a minor. In discussing this feedback, CAP decided the following: a) a separate category of “interdisciplinary minor” was unnecessary, because it did not have any different requirements than a regular minor. Instead, a brief definition of interdisciplinary minor was added to the description of minors (as well as a general definition of a minor, which was not previously in the policy). b) Unlike double majors, who choose to have two majors, dual majors are required to have two majors. Therefore, CAP felt that it was appropriate that only dual majors can count two major courses toward a minor.

To address the second charge regarding this policy, CAP reviewed minors at several peer and aspirant institutions, and determined that the majority of minors require more than one upper-level course. Therefore, CAP decided to maintain the current policy of requiring 2 300-400 level courses. Departments with minors that are not in compliance with this part of the minor policy have been notified that they must either bring their minor into compliance or may request a waiver from CAP. Specifically, departments may request a waiver for ONE of the two 300-400 level courses. The waiver request must be submitted to CAP along with an explanation that justifies the need (e.g., that the courses offer educational value of breadth within the field, or that the 300-400 level courses within the department offerings are not appropriate for a minor).

CAP unanimously voted to approve the revised policy.

**Final Recommendation:**

The revised policy includes the following additions/changes:

1. A general definition of a minor has been added.
2. A definition of an interdisciplinary minor has been added.
3. The policy states that in the case of dual majors, two courses taken as part of a student's majors may count towards a minor.

CAP proposes that this revised policy be effective starting in Fall 2018.



Section:	II.3.35	
Title:	Types of Majors and Minors Defined (Programmatic nomenclature defined)	
Effective Date:		
Approved By:		
Responsible Unit:	Academic Affairs ( <a href="mailto:academic@tcnj.edu">academic@tcnj.edu</a> , 609-771-3080)	
Related Documents:		
History:		
<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1.0	October 2010	New policy; initial release
1.1	October 2014	Revised by Steering
1.2	November 2014	Revised by Steering
1.3	February 2018	Revised by CAP

## I. INTRODUCTION

This policy defines types of courses in terms of the context they have within a major/program and provides nomenclature for the various types of majors and other programs. Liberal Learning requirements, based upon the type of major a student takes, are set out.

## II. DEFINITIONS

N/A

## III. POLICY

### A. Types of Courses

#### 1. Major Courses

Required or designated optional courses sharing either the same disciplinary prefix(s) (for disciplinary majors) or sharing the same focus from a multidisciplinary perspective (for interdisciplinary majors).

#### 2. Minor Courses

Required or designated optional courses sharing either the same disciplinary prefix(s) (for disciplinary minors) or sharing the same focus from a multidisciplinary perspective (for interdisciplinary minors).

### 3. Correlate Courses

Courses outside the programmatic discipline that are supportive of and integral to the specified disciplinary study.

### 4. Capstone Courses

Courses designated by the program as being the culminating experience or product of the specified disciplinary or interdisciplinary study.

### 5. Liberal Learning Courses

These are courses fulfilling one or more of the Liberal Learning categories. They may fulfill only liberal learning requirements, such as those with FSP or WRI prefixes, or they may be counted toward major or minor programs while at the same time fulfilling liberal learning requirements. The number of courses that may be counted for liberal learning and other categories are limited under certain circumstances (See Interdisciplinary Concentrations below).

### 6. Elective Courses

Any course inside or outside the major may count as an elective course. The number required is obtained by adding required courses and liberal learning courses and subtracting that number from the number of required course units (most frequently, but not always, 32 units).

## **B. Majors, Minors, Concentrations, and Specializations**

*Note: All majors and minors must go through college governance for approval. Specializations must be approved by the Dean of the school where the specialization is offered. Liberal Learning concentrations must be approved by the Liberal Learning Programming Council (LLPC).*

### 1. Disciplinary Majors

A disciplinary major normally consists of not fewer than eight and not more than 15 full courses sharing the same departmental course prefix(s) (or an approved cross-list prefix) with a maximum of five additional correlate courses, exclusive of any departmental requirements that also satisfy liberal learning requirements. Pre-requisite courses or proficiencies must be clearly stated and are counted as correlate courses. Each disciplinary major will have a designated capstone experience. Students enrolled in a disciplinary major are assigned an academic faculty advisor from the department housing that major.

## 2. Interdisciplinary Majors

An interdisciplinary major normally consists of not fewer than eight and not more than 15 full courses combined from multiple disciplines in such a way as to allow students to focus on an area of interest from multiple disciplinary perspectives. The Women's and Gender Studies and International Studies programs fall into this category. A maximum of five additional correlate courses (not in any of the identified disciplines that comprise the major), exclusive of any departmental requirements that also satisfy liberal learning requirements may be required. Prerequisite courses or proficiencies must be clearly stated and are counted as correlate courses. Each interdisciplinary major will have a designated capstone experience. Students enrolled in an interdisciplinary major are assigned an academic faculty advisor from the department or program housing that major.

## 3. Double Majors

A student may double major by completing all the requirements of each major, both of which can stand alone as a disciplinary or interdisciplinary major. Correlate courses and liberal learning requirements may be applied to each major. A maximum of three full courses may be applied to both majors. Unless the capstone requirement carries the weight of two full courses and is approved by both major advisors, a capstone cannot apply to more than one major. A currently enrolled student who has completed the requirements for a double major will receive one degree, according to which major the student considers to be his or her first major. Liberal learning requirements are determined by the first major, and are calculated by the Option A formula. Double majors will be noted on transcripts. Students enrolled as double majors are assigned an academic faculty advisor from each of the individual majors.

## 4. Dual Majors

Dual majors are formed when at least one program must be attached to the other to be viable. The Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Education of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing sequences and all secondary education programs fall into this category. Dual majors fulfill the liberal learning requirements of the first major. The liberal arts or science content discipline is considered the first major for all secondary sequences. The Education major is considered the first major for Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Education of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing sequences. Liberal learning requirements for Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Education of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing sequences are calculated by the Option A formula and, except for programs attached to Spanish, do not include a foreign language. Students in secondary education programs must complete liberal learning requirements in the same manner as those in the disciplinary major alone, except that in B.S. programs, students studying a foreign language not previously taken in High School need only complete it to the 102 level. Students enrolled as dual majors are assigned an academic faculty advisor from each program. In all cases, transcripts will note that students completed a dual major in

the appropriate fields. [Note: There is no state- or TCNJ-approved secondary major; this document's reference to a dual major with secondary education as a part must be understood as classifying secondary education as an 'attached' program, and not as a stand-alone approved major.]

## 5. Self-Designed Majors

The self-designed major enables students with exceptional drive and creativity to gain major credit for a course of study that cannot be accommodated by existing degree programs. This is particularly attractive for students who are prepared to undertake extensive work in interdisciplinary areas such as biochemistry, cognitive science, environmental studies, political economy, and religious studies. However, it may also afford opportunities for in-depth studies in a single discipline, such as a language in which TCNJ does not offer a major. To be eligible for consideration, students must have at least a 3.0 GPA and submit a proposal to the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee no later than the beginning of their junior year. The major proposed should consist of not fewer than twelve courses. No more than four of the courses may be completed at other institutions. No more than three of the courses may be conducted as Independent Studies. At least half of the courses must be at the 300-400 level. The proposed courses must include a senior capstone project that serves as a means of unifying the major. Students completing self-designed majors must have two sponsoring faculty advisors chosen from departments whose courses are included in the program. Such majors are noted on students' transcripts.

## 6. Minors

An academic minor is an optional secondary field of study pursued while completing an undergraduate major. Typically, minors complement an academic major in some manner, but such is not required. Minor requirements and options are specifically designated and consist of five full courses (or four full courses plus an approved experience), of which a minimum of two courses must be at the 300-400 level. Minors are housed within a single academic unit. Interdisciplinary minors consist of courses combined from multiple disciplines in such a way as to allow students to focus on an area of interest from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Only one course taken as a part of the student's major may also be counted toward the student's minor; however, in the case of dual majors, two courses may count toward the minor. Correlate courses to the major may be applied freely to the minor. Multiple minors may overlap by only one course. One-half of the courses required for the minor must be completed at TCNJ or through a prior approved course exchange program. Minors will be recorded along with majors on the student's transcript.

## 7. Interdisciplinary Concentrations

Interdisciplinary Concentrations provide a focused means of completing the liberal learning breadth requirement. They consist of a minimum of six courses addressing a

common theme, similar in that sense to major or minor programs. They are different, however, in that courses comprising particular concentrations must include at least two of the three broad sectors of human inquiry—arts and humanities, social science and history, and natural science and quantitative reasoning. Students must take at least six courses, of which no more than four may be in the same broad sector. When an interdisciplinary concentration does not include two courses from each broad sector, additional courses, as necessary, from the appropriate sectors must be completed. Two additional qualifications apply: Every student must complete at least one course each in quantitative reasoning and natural science with laboratory, and when additional courses are required from the same sector, students must select courses with different prefixes. Two courses can be counted between an Interdisciplinary Concentration and a Major, and one course can be counted between an Interdisciplinary Concentration and a Minor. Designated interdisciplinary concentrations can be found at the Liberal Learning website ([www.tcnj.edu/~liberal/concentrations/index.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~liberal/concentrations/index.html)). Self-designed interdisciplinary concentrations are possible using a process similar to that of the self-designed major. Interdisciplinary concentrations are noted on students' transcripts.

#### 8. Specializations

Specializations are subdivisions within a major or minor. They consist of a set of courses outside the common core of a major that a student must complete in order to fulfill a specific area of study within that major. There is no specified number of courses required for a specialization.

### **C. Declaring Majors, Minors, Concentrations, and Specializations**

#### 1. Declaration of Major

Students may declare majors at any time prior to the completion of 16 course units if they have reached a decision and program entrance requirements are met. However, after earning 16 course units, students are required to declare a major by registering with the chair of the chosen department or program area. Upon declaration the chair gives written notice to the Office of Records and Registration and assigns the student an advisor within the major. Students proceed according to the requirements as stated in the Undergraduate Bulletin in effect at the time of their formal declaration. If changing majors, students must meet any new requirements as stated in the Undergraduate Bulletin in effect at the time of the change. Only enrolled degree-seeking students may declare majors, and any such declarations or changes are subject to approval by the program administrator. At least fifty percent of the major must be completed at The College of New Jersey or through a prior approved course exchange program. If a major is changed, the new major(s) must be officially declared before the deadline for applying for graduation in a given term. The Office of Records and Registration maintains a schedule of dates where major change requests may be submitted. Please refer to the Records and Registration academic calendar for the appropriate dates for each term.

#### 2. Declaration of Minor

Students eligible to declare majors may also declare minors in those disciplines where minors have been established. Students declare minors by registering with the chair of the chosen department or program area. The chair gives written notice to the Office of Records and Registration. Students proceed according to the requirements as stated in the Undergraduate Bulletin in effect at the time of their formal declaration. Students are responsible for knowing their minor requirements and for completing them. Minors not complete at the time of the student's graduation will be dropped from the student's record. Minors must be officially declared before the deadline for applying for graduation in a given term.

### 3. Declaration of Interdisciplinary Concentration

Students intending to complete an interdisciplinary concentration must obtain signatures from their major advisor(s) and one of the faculty sponsors of the concentration on the Interdisciplinary Concentration Form available on the Liberal Learning web site ([www.tcnj.edu/~liberal/concentrations/index.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/~liberal/concentrations/index.html)) or at the Office of Records and Registration where it must be submitted.

### 4. Declaration of a Specialization

The availability and nature of specializations vary from department to department. Declaration is by departmental advisement.





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