

# Standards for Academic Minors

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## A. Overview

1. Proposals for academic minors must comply with the Standards described in this document. Every academic program at UVM is encouraged to develop a minor according to these standards.
2. Existing minors that do not conform to these standards should be updated as soon as possible. All such minor programs must be brought into compliance by the end of the fall semester of 2005 (December 2005).
3. Once approved, information regarding the program requirements must appear on the sponsoring unit's website.
4. Throughout this document the phrase "sponsoring unit" refers to the college or school offering the minor program. The phrase "home unit" refers to the college or school of the student's major.
5. The Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate will provide oversight of each unit's criteria for admission to its minors and completion of its minors. Within each unit, different minors may have different admission and completion criteria. However, all changes to these criteria must be submitted by the unit, with its endorsement, to Curricular Affairs for approval.
6. All successfully completed minors will be noted on the student's official transcript.

## B. General Guidelines

1. An academic minor at the University of Vermont shall comprise a set of courses that reflect a coherent body of knowledge in one or more disciplines. A minor shall require between 15 and 20 hours of coursework, of which at least 9 hours must be at the 100-level or above. A minor shall require no more than the credit equivalent of three standard classroom courses (9 to 12 credits) of prerequisites that are not part of the minor, although exceptions to this rule may be allowed with just cause.

All courses included in requirements for a minor must have permanent numbers: i.e. they cannot be special topics courses. Special topics courses may be included in elective options for the minor as long as there are enough permanently numbered courses to complete the minor without them.

At least half of the courses used to satisfy the minor must be taken at the University of Vermont. The student may choose any set of applicable courses from his/her transcript to satisfy the minor requirements. The grade point average of these chosen courses must be at least 2.0. Courses used to satisfy a minor may not be taken pass-fail.

2. Minors are established by departments, programs, or similar academic unit and approved by the faculty of the college or school in which the offering department or program is located

(the sponsoring unit). Minors may be interdisciplinary in nature, involving two or more academic units, but for administrative and fiscal purposes, only one academic unit can be identified as the sponsor of the minor.

3. When the sponsoring program undergoes an Academic Program Review, its minors will also be reviewed for (a) the appropriateness of the courses required for the minor, and (b) the intellectual rigor of the minor. Unless otherwise arranged, minors will be evaluated as part of the sponsoring unit's APR process; therefore, the sponsoring unit should consider how data collected during assessment processes for the unit's majors might also be used to evaluate the appropriateness of the minor curriculum, and its intellectual rigor.
4. The Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate shall review proposed minors with respect to the formal criteria in these standards. During the development process of a minor or during the review by CAC, every undergraduate unit will be given an opportunity to offer comments.

### C. Operational Principles

1. **Proposal Development and Approval:** The sponsoring unit (Department, School, College or Program) will prepare a proposal following the format in section D, an abbreviated version of the format for new program proposals described in Academic Policies and Procedures. The Curricular Affairs Committee must approve any new minor before it can be offered for credit. This approval must be reported to the Faculty Senate at a regularly scheduled Senate meeting.
2. **Application and Admission to a Minor:** The Registrar's office will provide a standard application form, endorsed by the Curricular Affairs Committee, to be used by all sponsoring units. The student must apply to the sponsoring unit for admission to the minor by the end of the add-drop period of the last semester before graduation. This unit will notify the student and the home unit of acceptance or rejection. In the case of acceptance, the student must obtain approval from the dean's office of the sponsoring unit and the home unit, and submit the signed form to the Registrar. In the case of rejection, a letter of explanation to the student, copied to the student's advisor and dean of the home unit, will be included.
3. **Catalogue Description:** Minors will be explicitly designated in the undergraduate catalogue. The catalogue should make clear the criteria described in paragraph A4.
4. **Enrollment Limitations:** Because of necessary enrollment limitations, it is probable that some minors will not be accessible to all students. However, if a student requesting admission to a minor has completed all minor requirements (or, by the end of the applying semester, will have completed all requirements), the sponsoring unit will approve that minor regardless of any limitations placed on the minor. (This regulation takes precedence over all listed Eligibility Restrictions for minors.)
5. **Advising:** The sponsoring unit will develop and maintain an effective system of advising for all students enrolled in its minors.
6. **Degree Requirements:** A unit requiring or recommending a minor as meeting part of its degree requirements must accept any approved minor as fulfilling this requirement. Exceptions due to overlap with the declared major will be posted on the minor web page. Units wishing to require that their students complete a particular minor to meet degree

requirements must have approval from the sponsoring unit, as well as from their own unit. Any unit, however, may encourage its students to apply for a minor in another unit.

7. **Course Planning:** Sponsoring units will plan to offer a sufficient number of sections of courses to serve the needs of majors, minors and other students seeking to meet distribution requirements.
8. **Minor Certification and Student Records:** The student's home unit shall certify completion of the minor. The sponsoring unit is the only unit authorized to make course substitutions for satisfying the minor, and shall notify the home unit of substitutions in writing. The student's major advisor is not authorized to make course substitutions in minor requirements. The registrar will designate the minor program on student transcripts.
9. **Change of Major:** A student enrolled in a minor has the right to pursue completion of the minor irrespective of any subsequent change in their academic major or home (degree granting) unit, except in cases where enrollment limitations preclude non-majors (see #4 above). All minors will not necessarily fulfill the degree requirements of a given college. Transfer students and their advisors should check to ensure that degree requirements for a minor will be met.
10. **Alteration of Minor Programs:** A change of  $\geq 40\%$  of the coursework constituting a minor program must be submitted for review by the Curricular Affairs Committee, as described in the Senate document Proposal to Substantially Revise an Academic, Scholarly, or Service Endeavor ("Appendix B").

## D. Proposal Format for a new Academic Minor

I. Title of the minor, participating faculty, responsible academic unit, and description of the minor as it would be included in the University Catalogue.

II. Rationale for the new minor.

III. The web page content as described in paragraph A3 above:

A. The coursework required for completion of the minor, including an explanation for how they comprise a coherent body of knowledge in one or more disciplines.

B. A complete list of courses required to complete the minor but not counted as part of the minor. That is, all prerequisites needed to take the courses required for the minor must appear in this list.

C. A list of majors with which this minor is not acceptable due to overlap with that major.

D. A list of eligibility restrictions. While most minors will have no eligibility restrictions, some minors experience demands sufficient to require restricted access to that minor.

IV. Relationship of this minor to the current mission and long-range plans of:

A. Participating departments, schools and colleges;

B. The University.

V. Relationship to minors offered currently.

VI. Indicate any other minors at the University that are similar in title or content and illustrate how they may overlap or differ.

VII. Evidence of communication with academic units likely to be involved in or affected by the minor. Indicate the effect (cost, enrollment, etc.) the minor will have on other academic units.

VIII. Explain the anticipated effect of the minor on enrollments. List required new courses or description of changes to existing courses.

IX. Resources

A. Faculty: anticipated appointments;

B. Library Support

1. Library resources presently available to support the minor;

2. Additional demands with estimate of dollar cost for additions.

X. Cost estimates

A. First year costs in addition to current budget;

B. Total costs for first five years in addition to current budget.

XI. Schedule: Proposed starting date.

XII. Endorsements

A. Department(s) of minor(s);

B. School or college curriculum committee(s);

C. School or college dean(s).

## **Abstract**

A brief abstract must accompany the proposal, including essential information from sections I, II, and III of the program proposal.

The Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee will e-mail the abstract of the proposal to all Faculty, Department Heads/Chairpersons, Academic Deans and the presidents of the Student Government Association and Graduate Student Senate.

The e-mail will indicate that the complete proposal is available at the Senate Office or on the Faculty Senate website. Comments are requested within 30 calendar days.