

Undergraduate Academic Policies

Academic Policy on Undergraduate Majors

An undergraduate major is a structured and coherent primary course of study. It allows undergraduates to develop a specialized, in-depth field of study as part of their educational experience at UIS. All undergraduates must complete the requirements for one major program to earn a baccalaureate degree at UIS.

Majors may focus on a single discipline or provide an interdisciplinary approach to a field of study. Majors are usually offered by academic departments within a college, but interdisciplinary majors may be co-sponsored by two or more departments, even if those departments are in different colleges.

Typically, a major consists of a core of required courses and a set of electives from which students may choose. Majors usually consist of 30-36 credit hours. Majors are recorded on student transcripts.

Academic Policy on Undergraduate Minors

An undergraduate academic minor is a grouping of courses that has clearly stated academic objectives. It may be located in a discipline or may combine different disciplinary perspectives focusing on a common set of questions or a theme. Minors provide basic competency in a discipline, or basic understanding of the questions or theme. Minors contain core course(s) to provide direction and unity, and they may contain a set of options or electives beyond the core to allow flexibility.

At UIS, minors usually include 15-24 credit hours. Students may not adopt a minor in any major they declare. Students who adopt minors must be degree-seeking undergraduates who also have a major. Minors are recorded on student transcripts.

Academic Policy on Undergraduate Concentrations

A concentration is a grouping of courses within an undergraduate major, and constitutes a portion of the major. A concentration is distinct from a minor in that a minor broadly introduces a student to a field of study while a concentration focuses on a sub-field within a discipline. Typically, a concentration is defined as a minimum of nine or more hours that a student may take as part of the degree program. Concentrations are housed only in departments with majors and are recorded on student transcripts.

Accelerated Joint Bachelor's/Master's Degree Policy

An accelerated joint degree allows students to earn two degrees while completing fewer total hours than if they pursued the two degrees separately. Graduate level hours may be counted as hours toward the bachelor's degree while then being used to fulfill graduate requirements in a related master's degree by allowing for a reduction in the number of required master's hours.

Accelerated joint degrees must be agreed to by the degree programs involved and must be approved through the appropriate governance. Students must be separately admitted to each program. Students must meet all prerequisite requirements of each program, unless

master's prerequisites are waived as part of the accelerated joint degree agreement. A maximum of twelve (12) hours of 400- or 500-level course work may be counted toward both the bachelor's degree and the master's degree, with the applicable number of hours being reduced from the total required for the master's degree.

Students must earn a minimum total of 120 credit hours and complete all degree requirements for the bachelor's degree. The total number of hours required for the master's degree (less the 12 "joint" hours referenced above) must also be earned. Prior to earning the master's degree, students will submit to the Registrar a Student Petition outlining which courses and/or hours are being waived through the accelerated joint degree agreement. The programs must plan for assessment of program-level student learning outcomes that measures equivalency of outcomes for students regardless of whether they entered the program as accelerated degree students or traditional graduate entry students.