Minors: Proposal

Passed by EPC, 1 April 2016

EPC proposes a revision to the section on minors in the Bulletin, p. 16–17.

This is the proposed new language.

Undergraduate Minor Programs

A minor is a coherent group of four to six course credits that may be a limited version of a field of concentration (major) or a group of courses having closely related subject matter. Minors are optional and in no way replace the field of concentration. The object of a minor program is to present students with the basic concepts in a single scholarly discipline or interdisciplinary area, including an introduction to appropriate methodologies and ways of thinking about the subject.

Two course credits used toward the departmental minor may be used toward a foundation, distribution, or concentration requirement. Students may not complete a major and a minor, or two majors, or two minors, from the same department or program unless the department or program explicitly permits it. Students may declare a minor only after they have declared a major concentration. A student may have any number of majors and minors. All courses used in fulfillment of a minor must be taken for a grade (not pass/fail).

There is a wide variety of minors offered within Arts and Sciences. Not all departments and programs have minors, so students should consult department and program websites for additional information.

That is, we propose to abolish the distinction between departmental and interdisciplinary minors, and to treat minors the same way whether they’re offered by a department or by an interdisciplinary program.

Then at most two courses used toward a minor may also count toward a major, another minor, a distribution requirement, or a foundation requirement, which previously has been permitted only for departmental minors. We also propose that students may not have two majors, a major and a minor, or two minors from the same department or program unless that department or program explicitly permits it.

Rationale:

Currently, there’s no rule at all about what can double-count between minors, though there is for double-counting between majors, or a minor and a major. Courses for departmental minors can count toward foundation requirements but courses for interdisciplinary minors can’t. Students can’t have a disciplinary major and a disciplinary minor in the same discipline (whatever exactly “discipline” means in the Bulletin: it isn’t defined), and can’t have more than one disciplinary major. We’re proposing to make the rules simpler and more consistent.

The current rule is that a student can’t both major and minor in, say, English – but can major in Economics and minor in Finance, even though that minor is from the economics department, because it’s not the “same discipline.” Right now, a student could double major in Classics and Greek-and-Latin Studies, though arguably that is the “same discipline.” We’re proposing to put this under control of the departments.

Some departments already have compatibility rules. For example, economics has set up clear rules for how the Economics major and the Finance minor work together, with restrictions on what can double-count. Psychology explicitly disallows a double major in General Psychology and any of the
other psychology majors. Others, like classics, do not. With the proposed new language, each depart-
ment would need to specify what combinations are allowed.

Here, for comparison, is the existing Bulletin text:

**Undergraduate Minor Programs**

A student may have any number of majors and minors, provided there is only one disci-
plinary (departmental) minor. All courses used in fulfillment of a minor must be taken for
a grade (not pass/fail).

**Disciplinary (or Departmental) Minor**

A minor is a coherent group of four to six course credits that may be a limited version of
a field of concentration or a group of courses having closely related subject matter. Minors
are optional and in no way replace the field of concentration. The object of a minor program
is to present students with the basic concepts in a single scholarly discipline, including an
introduction to appropriate methodologies and ways of thinking about the subject.

Students may have only one disciplinary (departmental) minor, regardless of the number
of majors. Two course credits used toward the departmental minor may be used toward a
foundation, distribution, or concentration requirement. Students may not complete both a
minor and a concentration (major) in the same discipline. Not all departments have minors,
so students should consult department websites for additional information.

**Interdisciplinary Minor**

An interdisciplinary minor involves a designated group of five credits from at least three de-
partments or programs of the university, bringing to bear the knowledge and perspectives
of various disciplines on a single subject. In addition to the five credits, students pursuing
an interdisciplinary minor are required to complete a capstone project such as a research
paper, an oral presentation, or a performance, which integrates the knowledge and method-
ologies of the disciplines involved.

There is a wide variety of interdisciplinary minors offered within Arts and Sciences (see list
below). Students should consult the individual program website and/or program director
prior to declaring a minor. Students may declare a minor only after they have declared a
major concentration. Students may have more than one interdisciplinary minor, regardless
of the number of majors they have, and may have an interdisciplinary minor in addition to
a departmental minor. Two credits used toward the interdisciplinary minor may be used
toward a distribution or concentration requirement, but not toward a foundation require-
ment.