Programs, Courses & Credits

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Official Program Designations

Degree program: A degree program is an area of study approved as such by the institution and the Board of Governors (BOG) and listed on the official inventory of degree programs (https://www.wvhepc.org/resources/degree%20inventory%20update/progoffpubpriv.html#IDX1). The degree, which is an award signifying a rank or level of educational attainment and which is conferred on students who have successfully completed a degree program, is represented by the official degree designation (e.g., B.A.—bachelor of arts, B.S.—bachelor of science, etc.)

Major: A major is a field of study within an approved degree program, having its own curriculum. A degree program may have more than one major.

Area of Emphasis: An area of emphasis is a specific subject area within an approved degree program and major. Normally, a minimum of 12 credit hours and no more than 18 credit hours are expected for an area of emphasis within a baccalaureate degree program. Normally, a minimum of 6 and no more than 12 credit hours would be expected for an area of emphasis within a graduate degree program.

Minor: A minor is an area of study outside of the major that encourages students to pursue a secondary field. Students may not earn a minor in the same field as their major. Requirements for a minor are set by the academic unit offering the minor and must include at least 15 hours of coursework, with a minimum of 9 hours at the upper division level (course numbers 300 or above). Minors are only available to students earning a baccalaureate degree.

Certificate program: A certificate program is a coherent, specialized curriculum designed for students in search of a specific body of knowledge for personal/career development or professional continuing education. Normally, a minimum of 12 and no more than 21 credit hours constitute a certificate program at the baccalaureate or graduate level.

Graduate Certificate Programs

For a complete list of certificates and information on WVU’s graduate certificates, please see our Graduate Certificates Page (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduatecertificates).

Multiple Graduate Degrees

University policy permits students to obtain more than one WVU graduate degree either simultaneously or sequentially. Students must have permission from all programs to pursue degrees simultaneously. See the section on Course Credit Limitations for limits on the use of credits for more than one program.

Approved Dual Degree Programs

West Virginia University offers several approved dual degree programs. Approved dual degree programs are programs in which certain courses or credits are accepted for credit by each program. Students in such programs must also successfully complete any specific program requirements. Students in approved dual degree programs must graduate from both programs simultaneously (or the limits in the section on Degree Programs Credit Limitations (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/#Limitations) apply). Students should contact the individual units regarding admission and academic requirements and regulations for these approved dual degree programs.

Approved Dual Degree Programs:
- Doctor of Dental Surgery/Master of Public Health
- Doctor of Dental Surgery/Master of Business Administration
• Doctor of Jurisprudence/Master of Business Administration
• Doctor of Jurisprudence/Master of Public Administration
• Doctor of Medicine/Master of Public Health
• Doctor of Medicine/Master of Business Administration
• Doctor of Medicine/Doctor of Philosophy
• Doctor of Pharmacy/Master of Business Administration
• Master of Public Administration/Master of Social Work
• Master of Business Administration/Master of Science in Finance
• Master of Business Administration/Master of Science in Industrial Relations
• Master of Business Administration/Master of Science in Nursing
• Master of Business Administration/Master of Science in Sports Management
• Master of Public Health/Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology
• Master of Public Health/Master of Business Administration

Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Programs

Students in ABM programs complete all requirements for both degrees. Students are conferred both degrees simultaneously following completion of the requirements for both degrees. Students accepted to an ABM program will be dually enrolled in the bachelor’s and master’s degree programs after completion of at least 60 undergraduate credits and admission to the master’s degree program. Students must complete a separate application for admission to the master’s degree program.

Students enrolled in a master’s degree program as part of an ABM program may enroll in graduate-level courses approved for their program without completing a Senior Petition.

Unless given specific permission by the relevant dean, students admitted to an ABM program must maintain full-time continuous enrollment during fall and spring terms. Enrollment requirements in summer term are determined by individual programs.

Students who are admitted to an ABM program may not pursue a dual degree, double major, or certificate. They may pursue minors and areas of emphasis, as approved by their advisor. However, students admitted to an ABM program will not be approved for course overloads (more than 17 credits in any term that includes more than one graduate-level course, more than 20 credits in any term that does not include graduate-level courses).

APPROVED ABM PROGRAMS:
• Bachelor of Science/Master of Science in Applied and Environmental Microbiology
• Bachelor of Science/Master of Science in Physical Education Teacher Education

In this section:
• Degree Program Credit Limitations
• Credit Hour Definition

Degree Program Credit Limitations

Credit toward a graduate degree may be obtained only for courses listed in the graduate catalog and numbered 400–799 (although some professional programs allow credit for lower-level courses). No more than forty percent of course credits counted toward any graduate degree may be at the 400-level. Graduate credit is obtained only for courses in which the grade earned is A, B, C, P or S. Courses taken as audits or courses in which the grade earned is D, F, or U do not count toward a graduate degree.

Up to a total of 12 credits earned at WVU or at another institution prior to admission to a graduate degree program at WVU may be applied to that program. Students pursuing two degrees simultaneously at WVU may apply up to 12 total credit hours to both degrees. Furthermore, students who pursue a certificate concurrently with a master’s or doctoral degree at WVU may apply up to 6 credit hours of certificate coursework to the degree program (See Academic Certificates Policies (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduatecertificates)). Doctoral programs that require or allow students to earn a master’s degree in the same discipline may count the courses earned in the master’s degree program toward the doctoral program. Some approved dual degree programs are allowed to share more than 12 credits. Applicability of credits is at the discretion of the program offering the degree.

Credit Hour Definition

West Virginia University courses offered for credit are based on semester hours. Semesters are fifteen weeks long plus one week for final exams. A single credit hour is equivalent to fifty minutes of guided instruction within the classroom. An hour of preparation, or related activity outside of the classroom, is equivalent to sixty minutes.
FACE-TO-FACE CLASSROOM LEARNING

One credit hour is equivalent to one hour of guided instruction (fifty minute class) and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time such as during the summer academic term, when courses may vary in duration. One credit hour in other academic activities, as established by the institution, such as laboratory work, internships, practicums, studio work, study abroad, experiential learning opportunities, and online learning, must include an equivalent amount of required work.

ONLINE LEARNING

One credit hour of online learning is equivalent to fifteen hours of direct instruction and thirty hours of additional student work. Direct instruction can occur via computer-assisted (modules), multi-media interaction, discussions, and/or completion of exams/quizzes/assessments as documented in the course syllabus and approved to meet best practices in online learning. Student work includes activities like readings and supplemental home work. Students must fulfill these hours to complete the course requirements as set forth by the course instructor. Online courses developed from existing face-to-face instruction adhere to the defined learning outcomes and assessments of the original face-to-face format for the course. All WVU online programs are reviewed for nationally accepted standards for online learning.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In experiential learning, including opportunities representing laboratory/lecture courses, undergraduate research (with or without laboratory), professional development internships, and service learning, a total of three hours of classroom and preparation time per week over a period of fifteen weeks for one credit hour or the equivalent amount of work over a shorter period of time is required. Courses must incorporate adequate opportunities to document student progress and student completion of the stated learning objectives for each experience.

STUDY ABROAD

One credit hour is equivalent to fifteen hours of guided instruction and thirty hours of cultural, linguistic or other types of engagements as described by the syllabus and approved by the faculty, department Chair, Dean, and Associate Provost. Exceptions to this general rule would need to be justified and approved on an individual basis.

STUDIO/ENSEMBLE WORK

In studio courses in the arts, design, and theatre, one credit hour is equivalent to one and a half hours of guided instruction and three hours for studio class practice or projects each week for fifteen weeks as defined by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). In accordance with the National Association of Schools of Music standards, one credit hour of ensemble work in the music field represents three hours of practice each week, on average, for a period of fifteen weeks plus the necessary individual instruction as defined by the major subject.

VARIABLE CREDIT OFFERINGS

Variable credit courses often represent student experiences that range in credit hours based on the focus and discipline of the experience. Practicums (teaching and research), field experience, undergraduate and graduate research and laboratory rotations and credit, and independent studies offer a range of contact. One credit hour is equivalent to fifteen contact hours of guided instruction (e.g., student progress meetings, mentoring) and thirty hours of student work to complete the requirements set forth by the advisor or course instructor (e.g., team meetings, review sessions, thesis/dissertation preparation) over a fifteen week period. Instructors/mentors and students should discuss the appropriate number of total credit hours for a given course based on the time needed to attain outcomes of the particular endeavor.