

OPTIONS FOR SPECIALIZED STUDY

Programs have various options when developing specialized studies for post-baccalaureate, graduate, and professional students. Please consult with The Graduate School early in the planning process to discuss the necessary procedures and documentation.

Track – A broad term used to indicate a course of study to which students are assigned or select according to ability, needs, or interest. Tracks are typically identified prior to admissions to a degree program or early in a student’s career. They are not typically identified on student transcripts or formal academic records, but the Registrar’s Office can be petitioned to do so.

- Example: PhD in Education in the Culture, Curriculum and Change track

Specialization, Concentration, or Supporting Area – A collection of coursework in a specific field related to the degree program. Specializations and concentrations are focused within the major, while supporting areas are usually course requirements beyond the major and may or may not grow into a formal minor. They are not typically identified on student transcripts or formal academic records, but the Registrar’s Office can be petitioned to do so.

- Examples: Degree in Public Administration with a specialization in local government management; Aging supporting area for the PhD in Nursing

Minor – A formal secondary field of academic concentration governed by guidelines in the Graduate School and departmental policies. Minors are reflected on student transcripts.

- *From the Graduate Handbook, Sections 2.5 and 2.7:*

“With the approval of both the major and minor programs, a student may elect to declare a formal minor in any program that offers a degree. If a student does elect a formal minor, it must comprise at least [9 credit hours beyond the major – Master’s] [15 credit hours – PhD]. To count toward the minor, all credits must be for courses listed (or cross-listed) in programs other than that of the major, and cannot also be counted toward the major. A minor may consist of a set of related courses, some of which are listed by one program and some of which are listed by another. In most cases, the minor would not include courses from more than two programs. Only one program name will be listed as granting the minor, and the director of graduate studies in the minor program must agree to accept any coursework from outside the minor program offerings.”

- Example: Major in English and Minor in Religious Studies

Certificate – A formal program of courses and/or other work (i.e. practicum, seminars, field study) in a field of specialization. In some disciplines, a certificate is akin to a professional credential, while in others, a certificate is recognition of competence in a given skill, practice, or field of study. A formal admissions process is required. Official campus documents will be provided upon completion.

- Examples: Certificate in Latin American Studies; Certificate in Developmental Psychology; Certificate in International Development and Social Change
- For additional information, please see the Graduate School’s *Guidelines for Certificate Programs*.