Policy and Academic Process for Requests for
Graduate Program Majors by Academic Units

Graduate Majors
Graduate education at Purdue is organized by degree programs. A degree program may have one or more associated majors. Each major is a unique set of courses designed to give the student depth in an academic field. A major designation appears on all transcripts issued after the degree is posted, but not on the diploma.

Definitions:

Definition of a Graduate Degree
A graduate degree is a specific program of study, approved by the Purdue University Graduate Council, Provost's Office, the Board of Trustees, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission.

Definition of a Graduate Major
A major is an academic field of study within an approved graduate degree (requiring 60% of the graded credit hours for a master's degree or 18 graded credit hours for a PhD), approved by the Purdue University Graduate Council and the Provost's Office.

Definition of a Graduate Concentration
A concentration is an area of study within an approved graduate major (requiring a minimum of 9 credit hours), administratively approved by the Graduate School.

Graduate majors will have the following features:

1. Specialization in an academic field of study within a graduate degree.
2. For MS degree programs, a major is defined by a minimum of 60% of the credit hours required for the degree (see Table 1 for examples).
3. For PhD programs a major is defined by a minimum of 18 credit hours of graded course credits required for the degree.
Table 1. Number of course credits that define a graduate major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Credit Hours for the Master's Degree Program</th>
<th>Required Minimum Number of Graded Credit Hours Required for a Major</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>30</td>
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Review/Approval Process:

I. **Proposal for a Major**
   Proposals are addressed to the dean of The Graduate School from the head of the academic unit and endorsed by the academic dean.

   A. Upon receiving the proposal for a major, the Graduate Programs Office in the Graduate School concurrently conducts an administrative review of the proposal, while the Graduate Council conducts an academic review.

   B. The academic review begins with the Area Committee Chairs reviewing the proposal to determine if the proposal presents the need for a review by Area Committee B, that is, the need for a multidisciplinary review. If not, then the appropriate Area Committee will review the proposal.

   C. The Graduate Programs Office forwards all administrative comments to the appropriate Graduate Council Area Committee for review and recommendation to the Council. The area committee chair may seek feedback from corresponding degree granting units on any campus as well as the proposer.

   D. The area chair will establish time limits on responses from the proposer (typically 30-90 days). Under extenuating circumstances a longer period may be granted by the area chair.

   E. In parallel, non-academic reviews are conducted by the Office of Institutional Research Assessment and Effectiveness (OIRAE), Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning, and, if required, the Associate Vice Provost and Director of Digital Education.

   F. The area chair presents the proposal to the Graduate Council for consideration. The Council may elect to approve or not approve the proposal.

II. **Subsequent Review and Action**

   A. The Graduate School forwards a request to the registrar to set up a new graduate major and associated code in the Banner System.

   B. The dean of the Graduate School reports the major approval to the Graduate Council.

   C. The Graduate School notifies the proposer.
III. Proposals should include:

1. Completed Form 28

2. Supporting Documentation Outlining the Justification for the Major
   - Statement of the mission of the proposed major including, but not limited to, the need for the major, the target audience, the relationship to the degree under which the major will be listed, and the relationship to other majors in the degree
   - Any existing concentrations that will be listed under the major
   - Focus of the research or professional program associated with the major
   - Participating faculty, including name, academic rank, and departmental affiliation
   - Currently enrolled or expected number of students
   - Core courses for the major and a description of how they fit into and support the degree program. List only the courses required for this major.
   - Learning outcomes (e.g., unique knowledge or abilities, capacity to identify and conduct original research, ability to communicate to peer audiences, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, etc.)