

Guidelines for Proposing New Minors and Modifications for Existing Minors

Effective Winter 2019

Given the limited coursework involved in completing a minor, ***it is particularly important that minors be designed to provide a focused and coherent program of study based on stated learning outcomes.*** However, the curriculum committee recognizes that definitions of coherence will vary according to discipline. Certain fields of study may call for a sequential series of courses with specific requirements while others may prioritize a breadth of topics. While recognizing the many benefits of minors and their popularity among students, the curriculum committee recommends the following for departments when they propose new minors or modifications to existing minors. These guidelines are in addition to the existing [current policies](#) and will go into effect immediately.

1. When appropriate and feasible, academic minors, like majors, should have a common element for all students pursuing the minor, either through a prerequisite or introductory course, a capstone class, or experiential practicum or project. If infeasible, an explanation must be provided in a proposal for a new or modified minor.
2. Proposals for new minors or modifications to existing minors should include evidence of a constituency based on student interest and demand.
3. Proposals should include a statement of learning outcomes that addresses what a student should know and/or what practical skills or experiences will be gained upon completing the minor.
4. Proposals should include a justification, statement of purpose, and/or evidence of internal coherence as defined according to the discipline.
5. Departments which host multiple minors and are submitting a proposal for a new or modified minor also should provide a statement indicating clear disciplinary distinctiveness between or among the department's minors and justification for hosting multiple minors. The justification should reference distinct learning outcomes, skills or experiences, and coherence between or among the minors.
6. If a proposed new or modified minor aligns or overlaps significantly with one or more pre-existing minors as determined by the curriculum committee, the department will be required to consult with departments hosting similar minors and might be encouraged to consider developing a program of study that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration. If any of the departments involved determine that a shared minor is not feasible, the proposing department must include a statement addressing the infeasibility and sign-offs from the other department or departments.

7. Minors proposed by other U-M schools or colleges must include relevant coursework from LSA departments.
8. The curriculum committee will evaluate favorably new or revised minors that employ cross-disciplinary, problem-focused learning. Such minors can encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and enhance the relevance of the liberal arts to students' future pursuits. Two of the three most popular non-LSA minors require a problem-focused, experiential service project or practicum.
9. The curriculum committee will work with departments proposing new or modified minors to ensure that the minor requirements are consistent with the recommendations above and are concise and clearly stated.
10. Departments submitting multiple modification requests within a five-year period will need only to submit the required statement of learning outcomes, evidence of a constituency, and purpose or coherence **once** in that five-year period.

Additionally, the curriculum committee made the following recommendations with regard to the number of minors attracting little to no active student interest. While the curriculum committee doesn't assume the authority to require departments to discontinue "unpopular" minors, the associate dean for undergraduate education will work with academic departments that host minors that have attracted fewer than five declarees consistently over the past five years. These discussions will include the issues of administrative costs, content duplication, availability of courses, or any other relevant matters. To that end,

- The associate dean will begin discussions starting in Winter '19 with departments about consolidating or eliminating historically and severely under enrolled minors.
- The associate dean will host a meeting between the program directors of multiple chronically undeclared minors in pedagogically connected departments to discuss possible avenues of cooperation, consolidation, or elimination.
- The associate dean will request justification for continuance of the minor from the departments hosting minors that currently have fewer than five declarees and typically have had fewer than five declarees in most or all semesters in the past five years.
- The associate dean and the curriculum committee will review the status of minors every five years.