

DRAFT

INTERPRETIVE GUIDELINES FOR POLICY 1990-06-A: ACADEMIC DEGREES

A. Purpose

The Interpretive Guidelines serve to interpret and clarify the policy on Academic Degrees for State System universities. The Interpretive Guidelines merely define or explain the relevant policy and do not impose any requirements that are not otherwise set forth in the policy.

B. Policy Sections

For the full text of the policy, go to:

<http://www.passhe.edu/inside/bog/pol/Policies/Policy%201990-06.pdf>

Specific sections of the policy, for which interpretation is provided, are as follows:

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2. Baccalaureate Degrees – Baccalaureate degrees require 120 semester credit hours unless (1) otherwise required by statute, regulation, or accreditation, and (2) approval by the Board of Governors, upon recommendation of the chancellor. Baccalaureate degrees consist of two principal components, general education and study in depth in a major, which taken together, are designed to prepare the student for a productive career, involved citizenship, and continuous growth:

General education consists of a broad program of study in the liberal arts and sciences, such that at least 40 semester credits hours are focused on competencies consistent with the liberal education learning outcomes as defined in Policy 1993-01: *General Education at State System of Higher Education Universities*. These competencies are typically met through study in the areas of humanities, fine arts, communication, social and behavioral sciences, mathematics, and the natural/physical sciences. In addition, general education requirements should be consistent with distribution requirements of the statewide Transfer Credit Framework. Transfer credits up to 30 semester hours will be applied to the general education requirement assuming the courses meet the standards of the Transfer Credit Framework and are designated as equivalent through identification of comparable competencies attained by

students. Certain majors have specific requirements prescribed by external agencies that may pertain to general education requirements.

The remainder of the curriculum may consist of coursework related to the major, advanced coursework (see endnote) in the liberal arts and sciences, or electives. At least 42 semester credits hours must consist of advanced coursework.

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) – The Bachelor of Arts degree is the common degree in the arts and humanities, typically offered through the liberal arts and sciences. Bachelor of Arts degrees emphasize breadth and depth of study, and encourage aesthetic, ethical, and intercultural inquiry. The major program should not exceed 40 semester credit hours, including required cognate courses, unless approved by the chancellor. Cognate courses are those courses in related disciplines required for the major. For example, a major in sociology might require a cognate course in social psychology taught through Psychology.

b. Bachelor of Science (B.S.) – The Bachelor of Science degree is the common degree in mathematics, the natural sciences, and many of the behavioral and social sciences. The Bachelor of Science degree generally represents a more structured major program, and more direct orientation toward professional preparation than the Bachelor of Arts degree. The courses required by the major, including required cognate courses in related disciplines, must comprise at least 40 semester credit hours but no more than 60 semester credit hours, unless approved by the chancellor. Cognate courses are those courses in related disciplines required for the major. For example, a major in biology might require a cognate course in biochemistry taught through Chemistry.

C. Interpretation or Clarifications

1. The two principal components – “general education and study in depth in a major” – of a baccalaureate degree do not preclude requirements for all majors with a specific degree designation. An example of a “degree requirement” is:

Modern Language Requirement for the BA Degree

Proficiency at the 103 class level of a modern language, or the equivalent, is required for all Bachelor of Arts degree candidates. Exemption by placement or examination is possible. The modern language courses used to satisfy the BA requirement may not be used in the goal or enrichment section of the global community block of the liberal studies program.

OR

Modern Language Requirement for the BA Degree

All BA degree candidates must successfully complete a modern language requirement, defined as completion of three courses in one modern language (e.g. Chinese I, Chinese II, Chinese III) with a course grade of C or higher. Modern language courses/credits used to fulfill the degree requirement may not be counted to fulfill general education requirements or requirements for the major.

2. General education courses that are "required for the major" are considered "directed general education". Therefore, directed general education courses are counted in the general education requirement/credits. As such, they would not be counted in courses/credits for the major requirements. An example of a "directed general education" requirement is:

Example 1

The academic preparation of all applicants for admission to initial preparation programs which culminate in a bachelor's degree shall include at least 6 semester hour credits (or the equivalent) in college level mathematics and at least 6 semester hour credits (or the equivalent) in college level English composition and literature. If the designated college level mathematics courses, English composition course, and literature course meet general education requirements, then they are considered "directed general education" and are not placed or counted in the requirements for the major.

Example 2

The program of study for a nursing major requires Anatomy and Physiology I. If the Anatomy and Physiology I course meets a general education requirement, then it is a "directed general education" course. As such, it is counted toward the general education requirements and not in the requirements for the major. However, if the Anatomy and Physiology course is not counted or considered to meet a general education requirement, then it may be considered a "cognate course" in the requirements for the major.

3. Courses that are not counted toward the general education component, requirements for a major (including cognate courses), or degree requirements, are "elective courses" or "free electives". While certain courses may be recommended or suggested for students in a major, students are to remain free to take courses of their choice, whether such courses are courses related to the major, advanced coursework in the liberal arts and sciences, courses for a minor, or free electives.
4. In summary, one cannot determine by looking at a particular course whether it is counted in the credits for the general education component, major requirements, a degree requirement (major or cognate), a university requirement, or an elective. One must look at the overall program of study for a degree and major to determine how courses are organized into the different components, or which requirements they fulfill.

University Requirement ?

Computer Competency Requirement

The goal of the computer competency requirement is to ensure that students can effectively use computers and technology to succeed in an information based society. The purpose of the competency test is to determine if new SRU students have already acquired the faculty-designated minimum level of computer competence. The topics on which students will be tested are computer hardware, system software, application software, social impact, technology and the web, networks and security and privacy. We believe that students need to have a minimum level of competence to achieve the greatest success during their academic career. Students can demonstrate computer competency by either passing the computer competency exam or passing a one credit CPSC100, Introduction to Computing for Liberal Arts or any of the following three-credit courses: CPSC110 (Computer Concepts), CPSC130 (Introduction to Information Systems) or CPSC210 (Productivity Software). Upon the successful completion of the exam or one of the courses, Slippery Rock University will certify graduates as having achieved a minimum level of computer competency. Some departments may require students to take additional courses to achieve computer competency for a specific academic major.