

# MAJORS AND DEGREES

## Bachelor's Degree

A bachelor's degree is an award signifying a rank or level of undergraduate educational attainment. Particular types of bachelor's degrees identify educational programs having common objectives and requirements. Degree programs may provide academic, pre-professional, or professional experiences and preparation. Majors lead to a bachelor's degree. Each student must select a major within a bachelor's degree type. If options are offered within a major, a student selects one. The student may also elect to enroll in a minor to supplement the major. Alternatively, the student may seek to enroll in multiple majors within the same type of bachelor's degree or to enroll in a concurrent degree program. A bachelor's program of study shall consist of no fewer than 120 credits. Students may elect to take courses beyond the minimum requirements of a degree program.

## Second Bachelor's and Concurrent Degrees

Students and former students interested in obtaining a second bachelor's degree and currently enrolled students interested in earning concurrent degrees must follow the stipulations as described in the following paragraphs.

A student may only be awarded one degree with the same degree type (i.e., Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, etc.). For example, once a Bachelor of Arts is earned, a student may pursue a second major associated with a Bachelor of Arts but not a second Bachelor of Arts degree. In this example, the student could pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Communication because the degree type is different.

Currently enrolled students are encouraged to pursue graduate level studies toward an advanced degree through the Accelerated Masters Program (AMP) in lieu of pursuing a concurrent bachelor's degree. Students should contact their primary college of residence for additional AMP information.

A currently enrolled student may earn two different bachelor's degrees (i.e., a BA and a BS) concurrently if he or she meets the following requirements:

- earns a minimum of 30 additional credit hours over and above the number of credit hours required for the primary degree
- earns a minimum of 60 credit hours in residence (dependent upon the number of credit hours required to earn the two degrees)
- meets all degree, College and University requirements for both degree programs
- meets all prerequisites and course requirements in the two different major fields

Students may pursue no more than three degree or certificate programs concurrently.

Courses may be counted toward meeting the requirements in more than one area unless specifically prohibited by the academic departments and so stated in the catalog. However, credit for such a course cannot be applied toward both the total hours required for the first degree and the additional hours required for any additional degree.

**NOTE:** Both degrees do not have to be received in the same semester provided the concurrent degree plan of study was approved prior to the receipt of the first degree; otherwise, see the next bullet below.

A student who has previously earned a bachelor's degree from The University of Alabama and wishes to pursue further undergraduate work may complete an additional major and have it noted on the official transcript (with date of completion) **or** earn a second degree if it is different from the first (i.e., a BA if the first degree was a BS and vice versa). This student must apply for readmission for the second degree and then:

- earn a minimum of 30 additional credit hours in residence at The University of Alabama over and above any hours applied to the first degree
- complete all hours for the degree in the college awarding the degree except in special circumstances approved by the dean
- meet all degree, College and University graduation requirements for the second degree program in the catalog under which the student enters or in a subsequent catalog
- meet all prerequisite and course requirements in the major field(s) for the second degree

The University of Alabama recognizes bachelor's degrees earned from postsecondary institutions fully accredited by one of the following accrediting agencies: Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). A student holding a bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by one of the aforementioned agencies may earn a second bachelor's degree, in most instances, from The University of Alabama by fulfilling a specific set of requirements at both the college and University level. This student must apply for admission for the second degree and then:

- meet all requirements for the second degree to include all course hours, grade point, ancillary, prerequisite, and residency requirements specified by the degree program
- earn 25 percent of the degree requirements (a minimum of 30 additional credit hours for a 120-hour degree) in residence at The University of Alabama over and above any hours applied to the first degree

If a student holds a bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by one of the aforementioned agencies, the University presumes all general education/core curriculum requirements are completed. This presumption does not apply to ancillary college and curricular requirements required by the college awarding the degree.

Students are responsible for declaring their intent to pursue a second bachelor's degree by filing an approval plan of study with the primary college of residency. To ensure appropriate advising, approval is obtained at a point when no fewer than 30 hours of coursework remains for the completion of one or both degrees. Students are also responsible for re-filing updated plans of study if changes are desired.

For degrees in different colleges, students must establish one college as their primary college of residency. If program accreditation is a component of the degree program, then the primary college of

residency must be the college of the degree program whose professional accreditation requires residency. The student must pay all fees and adhere to all requirements of each college, other than residency.

At the time of graduation, students pursuing multiple degrees must submit a degree application for each degree by the deadline published on the Academic Calendar.

## Joint/Shared Degree

A joint/shared degree program involves a student working toward a degree mutually sponsored by UA, The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), and/or The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) leading to a single degree which is conferred by all participating institutions. A joint degree program is unique and distinguishable from any program offered independently at any one of the three institutions. The joint/shared degree program must be established through the student's primary institution of residency.

## Multiple Institutions Bachelor's Degree

A Multiple Institutions Bachelor's Degree is a special degree based on a Transfer Articulation Agreement. The agreement is a contract between two institutions of higher education, allowing the student to complete a specific set of courses at each institution to complete requirements for a bachelor's degree. The agreement is program specific and institution specific, so the courses of a specific institutional program have a guaranteed application toward a specific bachelor's program at the other institution.

## Majors

A major is an academic program of study within a degree designation. It is that part of a degree program consisting of a specified number of hours from a defined group of courses in a primary discipline or field. Students are expected to acquire some mastery of a particular discipline or interdisciplinary area as well as to achieve a breadth of intellectual experience. In addition to college/school approval processes, a new major must be approved by other university committees, the Office for Academic Affairs, and external bodies, such as the Board of Trustees and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. Only majors receiving final approval from the Board of Trustees will appear in the UA Catalog. Only formally approved majors will appear in the UA Catalog. A completed major is shown on a student's transcript but not the diploma.

A major must comprise a minimum of 30 semester hours of coursework specified by the academic department.

## Multiple Majors

Students may pursue multiple majors (two or more majors) at the same time within a single bachelor's degree or across degree types. To earn multiple majors, students must fulfill all the major requirements for each major, including any grade point and ancillary requirements. A student may share specific courses pertinent to both majors, provided an agreement has been negotiated and agreed upon between the two colleges or departments involved in granting the majors. Students are not required to complete additional general education/core curriculum requirements beyond those required for the first major, except in the case where additional lower-level courses are needed to fulfill prerequisite requirements of upper level courses. Majors may be selected from multiple colleges, with approval of the college responsible for each additional major, but students must establish one college as the primary college for residency. If a major program's accreditation requires residency in a specific college, the student will reside in the college whose professional accreditation requires residency.

Students are responsible for declaring their intent to pursue multiple majors by filing an appropriate plan of study with their college or school student services office. To ensure appropriate advising, approval should be obtained at a point when no fewer than 30 hours of coursework remain. The student is responsible for re-filing updated plans of study with the primary college of residence, if changes in major intent are desired.

**NOTE:** Students pursuing multiple majors across degree types (ex. BA & BS) will be awarded one degree with multiple majors. Students who are pursuing multiple degrees and earn a minimum of 150 hours may be awarded multiple degrees assuming completion of all necessary requirements. At the time of graduation, students pursuing multiple degrees must submit a degree application for each degree by the deadline published on the Academic Calendar.

## Dual Majors

A dual major is a condensed pathway that allows a student to complete two majors in less time than it typically takes to earn them separately. The pathway shares specific courses pertinent to both majors. Up to nine hours of coursework may overlap. The pathway is predetermined by formal agreement between two departments within a single college or two departments from two different colleges. More specifically, dual majors are predetermined, lock-step programs defined by the two areas of interest and are not self-devised. Students must complete requirements for both majors.

## Minors

A minor is intended to be a secondary area of study outside of a student's primary program of study (major) that represents a coherent course of study. It requires fewer hours than a major and is awarded only if approved by both the major and minor department and/or college. A minor must be completed in conjunction with the degree a student is pursuing, and a student may not pursue a minor after a degree has been conferred. Some colleges do not allow students to double-count courses required by their major. A new minor (by each degree level) must go through the college/school curriculum approval process and ultimately be approved by the Office for Academic Affairs. A completed minor is shown on a student's transcript, but not on the diploma.

A minor must be comprised of 15-24 semester hours of coursework with a minimum of 6 hours of upper-level (300/400) coursework as specified by the department.

## Concentrations

A concentration is an approved set of courses within a major that define a specialty area or specific field of study. Concentrations may also be referred to by departments as "Specializations," "Tracks," or "Options." Unless specified by the unit offering the major, a concentration is not required. Both new concentrations or changes to existing concentrations (by each degree level) must go through the college/school curriculum approval process and be approved by the Office for Academic Affairs. Only formally approved concentrations will appear in The University of Alabama Undergraduate Catalog. A completed concentration is displayed on a student's transcript, but not the diploma.

A concentration must be comprised of 9-18 semester hours of coursework specified by the department.

## Focused Area of Study

Degree programs and majors may include a focused area of study, which describes a subset of coursework that is flexible in nature and relates to a specific field or range of content within the curriculum. Focused areas

of study are different from concentrations in that they do not require formal approval by the Office for Academic Affairs and are not reflected on student transcripts.