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Responsible Executive: Associate Provost, Office of the Provost

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POLICY ON ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS AND PROGRAMS

I. SCOPE

This policy applies to all academic units of the university. It is of interest to all faculty, academic administrators, program directors, and staff of the office of the University Registrar.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Indiana Wesleyan University awards academic credentials (degrees and certificates) to students who complete defined programs of study. Each credential is defined in terms of a set of essential learning outcomes, which may include discipline-specific and general education outcomes, as well as credit hour and other specifications. Each program of study for a particular credential maps the credential learning outcomes to a series of credit-bearing courses. Student performance in each course, credit hours earned in each course, and credentials awarded are transcribed by the University Registrar.

The university owns the titles and specifications of each credential.

The academic units own the program curricula designed to accomplish given credentials, including title, catalog description, and learning outcomes of specific courses. Course credit allocations must conform to the IWU Credit Hour Policy. Course numbers are assigned by the University Registrar in consultation with the academic unit. Courses of identical title and number taught by different academic units must have identical essential learning outcomes. A minority of additional learning outcomes beyond the essential learning outcomes that define the course may be included in various versions of a course offered by various faculty or units. The essential learning outcomes must constitute a majority of the course learning outcomes and must account for a majority of course time and effort. Courses taught by one academic unit but utilized by other academic units within their curricula may not have their essential learning outcomes changed without consultation with all affected academic units.

Except in cases where course syllabi are developed in community or by assigned developers, the individual faculty member is the owner of his/her course syllabi and the included intellectual property. Syllabi must be made available for public historical archive and for review to ensure fulfillment of all established course learning outcomes. The academic affairs office of each Principal Academic Unit (PAU) establishes a system for archiving syllabi.

As appropriate, given the learning outcomes and alignment of involved programs and courses, credits may be shared between academic credentials and sub-credentials awarded coequally, within the following boundaries.

1. The student must fulfill all of the requirements for any credential awarded.

2. Credits may be shared between a major and a minor, as long as the minor includes at least 15 unique credit hours unshared with any other major or minor.
3. Credits may be shared between two minors, as long as each minor includes at least 15 unique credit hours unshared with any other major or minor.
4. Credits may be shared between two undergraduate majors as long as there are 51 unique (unduplicated) credit hours between the two majors.
5. Credits may be shared between two graduate majors as long as two thirds of the credits in each major are unique (unduplicated).
6. Up to three credit hours may be shared between a certificate and a minor.
7. Up to six credit hours may be shared between a certificate and a major (undergraduate or graduate).
8. A major or minor may be added to a previously awarded baccalaureate degree. The student must complete all of the course requirements for the major or minor and a minimum of nine new credits hours must be earned. New general education requirements need not be met to post an additional major or minor. Students adding a major or minor are not eligible to participate in commencement ceremonies again. The additional major or minor will be posted to the transcript only on one of the conferral dates.

As appropriate, given the learning outcomes and alignment of involved programs and courses, credits applied to a previously-awarded IWU academic credential may be applied, without surrender of the prior credential, to another IWU academic credential within the following boundaries.

1. The student must fulfill all of the requirements for any credential awarded.
2. For credits from a prior IWU academic credential to be applied to a second IWU academic credential, the second academic program must be started within ten years of the awarding of the first credential. Exceptions must be approved by the dean (or equivalent) of the school sponsoring the academic program of the second credential. Individual academic programs may specify more strict credit-age limits if warranted by the discipline.
3. The credits from a previously-awarded undergraduate certificate may be applied to fulfill the requirements of an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree.
4. Up to 6 credits from a previously-awarded associate's degree or bachelor's degree may be applied to fulfill the requirements of an undergraduate certificate.
5. The credits from a previously-awarded associate's degree may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a different associate's degree, as long as each credential has at least 25% unique credits.
6. The credits from a previously-awarded associate's degree may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a bachelor's degree.
7. The credits from a previously-awarded bachelor's degree may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a different bachelor's degree, as long as each credential has at least 25% unique credits.

8. The credits from a previously-awarded bachelor's degree or undergraduate certificate may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a master's degree, limited by the provisions of the Undergraduate and Graduate Credit Crossover Policy.
9. The credits from a previously-awarded graduate certificate or post-masters certificate may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a master's degree.
10. The credits from a previously-awarded graduate certificate or post-masters certificate may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a doctor's degree.
11. Credits from a previously-awarded masters's degree or doctor's degree may be applied to fulfill up to 1/3 of the requirements of a graduate certificate.
12. The credits from a previously-awarded master's degree may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a different master's degree, as long as each credential has at least 50% unique credits.
13. The credits from a previously-awarded master's degree may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a doctor's degree, as long as the doctor's degree has at least 50% unique credits.
14. The credits from a previously-awarded doctor's degree may be applied to fulfill the requirements of a different doctor's degree, as long as each credential has at least 50% unique credits.

III. REASON FOR THE POLICY

The policy establishes common understanding of definitions and terminology relating to academic credentials and defines the landscape and boundaries of academic programs designed to culminate in academic credentials: ownership, credit limits, credit sharing, etc.

IV. PROCEDURES

The Board of Trustees must approve the establishment of any new degree, following proposal by the Academic Affairs Committee (or equivalent) of the appropriate Principal Academic Unit, and approval by the University Faculty Senate.

Upon recommendation from the Academic Affairs Committee (or equivalent) of the appropriate Principal Academic Unit, the University Faculty Senate approves new degree and non-degree programs, majors, minors, and certificates.

V. DEFINITIONS

Additional Major. An additional major is a major completed after degree conferral. All rules pertaining to second majors apply. For example, there must be 51 unduplicated hours between an original baccalaureate major and an additional baccalaureate major. New general education requirements need not be met to post an additional major. Students adding an additional major are not eligible to participate in graduation again. Additional majors are added to the transcript on the conferral date following completion.

Additional Minor. An additional minor is a minor completed after degree conferral. All rules pertaining to minors apply. Additional minors are added to the transcript on the conferral date following completion.

Associate's Degree. An associate's degree consists of at least 60 credit hours, including the major, general education requirements, and electives.

Bachelor's Degree. A bachelor's degree consists of at least 120 credit hours, including the major(s), any minor(s), general education requirements, and electives.

Certificate. A certificate is a coherent collection of courses that fulfill specified learning outcomes leading to certification of mastery. A certificate may be earned independent of other academic pursuits. A certificate must be 12 or more credit-hours. Certificate programs must be assessed with regard to accomplishment of stated learning outcomes, as with degree programs. Certificates are recorded on the transcript. The same collection of courses taken as part of a degree program may be termed a specialization or concentration.

- To be eligible for Title IV federal financial aid, a certificate program must qualify and be registered as a “gainful employment” certificate program. The process for gainful employment approval and registration is available from the Office of Financial Aid. Gainful employment certificates must include at least 16 credit-hours and have at least 15 weeks of instructional time.
- A certificate that is drawn substantially from an existing degree-program curriculum does not require HLC approval. “Stand alone” certificates that have a curriculum distinct from existing degree programs require HLC approval.
- Certificates are commonly sub-classified as undergraduate certificates, graduate certificates (also called post-graduate certificates), and post-masters certificates.

Certificate-of-Completion. A Certificate-of-Completion is an untranscribed recognition that a student has completed a course or collection of courses, for credit or not-for-credit, that relate to a recognized learning outcome(s). A Certificate-of-Completion is awarded by the sponsoring unit, but is neither transcribed nor a part of the official academic record.

Cognate. The word cognate means related or similar. A cognate is a collection of two or more courses in a particular subject, field, or subfield, or a collection of courses serving a common purpose. A common use of cognate in the curriculum is to require coherence in electives. For example, instead of allowing a student to take any four elective courses, requiring two of the elective courses to be cognate to ensure some degree of depth in the chosen subject, or two cognate pairs, etc. Cognates may be required in a curriculum, but are not transcribed except as individual courses. Phrases such as “required supporting courses” are interchangeable with cognate.

Complementary Major. A complementary major may not stand alone but may be completed as a second major or an additional major. Examples: Honors Humanities, Pre-medical Science.

Concentration/Specialization. A specialization (or concentration) is a coherent collection of courses that fulfills specified learning outcomes as an optional or elective part of a degree program. The same collection of courses may be offered independent of a degree program as a certificate (if the total number of credits is 12 or more) or a certificate-of-completion. Specializations are recorded on the transcript, but concentrations are not.

Course. Academic content is packaged into courses that are delivered in a variety of modalities. Each course has a defined set of essential learning outcomes and an assigned number of credit hours. Registered courses are recorded on the transcript.

Credit Hour. The credit hour is the smallest denomination of academic credit. Other denominations, such as courses, minors, majors, concentrations, specializations, certificates, and degrees are built of credit hours. Earned credit hours are recorded on the transcript. Historically, the credit hour represents the amount of learning expected in a course that meets one hour per week over the course of a semester. The IWU Credit Hour Policy details the assignment of academic credit to courses across the university.

Major. A major is an academic subject of primary focus associated with an awarded credential. Every credential must specify at least one major. Majors are noted on the transcript. Some majors may not stand alone (see Complementary Major). The major for the associate's degree must include at least 24 credit hours. The major for the bachelor's degree must include at least 40 credit hours, at least 12 of which must be above the sophomore level. A major for a graduate degree must include at least 15 credit hours. [Some programs appear to have majors of less than 40 credit hours. The RN-BSN program, for example, includes only 31 credit hours of required nursing courses. However, the entire major for the BSN degree includes transfer-in credits in support of the prior RN licensure, so the entire BSN degree has well over 40 credit hours of nursing.]

Master's Degree. A master's degree consists of at least 30 graduate credit hours.

Minor. A minor is an academic subject of secondary focus associated with an awarded bachelor's degree. Some academic programs require minors, others do not. Minors are noted on the transcript. A minor includes 18-24 credit hours (exceptions exist as required by regulatory agencies). Each minor must include at least 15 credit hours unduplicated in any other major, minor, or certificate.

Practice/Clinical Doctorate. A practice or clinical doctoral degree includes at least 30 credit hours of doctoral-level work.

Principal Academic Unit (PAU). The major academic structural units of the university. Currently there are six PAUs: the College of Adult & Professional Studies, the College of Arts & Sciences, the Graduate School, the School of Health Sciences, the School of Nursing, and Wesley Seminary.

Research Doctorate. A research doctoral degree includes at least 60 credit hours of doctoral-level work and includes comprehensive exams and a dissertation (or equivalent contribution of scholarship).

Second major. Bachelor's degrees may include multiple majors recognized at the time of degree conferral. To be recorded on the transcript, every requirement of a given major must be fulfilled. Any pair of majors must include at least 51 unduplicated credit hours.

Specialization/Concentration. A specialization (or concentration) is a coherent collection of courses that fulfills specified learning outcomes as an optional or elective part of a degree program. The same collection of courses may be offered independent of a degree program as a certificate (if the total number of credits is 12 or more) or a certificate-of-completion. Specializations are recorded on the transcript, but concentrations are not.

Unduplicated. Counted or used only once, not shared, unique. In the context of this policy, credits that are not shared between two majors (or minors, etc.) and apply to only one major or the other are unduplicated.