



The College at  
**BROCKPORT**  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**POLICY TITLE: Declaring a Major or Minor**

**OVERVIEW:** This policy describes how to declare a major, second major, or minor.

**OFFICE/DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE:** Academic Advisement

**DATE UPDATED:** August 2008

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## **Declaring a Major/Minor**

**The Academic Major.** To earn a baccalaureate degree at The College at Brockport, you must meet the general College requirement for the specific degree, you must complete the General Education requirements and you must complete an academic major.

The academic major has been formally described as “an undergraduate concentration of courses in an approved academic area.” Most majors are associated with a single department, but a few are interdisciplinary and draw upon several departments for their courses. The typical major requires 30 to 36 credits, although a few require more, and College policy requires that at least half of those credits must have been earned at Brockport. In addition, some majors have prerequisite courses, which are courses that must be successfully completed before one is accepted into the major. Some majors have co-requisites, courses that must be completed concurrently with those in the major. The requirements for each of the majors are listed in the undergraduate catalog. It is a very good idea to confirm your understanding of them with your major advisor, and to reconfirm that understanding now and then, just to be on the safe side.

Departments alter their major requirements from time to time, to keep pace with changes in the field and in the world. Once you have become a matriculated (formally admitted) student at Brockport, however, you are guaranteed the requirements that were in place at the date of your matriculation — provided your education continues uninterrupted. (Not the date you actually declared the major, but the date you matriculated, which is usually much earlier.) You can choose to abide by the new requirements if you prefer, but you can’t mix and match. The department also has the authority to substitute one course for another in the major, if it appears to be appropriate and in the best interests of the student. But if a substitution is made for you, make sure a *Course Substitution and Waiver Form* is placed in your permanent record in the Office of Registration and Records. “Somebody told me it was all right” is not a strong defense at some later time. You may also want to check your Degree Audit Report (DARS) to ensure that the change is reflected in your record.

You can choose to pursue a maximum of two academic majors if you wish, and many students do. If you elect a second major, file a *Declaration of Major Form* just as you did for the first and obtain an advisor in that department as well. In some cases, courses used to complete one major may also satisfy course requirements in another major or a minor. The College only looks at whether the requirements for a specific major are completed without respect to whether courses are also being counted toward another major.

**The Academic Minor.** The requirements for a minor are considerably less than they are for a major, and you don't usually need one to earn your degree (although certain certification and major programs may require one). But, a minor can be an excellent way to augment your major program, and could significantly improve your marketability. Minors are also an excellent way to pursue a field that simply appeals to you, but doesn't seem as if it is going to be your career choice.

Most minors at Brockport require a minimum of 18 credits (a few of them demand more), all of them require a minimum GPA of 2.0, and no fewer than half of the credits in the minor must have been taken at Brockport. Some minors, like some majors, have minimum GPA requirements for admission to the minor program. Check with the department offering the minor on the current requirements for declaration of a minor. (See also "Residency Requirement.")

You must officially declare a minor by filing a *Declaration of Minor Form* with the appropriate department. When you notify the Office of Registration and Records of your intent to graduate, that department must then certify that you have indeed met its requirements for the minor. (You have never officially completed a major, a minor, or any other academic program until the department in charge says so.)