

4.81 – Degrees, Majors, Minors and Other Academic Programs of Study

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The following Administrative Rules and Procedures are adopted pursuant to the authority granted in **RPM 4.00**. They establish the protocols by which degrees, majors, minors, and other academic programs of study shall be developed, reviewed and officially adopted.

PART 2: TYPES OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS/MINIMUM CREDITS HOUR REQUIREMENTS

A. Degrees

An academic rank conferred by the university after successful completion of a required course of study or conferred as an honor on a distinguished individual. NMSU offers Associate, Baccalaureate, Master's and Doctoral degrees. A degree is indicated on the student's transcript.

1. **Associate Degree:** NMSU awards both designated and undesignated associate degrees following completion of a minimum of 60 credits. Associate degrees are designed to prepare a student to transfer to a baccalaureate program and generally cover the first two years of a four-year degree.
2. **Applied Associates Degree:** Applied associate degrees are offered by the system's community colleges and designed for students moving directly to the workforce. These professional programs have a minimum of 60 credits.
3. **Baccalaureate Degree:** A baccalaureate or bachelor's degree is designed to provide the student with a broad educational base as well as knowledge in a specific field. The baccalaureate degree requires coursework to satisfy the New Mexico Common Core requirements (35-36 credits), New Mexico State University's Viewing a Wider World requirements (6 credits), and the requirements of the major field of study (see section B).
4. **Master's Degree:** A minimum of 30 semester graduate course credits is required for the master's degree. Master's programs involving a thesis include no more than six and no fewer than four credits of thesis. At least 15 credits for the master's degree must be for work in courses in the department in which the student was admitted.
5. **Doctoral Degree:** The doctoral degree requires significant scholarly study beyond the master's. The individualized program of study is designed to meet the campus residency requirement and includes a minimum of 30 graduate course credits beyond the master's. If the Doctoral degree requires a dissertation, at least 18-credits of dissertation work must be included. The professional doctoral degree includes a practicum or special project that culminates in a written report which demonstrates a command of the relevant scholarly literature and links it to the specific clinical or practical experience.

B. Majors

A major is a recognized area of study in which there is an extensive and well-developed curriculum offered at the university, as well as adequate library resources and support services. All majors are indicated on the student's transcript.

1. **Associate Major:** An associate major, may include courses from more than one department, but as a minimum it must consist of at least 60 credits. Transfer degrees must include the New Mexico Common Core. Additional requirements may be imposed by the State of New Mexico and New Mexico State University or as specified in the Community College's Catalog.
2. **Undergraduate Major:** An undergraduate major may include courses from more than one department, but as a minimum it must consist of at least 24 credits within the major field, of which 18 credits must be upper-division courses. Additional requirements may be imposed by the State of New Mexico and New Mexico State University as specified in the Undergraduate Catalog.
3. **Graduate Major:** A graduate major may include courses from more than one department, but as a minimum it must consist of at least 30 graduate course credits. Additional requirements may be imposed by the State of New Mexico and New Mexico State University as specified in the Graduate Catalog.
4. **Multiple Major:** A student may earn multiple majors. In this case, the student must meet all of the requirements in the same catalog for each major. Courses taken outside of the major fields may be used to fulfill the conditions of any of the majors.
5. **Supplemental Major:** A supplemental major is designed to enhance a student's primary major through interdisciplinary coursework in a closely related field. The minimum requirements for an undergraduate supplemental major are 24 credits taken from the catalog listing for the field of study, of which at least 18 credits must be upper-division (300-499). Of the 24 credits, up to 9 may be courses from the student's major course of study.

C. Minors

A minor is based on courses that encompass a recognized field of study outside the student's major. Departments may require certain courses be a part of a minor and may exclude other courses. Offered minors are listed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. A minor is indicated on the student's transcript.

1. **Undergraduate Minor:** At a minimum, an undergraduate minor must consist of 18 credits of course work, of which 9 credits are at the upper-division level.
2. **Graduate Minor:** At a minimum, a graduate minor must consist of at least 9 course graduate credit hours.

D. Concentration

A collection of coursework in an area that is part of a major (see above) program of study. A minimum of 12 credits within the concentration are required, although some majors may require more. At the baccalaureate level, at least 9 of these 12 credits must be numbered 300 or above; at the graduate level at least 9 of these 12 credits must be numbered 500 or above. A concentration will be indicated on the student's transcript.

E. Certificates

1. **Community College Certificates:** A Community College may offer two types of certificates: Certificate of Achievement and/or the Certificate of Completion.
 - a. The Certificate of Achievement is a program of study less than 16 credits and is not eligible for Federal financial aid. It must provide employment related and/or career enhancing skills necessary to succeed in a job or a chosen field of study. These courses can be a subset of those required for a corresponding Certificate of Completion or Applied Associates Degree. These certificates are recorded on the student's transcript.
 - b. The Certificate of Completion requires a minimum of 16 credit hours (other Title IV requirements must be met to be eligible for financial aid) and has been approved through the academic review process described below. These courses can be a subset of those

required for a corresponding Applied Associates Degree. These certificates are recorded on the student's transcript.

2. **Graduate Certificate:** Graduate certificate programs require 12-18 credit hours of course work that is interrelated and designed to develop a focused skill or area of expertise but do not culminate in awarding of a degree. Courses that comprise the graduate certificate must be regular approved courses offered by the University and must be numbered 450 or above. A graduate certificate is indicated on the student's transcript.

PART 3: APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NEW AND REVISED CURRICULAR CREDENTIALS

The charts attached at ARP [Appendices 4.81-A](#) and [4.81-B](#) outline the sequence of approvals required for each type of academic credential. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the University Programs Academic Committee and Faculty Senate Chair or designee, is authorized to amend these appendices as deemed necessary, including for regulatory compliance.

All changes to current credentials must use these procedures. Examples include: name changes, offering more than 50% of a program in a new location, changing the Classification of Instruction Program (CIP) code, or moving a degree to an online only format.

The Office of the Provost may issue guidance to clarify the methods for initiating the process for review and approval of new programs and curricular changes (e.g. Curriculum Proposal Form, Curriculum Change Form posted at <https://provost.nmsu.edu>)

Details

Scope: NMSU System

Source: ARP Chapter 4 | Curriculum and Course Management

Rule Administrator: [Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs](#)

Last Updated: 07/15/2021

Related

Cross-Reference:

[RPM 4.00 - Academic Matters](#)

[Appendix – ARP 4.81-A – Las Cruces Campus Approval Sequence for Curricular Credentials](#)

[Appendix – ARP 4.81-B – Community College Approval Sequence For Curricular Credentials](#)

See also:

[ARP 4.68 – Course Curriculum Changes](#)

[ARP 4.82 - Transcript Notations](#) (formerly ARP 4.81 Part 2)

Revision History:

07/15/2021 Provisional Amendment approved by Chancellor

10/13/2020 Amendment [FSP No. 03-20/21] approved by Chancellor

05/20/2019 Amendment [FSP 24-18/19] approved by Chancellor

11/13/2018 Amendment approved by Chancellor

02/04/2016 Amendment [FSP 07-15/16] approved by Chancellor

2017 Recompilation, formerly 6.82

10/21/2015 former Policy 6.82 replicated by Board of Regents as initial Rule 6.82

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