

# MAJOR/MINOR DECLARATION AND RELATED PROCEDURES

See also [Special Major and Degree Programs](#) for information on *Contract Majors* and *Liberal Studies*.

## Choosing and Declaring a Major

Each department at New Paltz sets its own policies for major declaration, including minimum credit thresholds, GPA minimums, prerequisite coursework, etc. (See [Declaring a Major](#).) While some students may be admitted directly into majors as first-year students, most students will complete at least three semesters before selecting and declaring a major.

The process of major declaration involves meeting with someone in the major department (often the chair) and reviewing a major plan of study. The department will complete the Declaration of Change webform and assign an advisor in the major department. Once the Declaration of Change is processed, students receive an email acknowledgement and the progress report will be updated to reflect the major and advisor.

Students will be expected to fulfill the major requirements that are in effect at the time they officially declare or redeclare (in the case of academic dismissal or removal from the major). Completing the process in a timely fashion is, therefore, important.

Students who have 60 or more credits in progress will not be permitted to register for additional credits unless they have a declared major. New York State residents with 60 or more credits will not be eligible for New York's Tuition Assistance Plan (TAP) until the major is declared. This policy applies to incoming transfer students as well as continuing students at New Paltz. *[Policy revision effective Fall 2015]*

**Residency requirement for the major:** Transfer credits may be applied to major requirements; however, *one-half of the major must be completed at New Paltz*. (For more information about transfer credits, please refer to the [Transfer Credits policy](#).)

Students who need help deciding on a major should seek assistance from the Career Resource Center and the Office of Academic Advising. The Undergraduate Catalog is also a helpful resource. Descriptions of all majors, major requirements, course descriptions and policies for declaring a major can be found in the Catalog. Many departments also have this information on their webpages.

## Concentrations within Majors

A *concentration or track* provides a formal plan of study through which students may explore a subdiscipline or area of special focus within a major. Students who declare a concentration or track within a major must complete a set of required courses in addition to completing the core courses required for the standard major.

## Double Majors

*[Policy revision effective Fall 2017]*

A student may major in more than one field. The following restrictions apply:

1. The student must designate a primary major<sup>1</sup> and, for majors that lead to either a BA or a BS, the degree the student intends to pursue.<sup>2</sup> All General Education and college-wide requirements must be

completed. The second major need not be associated with the same degree type as the primary major.

2. All program requirements for both majors must be completed satisfactorily. In most cases, the student may find it necessary to complete more than the minimum 120 credits for graduation.
3. *There must be at least 15 credits of difference in the coursework completed for the two majors.* (This includes both major courses and required cognate courses.) Beyond the 15 credits not in common, all other courses may apply to both majors.
4. Upon completion of all requirements, the student will be granted one degree with two majors noted on the transcript.

<sup>1</sup> Students should be fully aware of any financial aid implications before designating a primary major.

<sup>2</sup> The primary difference between degrees relates to the number of liberal arts credits required: 90 for BA, 60 for BS, 30 for BFA.

## Dual Degrees

A student may earn two bachelor's degrees (BA, BS, BFA) simultaneously. *These dual degrees will be awarded at the same time upon completion of all coursework for both degrees.*

The following restrictions apply:

1. At least 15 credits of the major in the first degree must not be contained in the program plan of the major in the second degree (this includes both major courses and required cognate courses). Beyond the 15 major credits not in common, all other courses applied to the first degree may be applied to the second degree. Simply stated, there must be at minimum a 15-credit difference between the majors of the two degrees.
2. The student must complete the college-wide requirements associated with each degree. The primary difference between degrees relates to the number of liberal arts credits required (90 for a BA, 60 for a BS, and 30 for a BFA). However, majors in Engineering have been granted exceptions to their general education requirements. Engineering majors who wish to earn a second degree with a major in another field would be required to complete the general education requirements associated with the other degree.
3. Most importantly, the student must complete a minimum of 150 credits.

## Second Bachelor's Degree Candidates

*[Policy revision effective Fall 2019]*

Any applicant to New Paltz who has already completed a bachelor's degree must apply as a transfer student following the procedures outlined for transfer students. The Director of Transfer Admission reviews and approves applications for a second degree. The criteria for admission as a second-degree candidate are as follows:

- The intended major of the second degree must require at least 15 credits that were not contained in the major of the first degree.
- Second-degree students are considered to have met the general education and writing intensive requirements.
- The student must complete a minimum of 30 second-degree credits at New Paltz.

It is the responsibility of the student to meet with the department chair of the intended major to review their academic program and the requirements remaining for their second degree.

When second-degree candidates have been formally admitted, they must file the Declaration of Major form and be assigned a faculty advisor in their major department. From that point on, the same procedures apply to second-degree students as to those who began their college study at New Paltz.

## Minors

A few majors<sup>1</sup> require students to minor in a field, but in most cases declaring a minor is optional. Minors typically involve between 18 and 25 credits, and can be a way of exploring an interest area in a less in-depth way than a major, or of organizing elective credits. To determine if a department offers a minor, consult the Undergraduate Catalog.

Students who wish to pursue a minor must contact the department offering the minor to submit the Declaration of Change webform. When the changes are processed, the student will receive an email acknowledgement and the change will be reflected on the progress report. At least half of the credits for the minor must not be contained within the program plan of the student's major. (This includes major courses as well as required cognate courses.) Students will be expected to fulfill the minor requirements that are in effect at the time the minor is officially declared. Transfer credits may be applied to minor requirements; however, one-half of the minor must be completed at New Paltz. Students should consult the department regarding minimum grade requirements for courses used to fulfill the minor.

<sup>1</sup> A minor is required for Biology BA majors, all Music (BA and BS) majors, Theatre Arts BA majors, and Visual Arts BS majors.

## Use of the S\*/U\* Grading Option with Major/Minor Courses

Courses that have been elected satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S\*/U\*) **will not** be counted towards the major, the minor, the Education curricula, or the Engineering curricula **unless** the student requests that the S\* or U\* be changed to a regular letter grade. See the [policy on S\\*/U\\* grading](#) elsewhere in this catalog for details on how to implement this option.