

Michigan State University - Academic Program Terminology

This terminology is used to describe majors, minors, graduate specializations, graduate certificates, teacher certification and sub-categories within them as noted.

Name	Definition	Transcriptable <small>(listed on student's transcript)</small>	Trackable in SIS <small>(students can be located by program in the Student Information System)</small>	Eligibility	Relationship to major	Requires separate approval/certification
MAJORS						
Major	A primary field of study named as a specific degree program.	Yes	Yes	Students who select and meet specific admission criteria for a field of study as a major preference.	N/A	Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.
Concentration	A set of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses within a major.	Yes, if requested, by program.	Yes	Students enrolled in specific majors.	Available for majors that provide multiple paths to completion.	Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.
Cognate	A set of related disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses.	No	No	Students enrolled in specific majors.	Complementary to the major.	Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.
MINORS						
Minor	A secondary field of study at the undergraduate level. Policy: minimum of 15 credits	Yes	Yes	Students who select and meet specific admission criteria for a field of study as a secondary preference.	Coherent set of courses supplementary to the major.	Final approval is concurrent with the degree certification process.
GRADUATE SPECIALIZATIONS						
Specialization	An interdisciplinary program of thematically related courses. Guideline: 9 credits.	Yes	Yes	Students enrolled in any major unless specified.	Distinct from a major.	Final approval is concurrent with the degree certification process.
GRADUATE CERTIFICATES						
Type 1 Certification for . . .	Course work, specified professional training, skills, or competency levels.	Yes	Yes	Students enrolled in specific majors.	Directly related to a degree program as part of the degree program's requirements.	Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.
Type 2 Graduate Certificate Program in . . .	Course work, specified professional training, skills, or competency levels.	Yes	Yes	Students who meet specific admission criteria.	Distinct entity not related to a degree program.	Final approval is separate from or concurrent with the degree certification process.
Type 3 Academic Unit Certificate Program . . .	Course work, specified professional training, skills, or competency levels.	No	No	Students enrolled in any major unless specified.	Distinct entity not related to a degree program.	Final approval is granted by the academic unit.
Type 4 University Graduate Certification in . . .	Specified professional training, skills, or competency levels.	Yes	Yes	Students enrolled in specific majors.	Distinct entity not related to a degree program.	Final approval is recommended by the administering unit and The Graduate School and is separate from the degree certification process.
TEACHER CERTIFICATION						
Area of Emphasis <small>(Exclusively for Teacher Certification Programs)</small>	A set of disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses.	Yes	Yes	Students enrolled in specific majors.	Integral to a major.	Final approval is integral to the degree certification process.
Teaching Minor <small>(Exclusively for Teacher Certification Programs)</small>	A group of single subject or group subject courses required by the State of Michigan.	Yes	Yes	Students admitted to teacher certification programs.	Teaching Minors are available for elementary and/or secondary certification. Certain teaching minors are only available for specified majors.	Yes