UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

University Admissions

University Admissions recruits, admits, and enrolls a diverse undergraduate student population regionally, nationally, and internationally. University Admissions is committed to educating students on how to achieve access to higher education.

We are committed to:

- Keeping the best interests of students in mind in all that we do and treating students, their influencers, and other external audiences with honesty and integrity
- Accurately representing the University's application and enrollment processes
- Recruiting diverse and academically eligible students through effective and innovative recruitment and marketing strategies
- Seeking to achieve annual enrollment goals while also keeping the individual student as our focus
- Promoting West Chester University and the benefits of the Ram experience
- Ensuring high operational efficiencies and effectiveness through continuous review and assessment

Our Guiding Principles:

- Fostering student success and collaboration
- Building team success
- Promoting values of equity, inclusion, and civility
- Providing quality service
- Utilizing data and trends to make well-informed decisions

Undergraduate Academic Programs Policy

Accommodations for individuals with disabilities in accessing these policies are available upon request by emailing accessiblepolicy@wcupa.edu

Purpose and Scope

The Undergraduate Academic Programs Policy outlines governing criteria and definitions for undergraduate academic programs at West Chester University. The policy is also in alignment with applicable PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors Policies, State System of Higher Education System Procedures and Standards, Middle States Commission on Higher Education requirements, as well as associated PA Commonwealth statutory requirements.

Policy Statement and Framework

Undergraduate Credentials and Degree Components

Undergraduate Baccalaureate Programs are 120 credits. Baccalaureate degrees include the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), as well as professional baccalaureate degree designations.

Exceptions to the 120 credit maximum must be connected to external accreditation, professional associations, and/or best practices in the discipline. Exceptions must be recommended by CAPC, approved by the Provost, and submitted to the Chancellor for final approval.

At least 42 credits of the 120-credit baccalaureate degree must be from advanced standing coursework.

At WCU, advanced standing is defined as any course numbered at the 300-level or above and any approved 200-level course requiring at least 6 credits of prerequisite coursework (or equivalent).

1. Example: BIO 269 requires a prerequisite of BIO 259; BIO 259 requires a prerequisite of BIO 110. BIO 269 thus requires at least 6 credits of prerequisite coursework, though it directly lists only one prerequisite.

2. Example: SPA 201 requires proficiency at the level of SPA 102, which requires proficiency at the SPA 101 level. Whether a student demonstrates proficiency by completing those two prior courses or through placement testing, SPA 201 requires the equivalent of 6 credits of prerequisites.

A minimum overall GPA of 2.00 is required for all academic programs (e.g., degree, minor, certificate) unless directed by external agencies, licensure, and/or specific accreditation requirements. A 2.00 overall GPA is required for good academic standing as well as progression in the major. Any higher GPA requirement must be recommended by CAPC and approved by the Provost.

Students completing their first baccalaureate degree at WCU must take at least 30 of their last 60 credits from WCU. Additionally, at least 50% of the credits required for the major must come from a Pennsylvania State System university. Exceptions apply to active-duty service members.

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

The major and cognate requirements for the B.A. reflect a minimum of 30 credits but no more than 42 credits. Exceptions to the credit range must be connected to external accreditation, professional associations, and/or best practices in the discipline. Exceptions must be recommended by CAPC, approved by the Provost, and submitted to the Chancellor for final approval.

Cognate courses are required courses in a discipline or field of study different from the primary discipline of the major (e.g., as determined by the course prefix, or home department). For example, a B.A. in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) consists of a core of CSD courses as well as related disciplines such as Psychology. In this example, PSY courses would be cognates for the CSD major.

Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

The major and cognate requirements for the B.S. reflect a minimum of 40 credits but no more than 60 credits. Exceptions to the credit range must be connected to external accreditation, professional associations, and/or best practices in the discipline. Exceptions must be recommended by CAPC, approved by the Provost, and submitted to the Chancellor for final approval.

Cognate courses are required courses in a discipline or field of study different from the primary discipline of the major (e.g., as determined by the course prefix, or home department). For example, a B.S. in Computer Science (CSC) consists of a core of CSC courses as well as related disciplines such as Mathematics. In this example, MAT courses would be cognates for the CSC major.

Professional Baccalaureate Degrees

Professional degrees reflect the standards of professional societies or accrediting agencies as well as the requirements of West Chester University. Professional degrees do not have a minimum or maximum credit limit for major/cognate requirements.

The following undergraduate professional degree designations are recognized by the Office of the Chancellor: Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), Bachelor of Music (B.M.), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.), Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.), Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (B.S.B.A), and the Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.Ed.). Other professional degree designations must be approved by the Office of the Chancellor.

The General Education component of professional degrees may be specifically adapted to the profession but must still be consistent with the competencies appropriate for all WCU students. Such adaptations must be recommended by CAPC and approved by the Provost.

Concentration, Track, Specialization, or Emphasis

A program of study in a focused area within an academic degree program (i.e., a major, not a minor), consisting of a minimum of 12 semester credit hours for baccalaureate degrees.

If students are required to choose a concentration, track, specialization, or emphasis, those credits count toward the major/cognate cap for a B.A. or B.S. degree, as outlined above.

General Education

General Education is aligned with the liberal arts approach to learning, and it is the part of a university undergraduate curriculum that is shared by all students. It ensures that students acquire breadth of knowledge and provides a basis for developing essential learning outcomes.

Learning across traditions and disciplines fosters integration of knowledge and develops skills in diversity, civic and cultural awareness, problem solving, and critical analysis. Within General Education, student learning outcomes consist less in mastery of disciplinary content than in the acquisition of skills, values, awareness, understanding, perspective, and appreciation that are the foundation for informed citizenship in a democratic society, innovation, and career readiness. General Education is also a foundational component of employability skills.

PASSHE requires that General Education programs consist of a minimum of 40 credits and a maximum of 48 credits. At WCU, the General Education requirement is 43-47 credits.

At WCU, the following are General Education requirements:

- Academic Foundations
  - First Year Experience (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/first-year-experience/)
  - English Composition (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/english-composition/)
  - Mathematics (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/mathematics-requirement/)
  - Interdisciplinary (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/interdisciplinary-requirement/)
  - Diverse Communities (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/diverse-communities/)
  - Ethics (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/ethics-requirement/)
- Distributive Disciplinary Foundations
  - Science (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/science/)
  - Behavioral and Social Science (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/behavioral-and-social-sciences/)
  - Humanities (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/humanities/)
  - Arts (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/the-arts/)

Directed General Education courses are courses that are required for the major (e.g., cognates). Directed General Education course credits are counted in the General Education requirements and, as such, would not be counted toward the major/cognate cap of a B.A. or B.S.

Additional Baccalaureate Requirements

These can be University Requirements or Degree Requirements.

University Requirements are courses or competencies that are required for all academic major programs across the university. They are not otherwise a part of the General Education program.

At WCU, the following are University Requirements:

- Writing Emphasis (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/writing-emphasis/)

- Speaking Emphasis (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/speaking-emphasis-requirement/)

Degree Requirements are courses or competencies that are required for all academic majors or major programs of study with a specific degree designation (e.g., B.A., B.S.).

At WCU, the following are Degree Requirements:

- Language and Culture Requirement (https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/general-education-requirements/language-and-culture/) for the B.A., and some B.M. and B.S. degrees
- Capstone requirement for all B.A. and B.S. degrees. Recognizing that professional baccalaureate programs have capstone requirements directed by the profession, all B.A. and B.S. degree candidates must also successfully complete a Capstone requirement that includes an assessment of student learning from general education courses, major courses, electives, and co-curricular experiences.

Academic Minor

An organized program of study that comprises the fundamental requirements of an academic major (core and cognate courses) equivalent to a minimum of 18 semester credit hours. As a secondary field of study, the academic minor should reflect a minimum of six credits of advanced standing coursework. Advanced standing is defined at WCU as any 300-level course or above and any approved 200-level courses requiring at least 6 credits of prerequisite coursework or equivalent. Courses that meet the definition of 'advanced standing' are designated by programs. Advanced standing coursework ensures that a significant portion of a student's studies prepares them to develop advanced competencies requiring depth of knowledge of the discipline.

Prerequisites for specified required courses must be included in the minor (both in the course list and the total credits).

Minors cannot include 'tracks,' 'concentrations,' 'emphases,' or 'specializations' as these terms are reserved for majors. Instead, minor programs may use language such as 'focus areas' or 'electives' if needed.

Students completing their first undergraduate minor must take at least 50% of the credits required for the minor from a Pennsylvania State System university.

Certificates

A formal credit-based credential designated on the academic record and awarded by an educational institution to indicate completion of an organized program of study at the post-secondary level that does not culminate in a degree. Certificates are not the same as certifications or licenses, which are typically awarded by third party, standard-setting bodies (not academic institutions), based on an assessment process that recognizes competencies in a particular occupational specialty as measured against a set of standards. Certificates may be awarded at the undergraduate or graduate level.

There are two types of undergraduate certificates: sub-baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate.

The **sub-baccalaureate certificate** is a 12-credit minimum credential of undergraduate coursework, available to both degree-seeking and non degree-seeking undergraduate students. It serves as an opportunity to access continual learning without requiring the pursuit or prior completion of a bachelor's degree and can be awarded with or without a bachelor's degree. All prerequisite required coursework must be included in the sub-baccalaureate certificate. Sub-baccalaureate certificate admission requirements align with university non-degree admission requirements.

The **undergraduate post-baccalaureate certificate** is a 12-credit minimum credential comprising primarily undergraduate coursework.

Post-baccalaureate certificates offer an opportunity to extend learning to support career growth and/or supplement learning during undergraduate degree progress. A bachelor's degree is not required to begin a post-baccalaureate certificate. The undergraduate post-baccalaureate certificate credential is conferred along with or after earning a bachelor's degree.

Students completing their first undergraduate certificate must take at least 50% of the credits required for the certificate from a Pennsylvania State System university.

Certification Program

A certification program leads to Professional Education Licensure. Certification programs may or may not be credit bearing and can be offered at the undergraduate or graduate level. Students completing certification programs may be recommended by WCU for certification, but WCU does not confer certification. Certification is conferred by a professional body such as the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

A credit-bearing Certification program may also be considered for the Certificate credential provided it meets the requisite definition and requirements in this policy and is recommended by CAPC and approved by the Provost.

External Resources:

Academic Degrees (https://www.passhe.edu/inside/policies/ BOG_Policies/Policy%201990-06-A.pdf) and companion System Procedures (https://www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/ Policies_Procedures_Standards/Academic%20Degrees%202012-13.pdf)

Requirements for Initiation or Change in Credit-Based Academic Programs (https://www.passhe.edu/inside/policies/BOG_Policies/ Policy%201985-01-A.pdf) and companion System Procedures (https:// www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/Policies_Procedures_Standards/ Requirements%20for%20Initiation%20or%20Change%20of%20a %20Credit-Based%20Academic%20Program%202016-23-A.pdf)

General Education (https://www.passhe.edu/inside/policies/ BOG_Policies/Policy%201993-01-A.pdf)

Student Transfer (https://www.passhe.edu/inside/policies/ BOG_Policies/Policy%201999-01-A.pdf)

Program Review (https://www.passhe.edu/inside/policies/ BOG_Policies/Policy%201986-04-A.pdf) and companion System Procedures (https://www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/ Policies_Procedures_Standards/Review%20of%20Academic %20Programs%20and%20Programs%20in%20Support%20of%20the %20Student%20Experience%202018-35.pdf)

Subsequent Degrees (https://www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/ Policies_Procedures_Standards/Subsequent%20Degrees %202018-34.pdf)

Guidelines for Accelerated Bachelors to Masters Programs and Early/Dual Admission to First Professional Master's Degree Programs (https://www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/ Policies_Procedures_Standards/Guidelines%20for%20Accelerated %20Bachelor%20to%20Masters%20Degree%20Programs%20.%20. %20.2016-25-A.pdf)

Graduation Residency Requirements (https://www.passhe.edu/ policies/documents/Policies_Procedures_Standards/PS%202016-24-A %20Graduation%20Residency%20Requirements.pdf)

Statewide Program to Program Agreements (https://www.patrac.org/ Administrators/Statewide-Program-to-Program-Process/)