

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
of the  
**ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL**  
concerning  
**APPLICATION OF COURSES  
TOWARDS MULTIPLE CREDENTIALS**

Presented at the  
745<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
February 19, 2015

**ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL**

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## I. BACKGROUND

This policy, to be added to the Academic Regulations, clarifies issues involving courses/credits being applied to multiple credentials, wherein “credential” is defined as an academic degree program (major), minor, or certificate. University graduation requirements, such as the 120 credit hours needed to receive the baccalaureate degree; School/College-level requirements, such as foreign language requirements; and requirements for the General Education curriculum are not included in this definition, as they are not independent credentials.

This policy addition is deemed necessary because of a lack of existing regulations and a changing campus environment. In the fall of 2008, the Faculty Senate approved the Supplemental Guidelines for Undergraduate Certificate Proposals (Sen. Doc. No. 09-018A). This document includes a provision limiting the application of courses between multiple certificates to two. At the time, certificates were almost exclusively pursued by non-matriculated students. Subsequently, certificates have become a popular credential for matriculated students to pursue simultaneously with their major. Departments have therefore attempted to develop certificate programs aimed at matriculated students, but without clear guidelines about the amount of overlap a certificate program may have with a major and how many overlapping courses may be applied to both.

Additionally, this policy clarifies questions arising from students pursuing minors that are closely related to their major.

This policy only affects undergraduate programs.

This policy aligns the University of Massachusetts Amherst with the majority of its peer institutions, which have similar regulations.

This policy was drafted by the Academic Matters Council’s Policy Subcommittee in close consultation with the University Registrar and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate and Continuing Education.

It was unanimously approved by the Academic Matters Council on October 15, 2014.

## II. NEW POLICY: APPLICATION OF COURSES TOWARDS MULTIPLE CREDENTIALS

**No more than two courses used to fulfill the requirements of any one credential may be applied towards the fulfillment of another credential, wherein “credential” is defined as an academic degree program (major), minor, or certificate. One course may only be applied to two credentials.**

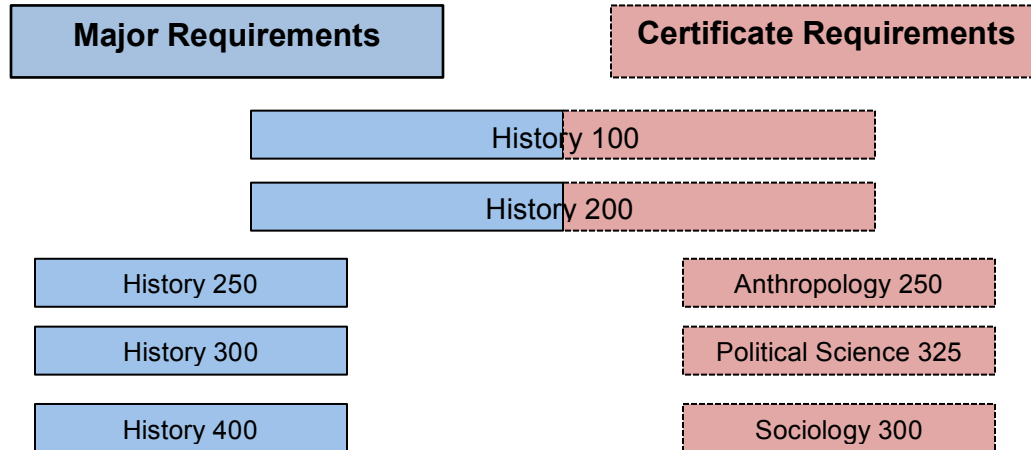
## III. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

For example, a student may apply two courses used to fulfill major requirements towards the requirements of a minor or certificate (figure 1). In this instance, no additional courses used to fulfill either the minor/certificate or the major may be applied to any other credential. Alternatively, a student could apply one course used to fulfill major requirements towards a certificate and one course towards a minor (figure 2). In this instance, the student could apply one additional course towards both the minor and the certificate, as each of those credentials had not yet met the two-course limit via the application

of courses from the major requirements. No additional courses used to fulfill the major requirements may be applied to any other credential, as two courses from the major requirements have already been applied to other credentials.

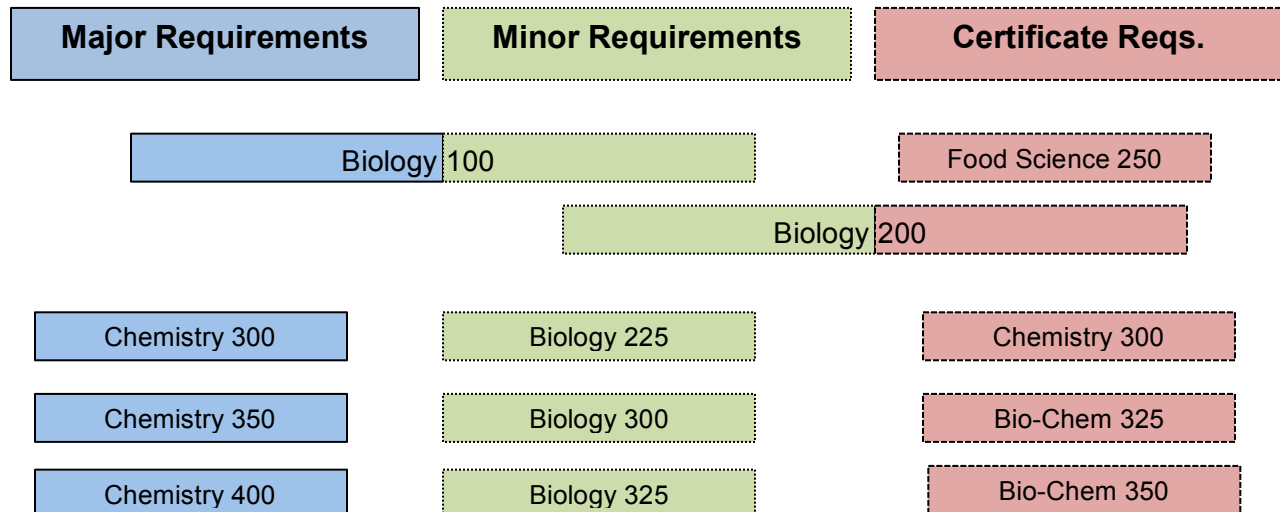
**Figure 1:**

This figure shows a hypothetical major and certificate combination in which two courses are applied to the requirements of both the major and the certificate. In this example, the certificate could also represent a minor.



**Figure 2:**

This figure shows a hypothetical combination in which a student is pursuing a major, minor, and certificate that all entail some possibility of overlap. This student applies one course from the major to the minor (Bio 100) and an additional course from the major to the certificate (Chem 300). The student has then applied two courses from the major to other credentials, and can apply no additional courses to both the major and an additional credential. However, only one course from both the minor and certificate have been applied to additional credentials, so the student may apply one course to both the minor and the certificate (Bio 200).



#### IV. EXCEPTIONS

There are a few established exceptions to this rule, and they have explicit policies allowing for additional application of credits. These exceptions include: double majors, where a student simultaneously pursues a primary and secondary degree; transitional certificates, where some or all of the credits taken by a non-degree student prior to matriculation at the University may be applied to the specific degree program associated with that transitional certificate; and second bachelor's degrees, in which students must complete at least 30 credits beyond those normally required for graduation in order to be awarded a second bachelor's degree.

#### V. IMPLEMENTATION

Because the awarding of minors and certificates is administered at the department and/or program level, advisors within the departments or programs should communicate this regulation to students and ensure that no more than two courses are used to fulfill the requirements of more than one credential. Students pursuing credentials in multiple departments are responsible for ensuring that the requirements for each credential are met within the guidelines of this policy, at the risk of not being awarded one or more of the desired credentials. In cases of uncertainty, students should confirm their academic plans with the Associate Dean for Advising of the relevant College(s) or School(s).

**MOVED:**      **That the Faculty Senate approve the Application of Courses towards Multiple**  
**22-15**            **Credentials, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 15-030.**