

**CAL POLY HUMBOLDT**  
**University Senate**

**Resolution on the Policy Governing Proposed Minors and Academic Credit Granting  
Certificates**

03-24/25-Academic Policy Committee — October 29, 2024 — Second Reading

**RESOLVED:** That the University Senate of Cal Poly Humboldt recommends to the Provost that the following policy governing proposed Minors and Academic Credit Granting Certificates be adopted; and be it further,

**RESOLVED:** That this policy supersedes the Cal Poly Humboldt 2022 Policy Governing Proposed Minors, Academic Credit-Granting Certificates, and Concentrations ([VPAA 22-03](#)), and the Cal Poly Humboldt 2020 Policy on Certificates ([VPAA 20-04](#)).

**RATIONALE:** This policy revision intends to clarify how minors and academic credit-granting certificates are defined at Cal Poly Humboldt. The policy also provides guidance for proposing new minors and academic credit-granting certificates.

**Policy Governing Proposed Minors and Academic Credit-Granting  
Certificates  
[Policy Number]  
Academic Policies Committee**

**Applies to:** All new proposals for minors and academic credit-granting certificates. Non-academic credit-granting certificates, such as certificates of participation, are administered by the College of Extended Education and Global Engagement and do not fall under the purview of this policy document.

**Supersedes:** Policy Governing Proposed Minors, Academic Credit-Granting Certificates, and Concentrations (03/29/2022, [VPAA 22-03](#)), and the Policy on Certificates (05/12/20 [VPAA 20-04](#)).

**Purpose of the Policy**

This policy revision intends to make more clear how minors and academic credit-granting certificates are defined at Cal Poly Humboldt. The policy also provides guidance for proposing new minors and academic credit-granting certificates.

**Table of Contents**

- I. Definitions
- II. Policies governing new proposals for minors and academic credit-granting certificates
- III. Specific guidelines for proposing new minors
- IV. Specific guidelines for proposing new academic credit-granting certificates
- V. Dually proposed minors/academic credit-grant certificates

**I. Definitions**

**Minor.** A minor is a course of study designed to emphasize a disciplinary or multidisciplinary specialty, or area of special interest, for a matriculated student pursuing a bachelor's degree. Minors require a minimum of 12 units of coursework and offer a sustained course of study that complements academic work. Most minors will not exceed 24 units, although proposed minors with more than 24 units shall be considered provided the proposal includes rationale justifying the unit count. Existing minors are exempt from these unit cap guidelines.

**Academic credit-granting certificate.** An academic credit-granting certificate is a cohesive course of study, shorter than a bachelor's or master's degree program, typically designed to

provide students with training to enhance their professional/career opportunities. These certificates are offered at the undergraduate or post baccalaureate level. Academic credit-granting certificates are available to matriculated students who wish to earn a certificate and to non-degree-seeking students who register for the courses through the College of Extended Education and Global Engagement.

An academic credit-granting certificate's required coursework (9-24 units) often entails a structure formulated for specific career-enhancing skills or professional qualifications, setting it apart from a minor, which implies a breadth in a particular discipline. For example, note the contrast between a minor in English and a certificate in grant writing. Another noteworthy distinction is that post-baccalaureate and graduate students cannot earn a minor, and thus a certificate is an attractive option if such students are an intended target of a proposed program.

**Stackable Certificates.** Stackable certificates are a series of academic credit-granting certificates designed to be taken in sequence, allowing students to gradually build expertise in a particular field or topic. Each certificate in the stack is a standalone credential, and students are not required to complete every certificate in the stack. Subsequent certificates in the stack may require the completion of earlier certificates as prerequisites.

**Matriculated student.** A matriculated student is a student who has, through normal procedures, been admitted formally at a CSU campus to pursue an authorized degree, credential, or certificate (for academic credit) and who is enrolled in or is expected to enroll in courses. A student may be matriculated through state-supported university enrollment or self-supporting enrollment, or both (EO 1099).

**Self-support mode.** Instruction offered through self-supporting mode does not receive state general fund appropriations and instead collects non-state student fees that are adequate to meet the cost of maintaining operations. Such fees shall be required pursuant to rules and regulations prescribed by the trustees, including but not limited to fee policies such as Executive Order 1102 and Education Code section 89708 (EO 1099).

**State-support mode.** State-support mode is the type of funding structure in which the university receives state appropriations for instruction offered (EO 1099).

## II. Policy Details

Policies governing new proposals for **minors** and **academic credit-granting certificates** (abbreviated as "certificates" for the remainder of this section):

- a. Minors and certificates are subprograms of academic units at Cal Poly Humboldt. Every subprogram will uphold the vision and responsibilities of Cal Poly Humboldt and the California State University system.
- b. Proposals for a new minor or certificate must include a clear description of the necessary academic preparation and prerequisites required for students to

- successfully begin the coursework. This description should provide guidance to students considering the minor/certificate to ensure transparency about any courses or skills needed prior to enrolling in the minor's/certificate's core courses.
- c. All course work for a minor or certificate must be satisfied with an average 2.0 GPA or above. Any additional GPA requirements must be included in the proposal.
  - d. For **matriculated students**, there shall be no residency requirement for minors or certificates. For non-matriculated students pursuing certificates, at least 50% of the required coursework must be completed in residence at Cal Poly Humboldt.
  - e. Certificate programs shall be offered in **state-support** or **self-support mode**.
  - f. For a certificate program or an individual course to be offered through self-support mode versus state-support mode: (1) CSU operating funds shall be either unavailable or inappropriate for supporting the offering(s), and (2) at least one of the following additional criteria shall be met:
    - i. The course or program is designed primarily for career enrichment or retraining (Education Code section 89708); or
    - ii. The location of the course or program offering is removed from permanent, state-supported campus facilities; or
    - iii. The course or program is offered through a distinct technology, such as online delivery; or
    - iv. For new programs, the client group for the course or program receives educational or other services at a cost beyond what could be reasonably provided within CSU operating funds; or
    - v. For existing programs, there has been a cessation of non-state funding that was previously provided for educational or other services beyond what could be reasonably provided within CSU operating funds (EO 1099).
  - g. Faculty teaching in all programs that offer certificates must be reviewed through appropriate APS/HR procedures.
  - h. Self-support certificates shall result in a positive impact on Cal Poly Humboldt facilities, services, faculty, staff, and students as per EO 1099 supplanting policies.
  - i. Proposal documents must indicate which department will house the minor or certificate and include a resource statement/commitment from the appropriate college.
  - j. Certificates and minors must be reviewed and approved by the Integrated Curriculum Committee (ICC). Proposals will be submitted using appropriate curriculum forms and/or online review software such as Modern Campus Curriculum.
  - k. State-support mode certificates will be covered by tuition, but self-support certificates will have additional charges.

- I. Each proposed new minor or certificate will be proposed by the sponsoring academic unit and reviewed and recommended by each of the following:
  - i. Sponsoring department
  - ii. Associate Dean
  - iii. ICC
  - iv. Senate
  - v. Provost
  - vi. President

### **III. Specific guidelines for proposing new minors**

The following criteria must be met when proposing a new minor:

- a. Describe the program need/rationale for the new minor framed by Cal Poly Humboldt's vision and strategic goals. Provide evidence that the new minor will have sufficient enrollment. Describe how the minor will enhance student education.
- b. Provide the exact title of the new minor being proposed.
- c. List the courses and descriptions for all required units for the new minor. All prerequisite courses must be clearly identified. If the minor requires completion of Cal Poly Humboldt general education courses before entering the minor, these shall be clearly identified as prerequisite courses. If the program allows for choice in the selection of specific coursework, all pathways shall be clearly mapped.
- d. Any new courses created for the minor must be clearly identified in the proposal. Courses created only for the minor must meet established Cal Poly Humboldt course enrollment targets and may not be allowable.
- e. Students must take at least 6 upper-division (300 and above) units for any minor and 9 upper-division units if the minor is more than 20 units. Proposals that deviate from this requirement should include a rationalization for the inclusion of fewer upper-division units.
- f. A maximum of 3 units for the minor can be academic internships or independent study unless the minor is designed to include more and has prior approval.
- g. All courses that meet the requirements of a minor may be used, as appropriate, simultaneously to meet requirements in the GEAR program, credentials, certificates, or complementary studies.
- h. Proposals must include documentation of all campus-required curricular approvals.

### **IV. Specific guidelines for proposing new academic credit-granting certificates** (abbreviated as "certificates" for the remainder of this section)

The following criteria must be met when proposing a new certificate:

- a. Describe the program need/rationale for the new certificate framed by the institution's vision and strategic goals. Provide evidence that the new certificate will have sufficient enrollment. Describe how the certificate will enhance student education.
- b. Self-support certificates (in conformance with EO 1099 and EO 1102) must include:
  - i. specification of how all required EO 1099 self-support criteria are met;
  - ii. assurance that the proposed program does not replace existing state-supported courses or programs;
  - iii. evidence that the academic standards associated with all aspects of certificates are identical to those of comparable state-supported CSU instructional programs;
  - iv. an explanation of why state funds are either inappropriate or unavailable;
  - v. a cost-recovery program budget;
  - vi. the student per-unit cost; and
  - vii. the total cost for students to complete the program.

**V. Dually proposed minors/academic credit-granting certificates** (abbreviated as “certificates” for the remainder of this section)

Circumstances may arise in which a certificate is identical to a minor in an academic discipline. Such certificate programs exist to provide students who would not be eligible to pursue a minor (graduate, credential, non-matriculating) with the equivalent acknowledgment of completion. The following criteria must be met when proposing an identical sequence of courses as both a minor and a certificate:

- a. Dually proposed minors/certificates must meet all the standards for both minors and certificates.
- b. The proposing department/program must make clear the course requirements, pathways, and options for state-supported university enrollment or self-supporting extended education enrollment; identify any distinctions between the minor and certificate (if applicable); and clearly outline in which situations a matriculated student could earn the certificate.
- c. If the same sequence of classes is offered as both a minor and a certificate, students shall not be awarded both.
- d. If self-support is necessary, an MOU with the College of Extended Education and Global Engagement must also be submitted.

~~Related Policies: (if any, optional)~~

~~Expiration Date: (if any, optional)~~

**History (required)**

~~All changes must be listed chronologically in the format below, including all edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes. Note if an edit or revision date is exclusively for the policy section or the procedure section:~~

Academic Policy Committee: 09/25/2024  
Reviewed by University Senate: ~~MM/DD/YYYY~~ 10/29/2024  
Approved by Provost/President: MM/DD/YYYY

*Template Updated: February 28, 2024*

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