



August 31, 2023

TO: Department Chairs, Directors of Undergraduate Studies,
and Certificate Program Directors

FROM: Jill Dolan, Dean of the College, Chair, Committee on the Course of Study
Rebekah Peeples, Associate Dean and Secretary, Committee on the Course of Study

RE: Process for Proposing Minors – February 1, 2024 deadline

Colleagues, as we look ahead to the new academic year, we write to share updated information about the ongoing process of establishing minors, as approved by the University Faculty in April 2022.

Last year, the Faculty Committee on the Course of Study (COCS) reviewed and approved thirty-six minor proposals, and will continue this multi-year process of converting certificates to minors this year. While there is no deadline by which a department may propose a minor, we anticipate that current certificates will be converted to minors within the next two years.

The deadline for submissions this cycle will be **February 1, 2024**, although the COCS will review proposals submitted earlier on a rolling basis. Any minor fully approved by the University Faculty by Monday, May 13, 2024, will be available to students beginning in AY 2024-2025.

Submissions should include a proposal memo from the department or program and a tentative listing for the Undergraduate Announcement, as described further below.

To assist departments and programs with this process, we have compiled a number of resources [in this online directory](#), including sample proposals, examples of applications and culminating assignments, and answers to frequently asked questions. A [template](#) for new minor listings in the Undergraduate Announcement is also available on our website.

Proposals from Departments and Current Certificate Programs

Any academic unit with curricular authority from the Academic Planning Group can propose a minor. Proposals should include the following components, and be submitted by the department chair, director of undergraduate studies, or program director:



I. **Proposal.** The proposal memo should address the following questions in narrative form and explain how it has been reviewed and endorsed by department or program faculty. Departments and programs are encouraged to consult with current undergraduates throughout this process for student feedback and input.

- What are the learning goals for the proposed minor and how will the minor contribute to undergraduate students' academic experience? How will the program enrich or expand on students' work in their major? For department minors, in particular, how will the learning goals of the minor differ from those of the major?
- Which group of courses will form the core coursework for the minor? Can these courses accommodate new student demand? Departments and programs are encouraged to identify a specific and coherent body of coursework for the minor, to include both required courses and electives according to their curricular goals.
- What would be the ideal number of students in the minor? Is there a plan to manage additional growth in course enrollments, if needed? Will the minor require additional faculty advising, or supervision of independent work or another capstone project, and if so, how will the department or program manage it with existing faculty resources?
- If the proposed minor is a revision of an existing certificate program, what changes, if any, are being proposed and why?

II. **Proposed listing for the Undergraduate Announcement.** All proposals must be accompanied by a draft entry for the [Undergraduate Announcement](#) (UA), detailing the proposed learning goals and curricular requirements for the minor. For guidance on what should be in this listing, please consult [this template](#).

The following parameters for minors have been endorsed by the COCS:

- A minor will normally require at least five courses and will impose reasonable restrictions on double-counting courses with a student's major.
- If a minor is offered by a department (or as a track of study within a department), the minor will not be open to students majoring in that department.
- Students should declare a minor during a time period determined by the department or program, which should normally fall between the spring of the sophomore year and the spring of the junior year. Students may not declare a minor until they have declared a major.
- Independent work is not required, but a department or program may elect to require a portion of a thesis, a junior paper, or another substantial piece of writing for the minor. In lieu of independent work, some departments have

elected to require students to write a reflection essay that reflects on the methods and content they've learned through their minor coursework.

New Minors

The process for **establishing an entirely new minor** – one not currently available as an undergraduate certificate or as a major – first requires review and approval by the Academic Planning Group before the proposal may be considered by the COCS.

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Minors Deadline

The requirements for these proposals are the same as those above, but should be accompanied by a clear statement of the need for the program as well as the reasons why student interest and demand cannot be met through a combination of existing academic alternatives. The following questions offer a useful starting point:

- What need does the new minor meet?
- Does the minor overlap with existing courses or programs? If so, how is it distinct?
- Which existing or proposed courses will satisfy program requirements? Are these courses taught regularly and will they be able to absorb increased student demand?
- Who will direct the minor program? Which faculty might be willing to lead the minor on a rotating basis? Which other faculty members are involved and willing to teach in the minor? Have they made the necessary commitment to sustain the minor?
- What new resources, if any, will be required to support the minor and from where will they come? Note that resource requests should be pursued separately with the Provost's office prior to submitting the minor proposal to APG.

Finally, please know that we're eager to assist you as you consider engaging in this process. Departments and programs are encouraged to consult with [Associate Dean Rebekah Peeples](#) early in the process to solicit guidance and feedback on proposals in draft form. Don't hesitate to be in touch with your questions at any point during the months ahead. We wish you all the very best in these final days of summer, and look forward to welcoming all of you, along with our students, back to campus next week.

