Faculty Council on Academic Standards (FCAS) Policy Pertaining to Majors

1. A major should consist of between 50 and 90 credits.

2. The credits to complete a major, along with general education requirements and admission requirements, should not require students to complete more than 180 credits for their degree.

3. Majors may be proposed with three types of admission (cf. admission page for more on admission policies – will be hyperlink online):

    1. Open Admission: Matriculated students in good academic standing are admitted at any time.
    2. Selective /Minimum Requirements Admission: Requires students to complete satisfactorily a set of prerequisite courses with a minimum GPA. All students who meet the minimum requirements are admitted.
    3. Competitive Admission: Students must complete all minimum requirements to apply and must then compete with the entire applicant pool for a limited number of spaces.

4. Majors should include at least 20 credits of core courses, which all students must fulfill. These courses may come from thematic groupings (e.g. discipline-specific statistics, labs, approaches, theory, practices, etc.), and courses in any given grouping should be comparable in learning goals . The intention is to provide a substantive foundation that all students in a major share. This expectation may be met in two ways:

    A. This expectation may be met in departmentalized or programmatic majors by a set of courses within that offering unit.
    B. This expectation may be met in interdisciplinary majors by a set of courses that serve to integrate the participating disciplines.

5. Majors should require that at least 50% of the credits for that major derive from upper-division (300- and 400-level) courses.

6. Proposed catalog copy for a major may explicitly list electives for inclusion in the catalog. Alternatively, proposed catalog copy may indicate that electives may be taken from a list that is managed by the department. Such lists should be included with the initial proposal documentation, with an indication that they will be departmentally managed. This expectation may be met in interdisciplinary majors by a set of courses that serve to integrate the participating disciplines.

7. Majors and degrees that are competitive must include a continuation policy that is no more restrictive than the requirements to graduate from the major. All students are to be held to the same continuation policy regardless of when they were admitted

8. Programs requesting that greater than 50% of the credits for that major must be taken through the University of Washington must provide justification for that request. On the condition that adequate academic justification is provided, FCAS will approve such requests.

9. Programs shall not present barriers to admission or graduation to students with disabilities.

10. Programs shall not present barriers to admission or graduation in view of student visa status requirements.

FCAS Policies On Program Based Requirements *(new majors should conform to these, unless a substantial justification can be made).*

Program-Based Grade Requirements
A. Cumulative Grade Graduation Requirement: (UW requires 2.0 cumulative gpa for graduation)

1. Programs are permitted to have 2.0 cumulative GPA requirement for courses within the major.
2. Programs may request cumulative GPA in the range of 2.0 to 2.5 for courses in the major and/or all UW courses. The programs must document and provide justification for the request. Provided adequate academic justification is provided, FCAS will approve such requests.
3. Programs requesting cumulative GPA requirements greater than 2.5 for courses in the major and/or all UW courses must provide strong justification for the request. In general, except in exceptional cases and with very strong academic justification, FCAS will not approve these requests.

B. Minimum Grade Graduation Requirement in Individual Courses: (UW requires 0.7 in each course)

1. Programs may request that students achieve a minimum grade in each course of a subset of the courses required for a major, every course for a major, and/or all UW courses in the range of 0.8 to 2.0. The programs must document and provide justification for the request. Provided adequate academic justification is provided, FCAS will approve such requests.
2. Programs requesting a minimum grade in each course of a subset of the courses required for a major, every course for the major, and/or all UW courses exceeding 2.0 must provide strong documented justification for the request. In general, FCAS will not approve these requests.

FCAS Best Practices for Proposed New Majors

- All majors should have a "home" department where students have access to a program advisor. This applies to interdepartmental and intercollege majors as well as majors offered by one department or program.

- All majors should have a lead faculty coordinator, who is responsible for convening faculty to discuss all aspects of the major from the inclusion of courses from other departments, changing program requirements, appeals from students, etc.

- All majors should have core of faculty who make decisions concerning the major, to be transmitted by the chair of the program to the appropriate department(s) and/or college(s) and, if necessary, the Registrar and/or FCAS.

- Program requirements should generally be achievable in two years residence at the university, especially if they are upper division requirements. Courses that either not taught frequently enough or do not have adequate spaces to be consistently taken by students should not be required courses.