

Degrees, Majors, and Minors

Declaring Majors and Minors

Undergraduate students may declare their majors upon admission to Northeastern University or may elect to join programs for undeclared students before declaring a major. Students must declare a major no later than the end of the sophomore year. Majors and concentrations are described under the various schools and colleges in this catalog.

Students should declare a minor as early as possible and no later than the end of the junior year. Students must fulfill all requirements for the minor and major concurrently and may not extend their program of study to complete a minor. Completion of the requirements of a major, minor, or concentration is noted on the transcript.

Changing Majors

Undergraduate students enrolled full time in one or more of the university's undergraduate schools or colleges may change their major if they meet one of the following transfer criteria:

- The student meets the criteria for immediate entry as defined by the receiving major.
- The student has a cumulative grade-point average of 2.000 or greater and satisfactorily completes the transition criteria as defined by the receiving major. For GPA below 2.000, change of major is at the discretion of the receiving major.

Students who are considering a major change must discuss their change in person with an advisor in the receiving major. The advisor will certify that the student meets the criteria for immediate entry to the major or will set up a transition term for the student to satisfy the change-of-major criteria. Advisors will discuss the student's ability to succeed in the desired program given the current academic record as well as the influence of changing major on the student's ability to obtain a degree in the desired program within the traditional eight-academic-term time frame.

Transition criteria are designed to help ensure that students who change major have a reasonable chance of academic success and program completion. A list of school and college transition criteria is maintained at the website of the respective school or college. Students wishing to join some majors must also audition or submit a portfolio, as indicated on the aforementioned webpage. Note also that some colleges have deadlines for applications to change major, also indicated on the aforementioned webpage.

International students must inform the Office of Global Services (<https://international.northeastern.edu/ogs/>) of any change of major.

Northeastern Explore Program

The Northeastern Explore Program provides support and guidance to first-year students who have not yet decided upon or officially declared a major. All students must declare a major no later than the end of the sophomore year. Undeclared students are strongly encouraged to declare a major by the beginning of their sophomore year if they are interested in highly structured programs or in maximizing their number of co-op placements within such a major. Admission to a particular major is dependent on the transfer criteria described above.

The D'Amore-McKim School of Business, the College of Engineering, and the Khoury College of Computer Sciences also each provide resources to facilitate a major choice for students who enter their respective colleges with undeclared majors.

Double Major

Students may earn a double major by gaining admission to the second major and by completing all requirements for both majors. Because some double majors will have a significant overlap in courses, all double-major proposals must be approved by the home college of each major in the proposed double major. Students completing a double major receive one degree and one diploma. The two majors appear on the transcript. If the two majors are in different colleges, the degree is associated with the major in the home college.

Second Northeastern University Bachelor's Degree

A student may earn a second Northeastern bachelor's degree after the conferral of a first Northeastern bachelor's degree. Following the first degree conferral, a student may seek and be granted admission into a second bachelor's degree program. All degree requirements for the second major that are not included on the student record for the first degree must be fulfilled. Outdated coursework may not be accepted. Students must earn a minimum of 32 semester hours beyond those earned toward the first degree. A second diploma will be awarded and the second degree will be noted on the transcript.

Students must complete an application with the home college of the intended degree. Some programs may require prerequisites prior to admission. Students should apply by the normal transfer deadline to ensure timely consideration. The college makes the determination on admission; notifies the student of this decision; and, if the student is admitted, provides the student with a program of study and reactivates the student's record. International students must consult with an advisor in the Office of Global Services to request updated documentation reflecting engagement in the second bachelor's degree program.

Combined Majors

Students with academic interests spanning two disciplines may choose to pursue a combined major. A combined major is one major that includes at least nine courses from each of the two participating disciplines. No more than two courses may count for both disciplines, i.e., there must be at least 16 courses in the combined major. There are multiple points of curricular integration between the two disciplines. This includes courses acting as a bridge between the two majors being combined, experiential learning opportunities, research and creative opportunities, and more. These opportunities for curricular integration occur at different stages of the program in order to meet the curriculum integration learning outcome(s). It is generally advantageous to declare the combined major as early as possible, especially when highly structured disciplinary components are involved.

See the online list of current combined majors. (<https://admissions.northeastern.edu/academics/combined-majors/>) Students may request admission to a combined major by following the standard procedure for changing majors. A home college is designated, in which the student will be registered and from which they will be graduated. Most combined majors allow the student to choose the home college. Upon graduation, students receive one major, one degree, and one diploma. The combined major and home college will appear on the transcript and diploma.

Independent Majors

In the rare cases when students have academic interests that fall within the expertise of Northeastern faculty members and are not available in the large number of existing majors and combined majors, they may propose an independent major. Independent majors form a cohesive program focusing on some issue, theme, or subject area not available within the context of existing curricula. These programs should be equivalent in depth and coherence to existing majors. No student with less than a 3.250 GPA will be approved for an independent major. The proposal must be approved by the end of the first semester of the junior year. Proposals will not be considered before the end of the freshman year. For initial information and advice, interested students should consult their academic advisor.

The student assumes the initiative in formulating an independent major. High degrees of student initiative and self-reliance are also necessary for completion of this type of major. The student is responsible for securing the advice and approval of faculty mentors, at least one from each of the disciplines. These faculty mentors will help the student design the curriculum. The faculty mentors will guide the student's academic progress through the major. The student should select one of the faculty mentors as the primary mentor.

If the disciplines partnering in the independent major are in different colleges, the college of the primary mentor will be designated as the home college, in which the student will be registered and from which the student will be graduated. The student will enroll in the Approved Independent Studies major. Students completing an independent major receive one degree and one diploma. Upon graduation, a comment will be added to the transcript to reflect the title indicated on the approved independent major proposal. When the components of the independent major individually offer different degree designations, the degree designation that will appear on the transcript and diploma will be designated during the approval process.

The student, with the assistance of the faculty mentors, must formulate in writing and submit to the home college curriculum committee an Independent Major Approval form (<https://registrar.northeastern.edu/article/independent-majors/>) bearing the signatures of all faculty mentors and a proposal containing the following items:

- A statement of the central concept around which the independent major is organized and a rationale for the major, including a discussion of why existing programs are inadequate to the student's purpose and how the proposed major meets the student's educational, professional, or personal goals
- A list of courses—including names, numbers, prerequisites, and frequency of offering (if known)—and a breakdown of the introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses included in this list
- A statement of the manner in which NUpath requirements (<https://catalog.northeastern.edu/undergraduate/university-academics/nupath/>) are fulfilled (and, if applicable, BA degree requirements (<https://catalog.northeastern.edu/undergraduate/university-academics/nupath/ba-requirements/>))
- A list of courses—including numbers, names, and grades—already taken that will apply to the major or to NUpath (and BA degree, if applicable) requirements
- A student transcript
- A calendar for completion of the degree

A meeting of all faculty mentors and the student must be held before college approval of the major program. In accepting the proposal, the home college dean's office certifies that the rules established for the independent major have been followed, and it assumes administrative responsibility by assigning an academic advisor to monitor the student's progress and clear the student for graduation. Any changes in the curriculum must be approved by the primary faculty mentor, and the home college advisor must be informed. Final approval of independent majors is granted by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

PlusOne Bachelor's/Master's Programs

Northeastern offers a number of PlusOne bachelor's/master's degree programs that allow students to accelerate the completion of the bachelor's degree by applying graduate credits taken as an undergraduate toward both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Generally, both degrees may be earned in one more year than is the normal time allotted for completion of the bachelor's degree. See additional information on PlusOne Bachelor's/Master's programs (<http://www.northeastern.edu/plusone/>). (<https://registrar.northeastern.edu/article/plusone-program-accelerated-bachelorgraduate-degree-programs/>)

Northeastern University School of Law also offers students a PlusJD program (<https://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/law/accelerated/>) that allows students to count their first year of law school toward their undergraduate degree.

Minors

Minors offer an opportunity for students to complement their major with intensive study in another area. A minor consists of a minimum of four courses (16 semester hours) defined by a department or an interdisciplinary program. In some cases, background courses are also required. Unless otherwise indicated, minors are generally open to all university students. The program of study for the major and minor cannot be the same where the courses for the minor are a subset of required courses in the major, e.g., a Bachelor of Science student with a biology major cannot enroll in the biology minor.