

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY CERTIFICATION OF CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

Preparation Date **29-Apr-19** Curriculum Bulletin _____

Effective Date **Fall 2019** Approved by EPC _____

Department **EPC Ad Hoc Committee**
College **PR - Provost**
Proposal **Revise Policy**
Proposal Name **Calculation of Major GPA, Minor GPA, Certificate GPA for Graduation**

Description of proposal:

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies recommends establishment of a policy on how the university determines the major GPA, minor GPA and certificate GPA for graduation—replacing and revising a current practice—to bring more consistency and transparency to the process and to continue the goal of removing unintended barriers for students to graduate.

Describe impact on other programs, policies or procedures (e.g., duplication issues; enrollment and staffing considerations; need, audience)

Impact will be on the major/minor/certificate GPA displayed in the GPS degree audit, used for clearing students for graduation.

Units consulted (other departments, programs or campuses affected by this proposal):

Members of the EPC Ad Hoc Committee (see last page for member list) consulted with colleagues in their college, campus or office.

REQUIRED ENDORSEMENTS

_____/_____/_____
Department Chair / School Director

_____/_____/_____
Campus Dean (for Regional Campuses proposals)

_____/_____/_____
College Dean (or designee)

_____/_____/_____
Dean of Graduate Studies (for graduate proposals)

_____/_____/_____
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (or designee)

Establishment of a GPA Policy for Majors, Minors and Certificates Proposal Summary

SUBJECT SPECIFICATION

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies recommends establishment of a policy on how the university determines the major GPA, minor GPA and certificate GPA for graduation—replacing and revising a current practice—to bring more consistency and transparency to the process and to continue the goal of removing unintended barriers for students to graduate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Overview of Issue

A student's major GPA is one factor in determining graduation with an associate or bachelor's degree. Other factors for graduation include a student satisfying the overall GPA, program requirements, grade requirements, university requirements (e.g., Kent Core) and total credit hours.

Kent State University requires students in an associate or bachelor's degree to earn a minimum 2.000 major GPA to graduate. To earn a minor or certificate, students must earn a minimum 2.000 minor or certificate GPA, respectively. Some program areas require a higher GPA for graduation.

How that GPA is calculated has been an on-going debate among the colleges since the implementation of the GPS degree audit in 2009. In the previous degree audit system, KAPS, the major, minor and certificate GPA were ad hoc and free-flowing, reflecting neither transparency nor consistency. There was no central oversight of the KAPS audit, and it was not used by all colleges and not used to clear students for graduation, unlike the GPS degree audit.

When the GPS degree audit was implemented, there was a short window of time for thoughtful and inclusive discussion on best practices for calculating the major GPA. Therefore, a compromise, rather than an informed decision, was reached for the major GPA in the audit. At the time, there was no discussion on the minor or certificate GPA; hence, calculation of GPA for those programs are using only the basic setup in the audit. There is no written university policy for major GPA aside from some vague wording in the previous course repeat policy. There is no written university policy for the minor GPA or certificate GPA.

This long-standing issue was brought to the EPC Ad Hoc Committee by the Undergraduate Deans Council. Over the past semester, EPC Ad Hoc Committee members examined Kent State's current practices, discussed the other options available in the GPS degree audit and sought feedback from colleagues in their college, campus or office.

Basic Information on Major, Minor and Certificate GPA

- Used as a graduation requirement
- For some programs, may be used as a factor to decide student progress as detailed in that program's progression or not-permitted-to-continue policy

- Displayed only in the GPS degree audit
- Not displayed on the student's diploma or transcript
- Not stored in the student information system (Banner)
- Not used to determine honors recognition
- Not used to determine admission to graduate study
- Separate from any other GPA requirement for a group of courses that programs may require for progression and/or graduation (e.g., "science GPA" in the B.S.N. degree)

Current Practices for Calculating Undergraduate GPA at Kent State

Major GPA: Grades A-F, NF, SF, U earned in Kent State undergraduate¹ college-level courses (1/2/3/4 levels) that either complete or potentially can complete major requirements, with the exception of grades exempted through Kent State's course repeat² or academic forgiveness³ policy

Minor GPA: Grades A-D earned in Kent State undergraduate¹ college-level courses (1/2/3/4 levels) that complete minor requirements, as well as F, NF, SF, U grades earned in courses that potentially can complete minor requirements, with the exception of grades exempted through Kent State's course repeat² or academic forgiveness³ policies

Certificate GPA: Same as minor GPA.

Overall GPA: Grades A-F, NF, SF, U earned in all Kent State undergraduate¹ courses (0/1/2/3/4 levels), with the exception of grades exempted through Kent State's course repeat² or academic forgiveness³ policies

Latin Honors GPA: Grades A-F, NF, SF, U earned in all Kent State undergraduate¹ courses (0/1/2/3/4 levels), including grades exempted through Kent State's course repeat² or academic forgiveness³ policy

- ¹ If a student has been approved to apply a graduate course (5/6 level) toward an undergraduate degree requirement, the grade for the graduate course will count in the undergraduate GPA.
- ² An undergraduate course (0/1/2/3/4 level) that is repeated in or after fall 2019 will have only the highest earned grade from all attempts calculated in the GPA. Pre-2019, policy affected only lower-division courses (0/1/2 level).
- ³ Courses approved for academic forgiveness have grades C-, D+, D, F, NF, SF, U exempted from the GPA.

Options for Major, Minor and Certificate GPA

Below are the options that can be programmed into the GPS degree audit:

Option 1: Count the highest grade of the course that completes the requirement.

Option 2: Count the highest grade of the course that completes the requirement and failed grades of courses that potentially can complete the requirement.
This is how minor GPA and certificate GPA are calculated currently.

Option 3: Count the grades of all courses that either complete or potentially can complete the requirements. *This is how major GPA is calculated currently.*

For the options in practice, see the next page for hypothetical examples, and page 5 for actual Kent State student examples.

Hypothetical Examples

Teaching English as a Second Language Major (2.000 major GPA required for graduation)

Major Requirements		Student Grades	Grades Used in GPA Calculation		
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
ENG 31001	3	B	B	B	B
ENG 31002	3	C	C	C	C
or ENG 31004		F		F	F
ENG 31003	3	B	B	B	B
ENG 31005	3	B	B	B	B
or ENG 31009					
ENG 31007	3	C	C	C	C
ENG 31008	3	B	B	B	B
ENG 41002	3	B	B	B	B
ENG 41003	3	C	C	C	C
ENG 41092	3	B	B	B	B
or ENG 41292		D			D
Choose 1 course:	3				
ENG 30050 (3)		B	B	B	B
ENG 30051 (3)		D			D
ENG 30062 (3)		F		F	F
ENG 30063 (3)		C			C
ENG 30064 (3)					
ENG 30066 (3)					
Choose 2 courses:	6				
COMM 35852 (3)		C	C	C	C
ENG 31006 (3)		B	B	B	B
ENG 41001 (3)					
PSYC 22221 (3)		F		F	F
Credit Hours	36				
Credit Hours Calculated		36	45	54	
Quality Points		96	96	105	
Major GPA		2.666	2.133	1.944	

Example of the options (see red block):

- Student is required to complete one course from a list of six courses.
- Student completes four of the six courses.
- Student earns grades B, D, F, C in the four courses.
- The course with the highest grade (B) completes the requirement.

Option 1: Only the highest grade (B) counts in the major GPA.

Option 2: The highest grade (B) and the F grade count in the major GPA.

Option 3: Grades in all four courses (B, D, F, C) count in the major GPA.

current policy for major GPA

Park Management Minor (2.250 minor GPA required for graduation)

Minor Requirements		Student Grades	Grades Used in GPA Calculation		
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
RPTM 26081	3	C	C	C	C
RPTM 36082	3	B	B	B	B
RPTM 36083	3	C	C	C	C
RPTM 46070	3	B	B	B	B
Choose any 2 RPTM courses:	6				
RPTM 16001 (3)		C	C	C	C
RPTM 36085 (3)		C			C
RPTM 46001 (3)		B	B	B	B
RPTM 46030 (3)		F		F	F
RPTM 46095 (3)		C			C
RPTM 46095 (3)		F		F	F
Credit Hours	18				
Credit Hours Calculated		18	24	30	
Quality Points		45	45	57	
Minor GPA		2.500	1.875	1.900	

Example of the options (see red block):

- Student is required to complete two courses with RPTM course subject.
- Student completes six RPTM courses that potentially could apply.
- Student earns grades C, C, B, F, C, F in the six courses.
- The two courses with the highest grades (B, C) complete the requirement.

Option 1: Only the two highest grades (B, C) count in the minor GPA.

Option 2: Two highest grades (B, C) and the two F grades count in the minor GPA.

Option 3: Grades in all six courses (C, C, B, F, C, F) count in the minor GPA.

current practice for minor GPA

Actual Kent State Student Example – Major (2.000 major GPA required for graduation)

Major Requirements		Student Grades	Grades Used in GPA Calculation		
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Course 1 (3)	3	TRB			
Course 2 (3)	3	B	B	B	B
Course 3 (3)	3	C	C	C	C
Choose 1 course:	3				
Course 4 (3)		C-			C-
Course 5 (3)		B+	B+	B+	B+
Choose 1 course:	3				
Course 6 (3)					
Course 7 (3)		C	C	C	C
Choose 1 course:	3				
Course 8 (3)		C	C	C	C
Course 9 (3)					
Choose 1 course:	3				
Course 10 (3)					
Course 11 (3)		C	C	C	C
Choose 1 course:	3				
Course 12 (3)		D+	D+	D+	D+
Course 13 (3)		TRB			
Choose 1 course:	1-3				
Course 14 (1)					
Course 15 (1)		A	A	A	A
Choose 3 courses:	9				
Course 16 (3)		C	C	C	C
Course 17 (3)		F		F	F
Course 18 (3)		D	D	D	D
Course 19 (3)		C+	C+	C+	C+
Credit Hours	34				
Credit Hours Calculated			31	34	37
Quality Points			66.7	66.7	71.8
Major GPA			2.151	1.961	1.940

TRB=transfer course, B grade (transfer grades are not counted in a Kent State GPA)

current policy for major GPA

Actual Kent State Student Example– Minor (2.000 minor GPA required for graduation)

Minor Requirements		Student Grades	Grades Used in GPA Calculation		
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Course 1 (4)	4	C+	C+	C+	C+
Course 2 (4)	4	C+	C+	C+	C+
Course 3 (3)	3	C	C	C	C
Choose any 3 UD XX courses:	9				
Course 4 (3)		B	B	B	B
Course 5 (3)		SF		SF	SF
Course 6 (3)		B+	B+	B+	B+
Course 7 (3)		B			B
Course 8 (3)		B+	B+	B+	B+
Course 9 (3)		SF		SF	SF
Course 10 (3)		C			C
Course 11 (3)		NF		NF	NF
Course 12 (3)		SF		SF	SF
Credit Hours	20				
Credit Hours Calculated			20	32	39
Quality Points			53.2	53.2	70.2
Minor GPA			2.660	1.662	1.800

current practice for minor GPA

EPC Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee recommends option 1 for majors, minors and certificates due to several reasons:

- Option 1 is more consistent with the direction Kent State is going with its strategic priority of “students first,” as illustrated by the recent changes to the course repeat policy.
- Students’ GPA will more accurately represent the courses that are completing requirements in their program to graduate.
- Students will not be penalized in the major GPA for taking courses above and beyond what is required to graduate. (All course grades still count in overall GPA.)
- The option affects only requirements where there are multiple choices from which students can select, and only when students take more courses than needed to meet that requirement; the option does not affect single (1:1) course requirements.
- Over the past several years, there has been an increase of faculty replacing specific course requirements with elective choices in majors and minors (e.g., take either this course or that course; take one course from a list of five courses). With these elective choices, faculty are not expecting or requiring students to take all the courses. Therefore, it does not make sense that the expectation or requirement will be that grades for all the courses taken will count in the major GPA for graduation.

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee does not recommend options 2 and 3 for the following reasons:

- By purposefully allowing the system to choose F grades over other grades when calculating GPA, option 2, to be blunt, is just mean.
- Option 3 counts in the GPA more than what is required to graduate.
- With the increase of multiple choices in programs (i.e., elective lists) and more interdisciplinary programs, option 3 may penalize students who have not have done well in one program and change programs, only to find those poor grades in their new major GPA because the associated courses are listed among the elective choices.
- Option 3 is almost redundant to students’ overall GPA since option 3 counts grades in courses that students completed as part of their undergraduate experience, whether or not they are completing requirements in the student’s program.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES

The alternative is the status quo, and the consequences will be a continued and considered unfair calculation of minor and certificate GPA, as well as a major GPA that reflects more than what is required of the student to graduate.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies recommends the establishment of the following policy (next page)—which revises current practices—to continue toward the goal of removing obstacles and supporting student graduation on a timely basis. In addition, the EPC Ad Hoc Committee recommends small revisions to the overall GPA policy to further explain what it is and how it is determined.

TIMETABLE AND ACTIONS REQUIRED

Educational Policies Council	May 2019
Faculty Senate	July 2019
Proposed implementation	Fall 2019 semester for all new and current students at the university

REVISIONS TO ACADEMIC POLICY IN THE UNIVERSITY CATALOG

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Overall GPA for Graduation

Added ~~Removed~~ ~~Moved From~~ Moved To

To graduate from Kent State University with an associate degree, bachelor's degree, undergraduate minor and/or undergraduate certificate, all students must ~~earn~~ attain a minimum 2.000 overall grade point average (GPA). ~~for all coursework taken at Kent State University. Candidates for the Associate of Applied Business and Associate of Applied Science degrees must attain a minimum 2.000 overall GPA in the technical courses. If students are required to take additional coursework to raise the GPA in the technical courses to 2.000, the course(s) must be in the technical area and will be selected in consultation with the program advisor and approved prior to registration.~~

A student's overall GPA is calculated using all coursework taken at Kent State University, with the exception of grades exempted through Kent State's course repeat or academic forgiveness policies.

Some programs require a higher overall GPA for graduation, and these are noted on the program's page in the University Catalog and in the GPS degree audit. ~~Additionally, some degree and certificate programs have higher minimum GPA requirements.~~

Major GPA, Minor GPA, Certificate GPA for Graduation

To graduate with a declared undergraduate major, minor or certificate, all students must earn a minimum 2.000 GPA in the program. Some programs require a higher GPA for graduation, and these are noted on the program's page in the University Catalog and in the GPS degree audit.

A student's major, minor or certificate GPA is calculated using only the courses that complete the requirements in that major, minor or certificate. When multiple courses may be used to complete a specific requirement (e.g., "choose from" or either/or choice), the course with the highest passing grade will complete the requirement and be used in the calculation of the major, minor or certificate GPA.

The major, minor and certificate GPA can be found in the student's GPS degree audit; they are not displayed on the student transcript or diploma and are not stored in the university's student information system.

Latin Honors GPA

For information on how the GPA is calculated for Latin Honors (bachelor's degrees) and for Distinction (associate degrees), refer to the Graduation-Honors policy in the University Catalog.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How do Kent State's peer and aspirant universities calculate major GPA?

That information is not readily available. Most universities consider the method to calculate GPA to be an operational, not an academic, policy and, therefore, do not make the information public. The Office of Graduation Planning Systems sent an inquiry to several universities using the same degree audit software as Kent State (DegreeWorks) and received very few responses. The ones that did respond were either unsure as to how their audit was coded at implementation, or they calculated the GPA unique to each program.

One university outside the norm in responses was the University of Alabama. When the University of Alabama was implementing the DegreeWorks degree audit, it encountered the same issue Kent State faced regarding calculating major GPA. That university deliberated on the same options presented in this proposal and determined that any solution must fulfill the following goals: (1) student-centric, (2) consistent across all colleges and (3) easy to explain, demonstrate and put into words. The university did a data study on a random population of graduates from different colleges and majors. It compared its current major GPA practice (also Kent State's current practice) to option 1. The results were that under option 1, the average major GPA increased by 0.0985, which does not sound significant, but would have allowed six more students to graduate. The university chose option 1 over its previous practice because it felt the option accomplished the university's goals.

Are we doing students a disservice by not counting lower grades in the major GPA? Over time, will that have a negative impact on the public's perception of Kent State?

It is important to reiterate that students still must complete all the requirements set by faculty to graduate with a specific major (or minor or certificate). The only action option 1 is doing is selecting "best fit" when students take more than what is required. Students still will need to meet a minimum overall GPA, which includes grades earned in all undergraduate courses. Implementing option 1 will increase the major GPA for some students, but those students will not go from ineligible to graduate to looking like honors students due to the different GPA formula for the major.

Shouldn't every course in the major count toward the major GPA whether or not it is in the requirements?

The rationale behind the proposed policy is to align the major GPA with the major curriculum that faculty have determined should lead to a degree. What this policy does is to make additional major courses—exceeding what is required to graduate with that major—major GPA neutral. The overall GPA will reflect all courses taken, even those that do not complete any requirement to graduate.

Will the proposed policy override any program requirements to graduate?

No. The proposed policy to calculate major, minor and certificate GPA will not change or override a minimum grade faculty require for specific courses or the minimum GPA required to graduate with the program. The policy will not override any GPA that faculty require for a specific group of courses (e.g., 2.700 GPA in ACCT 23020 and ACCT 23021 in the Accounting major).

If approved, will the policy be made retroactive for current students?

Yes. The calculation of major, minor and certificate GPA will not be different per student's catalog year. All students, current and new, will be under the same policy starting in fall 2019.

Regarding the language about courses that "potentially can complete the requirements," is this referring to extra courses in the major or minor that aren't listed as requirements? Is option 1 saying that the grades in these courses will not be counted?

"Potentially can complete the requirement" means any course that meets the conditions of that requirement. For example, if the major requirement is MATH 40015, then the student can take only MATH 40015 to complete the requirement. But, if the requirement is one upper-division MATH course, and the student completes four upper-division MATH courses, then any of the four courses has the potential to complete the requirement. Per option 1, only the course out of the four with the highest passing grade will complete the requirement and be counted in the major GPA. Grades for all four courses will be counted in the overall GPA. Grades for courses that do not meet any conditions of a major requirement will not be counted in the major GPA, but will be counted in overall GPA.

Does option 1 mean students are picking which courses will apply to the major GPA rather than going with the listed requirements?

The proposed policy does not alter a program's curriculum as determined by faculty. With most programs, faculty have at least one requirement that allows students to choose a course out of several possibilities to meet the requirement (e.g., choose one of five courses). And, there are instances where students take more courses than needed to meet that requirement. All that is being done by going with option 1 is having the degree audit select the highest passing grade from the what is approved to complete the requirement and to count in the major GPA.

In the actual student example with the major [page 5], what is the rationale for counting the D+ grade in [course 13] vs. the B transfer grade in [course 12]?

Grades earned in transfer courses do not count in the Kent State GPA. When selecting the course to complete a program requirement, the audit is set to select the course with the highest passing Kent State grade to complete the requirement.

How will this policy work for students who need to take additional courses to boost their major GPA? Can students petition for an exception to allow additional elective courses to count toward their GPA?

The assumption is that students who have a low major GPA will have low grades in major courses. Instead of encouraging them to take additional courses, it may be more beneficial to encourage them to repeat major courses for a better grade. With the new course repeat policy, only the highest grade of any undergraduate repeated course will count in the GPA. Therefore, their GPA most likely will see a greater increase with repeated courses under the new course repeat policy rather than taking additional courses.

Does this policy affect students in graduate programs?

No. Only undergraduate programs require a minimum major, minor or certificate GPA for graduation currently.

EPC Ad Hoc Committee for Academic Policies

REPORTS TO: Educational Policies Council and provost

CHARGE: The committee will review academic policies and practices; determine the policies and practices that create obstacles for student progress toward graduation and/or do not support the quality of a Kent State University education; and make recommendations of new and revised policies that promote student success.

Philosophy

The EPC Ad Hoc Committee has agreed that any policy it recommends would be:

1. Upholding the integrity, quality and standards of a Kent State education;
The policy should connect with Kent State's mission and core values.
2. Aligned with the university's strategic priority of "Students First";
Kent State should demonstrate its commitment to educate and graduate students by providing the best opportunities for students to be successful.
3. Consistent across all programs, colleges and campuses to the greatest extent possible; and
Students regularly change programs and declare multiple programs spanning departments, schools and colleges on all campuses and locations.
4. Easy to explain, demonstrate and put into words.
The policy should be clear enough that students, faculty, advisors and administrators can understand and articulate it to each other.

Spring 2019 Membership

Chair: Melody Tankersley, Senior Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Vice-Chair: Therese Tillett, Associate Vice President, Curriculum Planning and Administration

- Stavros Atsas, Analyst, Office of Graduation Planning Systems
- Stephanie Belovich, Associate Professor, College of Podiatric Medicine
- Jessie Carduner, Associate Professor, Department of Modern and Classical Language Studies
- Liz Driscoll Dewitt, Director I, Enrollment Management and Student Services, Ashtabula Campus
- Sue Emens, Assistant Dean, Geauga Campus
- Jill Folk, Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences
- Bill Hauck, Assistant Professor, School of Fashion Design and Merchandising
- Lynette Johnson, Associate University Registrar
- Steve Mitchell, Associate Dean, College of Education, Health and Human Services
- Tracey Motter, Associate Dean, College of Nursing
- Kim Peer, Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences
- Eboni Pringle, Dean, University College
- Amy Quillin, Student Ombuds, Division of Student Affairs
- Lock Reynolds, Associate Professor, Department of Economics
- Matt Rollyson, Assistant Dean, College of Communication and Information
- Valerie Rose, Financial Aid Coordinator, Office of Student Financial Aid
- Linnea Stafford, Senior Information Officer, Office of Institutional Research
- Cynthia Stillings, Associate Dean, College of the Arts
- Andrew Tonge, Chair, Department of Mathematical Sciences
- Don White, Professor, Department of Mathematical Sciences
- Gina Zavota, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy
- Melissa Zullo, Associate Professor, College of Public Health