

Personal Courses of Study Statute – Appendix A: Definitions and rules relating to majors, minors etc

On 28 April 2015, the Academic Board of the Victoria University of Wellington approved a change to Appendix A of the *Personal Courses of Study Statute*, specifically the definitions of ‘specialisation’, ‘major’ and ‘subject’ (VUW/15 – PCSS/1; AB15/16). The key changes were:

1. the term ‘major’ was amended to include the larger elements of undergraduate degrees previously called ‘specialisations’; and
2. the term ‘specialisation’ was changed from its previous meaning of a very large element within a qualification to a new meaning that will, from 2015–16, be used to identify optional subsets or focus areas *within* majors (i.e. at undergraduate level); subjects (i.e. at graduate and postgraduate level) and within certain graduate and postgraduate qualifications (generally those qualifications that have a fairly specific title).

Additionally, the definitions ‘concentration/module/unit of study’, ‘interdisciplinary major’ and ‘subject area’ were deleted and there were consequential changes to the Rules section.

This change took effect on 28 April 2015. It was expected that those qualification statutes that needed revising (BDI, BAS, BE(Hons) and BBmedSc) would be amended for 2016. The revised material, which is reproduced below, will be included in the *2016 Calendar*. Refer to the *2015 Calendar* for previous definitions.

Extract from the *Personal Courses of Study Statute* with revised material (the earlier text may be found on p. 149 of the *2015 Calendar*):

Appendix A: Definitions and Rules Relating to Majors, Minors, etc.

Definitions

Major: A substantial component of an undergraduate degree consisting of courses normally worth at least 120 points in a recognised subject area and including at least 40 points at 300 level or above. For general degrees (that is, the BA, BCom and BSc) a major shall not require more than 140 points at 200 level or above.

Minor: A component of an undergraduate degree, consisting of courses at 200 level or above in a recognised subject worth at least 60 points, and including at least 15 points at 300 level.

Specialisation: An optional area of focus within a major, a subject or a specialised graduate or postgraduate qualification. A specialisation shall require at least 45 points of directly relevant courses at 200 level or above, including at least one course above 200 level. The courses specified for a specialisation shall normally be from courses within the associated major, subject or specialised graduate or postgraduate qualification, but in all cases, at least 50% of the specified points shall be from such courses.

Subject: A particular academic discipline offered through courses at various levels. The term is also used in some graduate or postgraduate programmes to specify the main area of focus of the overall programme of study, in which case most if not all of the constituent courses are in that particular subject.

Note: The *Academic Transcripts and Certificates Policy* sets out what information appears on qualification certificates and academic transcripts.

Rules

1. A particular major may be offered for more than one general degree, but the requirements must be equivalent. (They may be stated differently according to conventions adopted by the faculties concerned.) Where a major is offered for both a general degree and a specialised degree, the requirements for each will normally be different.
2. No candidate may count a 300- or 400-level course towards more than one major or minor, or towards a major and a minor, or towards the same major for more than one degree. (There is no bar against double-counting at 200-level.)
3. No candidate may be awarded a major and a minor in the same subject area.