

Degree & Minor Plan Guidelines

1. It is recommended that degree plans be **120 hours** total. IHL has approved that degree plans be 120-124 hours, and many degree plans across the University have already adopted a 120-hour degree plan. A 120-hour degree plan allows a student taking 15 hours each fall and spring to graduate in 4 years. 120-hour degree plan can often be accomplished without requiring any fewer courses, but simply changing the total hours to degree.
2. List any **prerequisites for required courses** in the degree plan; these are also required courses to complete the degree and must be included as such. Semester-by-semester guides must also include all prerequisites.
3. Default University standards for minimum GPAs and grades are as follows:
 - GPA ≥ 2.000 for USM GPA, major GPA, and minor GPA.
 - Minimum course grade to pass, receive credit, and satisfy a course requirement is a D.
 - Unofficial cumulative GPA calculation includes transfer course grades, and this cumulative GPA is not a part of graduation GPA requirements.
 - No minimum GPA to change majors or minors.

Any deviations from the above default minimums must be included in the actual degree plan and should be justified (e.g., accreditation standards) when proposed. That is, it is not sufficient to mention GPA or grade requirements only in the program's narrative section of the Bulletin; it must be included in the degree plan along with other requirements for the degree.

- a. Include any **minimum grade requirements** (including for individual courses, minor GPA, major GPA, or USM GPA) that differ from the University standards in the actual degree plan. This includes Capstone.
 - b. Provide **justification** for minimum grade requirements above the University standards (e.g., accreditation requirements), including for individual courses, minor GPA, major GPA, or USM GPA.
 - c. Clarify what counts as **"major courses"**: Specify how the **"major GPA"** is calculated if it differs from the default calculation, which is all courses taken to satisfy **DEG 01**. Specify "Minimum grade of C in all DEG 01 courses," for example, rather than "Minimum grade of C in all major courses."
4. Identify courses that satisfy (or do not satisfy) degree requirements by course prefixes rather than discipline names or other broad categories.

Avoid these:	Possible solutions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15 hours of electives in music ▪ 15 hours of technical electives ▪ 15 hours of electives in the major ▪ Must receive a C in all courses in the major 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15 hours of electives in any MUS or MUP courses ▪ 15 hours of electives in ICT, IET, or MAT ▪ 15 hours of electives in SOC ▪ Must receive a C in all courses in DEG 01 ▪ Must receive a C in all MCJ classes in DEG 01-02.

5. If completion of higher-level courses eliminates the need to take lower-level course, clearly indicate this on the plan.

All courses must be taken:	Only highest-level class must be passed:
<p>Mathematics – 12 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MAT 101 ▪ MAT 103 ▪ MAT 167 ▪ MAT 168 	<p>Mathematics – 12 hours*</p> <p><i>*Fewer hours may be taken but at least MAT 168 must be completed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MAT 101 ▪ MAT 103 ▪ MAT 167 ▪ MAT 168

6. Give descriptive titles to categories/groupings of DEG requirement for easy identification. Also, give titles to sub-areas

Avoid this:	Solution:
<p>Select 1 course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MAT 115 - Elementary Statistics ▪ PSY 360 - Introduction to Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences ▪ SSGS 401 - Data Analysis and Statistics in the Social Sciences 	<p>Statistics – Select 1 course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MAT 115 - Elementary Statistics ▪ PSY 360 - Introduction to Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences ▪ SSGS 401 - Data Analysis and Statistics in the Social Sciences

Avoid these:	Possible solution:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select 1 course from each of the four areas in the major (12 hours) 	<p>Select 1 course from each of the four areas of Political Science listed below (12 hours):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include all PS courses from 320-329 or 420-429 2. American Politics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ American courses include all PS courses from 300-309 or 400-409 3. Global Politics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global courses include all PS courses from 330-339, 350-359, 430-439, or 450-459 4. Public Law and Administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Law and Administration courses include all PS courses from 370-379, 380-389, 470-479, or 480-489

7. Avoid requiring “**technical electives**” unless the program is open only to transfer students who come in with technical courses. USM does not offer “technical” courses as are offered in MS community colleges.
8. List all options (specific courses, range of courses with particular prefixes) for electives that qualify to satisfy the requirement on the degree plan, so that these courses will pull automatically on the DPR when taken. That is, avoid leaving electives so open that they must be decided on a case-by-case basis for each student and require a substitution for each elective, e.g., “Choose 12 hours of electives in consultation with the director” or “Choose 12 hours of electives. Consult the program for course options.”
9. Programs that wish allow students flexibility in course options (including WI and SI GEC requirements) must build it into the degree plan, so it applies to all students, not only some students. Course options to satisfy requirements cannot be implemented through course exceptions (substitutions).

Consider the courses that transfer students to the major are likely to have transferred in. If these transfer courses “fulfill the spirit of the requirement,” allow them to satisfy the requirement for all students.

10. DEG requirements, particularly DEG 02-03, should be as flexible as possible to allow students more options to find courses that fit with both program curriculum goals and students’ schedules/timeline to degree. Furthermore, programs should avoid limiting a DEG requirement to courses included in the GEC unless those classes are allowed to satisfy both the GEC and DEG.

Note that requirements to take GEC courses beyond those already taken to satisfy the GEC puts further strain on the demand for GEC courses, which are often already beyond capacity. As well, DEG requirements (DEG 01-03) that require additional GEC courses “not already taken to satisfy the GEC” create DPR logistical problems for students with an AA/AS whose GEC 01-06 has been waived. To avoid these potential DPR problems, see possible solutions below:

Will not work consistently on DPR:	Possible solutions:
<p>DEG 02: Select 1 course not selected in GEC 05:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ANT 101 - The Human Experience: A Global Perspective on Human Diversity 3 hrs. ▪ GHY 101 - World Geography: Dynamics of a Changing Earth 3 hrs. ▪ PS 201 - Great Issues of Politics 3 hrs. ▪ SOC 101 - Understanding Society: Principles of Sociology 3 hrs. 	<p>DEG 02: Social Science elective – Select 9 hours*:</p> <p><i>*May overlap with courses already taken for GEC 05.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any course from ANT, ECO, GHY, PS, PSY, or SOC <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>DEG 02: Social Science elective – Select 3 hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any 200-level or higher course from ANT, ECO, GHY, PS, PSY, or SOC

Additional comments

1. For programs that wish to encourage students to take courses related to diversity and inclusion, note that in addition to Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies, there are now also introductory courses in American Indian Studies and Black Studies. The following courses are open to all students.
 - AIS 301 - Contemporary Issues in Indian Country (see [American Indian Studies minor](#))
 - BLKS 301 - Introduction to Black Studies (see [Black Studies minor](#))
 - WGS 301 - Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies (see [Women’s & Gender Studies minor](#))

2. USM has been recognized as a top military friendly college. For programs with students who may be interested in the military or military studies, note that the following courses are open to all full time USM students and are not associated with any obligations for enrollment beyond the courses:
 - a. **Aerospace Studies** (See [Air Force ROTC Program](#))
 - [AOS 101 - Foundation of the United States Air Force I](#) 1 hr. AND [AOS 101L - Air Force Leadership Laboratory](#) 1 hr.
 - [AOS 103 - Introduction to the Air Force Today](#) 1 hr. AND [AOS 103L - Air Force Leadership Laboratory](#) 1 hr.
 - [AOS 201 - Evolution of USAF Air and Space Power I](#) 1 hr. AND [AOS 201L - Air Force Leadership Laboratory](#) 1 hr.
 - [AOS 203 - Evolution of USAF Air and Space Power II](#) 1 hr. AND [AOS 203L - Air Force Leadership Laboratory](#) 1 hr.
 - b. **Military Science** (See Army ROTC Program)
 - [MSL 101 - Introduction to the Army](#) [Note: No longer requires physical training.]