**Proposed UMW Academic Terminology**

**Rationale:** We need to standardize the language we employ to talk about academic programs. Doing this will help promote greater consistency and will also help ensure a clearer understanding of the relationship between the SCHEV Degree Inventory (UMW’s officially approved degrees) and some of our programs that are focused areas of study but that are not “standalone” degrees.

**Terminology**

**Degree**

A coherent program of study leading to an award conferred by the University’s Board of Visitors indicating successful completion of all requirements for the degree. A degree includes a degree designation and an official program name. The UMW Board of Visitors and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) must approve all approve all degree programs offered by the University. The University may only award degrees that are listed on the institution’s [Degree Inventory](https://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/inventory_1.asp) as maintained by SCHEV.

UMW awards degrees at the baccalaureate and the master’s level. All undergraduate degree programs of study are built upon these three components: general education, a major, and free electives (courses outside general education and the major). An undergraduate degree may (but does not necessarily have to) include a separate additional field experience or licensing requirement. Undergraduate degree programs are 120 credit hours in length.

A master’s degree program requires a minimum of 30 credits hours. A master’s degree does not contain a general education component. Master’s degree programs may have a specified research, capstone, or other similar final, culminating independent student project.

**Degree Designation**

The degree designation signifies a rank or level of educational attainment that is conferred on students who have successfully completed all degree program requirements and degree conditions (such as achieving the required overall grade point average, the required grade point average in the major, and meeting the residence requirement).

An oﬃcial degree designation is noted on the student’s diploma and transcript. UMW is authorized by SCHEV to award the following degree designations:

Bachelor of Arts – B.A.

Bachelor of Science – B.S.

Bachelor of Science in Education – BSEd

Bachelor of Science in Nursing – BSN

Bachelor of Liberal Studies – BLS

Master of Business Administration – MBA

Master of Science – M.S.

Master of Education – M.Ed.

**Degree Program Name**

The degree program name is the subject classification of the degree program as stated on the institution’s [Degree Inventory](https://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/inventory_1.asp) as maintained by SCHEV. For example, B.A. in Philosophy and Religious Studies, B.S. in Mathematics, M.S. in Geospatial Analysis.

**Major**

The major is an organized and coherent undergraduate plan of study in a specified subject field that the student pursues in order to attain in-depth knowledge, competence, and understanding within the field of study.

A major may be built entirely or mostly upon courses in one subject field (such as biology) or may be interdisciplinary, drawing together subject matter from a number of separate but inter-related fields of investigation (such as Women and Gender Studies). A major must have at least 30 credit hours and no more than 48 credit hours. Specific guidelines for the construction of a major program are contained the *Academic Procedures Directory*, in the section titled “[Major Program - Defining Requirements and Constraints](http://publications.umw.edu/academicproceduresdirectory/major-program-defining-requirements-and-constraints/).”

An undergraduate degree program may contain just one major or it may have multiple different majors all leading to the same degree. For example, the B.S. degree in Mathematics has only one major (Mathematics). The B.S. in Computer Science may be earned by students majoring in and completing all requirements for the majors in Computer Science or Cybersecurity.

Majors grouped under the same degree program are considered by SCHEV policy as sub or support areas. According to SCHEV policy instituted in 2011, sub or support areas grouped together under the same degree must maintain the focus of the degree program and fulfill the common core requirement of the degree program.

For baccalaureate degree programs, 25% of total credit hours required for the degree, excluding general education, must be in common for the majors to be appropriately grouped together under the same degree program name. For master’s degree programs, 50% of total credit hours required for the degree must be in common.

Board of Visitors and SCHEV approval is not required to add new sub or support areas to a degree program. However, approval through all steps of the UMW curriculum approval process is required to add a new major to the curriculum.

**Concentration**

A concentration is a coordinated grouping of courses representing a sub-specialization or emphasis within a major field available for students majoring in that program. A concentration provides for a focused emphasis of study within a major. The number of credit hours required for a concentration varies, but is included within the required credit hours for the major.

A concentration is a sub or support area and, as such, Board of Visitors and SCHEV approval is not required to add new concentration to a major. However, approval through all steps of the UMW curriculum approval process is required to add a new concentration to the curriculum.

Concentrations are only used within the undergraduate curriculum.

**Track**

A track is a group of courses representing a specialized direction of study within a graduate degree program. At UMW, tracks are only used within the graduate curriculum. Tracks outline a specified set of course requirements with no (or only a very few) options. At UMW, tracks are used to identify the course of student leading toward an occupational specialty, such as the M.Ed. Initial Licensure Post-Baccalaureate Track: Prek-12.

**Minor**

A minor is a baccalaureate area of study outside of the major that encourages students to pursue a secondary ﬁeld. Minors are only available at the undergraduate level.

A minor must contain at least 15 credit hours and may have no more than 28 credit hours. At least three courses in the minor must be at the 300 – 400 level. The maximum degree of overlap permitted between courses in student’s major and minor is two courses. (The same overlap rule applies to two minors being pursued by the student.) Additional guidelines for the construction of a minor program are contained the *Academic Procedures Directory*, in the section titled “[Minor Program – Requirements and Constraints](http://publications.umw.edu/academicproceduresdirectory/minor-program-requirements-and-constraints/).”

**Certificate**

A certificate is a curriculum of study leading to a formal award certifying completion of baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate level work in an academic or occupationally-specific field of study. All coursework for a baccalaureate certificate is at the undergraduate level. By SCHEV policy, an undergraduate certificate must have a minimum of 9 credit hours and a maximum of 18 credit hours.

A post-baccalaureate certificate is a program of study designed to further undergraduate education that does not require enrollment in a graduate-level degree program. By SCHEV policy, a post-baccalaureate certificate requires a minimum of 9 credit hours and a maximum of 15 credit hours of coursework beyond the baccalaureate degree. The majority of required courses are at the graduate level with a limited number of upper-division (300- or 400-level) undergraduate courses. A baccalaureate degree is required for admission.

The University may only award the certificates that are listed on the institution’s [Degree Inventory](https://research.schev.edu/degreeinventory/inventory_1.asp) as maintained by SCHEV. To add a new certificate to the institution’s degree inventory, the certificate proposal must proceed through all steps of the UMW curriculum approval process and then reported to SCHEV (prior SCHEV approval is not required).

**Accelerated Degree Program**

Accelerated degree programs enable students to complete a baccalaureate and a master’s degree in a shortened time frame. While completing the undergraduate degree, the student begins work on the graduate degree. The undergraduate and graduate degrees involved in the accelerated degree program may have a maximum of four common classes. These courses are offered at the graduate level, and may be taken by students who apply for and are conditionally admitted to the graduate program during their undergraduate studies. The course credit hour may count toward the graduate degrees if formal admission to the graduate degree program is received within five years of the award of the undergraduate degree.