

Brock University Degree Framework Policy

Category: Academic

Jurisdiction: Undergraduate Program Committee

Academic Liaison: Provost & Vice-President, Academic

Approval Authority: Senate

Effective Date: May 2027

Amendments: N/A.

Purpose

This policy establishes the institutional framework for Brock University's degree architecture, ensuring flexibility, accessibility, customization, and academic integrity.

Scope

This Policy applies to all undergraduate degree programs, faculty, academic units, and administrative units involved in curriculum development, approval, delivery, advising, and degree adjudication at Brock University.

Policy Statement

Brock University is committed to offering a student-centered, faculty-driven degree architecture built on modular design, standardized credit structures, and clear pathways to credential completion. All undergraduate degree requirements—including breadth, module structure, program patterns, and overall composition—are governed by this Policy.

Definitions

"Module": A defined set of courses within an area of study (Minor, Major, Honours Major).

“Breadth Requirement”: Requirement that every student complete at least one course from Groups A, B, and C, respectively.

“Honours Major”: A 14-course/7-credit module for four-year degrees.

“Major”: A 10-course/5-credit module for four- or three-year degrees.

“Minor”: A 5-course/2.5 credit module for four- or three-year degrees.

Degree Architecture

Under this structure, two types of undergraduate degree credentials are established:

- Four-Year Bachelor (Honours Degree) (20 credits)
- Three-Year Bachelor (Pass Degree) (15 credits)

The Honours Degree may be awarded with one of the following academic standings, determined in accordance with University regulations and based on the student’s average, as outlined in the Progression and Standing Rules of this policy:

- Honours
- Honours with Distinction
- Honours with High Distinction

Composition of Degrees

A degree is composed of:

- One or more approved modules (Honours Major, Major, Minor)
- Breadth requirements
- Remaining electives

All combinations of modules must be consistent with the requirements established in the Degree Architecture Policy.

Modules: Undergraduate degrees are composed of the following standardized modules, which may be combined to meet credential requirements:

- Honours Major: 14 courses (7.0 credits), including:
 - At least 3.0 credits at the 300 level or above
 - At least 1.0 credit at the 400 level or above
 - Remaining courses must be at the 200 level or above

- Major: 10 courses (5.0 credits), including:
 - At least 2.0 credits at the 300 level or above
 - At least 2.0 credits at the 200 level or above
 - All courses must be at the 200 level or above
- Minor: 5 courses (2.5 credits) all at 200-level or above

Modules represent the foundational building blocks of degree completion and may be combined in several approved patterns (e.g., Honours Major + Minor; Major + Major). Multiple module combinations may be used to fulfill degree requirements. Modules are made up of courses at 200-level or above. All degree requirements must be satisfied through approved module combinations and breadth requirements.

In some circumstances, in order to meet the university degree and module requirements, more than 15 or 20 credits may be taken.

Honours Major, Major, and Minor Combinations

In a four-year bachelor's degree, students completing an Honours Major may also complete one or more approved Minor modules, subject to the overall credit requirements and constraints of the degree.

The combination of an Honours Major or Major with a Minor may be used to deepen or extend a student's academic engagement within a discipline or to pursue complementary or interdisciplinary areas of study.

For the purposes of this policy, a Minor that reflects the core disciplinary foundation of a field of study and that substantially overlaps with the structure of the corresponding Major or Honours Major, is understood to function as a foundational building block of that degree pathway. Such a Minor shall normally not be considered sufficiently distinct to be separately recognized in combination with the corresponding Major or Honours Major.

This does not preclude the approval or recognition of a Minor within the same overall discipline where that Minor represents a clearly defined and coherent area of study with a distinct

academic focus, learning outcomes, and course requirements that support advanced or specialized study.

The Honours Major shall normally constitute the primary module for the degree and shall take precedence for the purposes of academic standing, progression, and graduation adjudication.

First-Year Courses and Module Entry

Courses numbered at the 100 level are an integral component of undergraduate degree completion and count toward the total credit requirements of a three-year or four-year bachelor's degree, subject to the limits set out in the Progression and Standing Rules of this Policy. Such courses may satisfy breadth requirements, contribute to elective credits, and serve as prerequisites or recommended preparation for entry into a module or for enrolment in courses at the 200 level or above.

Courses numbered at the 100 level shall not form part of the credit requirements of any approved module (Minor, Major, or Honours Major). All module requirements must be satisfied with courses numbered at the 200 level or above.

In establishing module entry requirements, programs are encouraged to balance academic preparedness with flexibility and student choice. Wherever academically appropriate, entry requirements should not be unduly prescriptive or narrowly sequenced in ways that unnecessarily limit access to modules or restrict students' ability to explore or change fields of study.

Common Courses

Modules must be sufficiently differentiated in curricular content and academic objectives to be eligible for separate recognition as discrete credentials. Determinations of whether modules are materially distinct will consider the extent of overlap in required and elective coursework, including reliance on shared *course lists*, as well as the alignment of learning outcomes and academic intent.

For the purposes of this policy, a *course list* refers to a defined set of courses from which students may choose to satisfy a program requirement. As a general principle, where two modules share course credits in common, completed credits may not be counted toward both modules. Rather, any course that appears in the requirements or course lists of more than one module may be applied toward the requirements of only one of those modules. Students who wish to complete both modules must satisfy the full credit requirements of each by completing additional approved courses, normally chosen from the relevant course lists or elective offerings in the program(s) that house the module(s).

All new modules and major revisions require approval from Senate.

Exemptions

Professional programs that lead to credentials requiring third-party accrediting or regulatory oversight are excluded from adherence to modules as outlined. See [Appendix B](#) for a list of exempt programs.

Pattern of Honours Major and Major Programs

Programs must specify:

- Required courses within each module
- Entry requirements for each module (distinct from first-year course counting)
- Any course sequencing requirements within the module

Minor Requirements

A Minor consists of 5 courses (2.5 credits) at 200-level or up. Minors may appear on diplomas. Minor Modules must be sufficiently differentiated in curricular content and academic objectives to be eligible for separate recognition as discrete credentials. Determinations of whether modules are materially distinct will consider the extent of overlap in required and elective coursework, including reliance on shared *course lists*, as well as the alignment of learning outcomes and academic intent.

For the purposes of this policy, a *course list* refers to a defined set of courses from which students may choose to satisfy a program requirement. As a general principle, where two

modules share course credits in common, completed credits may not be counted toward both modules. Rather, any course that appears in the requirements or course lists of more than one module may be applied toward the requirements of only one of those modules. Students who wish to complete both modules must satisfy the full credit requirements of each by completing additional approved courses, normally chosen from the relevant course lists or elective offerings in the program(s) that house the module(s).

Explore Credit

To support academic exploration and informed decision-making, undergraduate students may designate up to 1.0 credit as an Explore Credit over the course of their degree.

An Explore Credit is a course taken outside a student's declared primary module and additional declared modules, intended to encourage exploration of disciplines, methodologies, or areas of study not already represented in the student's program structure.

Explore Credits shall:

- count toward the total credit requirements for the degree;
- be excluded from the calculation of cumulative and module averages, and be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis; and
- not be used to satisfy the requirements of any module, including a Minor, Major, or Honours Major.

Designation of a course as an Explore Credit must occur in accordance with University-established procedures and deadlines. Once designated, an Explore Credit may not be converted to a graded course for the purposes of academic standing, progression, or graduation adjudication.

Course Credit Structure

Undergraduate degree programs are normally structured using half-credit courses (0.5 credit) as the standard unit of academic delivery, to support flexibility, modularity, and clarity in degree planning.

Full-credit (1.0 credit), full-year courses may be approved only where there is a clear pedagogical or scholarly rationale that cannot be achieved through a sequence of half-credit courses. Such courses are expected to be limited in number and to occur primarily in the upper years of study, where sustained engagement, independent research, or integrative learning is academically justified.

Examples of courses that may warrant full-credit designation include, but are not limited to, Honours thesis courses, major research projects, capstone experiences, or other extended forms of supervised scholarship.

All full-credit courses require approval through established curriculum approval processes and must align with the principles of this Policy, including clarity of learning outcomes, appropriate workload expectations, and consistency with approved module structures.

Breadth Requirements

All undergraduate students must complete one course from each of the following groupings prior to graduation: Group A, Group B, Group C.

See [Appendix A](#) for course allocations in each grouping. Breadth requirements should normally be completed during first year.

Progression and Standing Rules

Three-Year Bachelor

Except where otherwise specified by Senate for particular degree designations, a Three-Year Bachelor shall be awarded upon the successful completion of 15 credits, including:

- Required modules as defined in the Degree Architecture Policy;
- Satisfaction of the University Breadth Requirement; and
- Remaining credits selected from electives.

To be eligible for graduation, a student must achieve:

- a) a minimum average of 60 percent across the courses constituting the student's primary module, as defined in the approved program structure;
- b) a minimum overall average of 60 percent across all courses applicable to the degree; and
- c) where transfer credit has been awarded, a minimum overall average of 60 percent on courses completed at Brock University.

Within the 15 credits required for the degree:

- a) no more than six credits may be courses numbered at the 100 level;
- b) at least three credits must be courses numbered at the 300 level or above; and
- c) all remaining credits must be courses numbered at the 200 level or above.

Honours Bachelor

Except where otherwise specified by Senate for particular degree designations, a Four-Year Bachelor (Honours Degree) shall be awarded upon the successful completion of 20 credits, including:

- Required modules, as defined in the Degree Architecture Policy;
- Satisfaction of the University Breadth Requirement; and
- Remaining credits selected from eligible electives.

To be eligible for graduation, a student must achieve:

- a) a minimum average of 60 percent across the courses constituting the student's primary module, as defined in the approved program structure; and
- b) a minimum overall average of 60 percent across all courses applicable to the degree.

Within the 20 credits required for the degree:

- c) no more than six credits may be courses numbered at the 100 level;
- d) at least six credits must be courses numbered at the 300 level or above; and
- e) all remaining credits must be courses numbered at the 200 level or above.

Classification of Honours Degrees

Honours degrees shall be classified on the basis of the student's average in their primary module and overall average, calculated in accordance with University regulations, as follows:

- a) Honours: minimum average of 60 percent in primary module and overall average of 60 percent;
- b) Honours with Distinction: minimum average of 80 percent in primary module and minimum overall average of 80 percent or higher.
- c) Honours with High Distinction: minimum average of 90 percent in primary module and minimum overall average of 90 percent or higher.

Primary Module

For the purposes of academic standing, progression, and degree adjudication, every undergraduate degree shall include one primary module.

The primary module is the module designated by the student, in accordance with University established procedures, that serves as the principal academic anchor for the degree and is used to determine satisfaction of module-based standing requirements.

Where a student is completing an Honours Major, that Honours Major shall normally constitute the primary module and shall take precedence over any Major or Minor modules, given its greater credit weighting and depth of study.

Declaration of Major and Primary Module

All undergraduate students shall be required to declare a Major and designate a primary module at the end of their first year of study, in accordance with University-established procedures and timelines. Declaration confirms the student's intended academic pathway and enables appropriate advising, progression monitoring, and degree planning.

Students admitted directly to an Honours program shall normally declare the Honours Major as their primary module at the time of declaration. Students may request changes to their declared Major or primary module after initial declaration, subject to approval and in accordance with University-established procedures.

Multiple Major Modules

A student may complete more than one major module within an undergraduate degree, subject to the approved degree and program structure.

Where a student completes two or more major modules, the student must designate one module as the primary module for the purposes of academic standing, progression, and degree adjudication.

An Honours Major shall supersede a Major for the purposes of primary module designation. A student may not designate a Major as the primary module where the student is also completing an Honours Major, except where otherwise approved in accordance with University established procedures.

All additional major modules must be completed in full in accordance with their approved requirements.

Change of Primary Module

A student may request to change their designated primary module after initial declaration, subject to approval in accordance with University established procedures.

Approval of a change shall normally be granted only where the change does not undermine degree integrity. Where a student is completing an Honours Major, approval shall not normally be granted to designate a Major as the primary module in place of the Honours Major, given the greater credit requirements and academic expectations of the Honours Major.

Requests to change a primary module may be subject to timing restrictions.

Graduation Adjudication

Graduation adjudication shall occur upon a student's submission of an intent to graduate, in accordance with University-established procedures and deadlines. Degree completion, module requirements, academic standing, and eligibility for graduation shall be assessed based on the student's declared primary module and any additional approved modules in effect at the time of adjudication.

General Studies Degree (Three-Year Bachelor)

Where a student satisfies all degree-level requirements for the Three-Year Bachelor but does not complete the requirements of any approved Major module, the degree shall be awarded as a General Studies degree. The BA or BSc designation shall be determined by the balance of completed coursework, in accordance with University regulations.

Relationship to the Faculty Handbook

This Policy supersedes relevant portions of Faculty Handbook Section 3 (Academic Regulations), including sections on curriculum, degree requirements, program patterns, minor

and major definitions, and academic standing, to align institutional regulations with the new modular degree architecture.

Transitional Provisions

This Policy applies to all new undergraduate students beginning Fall 2027. Continuing students may complete their programs under existing requirements or opt into the new degree architecture where feasible. Academic units must complete program mapping in accordance with Senate's approved implementation timeline.

Governance and Implementation

The Undergraduate Program Committee and will oversee implementation and recommend necessary amendments to Faculty Handbook Section 3. The University Secretariat ensures governance alignment and publication of updated regulations.

Policy Compliance

This Policy is under the jurisdiction of the University Senate. Reviews occur every 5 years.

Review Period: 5 years

Next Review Period: 2031-2032

Related Policies and Policy Instruments: Faculty Handbook

Required Consultations: Undergraduate Program Committee

Recommended Consultations: Academic Review Committee, faculty, students, professional librarians, Centre for Pedagogical Innovation

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Management Policy & Procedures. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and policy related instruments and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.;

Email: universitysecretary@brocku.ca

Appendix A: Breadth requirement

Group A: Accounting, Applied Linguistics, Business Administration, Business Economics, Child and Youth Studies, Critical Criminology, Economics, Environmental Sustainability, Film Studies, Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice, Geography, Labour Studies, Media and Communication Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Tourism Studies, Women and Gender Studies

Group B: Adult Education, Arts Leadership, Canadian Studies, Classics, Dramatic Arts, Early Childhood Education, Educational Studies, English Language and Literature, French Studies, German, Hispanic and Latin American Studies, History, Indigenous Adult Education, Indigenous Educational Studies, Interactive Arts and Digital Media, Italian Studies, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Music, Philosophy, Visual Arts

Group C: Applied Computing, Applied Grape and Wine Science, Biochemistry, Biological Sciences, Biophysics, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Data Sciences and Analytics, Earth Sciences, Health Sciences, Integrated Engineering, Kinesiology, Mathematics and Statistics, Neuroscience, Physics, Recreation and Leisure Studies, Sport Management

Appendix B: Exemptions (Degrees exempt from modular requirements outlined in the policy)

- Accounting
- Business Administration
- Consecutive Teacher Education
- Game Design & Game Programming (Niagara College partnership)
- Integrated Engineering
- Nursing