



Committee on Curricula/CoC

Submitting a Proposal for New Undergraduate Minor for Faculty Governance Review

Background

First established for HASS areas in 1987 and expanded in 1992 to other areas, minors at MIT are optional undergraduate programs that consist of five to seven subjects, with a typical program comprising six. A minor program is intended to provide a student with recognition of focused work in an area of inquiry outside of but complementary to that of the student's major. The program should be designed so as to provide students with a depth of understanding and expertise that is sufficient to enable the student to appreciate the complexities and issues that are central to the area and to perform at a level sufficient to solve realistic problems and/or to make contribution to the field. A minor may include subjects that count toward General Institute Requirements (GIRs). For a complete description of the policies governing minors, consult [Section 11 of the CoC Guidelines](#).

The authority to approve new departmental minor programs has been delegated by the Faculty to the [Committee on Curricula](#) (CoC). Proposals to establish new interdisciplinary minors must be approved by both the CoC and the [Committee on the Undergraduate Program](#) (CUP).

In proposing a new minor, preliminary drafts are encouraged, particularly for proposals involving interdisciplinary programs or proposals that raise questions concerning *Rules and Regulations of the Faculty* and/or other existing policy governing the undergraduate program. Preliminary proposals should be forwarded to the CoC by mid-October for comment. Draft proposals can be saved in MIT's [Program Management](#) system and shared with faculty committee staff for consultation. Proposals should not be submitted in final form until they have been vetted by the appropriate School and departmental curriculum committees; final proposals are due by the end of the fall term.

On the proposal form, you will be asked to provide basic information about the minor program (the rationale for establishing it, anticipated demand for the program, other programs that may be affected by the new minor), a description of the curriculum (its structure and coherence, required and recommended subjects offered by other programs, programs with which there is substantial overlap), and answers to general questions that fall within the purview of faculty governance. Formal roadmaps are not required, but sponsors must be able to explain common pathways through the minor. The form also explains the requirements concerning letters of support that must accompany the proposal.

Once submitted, proposals are routed through a workflow in the proposal system that corresponds to the steps outlined in the CoC Guidelines. The approval process is iterative and somewhat fluid. With regard to interdisciplinary proposals, some discussions and considerations may move forward simultaneously, although a review by the CoC normally precedes a review by the CUP. In these situations, proposals may be discussed across several meetings both in the presence of the proposers and in committees. The committees may also refer specific elements of a proposal to other entities for consideration and feedback. Proposals are not normally approved by either committee at the same meeting at which they are initially presented and discussed. The CoC's review focuses primarily on the curriculum, including the educational rationale, the sustainability and structure of the program, and its compliance with existing policy and rules; the CUP's review focuses primarily on administrative infrastructure, policy, and governance and oversight issues.

Upon approval of a new minor, the approved proposal is forwarded to the Provost. New minors are not subject to a vote of the Faculty.

The following founding documents pertaining to minors are available for reference:

- [Proposal to Permit a Minor in HASS](#) (April 1987)
- [Resolution Enabling Minors in Disciplines other than HASS](#) (October 1992)
- [Criteria to be Met for Interdisciplinary Minor Degree Programs](#) (December 1994; revised February 2011)

Notes about Special Types of Minors

HASS Minors

HASS minors are approved by the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) and have slightly different criteria than other minors.

A HASS minor is defined as a minor that can be completed by taking only subjects that carry attributes associated with the HASS General Institute Requirement (GIR). The sponsors of a HASS minor must secure acknowledgement from SHASS that the proposal qualifies as a HASS minor. They must also agree to administer the minor in accordance with rules and policies governing HASS minors. Interdisciplinary HASS minors must also conform to the guidelines for interdisciplinary minors.

For more information about HASS minors, see [Section 11.2 of the CoC Guidelines](#).

Interdisciplinary Minors

An interdisciplinary minor must be sufficiently broadly based that it cannot be reasonably addressed by a minor within a single department. The selection of subjects that constitute a minor should not be simply a concentration of subjects in an interdisciplinary area, but must form a cohesive program. The number of subjects required should be the same as those required for a departmental minor.

An interdisciplinary minor must be formally supported, financially and academically, by the department heads of all departments that offer any required subjects for the minor. The minor should lead to the eventual modification of existing subjects and/or the creation of cross-disciplinary subjects that join the concepts of the various disciplines contained in the minor.

Detailed information about the requirements for interdisciplinary minors and other special situations, such as minors proposed by a non-degree-granting entity, is published in [Section 11.4 of the CoC Guidelines](#).

Guidelines for Describing Subject Requirements for Minors

In listing subjects for a minor, it is not necessary to show prerequisites for subjects in a minor in the Bulletin description, although the prerequisite structure of the minor should be illustrated in response to the question on the proposal form that asks for a description of the coherence and structure of the program. The CoC may request additional documentation if there are concerns about pathways to completion. Because subjects in a minor program may also count toward General Institute Requirements, it is not necessary to identify GIR attributes. For joint subjects, only one number should be listed. For departmental minors, use the department's subject number, if applicable. Otherwise, identify the subject by its master number.

Choices between subjects may be designated in any of several ways. The most common methods of listing options in a minor are illustrated below. Please note that when subjects

are presented as a list, departments are encouraged to sort the list in alphanumeric order by subject number.

As a choice from a list.

Laboratory Core

Select one of the following:

- 5.310 Uncertainty in Engineering
- 7.02[J] Introduction to Experimental Biology and Communication
- 20.109 Introduction to Computers and Engineering Problem Solving

As a choice between subjects.

- 1.073 Introduction to Environmental Data Analysis
- or 1.074 Multivariate Data Analysis

As a statement that identifies requirements by area, for example:

Tier III *Two elective undergraduate subjects chosen from the field of applied economics. A list of specific subjects is available in the Economics Department Office, E52-391.*

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