

## **CPoS Definitions**

The definitions below pertain to Course Program of Study (CPoS) requirements, degree-applicable courses, and enrollment.

- [Course Program of Study \(CPoS\)](#)
- [Degree-Applicable Courses](#)
  - [Major Course Requirements](#)
  - [General Education Requirements](#)
  - [Free Elective Courses](#)
- [Non-Degree-Applicable Courses](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment Standards for Financial Aid \(Title IV Federal and PA State\)](#)
- [Free Electives](#)
- [Dual Degrees and Double Majors](#)
- [Minors](#)
- [Concentrations](#)
- [Second Degree](#)
- [Honors](#)
- [Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses](#)
- [Graduates Taking Undergraduate Courses](#)
- [Prerequisites](#)
- [Repeated Courses](#)
- [Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's](#)
- [Major Change](#)
- [Course Substitution](#)
- [Certificates](#)

### **Course Program of Study (CPoS)**

CPoS is means by which Financial Aid determines if courses that the student is currently enrolled in, are applicable to the students declared program of study. CPoS does this by analyzing the student's Degree Works audit and indicating whether courses that the student is taking can count for aid or not. It comprises all coursework, including electives, necessary to complete the primary degree, certificate, or other recognized credential. For undergraduate degrees, the CPoS evaluates courses that are included in: general education, graduation requirements, (such as advanced coursework and residency), major requirements, concentrations (if applicable), minors (if applicable) and free electives.

*Note: Graduate and doctoral programs do not have Free Electives*

## **Degree-Applicable Courses**

Degree-applicable courses are courses prescribed by the Degree Works audit as approved by the University Curriculum Committee, the Academic Department and Provost. Only degree-applicable courses determine enrollment status (see Enrollment below) and are eligible for [Title IV federal aid](#) and [PA state aid](#). These courses may be:

- **General Education Requirements:** Undergraduate students are required to take General Education courses in a breadth of categories. General Education Courses provide students with a foundation of skills and knowledge necessary to reason clearly, communicate effectively, think critically and contribute to society. Those categories include: Foundations, Discoveries, Competencies and General Education Electives.
- **Major (Core) Course Requirements:** Major courses include courses within a field of study of an approved degree program. An undergraduate baccalaureate major requires a minimum of 30 credits, with the majority of credits at the advanced credit level (generally 3000 or higher). The required number of courses and credits required for each major may vary.
- **Major Electives:** These are courses within your major that you have some flexibility in which courses to take. These are generally a list of options that you need to choose from. Please work with your advisor about the most appropriate major electives for your educational outcomes.
- **Free Elective Courses (*Undergraduate Students Only*):** Elective courses are ones chosen by the student from a number of optional subjects or courses offered at PennWest. Electives may not fulfill specific course requirements for the degree program but typically count toward the degree program credit requirement. Be sure to review your Degree Works audit as programs have differing amounts of Free Electives. Some have as few as 6 credits of Free Electives, others have more than 20.

## **Non-Degree-Applicable Courses**

Non-degree-applicable courses are optional courses that are not specified in the Course Program of Study. They are not eligible for [Title IV federal aid](#) and [PA state aid](#).

If a student has enough degree-applicable courses to be considered full-time, adding additional non-degree-applicable courses will not affect aid eligibility. Credit hours above those required for full-time enrollment status are not required to be degree applicable and will not be checked. However, those courses are still computed in the calculation of the completion rate and maximum time frame for satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility.

## **Enrollment**

Federal and state aid require that students be enrolled for a minimum number of degree-applicable courses based on the length of the academic term and students' status. Once full-time enrollment status is reached, courses taken beyond full-time enrollment do not need to be degree-applicable.

- Undergraduate full-time is minimum twelve (12) credits per semester.
- Graduate full-time is minimum nine (9) credits per semester.

## **Enrollment Standards for Financial Aid (Title IV Federal and PA State)**

Credit hours above those required for full-time status need not be degree-applicable and will not be checked. However, those hours are still computed in the calculation of the completion rate and maximum time frame for satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility.

## **Dual Degrees and Double Majors**

Courses taken for a dual degree or a second major are degree applicable. Requirements for either may be combined each semester; however, once a student has completed the requirements for the first degree, they are considered to have earned a degree and are no longer eligible for [Title IV federal grants](#) or [PA state aid](#). After such time, they would need to be moved to a second bachelor's degree-seeker and would only be considered for federal loans. Thus, to continue to receive Title IV federal grants and/or PA state financial aid, students must complete the last requirements for both degrees/majors in the same semester. In order to remain aid eligible, students may not delay graduation in order to complete the concurrently pursued degree.

## **Minors**

Minor courses are degree-applicable if the minor is required in the student's Course Program of Study or if they are taken as free electives in programs. Students may not delay graduation in order to complete their minor if it is not required for the student's program. Programs with required minors are listed on the [Financial Aid](#) webpage in the FAQs.

*Note: If a student is full-time in degree-applicable coursework, they may also consider taking courses required for a minor above that full-time enrollment. For example, they may be in 12 degree-applicable hours (full-time for undergraduates), then take two courses for a minor, putting them at 18 hours of overall enrollment.*

## **Concentrations**

Courses in a student's declared concentration are considered required for their degree and are eligible for Title IV aid.

## **Second Degree**

After graduating with a first undergraduate degree, students seeking a second undergraduate degree may be eligible to receive [Title IV federal student loans](#). Those students are subject to degree-applicable coursework requirements each semester as well.

## **Honors**

Honors courses are degree-applicable if the Honors courses can be applied to the student's Course Program of Study, or if they are taken as free electives.

## **Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses**

If a student enrolled in a baccalaureate program takes a graduate-level course, and the course can be applied to their Course Program of Study, it is degree-applicable. Students who are pursuing Graduate level work as an undergraduate, must fill out the "Undergraduate Permission to Enroll in Graduate Level course form and also have their advisor submit a course substitution.

## **Graduates or Professionals Taking Undergraduate Courses**

If a student enrolled in a graduate program takes an undergraduate course, and the course counts toward the student's graduate Course Program of Study, it is degree-applicable.

## **Prerequisites**

Prerequisites are degree-applicable if they are specified in the student's Course Program of Study or if they are counted as free elective hours.

## **Repeated Courses**

A course could be repeated one time and still be degree-applicable if the student obtained a grade of a "D" or better at the undergraduate level or "C" or higher at the graduate level. Additional attempts after earning a D or better are not degree applicable. If a student fails or withdraws from a repeated course, they can take that course again until a "D" or better at the undergraduate level or "C" or higher at the graduate level grade is earned. However, all hours attempted and earned from the courses taken are still computed in the calculation of the completion rate and maximum time frame for satisfactory academic

progress for financial aid eligibility.

### **Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's**

This will be determined by the colleges and must be updated appropriately in Banner. Banner will determine which advisor receives communications and access to making overrides in the system.

### **Major Change**

Major changes are always applied to the term following the current term. If a student changes their major, the Course Program of Study in the new major will be used to determine degree-applicable coursework. However, the hours attempted and earned for the original major are still computed in the calculation of the completion rate and the maximum time frame for satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility.

### **Course Substitution**

#### **For Non-PennWest Courses**

When a student completes a course at another institution that has no direct PennWest equivalent, advisors can submit a course substitution request. This substitution allows the external course to fulfill a specific degree requirement.

#### **What the substitution confirms:**

- The course meets the educational competencies required by UCC-approved curriculum
- The course can count toward degree requirements
- The course is eligible for financial aid consideration

#### **For PennWest Courses**

Similarly, a PennWest course not listed in a student's program requirements can sometimes replace a prescribed course. This typically occurs due to course scheduling conflicts or other academic considerations.

The same approval process applies: the advisor submits a substitution request confirming the alternate course satisfies the necessary educational requirements and should count toward degree completion and financial aid eligibility.

### **Certificates**

A student pursuing both a degree and a certificate program will have a course program of study (CPoS) that includes courses for both, often with some overlap, depending on the specific certificate and degree requirements.