



**Proposal for Grades Required for Undergraduate Majors & Minors in  
the College of Arts & Sciences  
Fall 2017**

History

The rule of 18 hours of C has been in place since at least 1953.

For the Bachelor of Arts degree, a student “must secure a grade of C or higher in 18 semester hours of work in his [sic] major. Grades lower than C will not be acceptable in the major for students transferring from other colleges. For transfer students the number of hours taken here in the major must carry grades of C or better in the same ratio as the number 18 is to the total number of semester hours required in the major.” (University of North Carolina Record, 1954, pg. 124.)

Current policy (from 2017-2018 Undergraduate Catalog)

**Majors:**

- Although a specific grade point average in the major is not required, a minimum of 18 hours of C or better (C- does not qualify) in the major core is required. Certain majors require 21 hours of C or better grades in the major core.
- Students transferring credits in their major field must earn a grade of C (not C-) or better in at least three-fourths of those courses and credit hours in the major that are taken at UNC–Chapel Hill. Courses taken on a study abroad program through the UNC Study Abroad Office may receive TREQ credit; TREQ credit contributes to the hours of C in the major.

**Minors:**

- A minimum of 12 hours of C (not C-) grades or better is required in the minor, though some minors may require more. Students who transfer courses into the minor must earn C or better grades in three-quarters of the courses and hours that they take for the minor at UNC–Chapel Hill. Students who use By-Examination (BE) credit (see section below) toward a minor may have fewer than 12 hours of coursework remaining to complete the minor (especially for minors with fewer than five courses or 15 hours); in these situations, earning grades of C or better in all of the remaining coursework is required.

Problem

- 1) UNC-CH’s policy is not in-line with its peer institutions. In fact, University of California, Berkeley, University of Virginia, University of Michigan and University of Wisconsin all require a minimum GPA of 2.00 in their major(s). While Duke University does not require a specific GPA in majors or minors, no more than two courses with grades of D, D- or D+ may count toward graduation.
- 2) The policy is complicated, especially when considering science majors (which have courses ranging from 1-4 credits) and the application of rules governing transfer, by-examination and study abroad (TREQ) credits.
- 3) Manual intervention, calculation and follow-up is required for students who have transfer, by-examination and/or study abroad credits applied to their major/minor. This requires additional time and, in turn, increases the possibility of human error.
- 4) Students have difficulty understanding the policy and knowing if they have met the requirements.
- 5) A literal reading of the policy reveals the following; consider a major of 60 hours (e.g., BFA in Studio Art):

- i. a student with no transfer credit is required to earn 18 hours of C or better;
- ii. a student with one transfer course (three hours) is required to earn 42.75 hours of C or better (based on 75% of coursework at UNC (57 hours X 75% = 42.75 hours).

This literal interpretation is not currently followed but this illustrates a policy that is convoluted and unenforceable.

- 6) There is great disparity in the percentage of hours of the major core in which students must earn grades of C or better. For example, students majoring in linguistics (BA) or economics (BA) must earn a C or better in 85.7% of their core courses to reach the minimum of 18 hours; students majoring in chemistry (BS) must earn C or better in only 37.5% of their total hours. Even within all BA majors, the percentage ranges from 50% (studio art and art history) to 85.7% (linguistics and economics). See the attached chart.
- 7) There is no current written policy on how students may achieve the minimum hours of C or better when the courses in their major/minor core do not.
  - a. Current practice is students take any additional course in the major/minor department and apply it to the required hours of C. Students have not necessarily taken courses in the same requirement to replace grades lower than C, but rather any course.
    - i. For example: a student in the Biology BA major may have a grade of C- in each of the three required core courses (e.g., BIOL 201, 202, 205) and grades of C or better in the remaining requirements (14 hours). Thus, to reach the required 18 hours of C, instead of repeating any of BIOL 201, 202 or 205, the students takes another four-hour BIOL course of their choosing.
  - b. When students take an additional course to achieve their hours of C, this is only recorded manually by academic advisors on their internal "academic worksheet."

#### Data

The most common upper-level courses that are repeated when a student earns a grade of C- or D are:

Course	Number of Repeats Fall 2015 to Fall 2017
ECON 410	151
BIOL 202	110
CHEM 262	104
BIOL 252	102
MCRO 251	71
CHEM 241	65
BIOL 205	59
EXSS 276	48
COMP 401	48
COMP 411	45
ECON 400	41

#### Proposal

- A minimum GPA of 2.0 in coursework taken at UNC-CH in the major core is required.
- A minimum GPA of 2.0 in coursework taken at UNC-CH in the minor core is required.

Additional information:

- Policies regarding the use of by-examination and transfer credit in majors and minors would not change.

- Policies regarding the minimum amount of UNC-CH coursework required in majors and minors would not change.
- By-examination, transfer and study abroad (TREQ) credit would not count toward the required GPA in majors and minors.
- “Core” refers to the specific requirements of the major/minor.
  - Core does not include prerequisites or additional requirements, though departments may require specific grades for those courses.
  - If a student takes more than one course to meet a specific requirement, the highest grade can be used to meet that requirement and toward the GPA requirement.
  - If a student has not earned a 2.0 in the major/minor core, students may replace courses lower grade(s) with course(s) from the same specific major/minor requirement.

#### Impact

- This change would bring UNC-CH in line with its peer institutions and its UNC sister schools.
- Departments/academic units would be able to use the major GPA (calculated by the Tar Heel Tracker) for internal purposes such as identifying candidates for honor theses, awards and recognition. Currently, this data is not available in ConnectCarolina; thus, faculty and staff must manually calculate the GPA.
- Manual intervention and calculation would not be required since the Tracker would automatically calculate a student’s GPA in their UNC-CH major/minor coursework.
- The possibility of human error would be removed.
- Students could easily understand, calculate and check their progress toward this requirement.
- A change would address the disparity in the percentage of core hours in which students must earn C or better.

#### Tar Heel Tracker Implications

- 1) The current policy requires complicated configuration in the Tar Heel Tracker, especially when accounting for by-examination and/or transfer credit applied to the major or minor.
  - a. Data from spring 2017 graduates reveal that 300 students could not be cleared by the Tar Heel Tracker due to the calculations required to calculate their hours of C (in these cases, manual intervention was required).
  - b. The majors and minors with the largest number of students requiring manual intervention were: chemistry minor (19%); biology minor (15%); economics major (5.4%) and biology major (4.0%).
- 2) Using the proposed policy:
  - a. The Tar Heel Tracker could be configured to enforce these policies without complicated rules.
  - b. The number of graduating students who could be cleared by the Tracker would dramatically increase.

Roger Kaplan, Office of the University Registrar  
 Nick Siedentop, Office of Undergraduate Curricula

## Undergraduate Majors College of Arts and Sciences

Major	Division	Degree	Core Hours (min)	Hours of C	% of Core	Notes
Linguistics	HUM	BA	21	18	85.7%	
Economics	SBS	BA	21	18	85.7%	Additional grade restrictions for specific ECON courses.
Geological sciences, B.A.	NSM	BA	23	18	78.3%	
Music, B.A.	FA	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Romance languages-French	HUM	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Germanic and Slavic languages (german literature and culture track)	HUM	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Romance languages-hispanic cultures	HUM	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Romance languages-hispanic linguistics	HUM	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Women's and gender studies	HUM	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Romance languages-Italian	HUM	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Romance languages-Portuguese	HUM	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Mathematics, B.A.	NSM	BA	24	18	75.0%	Additional grade restrictions for specific MATH courses.
European studies	SBS	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Asian studies (general track)	SBS	BA	24	18	75.0%	
Interdisciplinary studies	SBS	BA	24	18	75.0%	
History	SBS	BA	30	21	70.0%	Requires 21 hours of C or better.
Management and society	SBS	BA	30	21	70.0%	Requires 21 hours of C or better.
Biology, B.A.	NSM	BA	26	18	69.2%	
Dramatic art	FA	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Philosophy	HUM	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Religious studies (standard track)	HUM	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Classics (classical archaeology)	HUM	BA	27	18	66.7%	

Major	Division	Degree	Core Hours (min)	Hours of C	% of Core	Notes
American studies (general track)	HUM	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Exercise and sport science, B.A. (general)	NSM	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Chemistry, B.A.	NSM	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Sociology	SBS	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Anthropology	SBS	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Political science	SBS	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Peace, war, and defense	SBS	BA	27	18	66.7%	
Computer science, B.S.	NSM	BS	27	18	66.7%	Additional grade requirements for MATH, PHYS courses outside the core.
Psychology, B.A.	NSM	BA	28	18	64.3%	
Public policy	SBS	BA	28	18	64.3%	
Psychology, B.S.	NSM	BS	28	18	64.3%	
Computer science, B.A.	NSM	BA	29	18	62.1%	
Physics, B.A. (standard track)	NSM	BA	29	18	62.1%	
English	HUM	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Comparative literature (international literature track)	HUM	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Communication studies	HUM	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Comparative literature (global cinema track)	HUM	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Geography	SBS	BA	30	18	60.0%	
African, African American, and Diaspora studies, B.A. (African American track)	SBS	BA	30	18	60.0%	
African, African American, and Diaspora studies, B.A. (African track)	SBS	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Latin American studies	SBS	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Global studies	SBS	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Archaeology	SBS	BA	30	18	60.0%	
Statistics and Analytics	NSM	BS	30	18	60.0%	

Major	Division	Degree	Core Hours (min)	Hours of C	% of Core	Notes
Mathematics, B.S. (standard track)	NSM	BS	30	18	60.0%	
Biology, B.S. (general track)	NSM	BS	30	18	60.0%	
Environmental science, B.S. (standard track)	NSM	BS	34	18	52.9%	
Environmental studies, B.A.	NSM	BA	35	18	51.4%	
Art History	FA	BA	36	18	50.0%	
Studio art	FA	BA	36	18	50.0%	
Geological sciences, B.S. (Earth science track)	NSM	BS	37	18	48.6%	
Physics, B.S. (standard track)	NSM	BS	43	18	41.9%	
Chemistry, B.S. (general track)	NSM	BS	48	18	37.5%	
Biomedical and health sciences engineering	NSM	BS	48	18	37.5%	

**Note:** Limited to Undergraduate Majors in the College of Arts and Sciences

**Source:** Undergraduate Catalog

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