

# ACADEMIC DEGREE TYPES

## Baccalaureate Degrees

Western Kentucky University confers seven baccalaureate degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and Bachelor of Social Work. To determine the degree awarded upon the completion of a specific program of study, consult the chart found under "Major Programs of Study" on the following pages.

**AB (Artium Baccalaureus/Bachelor of Arts)** degrees typically emphasize the social sciences, arts, humanities, and foreign languages. The degree is intended to advance student understanding of human culture through examination of historical, social, religious and political contexts; analysis of ideas; appreciation of art and creative endeavors; knowledge of philosophical theories; and achievement of language competency. AB requirements typically promote broad preparation within a discipline.

**BS (Bachelor of Science)** degrees typically emphasize the natural sciences, mathematics and technology. The degree is intended to advance student preparation in reasoning, analysis, experimentation and the application of scientific principles in problem-solving consistent with professional or technical preparation. BS requirements typically promote depth of preparation within a discipline.

**BIS (Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies)** provides an alternative baccalaureate degree program for students who do not need or desire the academic specialization involved in traditional major or major/minor programs. This degree program allows considerable latitude and flexibility to satisfy individual interests and needs.

**BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts)** is the initial professional degree in fine arts. It prepares students for a professional studio practice through an intensive artistic and academic experience. Students develop strong personal concepts along with technical proficiency creating a cohesive body of work on which to base an individual, sustainable studio practice.

**BM (Bachelor of Music)** provides intensive study in music leading to three distinct P-12 teaching certifications (vocal, instrumental, integrated) or a performance degree that supports private studio teaching or graduate study.

**BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing)** is an entry-level degree for professional nursing. It prepares the graduate to be a professional nurse who can practice in a variety of settings and who has the knowledge base to pursue graduate study in nursing.

**BSW (Bachelor of Social Work)** is the only undergraduate major that educates students to be professional social workers. BSW graduates are prepared for immediate entry into direct human service professional positions. They possess the intellectual, practical and professional skills needed to promote beneficial change in the lives of their clients.

A baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of 120 unduplicated semester hours, according to one of the following options:

- Students with a major that is 48 hours or more are not required to declare a second major or minor, unless specified by the department.
- Students with a major below 48 hours must select a second major or minor. Students who select a major and minor combination must have 54 hours total between the major and minor and 48 hours unduplicated.

- Students pursuing the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies are required to select an emphasis of study and may also select a minor. No hours may be duplicated between the emphasis and minor.
- A certificate of 12 or more semester credit hours may substitute for "minor" in all the above

## Associate Degrees

Western Kentucky University confers four associate degrees: Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Science in Nursing, and Associate of Interdisciplinary Studies. To determine the degree awarded upon the completion of a specific program of study, consult the program information within the undergraduate catalog.

## Certificate Programs

A certificate program is a coherent course of study that is compatible with the stated mission and goals of WKU and appropriate to the field of higher education (SACSCOC). Certificates should lead to the acquisition of a defined set of skills or expertise that will enhance employability or meet a professional development need. A certificate may be earned as a standalone credential.

To create a certificate at WKU, the certificate must demonstrate demand (student or market) in a field and meet one of the following criteria:

- Includes collaboration with area businesses or industries
- Provides training in a specific marketable skill, continuing education, or licensure/ certification/ accreditation
- Complements multiple programs
- Responds to a state mandate

Creation of new certificate programs requires internal approval, as well as approval from the Council for Postsecondary Education. In addition, SACSCOC approval may be required. Consultation with the WKU Provost's Office is necessary to determine if a new certificate program reflects a substantive change and must undergo SACSCOC review. Internal approvals are the same as those for new degree programs.

An undergraduate certificate program must meet the following criteria:

- Consist of a minimum of 12 undergraduate credit hours
- Must include an upper level component of at least 3 hours\*
- Must not include hidden pre-requisites or co-requisites
- Certificate programs may be substituted for a minor. Beginning fall 2021, certificate programs can be counted in place of a minor if (a) the major and certificate combination consists of at least 50% upper level hours, and (b) the two programs consist of at least 48 unduplicated hours.
- All courses earned toward the certificate must be letter graded except for those courses exclusively offered as pass/fail, which can encompass no more than 25% of the certificate program
- Academic certificate programs eligible for federal financial aid are subject to the United States Department of Education (DOE) Gainful Employment regulations. Academic units wishing to offer such certificate programs must first consult with the WKU Office of the Provost to ensure that all DOE Gainful Employment regulations are met.

Students may achieve an undergraduate certificate if the following requirements are met:

- A minimum of 50% of hours earned toward the certificate are earned at WKU
  - A minimum GPA of 2.0 must be earned in total course work required for the certificate program, in addition to a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA and a minimum 2.0 GPA earned in WKU coursework
  - Students should apply for the certificate the semester prior to completion
  - Only hours appearing on the undergraduate transcript may be counted toward undergraduate certificates
- \* Current certificate programs that don't meet this standard will be grandfathered in.