

FREE ELECTIVES AND FREE MINORS

INTRODUCTION.

The rapid and dramatic changes that Industry 4.0 is expected to bring about in the workplace necessitates universities to revisit its expected graduate attributes. In a rapidly changing environment, a key graduate attribute that has become essential for success is agility. In a world increasingly moved by artificial intelligence, higher-level thinking skills and creative problem solving are learning outcomes that have become even more essential. Real-world problems more often than not require a multi-disciplinal approach. It has become imperative that university students become collaborative workers and learners, and for them to transcend the disciplinal program of studies. In a technologically-enhanced world of work, the concept of cohorts working in parallel, doing similar tasks, or doing sequential tasks, is increasingly becoming outdated. What is critical in the new order of work are people who have unique talents, and people who come with special combination of skill and knowledge sets, who can offer what others could not. Differentiation is key, but universities today are still built on an assembly-line concept where uniform quality of skill and knowledge sets are the desired outcomes, allowing for easier fit with system designs.

University education has to transform with the revolution that is currently apace, and a vital first step is to allow customization to occur. It remains important to keep disciplinal learning outcomes as multi-disciplinal approaches are rooted in disciplinal knowledge and skill base. What is needed is to enable students to enhance a discipline-based education with knowledge from other disciplines through free electives, or to minor in another disciplinal area. Undergraduate students must also be enabled to fast track the assimilation of frontier-knowledge by topping up their disciplinal education with life-long learning modules or select graduate courses.

POLICY PROPOSALS FOR UNPROGRAMMED FREE ELECTIVES.

- (1) Students in an undergraduate program may take any and as many subjects outside their study program, as free electives, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. The student must have taken the prerequisite subject to the subject he/she wishes to enroll in.
 - b. The student is subject to the trimester enrolment cap of 18 units. Students who are qualified to fast track may enroll up to 21 units per trimester.
 - c. The student has not yet completed all requirements for his/her base program.
- (2) The free electives referred to in this proposal are separate from free electives programmed in the curriculum of the base degree programs.
- (3) Students in an undergraduate program may take a graduate course as free elective, provided he/she gets approval of the graduate coordinator of the program under which the course (subject) is offered. The graduate course may be credited as an advanced placement if and when the student is admitted to the graduate program.

- (4) A set of Lifelong learning modules offered by De La Salle University may be stacked and credited as a free elective, with crediting based on the total continuing professional development credits and alignment with a set of learning outcomes.
- (5) Students may take free electives for either credit or audit.
- (6) Students are NOT required to take free electives not specified in their base program.
- (7) Any failure incurred in unprogrammed free electives shall count towards the total accumulated failure.
- (8) Grades for all subjects taken for credit, including unprogrammed free electives, shall be included in the computation of trimester and cumulative grade point averages.
- (9) All courses taken by students, whether for audit or credit, shall be reflected in the Official Transcript of Records.

FREE MINOR DEGREE

- (1) Academic departments and institutes may develop free minor degree programs comprising of courses totaling at least 12 units. Requirements for admission to the minor program must be declared by the academic unit.
- (2) Offering of a free minor degree shall follow the approval process of a new program. The Academic unit must also submit document reporting the offering of the minor degree to CHED, through the Office of the Registrar.
- (3) Students who wish to take a free minor degree should apply to the academic unit for admission. Registration in a free minor degree is voluntary.
- (4) A student may take only one (1) free minor degree program.
- (5) Academic units shall submit to the Office of the University Registrar the list of students admitted to the free minor degree program.
- (6) The University Registrar shall develop a coding scheme to allow the inclusion of the free minor degree in the program code.
- (7) Upon admission to the free minor degree, the student is deemed to have shifted to a new program incorporating the minor, for the purpose of record-keeping.
- (8) The student will still be subject to the regulations of his/her mother/base degree program.
- (9) A student taking a free minor degree is subject to the trimester enrolment cap of 18 units. Students on fast track may take up to 21 units per trimester.
- (10) A student taking a free minor degree is responsible for his/her own course tracking.
- (11) Courses taken during exchange programs may be credited for corresponding minor degree courses, subject to evaluation by the particular minor degree program manager.
- (12) To earn the free minor degree, the student must earn credits for all the required courses of the minor degree.
- (13) Grades in the free minor degree courses shall be included in the computation for trimester and cumulative grade point average.
- (14) Any failure incurred in free minor degree courses shall count towards the total accumulated failure.

- (15) A student may opt to discontinue the free minor program by writing the host academic unit. Courses already taken shall be considered as free electives.
- (16) All courses taken for the free minor degree shall be reported in the Official Transcript of Records
- (17) The Diploma of the student shall reflect the free minor degree, together with the base degree program.