

Advising Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) Students

Question 1: Has the prospective BGS student completed at least 75 credit hours?

If not, the student is not eligible to declare a BGS and should not be advised as a BGS student. Instead, students with fewer than 75 credits should be advised to pursue a traditional major, except in very rare circumstances where two minors would truly better prepare the student for her/his desired career.

Question 2: Has the prospective BGS student completed “General Studies Category 1 - Basic Skills” mathematics and English requirements with grades of C or higher?

If not, the student is not eligible to declare a BGS.

Question 3: Does the prospective BGS student have at least an overall 2.0 GPA?

If not, the student is not eligible to declare a BGS.

Question 4: Will the BGS serve the potential student, preparing her/him for the career envisioned?

If not, the student should continue to explore degree options.

Purpose of BGS

The BGS is a “completion degree” designed for two populations:

(1) adults who have a significant number of college credits (at least 75) but who “stopped out” of college and who now wish to resume their baccalaureate studies;

(2) those who have a significant number of college credits but for whom a traditional degree is less advantageous than a BGS, or those who have reached an impasse during the pursuit of a traditional degree.

Adults in the first category typically have 90 or more credit hours from MWSU and/or other universities and have been out of college for at least a couple of years. Those in the second category may have pursued one or more majors which are no longer appropriate as they have determined that they no longer wish to pursue the career for which they were preparing. However, as they typically have 100+ credits spread across multiple majors pursuing a new major will substantially extend their baccalaureate career.

Steps In Declaring a BGS

1. Discuss how a BGS fits with the student’s career goals and timeline for graduation.
2. All transcripts should be reviewed and if transcripts have already been evaluated by Admissions, a GPS should be run and compared to the drafted BGS proposal.
3. Discuss potential minors that (1) meet career goals, and (2) fit the student’s transcript. Another critical factor may be whether the student can only take online courses to complete his/her degree.

Six minors are available completely online: Business, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Childhood Studies, Economics, and Health Information & Informatics.

4. Have student fill out personal information on a BGS major form.

5. Review the following degree and major requirements:

- a. Minimum of 120 credit hours to graduate (effective with Fall 2018 graduates), including 45 credit hours from senior colleges.
- b. 30 upper division credit hours to graduate (often a problem)
- c. 30 of last 45 credit hours must be taken at MWSU
- d. No more than 2 Ds allowed in both concentrations combined.
- e. Custom concentrations must contain at least 9 credit hours of 300 level or higher coursework.
- f. An applied learning course is required. The course must be included in one of the concentration areas or an applied learning course substitution must be approved. See list of applied learning courses at https://forms.missouriwestern.edu/registrar/ug/Other/Applied%20Learning%20Courses_Aproved.pdf

6. A BGS student can have two minors within the same discipline as long as the minors are relatively distinct (e.g., Wellness and Recreation Sports Management are both in HPER, but are distinct). If particular courses are included in both proposed minors, they can only be used once. Each minor must include a minimum of 18 unique credit hours. Thus, additional appropriate courses may need to be substituted for duplicated requirements.

7. Fill out minor forms. If the student is pursuing a custom concentration it is suggested that the student work with a WI advisor, unless a departmental advisor is experienced with custom concentrations. Custom concentrations should be based on a standard minor or major from either MWSU or another regionally accredited institution. Custom concentrations require chair and dean approval. The custom concentration MUST contain a minimum of 9 credit hours of 300 level or higher coursework. The title of a custom concentration is included on the student's transcript, thus custom concentration titles should be carefully selected.

8. If the student will need support from an advisor in one or both of the minor areas, contact potential advisor(s) and seek their willingness to assist the student. A departmental advisor may become the student's advisor, or a Western Institute advisor may remain the advisor of record. The Western Institute (WI) advisor helping the student build the BGS will determine on a case-by-case basis whether to keep the student as an advisee or to refer the student to an academic department. This decision will be based on various factors.

9. Work with the student to obtain all necessary signatures after consulting with relevant faculty, chairs and/or deans.

- Standard MWSU minors only require an advisor's signature (some interdisciplinary minors also require a director's signature).
- Standard MWSU minors that contain substitutions require the relevant chair's signature.
- Custom minors require chair and dean approvals.
- The BGS major form requires advisor and chair signatures
- **After student, advisor, chair and dean signatures on the various forms, the BGS packet will be reviewed in the WI before being routed to the Registrar.**

Tips

1. One advisor can sign all 3 forms unless substitutions are being made or unless a custom concentration is being used.

2. Unless a departmental advisor is very familiar with the structure and process of building a custom minor, custom minors should be handled by a WI advisor.
3. If transfer courses have not been articulated, work with admissions to develop a preliminary evaluation for general studies courses.
4. Major transfer coursework evaluations must be completed through individual academic departments.
5. Departmental advisors should not hesitate to call the advisors in the WI for questions and guidance regarding the BGS degree program.
6. The General Business minor is popular among BGS students but only contains 6 hours of upper division courses. There is also no Applied Learning within the minor.

BGS Web Page: <https://www.missouriwestern.edu/completion/bgs/>

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