

CREATING A MINOR

Reasons for Creating a Minor

Minor subjects offer students a smaller, secondary area of study (comprising no less than 90 points) that may be formally recognised in addition to their primary area of study for a bachelor's degree. There are several possible reasons for wanting to create a new minor subject:

- To offer a shorter course of study in an area where a major subject (or equivalent) already exists.
- To test the viability of a subject prior to proposing a new major subject (or equivalent) in that area.
- To offer a course of study in an area where there is no major subject (or equivalent) and where none is planned in future. In such cases, goals of the minor subject may include one or more of the following:
 - To offer a course of study in an area where the longer course of study associated with a major subject (or equivalent) is unnecessary, not appropriate, or not practicable.
 - To offer an undergraduate steppingstone to an area of study at postgraduate level.
 - To bring together study from related or complementary areas, for which major subjects (or equivalent) would normally already exist.
 - To offer a course of study in an area that complements but is distinct from one or more other areas for which major subjects (or equivalent) would normally already exist.

There will also be a number of possible reasons why student would enrol in a minor. The main reason is that it identifies a secondary area of subject strength within their degree. If they have put together a course of study with genuine coherence in one subject area, that should be recognised.

Questions to Answer

As you consider the prospect of proposing a new minor, you might keep these questions in mind:

1. What is the pedagogical justification for proposing the minor? For instance, is the minor a necessary development to maintain curriculum currency as new domains of knowledge and study open up?
2. What are the strategic imperatives and the resourcing implications? Why is the proposed minor important and what will it cost to deliver it? These questions may be more easily answered if the papers in the minor are already offered, but if new papers are necessary there will be resourcing implications to consider. Reflect on the potential of the minor to bring new students to the University, not just recycle students who are already enrolled. How will you attract students into the minor? Will the minor enhance the University's reputation for innovation? Note that the new minor will require CUAP approval if there is not already a corresponding major subject, but once approved it will not have to go through the GYR process.
3. What shape will you give the minor? The main idea to keep in mind is *coherence*: how will the course of study that makes up the minor hold together and build progressively? What will be the balance of core and elective papers? The former ensures a coherent scaffolding of learning, the latter preserves student choice and interest. A minor may not be well designed if the range of papers to choose from is so wide that two different students can take quite different papers and yet end up with the same minor on their academic record. Will the minor have a capstone paper that integrates student learning in the earlier papers? How many points will make up the minor? The minimum is 90 points; a minor can have more points than that but as the total points value increases, student freedom to choose the other papers in their degree reduces. A minor should have at least 54 points above 100-level including at least 18 points above 200-level. Are there any hidden prerequisites? In practice, these will increase the number of points required to complete the minor even if they are not obvious in the regulations. It is very important that students are made aware of any hidden prerequisites in a note to the regulations.

The Approval Process

For the new minor to be approved you will need to complete an indicative proposal for a new programme (previously known as Form 1S) and then, if that is approved, a full new programme proposal (formerly known as Form 1). In addition to Divisional approval, the indicative proposal will need to be approved by the PVCs/DVCs Advisory Group (on strategic and resourcing grounds) and by BUGS or BoGS (on pedagogical grounds) before you begin working on the full new programme proposal. The full proposal will also need approval from your Division and BUGS or BoGS and will then be sent to CUAP in Round 1. You will find these forms [here](#) along with a set of 'important notes' for filling them out. You should seek the advice of your Associate Dean (Academic) before you begin working on the proposals.

Structure and Formal Definition of a Minor at Otago

It may be helpful to see examples of minor subject requirements to guide you as you create your own structure. You may find a list of the minor subjects offered at Otago and links to their requirements [here](#).

You should also be mindful that there are common regulations governing all minor subjects at Otago. In particular, you should be aware that students may not count the same paper both towards a minor and towards their major or another minor unless the paper is compulsory for both subjects and is below 300-level. For reference, here is the formal definition of a minor subject at Otago:

A Minor subject shall consist of 90 points, comprised of those required for a Major if a corresponding Major exists, including at least 54 points at or above 200-level of which at least 18 points shall be at 300-level. These 90 points must not include any points which are counted toward either the Major or the Double Major in the same degree, unless those points comprise papers at the 100- or 200-level that are compulsory for both the Minor and Major or Double Major.