

Minor Advisor Guidelines and Procedures

Revision of August 21, 2020

Minor Requirements and Guidelines

- **A HASS minor consists of at least six subjects.** These are typically arranged into three levels, reflecting different degrees of sophistication. (Regional Studies Minors have four levels.)
- **Students may concentrate and minor in the same field,** and use the same subjects for both. Students must still submit concentration forms.
- **No more than five of the six HASS minor subjects may be applied toward the eight-subject HASS Requirement.**
- For students who began undergraduate studies at MIT prior to Fall 2020, **the junior/senior Pass/Fail option may not be used** for courses that fulfill a minor program in HASS.
- **The minor may include one or more HASS-Distribution subjects, but only one of these may also be counted toward the HASS-Distribution Requirement.** This is true for both the old and revised HASS-Distribution Requirements.
- **MIT subjects must comprise at least half of any minor program.** The minor may include subjects taken outside of MIT (through cross-registration or transfer credit) with the minor advisor's approval.
- **Students can download electronic forms at <https://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/minors>**
- **Once a minor application or completion form is signed, the student must distribute the copies in order for the minor to be official.** The forms should be emailed to awirth@mit.edu with CCs to the department's Undergraduate Academic Administrator and the student's major advisor.
- **Minors are awarded when the S.B. degree is awarded, and must be associated with a specific degree.** Students enrolled simultaneously in an undergraduate and graduate program must complete their minor(s) with the undergraduate degree.
- **Students may not minor and major in the same field.**
- **A HASS minor may not be in the same field as the humanities component of a Course 21E or 21S major.**
- **Students may not overlap more than 2 subjects between a HASS minor and any other degree (major or minor).** In some cases, students may minor and major in different, but related fields. Regardless of any overlap in requirements between the two programs, SHASS does not allow students to overlap more than 2 subjects between any two degrees (minor and minor or minor and major). Stated another way, there must be at least 4 subjects in each of two minor programs that do not overlap.

Minor Application Form

- **We advise students to submit minor application forms by the end of their junior year.** There is no firm deadline for proposal forms, but students who wait until their senior year sometimes find the classes they've taken aren't actually appropriate for a minor.
- **Minor subjects should be approved in advance.** Students typically need to take at least some subjects to decide whether they want to minor in the field, but they shouldn't just take six subjects in one field, assume that it will fulfill a minor, and then ask you to sign off. You are free to deny that request.
- **Students should list specific subject numbers and titles.** Though the application form is not fully binding in that changes can be made (with advisor approval), the idea is that if a student submits an application form with advisor approval, s/he can be confident that after completing those six subjects, s/he has completed a minor (regardless of whether or not the same advisor signs off on the completion form). This is why students must list specific subjects; vague notes such as "one more seminar" won't work. (Anything that can be left open to interpretation runs the risk of misinterpretation by a student.)
- **Ideally, students should meet with you to discuss their interests and get advice on their plans.** You may advise them on specific subjects, and make sure that they remember to file concentration forms. If you meet with a student you believe might be more interested in a different field, feel free to refer them to another advisor. Students looking for generic advice usually come to the SHASS Academic Administrator (Andrea Wirth), but some might still come to you without having fully investigated their options. Feel free to refer students to Andrea if you think they need more generic advice.

Revising a Minor

- **If a student wishes to take subjects other than those listed on her/his application form, s/he should consult you before doing so.** Some classes may seem interchangeable from a student perspective, but as an advisor, you know which classes do and don't make a coherent set. Feel free to reject any proposed changes that you feel are inappropriate.
- **If a student asks to make revisions that you find acceptable, they should bring the white copy of their original application form to you with the changes clearly marked.** You need only initial the changes. The student should then turn the original application form back in to you or your field office. Please forward a copy, paper or electronic, to Andrea Wirth in the SHASS Dean's Office (awirth, 4-240). Alternatively, it's fine to just fill out a new application form for clarity.

Dropping a Minor

- If a student decides not to complete a minor, s/he must send an email to the SHASS Academic Administrator, Andrea Wirth, awirth@mit.edu, with his/her full name, MIT ID, class year, and the name of the minor to be dropped. Students should also inform the original minor office (although the SHASS Academic Administrator will usually forward that information along).

The Minor Completion Form

- Students should bring the following items when meeting with you to sign a completion form:
 - **The white copy of the HASS minor application form** from the minor field office (with any changes marked and, ideally, already approved)
 - **The student's unofficial transcript** (or a grade report pulled up on a laptop, if you find that acceptable)
 - **A HASS minor completion form** (the student may fill out the top part of the form in advance, but s/he should fill in any last term subjects in consultation with you)
 - **A copy of the student's registration** (**only** for final term students taking one or more minor subjects). *Once a passing grade has been reported for a last term subject, the Registrar will record the minor as complete.*
- **It is important that you verify that the subjects listed on a student's application form match those that s/he has taken.** If any changes need to be made, please mark those on the original application form and send a copy to the SHASS Academic Administrator with the completion form. If anyone ever needed to pull minor forms to verify which subjects students actually take to complete a given minor, we'd want the subjects listed on the application form to be an accurate account of which subjects were actually taken.
- **Please verify that all proposed minor subjects have been taken (for a letter grade), and passed.** The reason we ask for the application form date on the completion form is to remind you (and the student) that you should be looking at the application form when you sign off on the completion form.
- **Please make sure that only five of the minor classes are counted towards the HASS Requirement and only one of those for the Distribution.** This basically means that students minoring in HASS should complete at least nine HASS classes in total instead of eight (since one of the minor classes cannot count toward the HASS Requirement).
- **If a student is currently taking one or more minor subjects (in his/her final semester before graduation), s/he may list the subjects on the completion form** and they will be audited once grades are submitted at the end of the semester. Please note: the student must list any last term subjects under the **exact subject number** that appears on their registration. For jointly listed classes, this is crucial, as the system will audit only the listed subject number. Please advise any students listing last term subjects that if they need to make any changes, they will need to contact the SHASS Academic Administrator directly (in addition to clearing the changes with you).
- **Students must file a HASS minor completion form by the end of the third week of their final term at MIT, even if they are taking some of their minor subjects during that term.** Students may file the completion form at any point after they have completed the subjects in the minor—there is no need to wait until their final semester—but they must do so by the deadline above in order to avoid a **\$50 late fee**.
- **We highly recommend that you plan to be available to students in the third week of classes** in order to sign off on forms by the deadline. We encourage students not to wait until the week before the deadline, but there is always a steady stream of student traffic at the start of each semester.

Student guidelines and procedures are available online at: <http://shass.mit.edu/undergraduate/minors> .