ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS

Academic Program – is a combination of courses and related activities organized for the attainment of broad educational objectives that lead to a certificate, diploma, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, specialist degree, or doctoral degree. (CPE, 2020).

Degree – is an award conferred by a college, university, or other postsecondary education institution as official recognition for the successful completion of a program of studies. (CPE, 2020).

Associate's Degree – is an award that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of fulltime equivalent college work based on at least 60 credit hours. (CPE, 2020).

Bachelor's Degree – is an award that normally requires at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent. This includes all bachelor's degrees conferred in a five-year cooperative (work study) program and degrees in which the normal four years of work are completed in three years. (CPE, 2020).

Undergraduate (pre-baccalaureate) Certificate – – is a sub-baccalaureate credential granted upon satisfactory completion of 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. Please refer to the Degree Requirements and Programs sections of the undergraduate catalog to learn more about undergraduate certificate programs at WKU.

Major – is a primary area of study defined by a set of course and/or credit hour requirements within a specified discipline or with a clearly defined multi-disciplinary focus. (CPE, 2020). Minors are only available to students seeking a baccalaureate degree.

Minor – is a secondary area of study that is separate from the major and is defined by a set of course and/or credit hour requirements within a specified discipline or with a clearly defined multi-disciplinary focus. (CPE, 2020).

Concentration – is a set of courses designed to develop expertise within a major or area at the master's level (CPE, 2020). The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) defined specific terminology for a set of courses designed to develop expertise within a major, and the term varies by degree level. Track is the specified term at the undergraduate level, Concentration at the master's level, and Specialization at the doctoral level. Tracks, Concentrations, and Specializations are noted in the WKU catalog, TopNet, degree audit, and on the WKU transcript as "Concentration."

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education approves new academic programs and in 2011 developed New Academic Programs: Policy and Procedures (http://cpe.ky.gov/policies/academicprograms.html). Within the new policy are definitions noted above. Definitions revised in 2020 (https://cpe.ky.gov/policies/academicaffairs/newacademicprogramapprovalpolicyglossary.pdf).