

CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENT FOR THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE
(Students are advised to detach this page and to retain it for future reference.)

General Statement

Concentration is the focal point for a student's undergraduate educational experience. It is an in-depth study centering on the unity provided by a discipline or disciplines, a problem or a theme, or a broad question. Study in depth aids intellectual development by encouraging conceptual and methodological learning on a sophisticated level. Study in depth also allows the student to gain a command of an area of knowledge sufficient to enable him/her to engage in meaningful creative efforts in that area. The unity of the subject area encourages the ability to utilize concepts and methods in a coherent manner.

In concentration a student will be undertaking an extensive inquiry into an area which is significant to him/her. He/she will be forced to integrate the large amounts of material with his/her personal experience. The very nature of a long and painstaking inquiry will aid the student in assessing his/her capability and limitations.

Concentration should be undertaken in ways which will maximize the student's contact with individual professors who will guide and work with him/her, and with his/her fellow students who are working in related areas.

Concentrations may coincide in some ways with specific prerequisite training for a student's professional goals, but professional training is not the central aspect of the concentration process. Concentration is designed to carry out the processes of intellectual and personal development which are at the center of the undergraduate educational experience.

Procedure

Each student is required to devise, in consultation with an appropriate faculty member, a concentration program centered on a discipline or disciplines, problem or theme, or broad question; he/she may also select a standard departmental concentration (see below). In undertaking an independent concentration, a written proposal presenting a statement on the major objectives of the concentration program and a list of the specific courses to be taken must be signed jointly by the student and a faculty advisor, and submitted to the College Curriculum Council for approval. Standard concentration programs require only approval of the appropriate department or committee. The number and nature of courses constituting any proposed program should be fully consistent with the objectives stated in the proposal. The faculty advisor for an approved concentration program is responsible for meeting regularly with the student throughout the period of concentration, to provide guidance as well as to assess, with the student, progress made toward attaining the goals embodied in the concentration program. This essential relationship forms a central feature in the terminal evaluation of a student's performance in concentration.

Departments and interdepartmental groups of faculty may establish, subject to the approval and periodic review by the College Curriculum Council, standard programs of concentration leading to either the A.B. or Sc.B. degree, thereby eliminating the need for individual approval. Faculty advisors designated by the departments and interdepartmental groups serve in the guidance of students undertaking approved standard programs of concentration.

All students must declare a field of concentration by filing an appropriate concentration program form (the attached form) with the Registrar, and copy to the Department, no later than the end of Semester IV; any student may file at any time prior to the end of Semester IV. No student will be permitted to pre-register for his or her fifth semester unless a declaration of concentration has been filed. Students failing to complete pre-registration on time because of the failure to file a concentration declaration will be subject to the same action taken by the University as for all cases of late pre-registration. Changes in declaration are permissible in accordance with the procedure noted in the following paragraph. The form calls for completion of three primary items: (1) a statement by the student of his or her reasons for selecting the field of concentration and plans for completing it; (2) a list of the courses the student plans to take in order to fulfill his or her purpose; (3) a statement from a faculty member approving the student's program.

At the discretion of the College Curriculum Council, minor changes in concentration programs may be arranged with the approval of the faculty advisor. Major alterations in independent concentration programs, involving either changes in courses or in faculty advisors, will require the approval of the Council. Changes in standard concentrations require only departmental or Council approval as the case may be. In all cases, a revised copy of the attached form must be filed with the Registrar.

A student who satisfactorily completes more than one concentration program may have that fact indicated on his or her permanent record. In order to accomplish this, the student must have filed a concentration program form with the Registrar for each concentration. Sponsorship and authorization of each concentration program shall follow the usual procedures.

Quality Requirement

All courses in the concentration program must be satisfactorily completed.

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Honors Program

Students considering Honors work should consult their departmental or independent concentration advisor. If the advisor accepts the student as an Honors candidate, the advisor will request the Registrar to record that fact. Honors will be granted at graduation to students whose work in a field of concentration has demonstrated superior quality and culminated in an Honors Thesis of distinction. The designation "Honors" will be included on the student's transcript and diploma. No distinctions are made with respect to quality levels of Honors work.

Concentration Program and Degree Candidacy

Brown University awards two baccalaureate degrees: the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science. Which of the two degrees is awarded is determined by the nature of the concentration program.

Standard departmental concentration programs for the A.B. degree shall require no more than ten semester courses, and standard inter-departmental A.B. programs shall require no more than ten courses in any one department. The total number of concentration courses required for standard interdepartmental A.B. programs shall not exceed twenty.

The Sc.B. degree recognizes a science concentration that demonstrates both breadth and depth in sciences beyond the minimum required for the A.B. degree in the same field. An Sc.B. concentration program will normally follow these guidelines:

1. Concentration programs for the Sc.B. degree--with the exception of Engineering--shall require no more than ten courses in any one department. The total number of concentration courses required for the Sc.B. degree should not exceed twenty (twenty-one for Engineering).
2. At least one semester course of independent study, research, or design in the concentration discipline must be included.
3. Additional electives must be chosen to meet the quantity requirement for all baccalaureate degrees.

None of these limits need preclude a reasonable number of pre- or co-requisites, but when passing upon any concentration requirement, the College Curriculum Council shall also review the number of these pre- or co-requisites.

Concentration Evaluations

A student may request a written evaluation of his or her performance in concentration, which will consist of his or her own statement and an evaluation prepared by an appropriate faculty member. Points to be included may be: any special characteristics of the concentration program; information on the student's performance in the concentration program which may not be fully reflected in the student's official transcript, such as the interest and motivation of the student, the probable capacity for more advanced work, the ability to conduct research, and so forth; and a comment describing the bases on which the evaluation was prepared.

If the student elects to have a concentration evaluation prepared, he or she will submit that request to his or her concentration advisor by the end of the first week of his or her final semester. The student will include his or her own statement and the names of three or more faculty members familiar with his or her performance in concentration. One of the three may be the concentration advisor if appropriate. The concentration advisor will be responsible for the completion of the evaluation by the end of the student's final semester.

An academic department or committee (for standard concentration programs) or concentration advisor (for independent concentration programs) must provide a senior concentration evaluation upon request, provided that the student has enrolled in a senior seminar, completed a thesis, taken a special examination, or enrolled in a suitable independent study, unless the department (or committee or advisor) finds that it already has enough information to write a meaningful concentration evaluation without such additional work by the student. If sufficient information will not be available, the department (or committee, or advisor) shall so notify the student, upon receipt of his or her initial request.

Copies of the concentration evaluation will be made available to: (1) the student, (2) the Dean's Office, and (3) the student's concentration advisor. While not part of the official record, concentration evaluations may be sent out of the University at the student's request as information on his or her work at Brown University.

Concentration and the Total Educational Experience

In addition to the Faculty requirement that students file a declaration of concentration and a statement about it, the Dean asks that students pause at the time of filing to reflect on their total undergraduate education. A sheet for this purpose is part of the declaration form. On it students are asked to list all non-concentration courses they have taken, or plan to take, and to explain why they believe this program, in conjunction with the concentration and other activities, will fulfill their goals for intellectual and personal development. The Concentration Advisor is asked simply to discuss the program with students. The approval of the Advisor is not required. The philosophy at Brown places ultimate responsibility on the student for his or her own development.