

Definitions for undergraduate tracks and specializations

These definitions are based on a foundational belief that a common structure used across the university is a critical asset to students, advisors, faculty, and curricular development. These changes will only expand capabilities for programs and not exclude possibilities.

Fundamental distinctions

1. Tracks and specializations should represent a substantial distinction within a degree. The minimum distinction recommended is that at least nine upper-level credit hours differentiate a track with the degree (or another track in the degree).
2. Finishing the track or specialization will have implications for finishing the degree, i.e., a student cannot finish the degree without finishing the track or specialization. (See #4 as to how that provides differentiation with a concentration or emphasis.)
3. Tracks are described as *knowledge-based* and specializations are described as *skill-based*.
4. Concentrations or emphases, by contrast, are identifications useful to students but not having any set number of credit hours to be differentiated from the degree. More importantly, a concentration or emphasis has no implications for finishing the degree, so that a student could jettison it without having an impact on graduation. Additionally, an option is viewed as a term that is non-curricular based.
5. Tracks and specializations can have a requirement that all courses within them have a "C" grade or above, as is already done in degrees. These curricular decisions, as always, are subject to UPCC review and recommendation to the Dean of US and Provost.
6. Existing tracks have been grandfathered in, although colleges are encouraged to adopt the new taxonomy for tracks and specializations (conforming to #2) or to change the descriptions to concentrations in order to fit into the general taxonomy and to make the degree options clearer to students, advisors, and faculty.
7. Data that was previously available only through tracks will be provided by the Office of Institutional Research for these different designations (tracks, specializations, concentrations, and emphases).
8. This policy was adopted in Spring 2011, and effective for the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Catalog for May, 2012.