Declaring Majors, and Minors, and Certificates

Students declare their major via the Declaration of Major form. The department chair or designee must sign the form acknowledging the declaration. The department will counsel the student about the requirements that must be met to complete the major and the likelihood the student will be able to meet them. If the department believes a student is not well prepared for success in its major, it may express its reservations on the form and/or propose a specific course of study to help a student improve his or her background. No department or program, except the School of Architecture and Shepherd School of Music, may refuse to admit an undergraduate as a major unless specific curricular conditions for such refusals are included in the relevant description of the requirements for the major, or in cases of resource limitations. Students may not obtain both a BA and a BS in the same major.

Students are encouraged to declare an official major as soon as they have decided on it, so that a major advisor can be assigned. Students may declare a major at any time up to, before or during the spring semester of their second year at Rice. They will not be permitted to register for the fall semester of their third year without having declared a major. The major declaration deadline is listed in the Academic Calendar each year. (Transfer students should declare within their first year or before reaching junior level status.) Students are always free to change their major by completing the Change of Major form. However, such a change may entail one or more additional semesters at the university. Area majors are an exception to this rule and must be declared by the fourth semester before graduation (see Area Majors below).

Students may declare a minor only after they have first declared a major. The declaration of minor process is identical to that of majors. Students may not major and minor in the same subject.

Additionally, students may declare their intent to pursue a university certificate only after they have first declared a major. The declaration of intent to pursue a university certificate process is identical to that of a major or minor.

Once a student declares a major, or minor, or certificate, the title of the major, or minor, or university certificate is noted on the student’s transcript, and a faculty advisor in the appropriate department is assigned. To gain full benefit of departmental or program course offerings, students should meet regularly with faculty major or minor advisors.

To assess progress toward degree requirements, students must complete two steps:
1) students should request ECAPP-monitored Degree Works degree audits (via ESTHER) to review progress toward university and general degree requirements;
2) students should meet regularly with their faculty major and minor advisors to review progress toward completion of major, minor, university certificate, and degree requirements.

For instructions on how to declare a major or minor in ESTHER, visit the Major, Minors and University Certificates page of the Office of the Registrar’s website.