

BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The Bachelor of Philosophy degree is designed to allow students to plan their own programs in conjunction with a faculty mentor and is intended for those few students for whom the present degree requirements are restrictive and not responsive to their needs. While the educational goals of most students are adequately met by existing degree programs, those who can demonstrate that the usual requirements of conventional programs prevent them from adequately meeting their goals may apply. An important standard for admission to the Bachelor of Philosophy degree program will be the ability of students to demonstrate that their stated goals are viable and worthy of a college degree.

The faculty mentor is responsible for assisting the student in planning the program and in achieving the proposed goals. The mentor must be able to certify to the Bachelor of Philosophy Degree Committee that the student has achieved the stated goals. The basis of this certification might be a comprehensive examination (written or oral), a written report, a public seminar or performance, or the presentation of a paper to a national meeting of a professional society, etc. A faculty member may serve as mentor for only one student at any given time.

The program is administered by an intercollege committee under the Office of the Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education. The Bachelor of Philosophy Degree Committee is responsible for selecting the students and their faculty mentors for the program, annually examining the progress of all students in the program, and approving the completion of the degree based on the certification made by the faculty mentor.

What is the Bachelor of Philosophy Degree?

The Bachelor of Philosophy program is Penn State's individual major program. Bachelor of Philosophy degrees bridge traditional disciplines and bring together perspectives from the arts, humanities, and sciences on topics such as sustainability, democracy and art, and religion.

You Might Like This Program If...

You want to integrate two different areas of study, such as Nutrition and Women's Studies, or if you want to create a major that does not exist at Penn State, such as Islamic Studies.

Entrance to Major

1. An entry interview with the candidate, the faculty mentor, and the members of the Bachelor of Philosophy Degree Committee is required prior to admission to the program. This preliminary interview provides an opportunity for the candidate to discuss and justify the intended use of the Bachelor of Philosophy degree program, and the unique circumstances that surround the applicant.
2. Second-, third-, and fourth-semester students may apply; those selected will begin their programs the following semester. Exceptions may be approved by the committee.

3. Evidence of successful completion of course work requiring independent research is required. In addition, the committee will consider the applicant's cumulative grade-point average as an index of academic performance and responsibility. Applicants must possess the capability of performing at a 3.0 minimum level.
4. Approval of the student's program by the committee is required.

Requirements for Graduation

1. Satisfactory completion of a program approved by the committee:
 - a. a minimum of 120 credits to include at least 18 credits at the 400 or 500 level;
 - b. certification by the faculty mentor; and
 - c. approval of a capstone, thesis or equivalent, by the faculty mentor.
2. Approval by the committee for graduation following presentation and defense of the capstone, thesis or equivalent.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

Janet Schulenberg

Coordinator of Bachelor of Philosophy Program, Associate Director for Curriculum and Technology
Division of Undergraduate Studies
814-865-7576
jks142@psu.edu

Career Paths

Graduates of the Bachelor of Philosophy program find work in many different areas, from music therapy to fundraising and development at a large university.

Contact

DIVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES
101 Grange Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-7576
jks142@psu.edu

<https://dus.psu.edu/bphil/>