

Academic Structure Constructs & Definitions

This handout describes the categorization scheme that SPIRE uses to tag student records: each category includes a definition, a list of corresponding values, and their abbreviations.

Academic Career, Program & Plan

Think of the *Academic Career*, *Program* and *Plan* as three concentric circles: each *Academic Career* includes various *Academic Programs*; within each *Academic Career* and *Program*, there are various *Academic Plans* and *Sub-plans*.



Academic Institution

UMAMH	University of Massachusetts-Amherst
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Academic Career

Definition: A grouping of academic work undertaken by a student that the University groups into a single student record for academic purposes. At UMass Amherst, we use four *Academic Careers*:

GRAD	Graduate matriculated (degree-seeking)
UGRD	Undergraduate matriculated (degree-seeking)
ND	Non-degree for credit
NC	Non-credit (hence, non-degree)

Academic Program

Definition: The entity within an institution and career to which a student applies, is admitted, and graduates.

Academic Career	Academic Program values
GRAD	Physics, English, Management, Sociology, Polymer Science & Engineering, etc. All departments/programs that admit students to graduate degree programs, approximately 75.
UGRD	UGRAD For the vast majority of University undergraduates STOCK For Stockbridge PGRD For Post-graduate CE-UG For the few undergraduate degree programs available via Continuing Ed

Academic Career	Academic Program Values
ND	<p>ND-CE For the vast majority of non-degree students, because they are “admitted” and register through Continuing & Professional Education</p> <p>ND-GR For non-degree graduate students</p> <p>ND-UG For “Special Students” and a few other small groups of non-degree students who are admitted and register through the “Undergraduate” Registrar’s Office</p> <p>ND-ST For the few non-degree students who are admitted and register through Stockbridge</p>
NC	NC-LL For all non-credit Lifelong Learning participants in Continuing & Professional Education

Academic Plan

Definition: An area of study/academic objective within an *Academic Program*.

At UMass Amherst, *Academic Plans* include:

- Degree + major combinations
- Secondary majors
- Honors
- Teacher certifications, and other academic objectives or groupings within an *Academic Program*.
- Undergraduate pre-majors
- Minors
- Certificate programs

Notes:

1. A common practice is to use “*Academic Plan*” and “*Major*” interchangeably. Remember that *Academic Plan* is an umbrella term that refers to multiple academic objectives, including a student’s major.
2. Out of the hundreds of *Academic Plans*, the most common are listed above. Most are very specific, but there are a few general ‘administrative’ plans used for *Non-Degree* and *Non-Credit* students whose specific academic objectives are not closely tracked (e.g., *ND-5COLLG – 5-College Interchange*, *ND-EXCHNG – Exchange*).

Some examples of *Academic Plans*:

Academic Career	Academic Plan values
GRAD	MS-PSYCH, PHD-PSYCH, MPH-PUBHL
UGRD	BA-PYSCH, BS-PSYCH, AS-TURF, SM-ENGLISH, MN-MUSIC, HN-COMMWLT, PR-COMM
ND	ND-CONT ED, ND-ACCESS, ND-LABOROC, ND-ECEVIP
NC	NC-LAWENFR, NC-SOIL, NC-CONT ED

Some commonly used *Academic Plan* abbreviations:

Abbreviation	Definition	Abbreviation	Definition
BS	Bachelor of Science	MFA	Master of Fine Arts
SM	Secondary major	MN	Minor
HN	Honors	PR	Pre-major
AS	Associates Degree	MPH	Master of Public Health

Academic Sub-Plan

Definition: An area of defined further specialization within an *Academic Plan*, similar to a track or a concentration. At the graduate level, it is sometimes used to differentiate the off-campus program through which a student is pursuing the degree specified in their *Academic Plan*.

At UMass Amherst, there are numerous *Academic Sub-plans*, as each defined track/concentration/option within a major will have its own sub-plan code. Also, each undergraduate plan through which departmental honors can be earned will have a sub-plan code for the students pursuing department honors.

Some examples of *Academic Sub-plans*:

Academic Plan	Academic Sub-plan values
BFA-ART	Painting, Photography, Print-making, Dept Honors, etc.
EDD-EDUC	Education Policy & Leadership, Social Justice Ed., etc.
PMBA	PMBA at Holyoke, PMBA at Pittsfield

Course Classifications

Course Career

Definition: A grouping of courses that share a common level.

GRAD	Courses with numbers 500 or above
UGRD	Courses with numbers less than 500

500-level courses are shared (i.e., open to both graduate and undergraduate students).

Academic Subject

Definition: A specific area of instruction. These are the areas under which courses are offered (e.g., *MUSIC, LATIN, MATH, ANTH*). UMass-Amherst has approximately 80 *Academic Subjects*.