

# GRADUATE PROGRAM MAJOR CONCENTRATIONS

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A graduate program concentration, otherwise known as a major concentration, is a formally recognized subfield of study within a discipline offered in a graduate program (master's or doctoral-level), and it represents a coordinated set of courses that emphasize a subfield within the graduate program. The major concentration indicates the student's focus according to research interests and/or professional goals.

## Declaring a Major Concentration

Students must apply for and obtain the approval of their departmental Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair to declare a major concentration. Students must declare their intent to pursue a major concentration using the *Declaration and Change of Major Concentration Form (GR)* available in ESTHER (<https://esther.rice.edu/>). With departmental permission, students may apply for more than one major concentration for each graduate degree earned, assuming the program has multiple concentrations. A major concentration is available only to students in the graduate program within which the concentration is administered. For those programs with approved concentrations, the major concentration is listed on the student's academic transcript as an element of the official curriculum.

## Programs with Areas of Specialization

Additionally, some programs allow for areas of specialization. Areas of specialization are pre-specified collections of elective courses that, when taken together, cover particular areas of specialization within a field of study. These can be viewed as an advising strategy to assist students in choosing electives. An area of specialization is not an academic credential and is not listed on the student's academic transcript.