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# *bridges to university*

issue no. 6



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# ***Introduction***



**AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan**

Hey everyone! Welcome back for this week's issue of the official *bridges* newsletter!

For this week, let's discuss something that almost every incoming student asks about: the technicalities that come with going into a program. In the next few weeks, you will be introduced to a whole bunch of academic jargon that you will get accustomed to as you go. What's a Major? What's the point of minors? Can I switch later on? Are electives even useful? Is any of this useful? What's the true meaning of life?

All these different terms were made by post-secondary schools to better categorize their various services. Ironically however, these very terms ended up looking quite confusing to incoming students who have no idea what these universities are talking about. To be frank, learning about these different terms and definitions is no thrilling adventure either. For this newsletter however, we will try to change that. It's time to take a dive into all these technical terms and what they mean while trying to keep the discussion as casual and fun as possible.

Allons-y mes amis!

## ***in this issue...***

- Majors, minors, and more
- How marks work in post-secondary
- Program switches

# ***Major huh? Minor what?***

AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan

Alright guys, let's get right into it.

## ***but first, some definitions...***

**Major:** the subject that's the main focus of your degree.

**Minor:** a secondary subject that you can do while acquiring your major

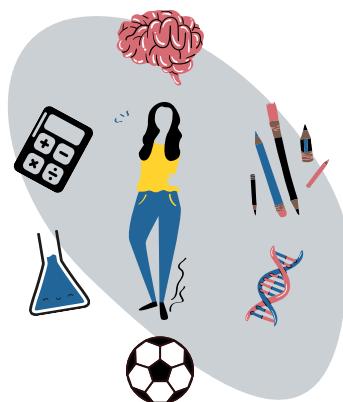
**Requisites:** Courses you must take to acquire your Major/Minor.

**Electives:** Courses you can take by your choice; they are not required for your Major/Minor

**Specialization:** Extra courses only for your major that allows you to “specialize” in the topic.

So let's dissect these definitions and see what they mean!

Your major is basically your program. If you're entering into a program called “Computer Science”, you will graduate with a “Bachelors of Computer Science” degree. If it's Life Science, it will be “Bachelors of Life Sciences”. In essence, your major is your main study. Your expertise. The thing you'll be famous for because of your cool discovery in the field 10 years later (...at least that's how we like to think about it about it).



Your minor on the other hand is a secondary topic you study. You will not delve into this topic as much as you do in a major, and you will have to take less courses accordingly. Your minor can be related to your major or it can be completely different. It's up to you! Your minor can give you an “edge” in your career and make you stand out, or you can just use it to surprise all your friends with your expert knowledge at the next get-together!

# ***Major huh? Minor what?***

AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan

## ***requisites***

Requisites are the courses you must take to get a major or a minor. These will be listed on your university website and it's a really good idea to make sure you know when you're taking them before your graduation date sneaks up on you.

***vs.***

## ***electives***

Electives on the other hand are the course slots that requisites don't take up. In these slots, you can take another related course, learn a new skill, acquire a minor, or simply learn something interesting for just the sake of it.

Next, let's talk specializations. For some unique programs, they allow you to take even more courses for your major that will allow you to "specialize" in a topic. This just means that you are more informed on the topic than an average bachelor graduate. If your program doesn't offer a specialization, don't worry! Having specializations only makes sense for some programs and you can do very well without them.



Lastly, let's go over "double majors". Like the name suggests, doing a double major allows you to major in two programs in the time of one (exciting am I right). This will of course mean more work, but it would again give you an "edge" into whichever career you want to go into. It is important to note that oftentimes, the majors will be closely related to one another and have overlapping courses.

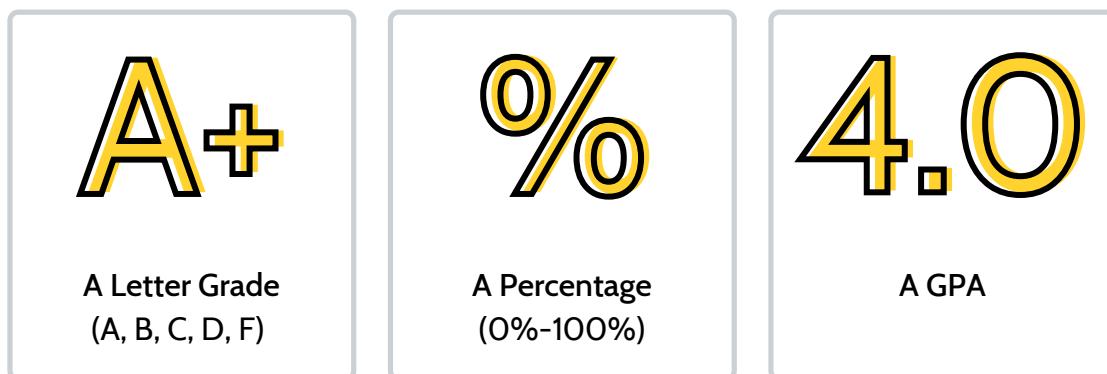
That's it about the types of degrees! Let's move on to the next topic!

# ***Are Marks going to Define my life?***

AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan

Marks are nothing new to any of us, and they are by no means an overall representation of yourself. Here at bridges, we would never encourage you to evaluate yourself from just that one number. They are, however, one of the main ways that universities get a better understanding of students, so let's talk about them.

In post secondary, many universities give marks in one of 3 ways.



From elementary school and high school, you should have a pretty good understanding of letter grades and percentages, so let's focus more on GPAs.

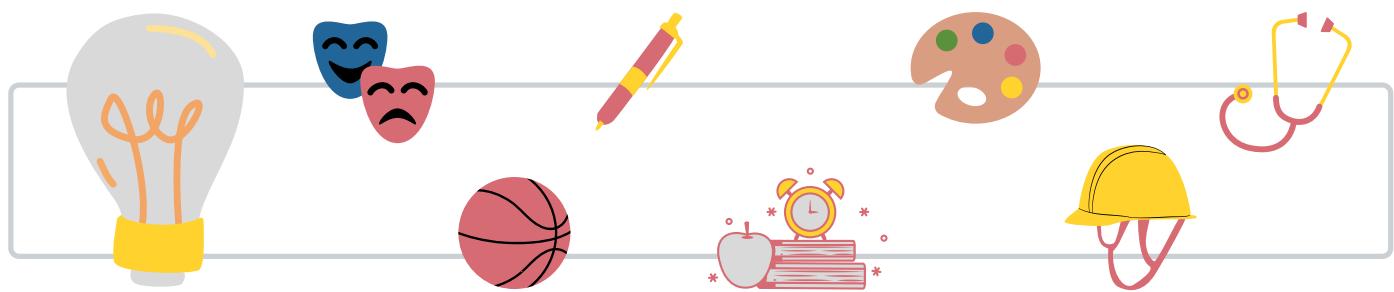
A GPA (Grade Point Average) is a lot like marks in the sense that it is the average representation of all your accumulated marks. Unlike marks, GPAs are a scale out of a certain number (For example, a student's mark could be 3.5 on a 4.0 GPA scale). Each university converts percentages into GPAs in their own way and it would be a good idea on what exactly the scale at your university is.

It is also important that if you decide to go to school after undergraduate education (eg. Masters, PhDs), many of these graduate schools do look at your overall GPA and percentages from your undergraduate program. So make sure to do your best and keep them as high as possible!

# ***This program isn't for me...***

AUTHOR(S): Hussain Jan

Being students ourselves, we understand that asking 17 and 18 year olds to decide what they want to do for the next 50 years of their lives is completely insane in any other context. Changing our minds as we gain more experience is not only normal, it's what makes us successful.



Maybe your program forced you to learn things you dislike. Maybe you found the topics or structure of another program way more interesting. Maybe you keep getting professors who make you watch lectures you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy. These are all valid reasons.

At the end of the day, if you don't like your program, then don't do it! Looking back, you'll be very grateful that you switched out during the first or second year of school and not when you were 5 years into your first job. To do so, each post secondary has many academic counselors specializing in each faculty. If you believe that your program doesn't make you happy, make sure to talk to these individuals and see if switching out is right for you.

We would like to make a clear distinction here however. There is an important difference between "this program doesn't make me happy" and "I keep sleeping in and failed all my assignments". Make sure to work hard, do your best, and be the best student you can be. If the program still doesn't get you excited, then switch by all means!

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**LAST ISSUE**

"Lets Talk About Mental Health"

10.08.2020

**NEXT ISSUE**

07.09.2020

