General

1. **How will this minor help me in my career?**

The STEP minor is an excellent program to help you more deeply understand your major, regardless of your chosen area of study. This is because all industries and fields are grappling with the societal implications of new and emerging technologies. From computer science to public health, to engineering, to journalism, and beyond, employers are demanding workers with an ability to understand and think critically about how new technologies are having immediate and long-term implications. After completing this minor, students stand out from others in their majors due to their ability to demonstrate directly applicable analytical skills to emerging issues in their respective fields.

Through the minor, students will enroll in ENES 440, the capstone course. The capstone project provides students another opportunity to uniquely stand out to potential employers and graduate programs.

2. **What is unique about this minor?**

This minor is unique due to its interdisciplinary nature, its accessibility to almost all majors, its diversity, and its ability to teach students how to translate hard skills into soft skills. This minor also allows students to complete an individual capstone course, making them more competitive applicants for further education and employment.

3. **What are the requirements for the STEP minor?**

The STEP minor is a 15-credit program, consisting of 5 classes. There are 2 core classes, ENES 240 and ENES 440. Students must take 3 electives from the approved list. Students may choose 1 lower-level (100 or 200-level) course but at least 2 of the 3 electives must be upper-level (300 or 400-level) courses. Students can apply up to 2 courses/6 credits to both their major and the STEP minor. No courses can be applied to 2 minor programs.

4. **What is ENES 240 and when is it offered?**

ENES 240 (cross-listed as PLCY 240) is the introductory course for the STEP minor. The course, "Asks students to think about how society should manage complexity, transformation, and uncertainty with an eye on developing a broader sense of ethics and social responsibility. [it] Introduces analytical frameworks, concepts, and data collection techniques that interdisciplinary scholars use to map relationships among science, technology, and society and generate important questions about the future of society." The course is approved for DSSP and SCIS Gen Ed credit. It is offered every Fall and Spring.

5. **What is ENES 440 and when is it offered?**

ENES440 is the culminating capstone course for the STEP minor. In this course, students will complete a capstone project which includes a physical artifact and a policy brief. Students **must** complete ENES240 and their 3 elective courses before taking ENES440. However, a student can choose to complete their third and final elective and ENES440 in the same semester.

Admissions

1. **When should I apply to the minor?**

Students are encouraged to apply to the minor as soon as possible to guarantee their space in the minor. Space is limited due to the limited number of seats in the core required classes. Students must apply at least within three semesters of graduation.

2. **How can I be admitted into the minor?**

Students should complete the one-page application found at the bottom of the [STEP minor website](#). The application sheet should be emailed to stepminor@umd.edu before you schedule a meeting with the STEP minor academic advisor through TerpEngage.

3. **How does the waitlist work?**

After rapid growth, the STEP minor began to track enrollment through a cohort model. The graduating classes of each academic year make up one cohort (e.g., Fall 2024/Spring 2025). Since the STEP minor does not have the capacity in its core classes to graduate more than 55 students each academic year, each cohort is capped at 55 students.

If you apply to the minor and your cohort is full, you will be placed on the waitlist. Students are placed on the waitlist *in the order their applications are received*. If students in your cohort drop the minor and a space becomes available, you will be contacted to let you know that a space has become available. Unfortunately, **it is not guaranteed** that a student will be admitted from the waitlist, even if they take ENES240.

Advising

1. **When should I meet with an advisor?**

You should meet with an academic advisor after you apply to the STEP minor. Students are only required to meet with the academic advisor immediately before declaring the minor, however, students are welcome to schedule an appointment to discuss their academic plan or anything else related to STEP.

2. **What can the STEP minor advisor help me with?**

The STEP minor advisor will ensure that you understand the requirements of the program, work with you to create a plan to complete the minor, and review your academic progress with you.

Please do not email the STEP minor advisor through their personal email. The position is filled by a graduate assistant with limited hours. All communications should be directed to the shared stepminor@umd.edu inbox to ensure quick responses and continuity in information between advisors/the STEP team.

3. **My STEP degree audit does not show all the classes that I have taken. How can I get that fixed?**

The degree audit tool is highly unreliable for the STEP minor. Because students have more than 400 electives to choose from to complete the minor, the degree audit tool is unable to pick up all of the classes.

If a course appears on the approved list of electives, or if a student has been told by the STEP advisor that a class will count for the minor, the class will count. The STEP minor keeps its own internal records about student progress, makes manual updates to degree audits whenever possible, and clears students for graduation with the minor manually once contacted by the Registrar's Office.

4. **What if I don't want to be in the minor anymore?**

No problem! Just email stepminor@umd.edu asking to be removed from the minor and the STEP academic advisor will process your request. It is best to make this request before submitting your application for graduation. If the request is submitted after an application for graduation has been submitted, Diploma Services must be contacted.

Electives

1. **I took classes on the electives list before joining the minor. Will those electives still count toward the minor?**

Yes! Any classes taken towards the STEP minor will count towards the requirements even if the classes were taken prior to admission to the minor.

2. **I took the honors version of a class listed on the approved electives list. Can that course still count?**

Yes!

3. **I took a class that is not on the list of approved electives but I think it should be considered. What should I do?**

A STEP minor elective is "A course that approaches science and technology issues from a humanities and/or social sciences perspective." If you find a course that meets this definition but is not already on our list, please email stepminor@umd.edu with a request to review the course for inclusion as an elective. In your email, include the name of the course, its description, and a syllabus if possible.

4. **How can I get into elective classes that require permission?**

Unfortunately, the STEP minor cannot admit students into approved elective courses that require permission. The approved electives list has extensive options due to the diversity of its student body. Students can only take STEP-approved electives if they also have completed any prerequisites, meet any restrictions, and/or obtain permission from the relevant department/instructor.