

The Junior Option

Updated: March 13, 2024

What is the Junior Option?

The Junior Option allows a student to stay on the current general education curriculum and fulfill the current graduation requirements (34 credits/courses in the current system). It also gives them a choice about major requirements in cases where the major requirements have changed. Juniors may elect to stay with their current major requirements (with the caveat that departments might need to use course substitutions in cases where courses are no longer offered). A student doesn't have to make the same decision about general education/graduation and their major; they can stay on the current general education program and move to the new major requirements.

Why would someone want to take the Junior Option?

With the required credits for graduation decreasing from 34 to 32 credits/courses (136 to 128 using the new credit system) and the required courses for general education and some majors decreasing, some students may complete their requirements for graduation earlier than anticipated.

Federal financial aid regulations prohibit Gustavus from awarding financial aid to students who have completed all of their graduation requirements (i.e. completed the minimum number of credits, requirements for general education, and requirements for a major). The government only counts total credit count, requirements for a first major, and general education requirements in their consideration of financial aid; courses required for a minor (or a second major) don't count.

If switching to the newly revised curriculum would mean you will finish all of your requirements by the end of the fall 2024 semester but do not want to graduate early (in December), you can take the Junior Option. The Junior Option means that you will remain under the old/current requirements for graduation (34 courses/136 credits, old/current general education requirements, and/or old/current major requirements).

Can I take the Junior Option?

The Junior Option is intended for students who began as first-time College students in Fall 2021. All students who in 2023-24 are juniors by year in residence (three years at Gustavus or three total years of post-high school college for transfer students) are eligible.

Students who identify as juniors, but do not fit these parameters may appeal to the Provost's Office if this option is something that they would like to pursue, with no guarantee of approval.

Should I take the Junior Option?

Great question. It would be helpful if you were looking at “Progress” in MyGustavus while you answer these. Really, open it up right now.

Here’s the basic rule: you want to figure out if you need more courses to graduate beyond those that you will take in Fall 2024. Keep in mind:

- To receive full financial aid, you need to be a full-time student (3 courses in the current system/12 credits in the new system).
- If you have the Minnesota State Grant, you need to take 3.75 courses in the current/15 credits in the new system to receive the full amount.
- To graduate, you must fulfill 1) the overall number of credits required (in the new curriculum 128 credits or 32 courses), 2) the requirements for ONE major, and 3) all general education requirements.

If you answer “yes” to either of the following questions, you should talk to your academic advisor about taking the Junior Option.

You won’t necessarily need to take the Junior Option in either case, but “yes” answers warrant a conversation.

1. Will you have completed 26 credits or more (using the current credit system of 1 course = 1 credit) by the end of Spring 2024?

- You can check by looking at the “Total Credits” bar in your Progress on MyGustavus. Count both “completed” (dark green) and “in progress” (light green). Do not count “planned” (beige) courses.
- If you will have completed more than 26 courses by the end of Spring 2024, you should talk to your advisor about the Junior Option.
- Why should you talk to your advisor? In the new curriculum, you will need 128 credits or 32 courses to graduate. Twenty-six completed courses is the point where it becomes almost possible to finish in Fall 2024 so it is the point we recommend looking closely at your plan for next year. And, the closer you are to having completed 32 courses/128 credits by the end of Spring 2024, the more seriously you should consider the Junior Option.

2. Will you have six or fewer unique courses to complete in order to fulfill general education and requirements for one major by the end of Spring 2024?

- You can check by counting the requirements still in red in Progress. If you have six or fewer unique courses to complete in order to fulfill your general education or requirements for one major, you should talk to your advisor about the Junior Option.

(Don't count WELBG or the four writing courses in your count of general education because those requirements are going away.)

- If you will have six or fewer courses remaining for general education and one major by the end of Spring 2024, you should talk to your advisor about the Junior Option.
- Why should you talk to your advisor? Six courses is the point where it becomes almost possible to finish in Fall 2024 so it is the point we recommend looking closely at your plan for next year.

If you answer “yes” to either of the following questions, you probably don't need to take the Junior Option.

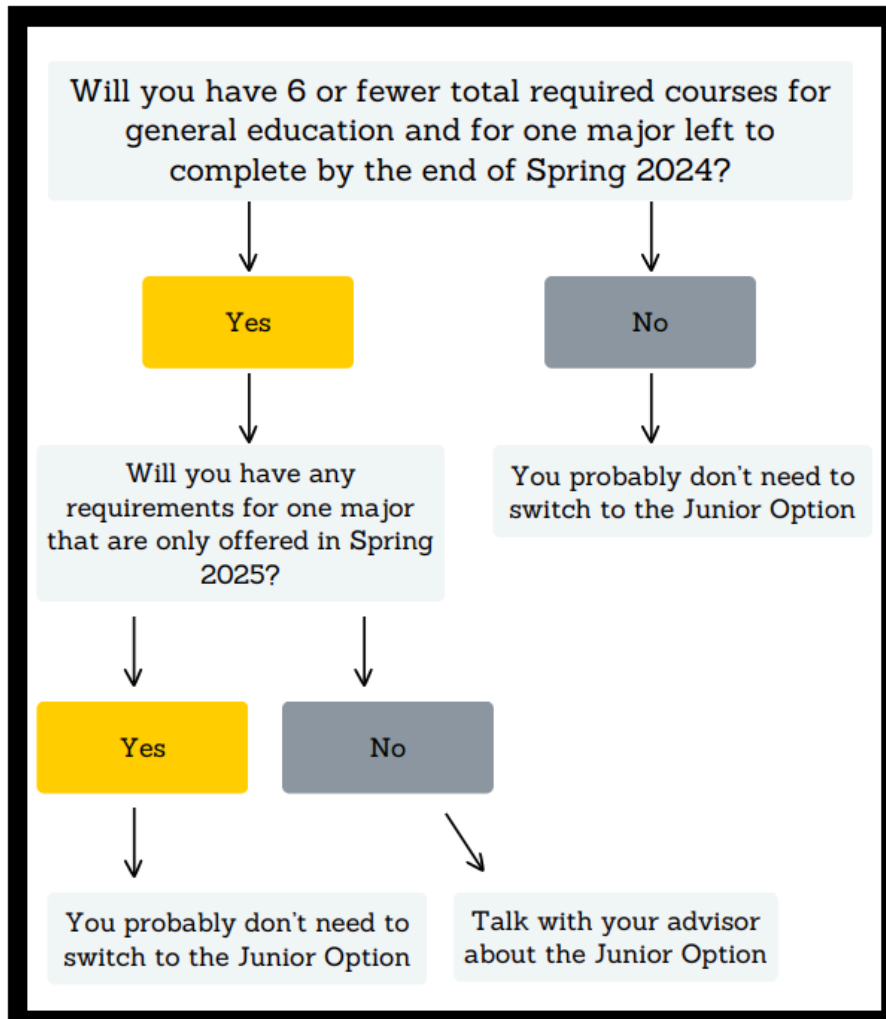
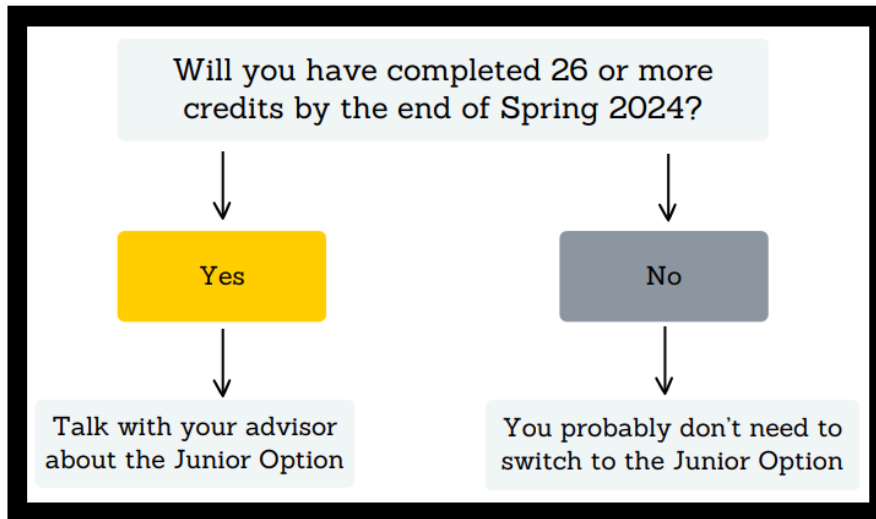
1. Will you have completed fewer than 26 courses in the current system by the end of Spring 2024?

- You can check by looking at the “Total Credits” bar in your Progress on MyGustavus. Count both “completed” (dark green) and “in progress” (light green). Do not count the “planned” (beige) courses.
- If you have completed fewer than 26 courses by the end of Spring 2024, you probably do not need to take the Junior Option.
- Why? Because in the new curriculum, you will need 128 credits/32 courses to graduate. If you currently have fewer than courses, you still need more than 6 courses to graduate—we won't let you do that in one semester.

2. Do you only have one major and do you have any major requirements left that will not be offered in Fall 2024?

- If so, you probably do not need to take the Junior Option.
- Why? Because you can't graduate without those requirements filled and they won't be filled by December 2024.

Or, to put it more simply...



How do I take the Junior Option?

We need to know if you plan to move to the new graduation requirements or take the “Junior Option” to stay on the old requirements. The Junior Option is OPT-IN. Forms will be available starting at the beginning of April if you want to opt-in. If you don't opt-in, we will transfer you to the new curriculum in the summer.

What happens if I change my mind?

We expect that some people will change their minds, particularly after progress reports are updated with the new credit system this summer. Starting in late Summer 2024, we will have a form that you will fill out if you change your Junior Option decision (e.g. you decide to stay on the current curriculum after you said you would change; you decide to opt-into new major requirements after you said you would change etc. etc.).