

# INDIVIDUAL MAJOR

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The Individual Major Program [IMP] works with students who design and carry out Individual Majors that intentionally integrate diverse methods, experiences, learning styles, subjects, and on- or off-campus resources. The goal of the IMP is to enhance the coherence of students' educational experience by encouraging them to make meaningful connections between their academic and co-curricular learning and helping them to build bridges between the college and other communities.

## The Individual Major

The Individual Major Program (IMP) is the academic home for students who choose to pursue a self-designed, integrative Individual Major. Students propose a sequence of courses, seminars, independent studies, or experiential learning as the means of pursuing an Individual Major. Proposals must include:

1. A description of the proposed area or topic of study.
2. A list of at least 10 courses organized in 3 areas, with an explanation of how each area and course contributes to the major. The 10 courses can include the senior capstone course.
3. A set of key questions that will guide studies in the major, including broader questions in the disciplines supporting the major and specific questions related to narrower topics of the major.
4. Initial plans for at least 2 potential senior projects.
5. A summary of the student's preparation to carry out the proposed major, and a justification of the major as a coherent, integrative academic plan.

Each proposal must have the support of a faculty academic advisor. The coherence, depth, and feasibility of each proposal are evaluated in a Final Review Consultation (FRC) convened by the IMP, after which the student is allowed to declare the Individual Major. At the end of the senior year, the student's work in the major is publicly presented to IMP faculty for review and certified by the IMP Director. Proposals for Individual Majors may be submitted any time during the sophomore year and the first part of the junior year. The deadline for final approval of an Individual Major is Dec. 1 in the fourth semester prior to the student's graduation. Should a student be planning to graduate mid-year, the deadline for final approval will be moved up one semester to May 1.

Most students pursuing an Individual Major have only one major and none can have more than two majors total. Pre-existing concentrations at the college are not allowed to be made into an Individual Major nor can a concentration serve as the base for Individual Major coursework. Should a student have another major, no more than three courses that count toward a student's other major may be used toward the 10 required for the Individual Major. Study abroad or away can be used to count toward the 10 course total.

All individual majors are eligible for the Ken Bonde Memorial Award. Students are nominated by their faculty advisors in the Individual

Major program; awards are determined by a committee chaired by the Director. More information about the award is available on the IMP website.

## The Web Portfolio

Students with Individual Majors create and maintain a public web portfolio that demonstrates the integration and coherence of the major. Its web-based structure allows students to make explicit links among the examples of their own work as well as to outside sites of public discussion related to the topic of the major. The web portfolio also allows students to track and reflect on their intellectual development as they complete their studies. The web portfolio must be submitted to the Director with the list of completed courses and the senior project by no later than two weeks prior to the end of their final semester.

## Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major

### Courses Senior Project

All senior projects can include work during both semesters of the senior year. Students determine the topic and scope of their project in consultation with their advisor at the beginning of the fall semester. Senior project plans describe the anticipated final product and the basis for its evaluation, as well as a research plan to support or contextualize the project. Whether the final product is a traditional research paper, a performance, a portfolio of essays, or a panel presentation, it must have a clear grounding in academic research.

For the fall semester students can choose to enroll in IM 391 Senior Project I, an independent course graded on a P/N basis. Enrollment in IM 391 is by permission of the IMP. During the spring semester, all students must enroll in IM 392 Senior Project II, a graded course which comprises the completion and public presentation of the senior project. Enrollment in IM 392 is by permission of the IMP, upon evidence that the basic elements of the required web portfolio are in place. A brief description of the student's Individual Major and senior project appears on the official transcript.

Students may also register independent study (IM 298 Independent Study), independent research (IM 398 Independent Research), or internships (IM 294 Academic Internship, IM 394 Academic Internship) through the IMP, if the supervising faculty member advises that as the appropriate course designation.

#### IM 294: Academic Internship

In consultation with their IMP advisor, students may register for this semester course, which is P/N. This optional course is generally used for an internship linked to the Individual Major.

#### IM 298: Independent Study

In consultation with their IMP advisor, students may register for this semester course, which can be graded or S/U. This optional course is generally used for research and other preparation for the work.

**IM 391: Senior Project I**

Students who are pursuing an Individual Major, in consultation with their IMP advisor, may register for this fall semester course, which is graded P/N. This optional course is generally used for research and other preparation for the work planned for the spring semester. Whether students are enrolled in IM 391 or another approved level III course or experience, senior project plans must be submitted to IMP by the end of September.

**Prerequisite:** permission of the IMP.

**IM 392: Senior Project II**

Students with individual majors can register for their senior projects in either fall or spring semester of the senior year. The graded work includes final research, a final presentation of the project, and completion of the web portfolio. A brief description of the student's major and senior project appears on the transcript.

**IM 394: Academic Internship**

In consultation with their IMP advisor, students may register for this semester course, which is P/N. This optional course is generally used for an internship linked to the Individual Major.

**IM 398: Independent Research**

In consultation with their IMP advisor, students may register for this semester course, which can be graded or S/U. This optional course is generally used for research and other preparation for the work.