

**INDIVIDUAL  
MAJOR  
INFORMATION**



## College of Letters & Science

### Individual Major Guidelines & Application

***\*\*The deadline to submit a completed application for Fall 2009 applications is Friday, 25 September 2009. Completed applications should be submitted to room 70 Bascom Hall before 4:15 p.m. on September 25th. You must submit the original completed application and three (3) copies of the original completed application.***

## GUIDELINES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL MAJOR (IM)

Any student in the College of Letters & Science (L&S) may choose to pursue an Individual Major (IM) [Code no. 560]. This option is for students whose interests bridge existing departments and disciplines or who want to pursue an interdisciplinary program to address a specific need. The IM program is ideal for developing unique interests because it provides flexibility in planning undergraduate work. **(Any student interested in pursuing the Middle Eastern Studies Individual Major should schedule an appointment as soon as possible to inquire about additional application materials.)**

The IM must consist of a plan of courses in more than one department or recognized interdisciplinary program organized around an explicit theme. **An L&S Individual Major Faculty Committee must approve the IM.** The Committee looks for a coherent pattern of course work that is substantively different from existing departmental or interdepartmental majors. In many cases a second major or a certificate is more appropriate than an Individual Major is.

It is possible to complete Honors in an IM (see IM Application Packet instructions). You may also complete additional majors in combination with any existing department or interdepartmental program. However, you may not complete more than one Individual Major. All majors will be noted on your University transcript. You may cancel your IM at any time and change to an existing departmental or interdisciplinary major. You are then responsible for meeting all the requirements of the latter majors, even if this means delaying graduation.

Below is **“The Individual Major Application Process at a Glance”** for your reference:

1. Research and identify a potential tenured faculty member who would be willing to serve as your sponsor and to become your faculty advisor if your Individual Major is approved.
2. Research and identify three (3) tenured faculty members who have knowledge/expertise in your particular area of interest and can serve as possible members of your Individual Major Review Committee. Make sure you share the names of these three individuals with the Individual Major Coordinator when you meet to discuss your proposal.
3. Do your homework! Prepare to meet with your potential faculty sponsor/IM faculty advisor.
4. Meet with your potential faculty sponsor and see if s/he would sign off on your Individual Major proposal.
5. Meet with the Individual Major Coordinator

6. Put your application packet together.
7. Submit **three (3) copies and the original copy** of your completed and signed application packet (*you should submit four [4] copies in total*) to room B12 Bascom Hall by the deadline. Please note that the deadline is the end of the fourth week of classes.
8. Wait to be contacted by the Individual Major Coordinator or his/her staff support person within 3-4 weeks of submission of your completed application.
9. Expect a three-member faculty committee to review your proposal before the last day of classes of the semester in which you submit your completed application.
10. Follow up with the Individual Major Coordinator to be sure that your newly approved individual major has been entered into DARS and your major declaration form has been submitted to the Registrar's Office for processing. This stage will take place in the first part of the following semester and requires that you be patient and keep in touch with the Individual Major Coordinator.

**You should apply during the second semester of your sophomore year or first semester of your junior year.** This schedule allows you ample time to have familiarized yourself with the broad academic offerings already existing in L&S and to identify an IM faculty advisor. Seniors will find it impractical to develop an IM since *all students are required to earn at least 30 credits after the term in which approval is given*. Attempts to "pull something together" near the end of the undergraduate program or to look back and create a theme to fit courses already carried are outside the spirit of the IM program.

**\*\*The deadline for submitting an Individual Major Application Packet is the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the fall or spring semester. No applications will be accepted during the summer.**

## INDIVIDUAL MAJOR APPLICATION PACKET

### A Successful IM Proposal:

- Features a theme or focus that unites all of the courses included. This theme must be reflected in a descriptive title that will appear on the transcript.
- Consists of 36-40 credits. A large portion of the course work included in the IM major should be either in progress or remaining to be completed at the time the proposal is submitted. ***Note that proposals submitted after the majority of the course work is completed will not be approved.***
- Shows a sequential pattern of work moving toward advanced level courses in the area of interest. Directed study or thesis courses are an ideal way to achieve individualized study at the advanced level and should definitely be considered for inclusion. Students must

complete prerequisites for all courses included in the major, and the IM Faculty Committee may require additional course work in foundation areas.

- Includes no more than 24 credits from any one department, and includes at least 20 credits must be Intermediate or Advanced level work
- Includes 15 credits that count toward the 15-credit rule as defined by the department that offers the course. Since each department uses its own definition of what counts toward the 15-credit rule, the IM applicant must consult the department's section in the *Undergraduate Catalog* to see which courses would count toward this requirement.
- Builds in flexibility with alternate courses. After approval of your proposal, you may make minor changes of two courses (delete one course, add one course) without difficulty. Requests for changes of more than two courses, however, will be reviewed by the IM Coordinator, and may be referred to the IM Faculty Committee for approval. All changes must be accompanied by a letter of explanation from the supervising faculty advisor.
- May include (not required) some course work carried at a university or college other than the UW-Madison provided that L&S has already accepted the work for degree credit. *The majority of the IM courses, however, should be in the UW-Madison College of Letters & Science.*
- May include (not required) UW-Madison courses taught outside of L&S as long as those courses are approved for degree credit in L&S (i.e., carry a "T" [only for student pursuing the L&S 1971 curriculum] or "C" code in the *Timetable*). *The majority of the IM courses, however, should be in L&S departments.* For example, a student cannot create a business major or an art major within the College of Letters and Science via the Individual major.

### Mistakes to Avoid

- Failing to provide a unifying theme that connects all the courses.
- Including a majority of courses that have already been completed.
- Including courses that do not count for degree credit in L&S (or free electives for students under the BABS07 degree requirements). If such courses are listed as part of an Individual Major, the approval of the major **does not** convert these courses into degree credit courses.
- Including courses carried on a Pass/Fail basis. *Pass/fail courses will not count toward an Individual Major.*

## IM Application Packet Instructions

All of the required materials must be submitted at the same time to room B12 Bascom Hall no later than THE END OF THE 4TH WEEK OF THE FALL OR SPRING SEMESTER. **YOU MUST SUBMIT THE ORIGINAL AND 3 COPIES OF EACH DOCUMENT.**

Approximately 4-6 weeks after submission of a complete Application Packet you will receive notice in the mail of the date, time and location of your meeting with an Individual Major Faculty Committee. We will do our best to accommodate your class schedule; however, preference will be given to the faculty members who are serving on the Committee.

1. Schedule Meeting with the Individual Major Coordinator: You should schedule an appointment with the Individual Major coordinator once you have: 1) assembled a completed application with a letter of support from your advisor for the Individual Major to turn in; 2) have the names and contact information for the three (3) tenured faculty members who have agreed to serve on your committee; and, 3) have an agreed date and time that all three committee members can meet to review your application. You should call 608/262-5858 to set up the appointment.
2. Student Summary Statement: Two-page (typed), addressed to College of Letters & Science Individual Major Faculty Committee, that includes:
  - . Description of your area of interest & explanation of its theme
  - . Reasons for pursuing this major
  - . How major relates to your future academic/career plans and goals
  - . Rationale for inclusion of each course listed on Course Plan
3. Individual Major Faculty Advisor's Letter of Support:
  - . Discussion of Advisor's interest in the proposed major
  - . Statement about student's interest and capabilities
  - . Advisor's view of major's relation to student's future plans and goals
4. Completed L&S Individual Major Application Form & Course Plan (available at [http://www.lssaa.wisc.edu/70bascom/academic\\_policy/individual.html](http://www.lssaa.wisc.edu/70bascom/academic_policy/individual.html))
  - . Signed by student and Advisor
  - . For Honors in the Major see specific instructions below
  - . Include description of courses being used for your Individual Major with a list of secondary courses just in case some of your primary courses are not offered
5. Completed Major Declaration Form (should be completed during your meeting with the Individual Major Coordinator in L&S Undergraduate Academic Services)
  - . The code for an Individual Major is 560. Submit only the original - no copies needed. The link to the Major Declaration Form can be found at <http://www.ls.wisc.edu/handbook/ChapterSix/LSMAJORDECLFORM.pdf>.
6. Current Official UW-Madison Transcript obtained from the Registrar's Office at:

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Office of the Registrar

333 East Campus Mall #10101  
Madison, WI 53715-1384  
(608) 262-3811  
Hours: Monday thru Friday, 7:45 am - 4:30 pm

7. Your current class schedule: Submit only the original - no copies needed

## Individual Major with Honors

To earn Honors in the IM, you must meet all of the requirements for the Honors Degree and include the following in your proposal:

- At least 20 of the 36 or more credits comprising your IM must be taken for Honors
- Of those 20 Honors credits, a maximum of 10 may be earned in any one department (excluding Thesis credits)
- Complete 6-8 credits of Senior Honors Thesis in one department
- **Contact L&S Honors Program for more detailed information about pursuing Honors. Inquiries and requests for information should be addressed to the L&S Honors Program, Washburn Observatory, 1401 Observatory Drive, Madison, WI 53706; 608/262-2984; [honors@honors.ls.wisc.edu](mailto:honors@honors.ls.wisc.edu). Information is also available at <http://www.honors.ls.wisc.edu/>.**



Comments:

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**I.M. Faculty Committee:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair's Name & Department (Please Print or Type)

Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_      Approved      Denied      (Circle One)

**Committee Members [Faculty Name(s) and Department(s)]:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Comments or Modifications:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**COURSE PLAN FOR INDIVIDUAL MAJOR**  
**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY**

**COURSES COMPLETED**

A/D <sup>1</sup>	Dept.*	Course #	Course Title	Level	Crs.	T/C

**COURSES IN PROGRESS**

A/D	Dept.*	Course #	Course Title	Level	Crs.	T/C

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<sup>1</sup> Add (A) and Drop (D) should be used to add or delete courses to a student's Individual Major plan.  
 \*Use department abbreviations as listed in the *Timetable*.

**For Administrative Use Only**

DARS Exception: Add Course (AC) & Requirement Modification (RM)  
 Requirement Name: INDIMAJ.1  
 Pseudo Course: INDIMAJ11A

