

INDIVIDUAL MAJOR, BS

Students who wish to pursue a special intellectual problem or academic path not adequately covered by existing majors can work with advisors and faculty to create an individual path of study to meet their goals. The individual major must involve courses from several programs, must be at least as rigorous as existing majors, and must be targeted at a special intellectual problem or academic need identified by the student.

The individual major must be approved by a faculty committee and the CALS Curriculum Committee. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with an assistant dean in the CALS Office of Academic Affairs early in their undergraduate career to discuss the process, planning, and feasibility of completion.

LEARN THROUGH HANDS-ON, REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES

Most CALS students complete independent research under the guidance of internationally recognized faculty researchers. Lab or field courses related to the special interests of the student are encouraged as part of the individual major.

BUILD COMMUNITY AND NETWORKS

With more than 20 CALS-sponsored student organizations, students can build their professional networks early and enhance their leadership skills.

CUSTOMIZE A PATH OF STUDY

Students who complete an approved individual major work closely with faculty and staff to craft a path of study unique to them. Their diploma will include the approved name of their specialized major.

MAKE A STRONG START

A number of first-year seminar courses are available to help new students understand academic programs, access student services, and develop time management and study skills.

GAIN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

All individual majors must complete a CALS International Studies course or approved study abroad experience. Students work with their advisor and the CALS study abroad office to identify appropriate programs.

department that offers many of the courses in the proposed individual major. No more than two members of the committee can be from a single department. The student must submit a proposed plan of study to the committee for review and approval. The faculty committee must consult with the department with the most courses in the proposed major. The plan should include: the title of the proposed major; the rationale for the major; learning outcomes for the major and a brief assessment plan; the list of courses and the reasons for including each course in the major; and a semester plan for degree completion. The student is required to earn at least 30 credits after the term in which the proposal is approved. Thus, early planning is essential.

If the faculty committee approves the plan, the student should work with CALS Academic Affairs to submit the plan of study to the CALS Curriculum Committee along with a letter of support from the major advisor and a summary of the department discussion of the plan. The student and faculty advisor will meet with the Curriculum Committee to present the proposal. The Curriculum Committee may approve the proposal, reject the proposal, or ask for further clarification and resubmission. **The decision of the Curriculum Committee is final.**

Any changes in the major must be approved by the faculty advisor and reported to the Office of Academic Affairs, and any changes that significantly affect the nature or rigor of the program must be reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee.

REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatestudytext>) section of the *Guide*.

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| General Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth–Humanities/Literature/Arts: 6 credits • Breadth–Natural Science: 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits • Breadth–Social Studies: 3 credits • Communication Part A & Part B * • Ethnic Studies * • Quantitative Reasoning Part A & Part B * |
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* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements.

HOW TO GET IN

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Individual majors must be approved by a faculty committee and the CALS Curriculum Committee. Approval is not guaranteed, so students should consider alternative options carefully. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with an assistant dean in the Office of Academic Affairs early in their undergraduate career to discuss the process, planning, and feasibility of completion. The process to request to pursue an individual major is outlined below.

The student selects a three-person faculty committee from departments offering courses in the proposed major. The major advisor is from a CALS

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the University General Education Requirements, all undergraduate students in CALS must satisfy a set of college and major requirements. Courses may not double count within university requirements (General Education and Breadth) or within college requirements (First-Year Seminar, International Studies, Science, and Capstone), but courses counted toward university requirements may also be used to satisfy a college and/or a major requirement; similarly, courses counted toward college requirements may also be used to satisfy a university and/or a major requirement.

COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL CALS BS DEGREE PROGRAMS

Code	Title	Credits
	Quality of Work: Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.000 to remain in good standing and be eligible for graduation.	
	Residency: Students must complete 30 degree credits in residence at UW–Madison after earning 86 credits toward their undergraduate degree.	
	First year seminar (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/#CALSThirdYearSeminarCourses)	1
	International studies (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/#CALSIInternationalStudiesCourses)	3
	Physical science fundamentals	4-5
CHEM 103	General Chemistry I	
or CHEM 108	Chemistry in Our World	
or CHEM 109	Advanced General Chemistry	
	Biological science	5
	Additional science (biological, physical, or natural)	3
	Science breadth (biological, physical, natural, or social)	3
	CALS Capstone Learning Experience: included in the requirements for each CALS major (see "major requirements") (http://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/#CALSCapstoneRequirement)	

INDIVIDUAL MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL MAJOR

Students are strongly encouraged to consult with an assistant dean in the Office of Academic Affairs early in their undergraduate career to discuss the process, planning, and feasibility of completion. Development of the individual major is the responsibility of the student. The student should identify a faculty major advisor from the CALS department that offers many of the courses in the proposed individual major. In addition, the student should select two additional faculty from departments offering the courses in the proposed major to serve on the faculty committee. The student should consult with the faculty members and an assistant dean in Academic Affairs as a plan of study is developed. The plan of study must include the following:

- title of proposed major
- rationale for the major (what specific goal does the major achieve that cannot be achieved through one or more existing majors? what is the targeted intellectual problem? why is the major necessary for achieving the student's academic and career goals?)
- 3-5 learning outcomes for the major with a brief explanation of how learning will be assessed
- list of courses, including the reason for including each course in the major (how does each course contribute to the major learning outcomes?)
- semester plan for degree completion and estimated graduation term (if graduation exceeds four total years, include a justification for the extended time-to-degree; note that the student must earn at least 30 credits after the term in which the proposal is approved)

APPROVAL OF THE INDIVIDUAL MAJOR

Once the plan of study is developed, the student submits the plan to the faculty committee for review and approval. The faculty committee must consult with the department with the most courses in the proposed major. The faculty committee may require revisions prior to approval, or choose not to accept the plan. Once approved, the student should work with CALS Academic Affairs to submit the plan of study to the CALS Curriculum Committee along with a letter of support from the major advisor and a summary of the department discussion of the plan. The student and faculty advisor will meet with the curriculum committee to present the proposal. The curriculum committee may approve the proposal, reject the proposal, or ask for further clarification and resubmission. **Approval of an individual major is not guaranteed, so students should consider alternative options carefully. The decision of the curriculum committee is final.**

Any changes in the major must be approved by the faculty advisor and reported to the Office of Academic Affairs, and any changes that significantly affect the nature or rigor of the program must be reviewed and approved by the curriculum committee.

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Total Degree To receive a bachelor's degree from UW–Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.

Residency Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW–Madison. "In residence" means on the UW–Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW–Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW–Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.

Quality of Work Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Students will develop learning outcomes as part of the individual major proposal process in consultation with their faculty mentors and an assistant dean. Review the Provost's website (<https://assessment.provost.wisc.edu/student-learning-outcomes/writing-student-learning-outcomes/>) for guidelines on developing learning outcomes.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

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Students will develop a semester-by-semester plan as part of the proposal process for the individual major, in consultation with their faculty mentors and an assistant dean. Review the Four-Year Plans available for similar or related majors in the *Guide* to begin planning. Students should submit the proposal early in their academic career but no later than achieving senior standing (86 credits) to ensure timely progress to degree completion.

ADVISING AND CAREERS

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Students are strongly encouraged to consult with an assistant dean in the Office of Academic Affairs early in their undergraduate career to discuss the process, planning, and feasibility of completion.

Students are required to identify a faculty advisor as part of the process for requesting approval to pursue an individual major. The faculty advisor serves as the student's academic advisor along with support from the other members of the student's faculty committee and professional advisors in the Office of Academic Affairs.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Students with specific post-graduate plans who pursue an individual major can work with advisors to craft a curricular plan that will meet their career goals.

WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

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Opportunities to apply classroom learning to real-world settings is at the core of a CALS education. We offer a variety of CALS Signature Experiences for students in all majors to live the Wisconsin idea and fulfill the Wisconsin Experience (<https://wisconsinexperience.wisc.edu/>).

These opportunities fall into five major categories:

CALS students **make a strong start**, and every CALS first-year student can achieve that through a First-Year Seminar to explore different areas of study, learn about how to take advantage of campus resources, and make friends. There are several seminars to choose from, including QuickStart (<https://cals.wisc.edu/academics/prospective-students/quickstart/>),

an online course that allows students to begin their college career the summer before they arrive on campus.

CALS students **learn through hands-on, real-world experiences**. A majority of CALS students earn credit for research experiences in labs and internships.

Through student organizations, peer advising and mentoring, and residential learning communities, students **build their community and networks**.

Students **gain a global perspective** by taking courses with an international focus, and many students choose to study abroad. CALS offers more than 34 faculty-led study abroad programs, and students may also choose from general UW–Madison study abroad opportunities.

Finally, many CALS students take advantage of the ability to **customize their path of study** by participating in an honors program (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/#honorstext>), pursuing certificates or multiple majors, and choosing elective courses that match their interests and meet their goals.

RESOURCES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

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Students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences receive more than \$1.25 million in scholarships annually. Learn more about college scholarships (<https://cals.wisc.edu/academics/undergraduate-students/financing-your-education/cals-scholarships/>).