

# INDIVIDUAL MAJOR, BA

The Individual Major in the College of Letters & Science is a method of fulfilling the depth requirement for students whose interests bridge existing departments and disciplines in ways not accommodated by an existing major. The Individual Major must consist of a coherent pattern of courses in more than one department or recognized interdisciplinary program in the College of Letters & Science and must be approved by a committee of appropriate faculty from the College of Letters & Science.

Getting approval to pursue an Individual Major is never guaranteed. Thus, students should discuss alternative majors with their academic advisors and be willing to pursue them. Students interested in learning more about the Individual Major should contact L&S Undergraduate Academic Deans' Services to set up an appointment with the coordinator for the Individual Major prior to starting this process.

## HOW TO GET IN

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To declare an Individual Major, students must

- Be an L&S degree student
- Have a minimum University GPA of 2.000
- Receive committee approval (see below) by the first semester of the junior.
- A student may only earn one individual major.

### APPLYING FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MAJOR

Applications for the individual major are accepted up to Friday of the fourth week of classes in the fall and spring semesters only. Applications received after that deadline will be reviewed during the following term. Individual major applications are not reviewed during the summer.

The application **must** include:

1. A meeting with the academic dean coordinator for the L&S undergraduate individual major;
2. A cover letter from the student to the Faculty Committee on Individual Majors describing the area of interest, explaining why the academic goals of the individual major cannot be achieved through an existing major or combination of majors and certificates, and discussing the individual major's applicability to future goals and plans;
3. A list of courses that will be included in the major along with a narrative explaining how the courses included on the list apply to the proposed individual major program (**NOTE: students can use a maximum of two (2) courses completed prior to getting the Individual Major approved as part of their list of courses**);
4. A letter of recommendation and support for the proposal from the individual major advisor; and
5. The student's current student record (unofficial transcript).

Additional supporting materials may also be included. Students must submit the original completed application with all supporting documentation in an electronic format to the individual major coordinator by the deadline.

Each individual major application is reviewed by a committee of three faculty members from the College of Letters & Science, each representing a department related to the proposed major. The faculty committee evaluates the proposal for coherence, appropriate breadth and depth, and similarity to existing majors. The committee may approve the proposal as submitted, recommend modifications, reject the proposal altogether, or reject it with an invitation to revise and resubmit in a later semester. The committee's decision is final. Committee approval is necessary for the student to declare the individual major.

Students may propose to complete an Individual Major with Honors by appending an Honors in the Major proposal to the regular individual major proposal.

## 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 (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatetext>) section of the Guide.

General  
Education

- 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 \*

\* 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.

### COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. The College of Letters & Science allows this major to be paired with either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science curriculum.

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Mathematics	Complete the University General Education Requirements for Quantitative Reasoning A (QR-A) and Quantitative Reasoning B (QR-B) coursework.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete the fourth unit of a language other than English; OR</li><li>• Complete the third unit of a language and the second unit of an additional language other than English.</li></ul>
L&S Breadth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 credits of Humanities, which must include 6 credits of literature; and</li><li>• 12 credits of Social Science; and</li><li>• 12 credits of Natural Science, which must include one 3+ credit Biological Science course and one 3+ credit Physical Science course.</li></ul>
Liberal Arts and Science Coursework	Complete at least 108 credits.
Depth of Intermediate/Advanced work	Complete at least 60 credits at the intermediate or advanced level.
Major	Declare and complete at least one major.
Total Credits	Complete at least 120 credits.
UW-Madison Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 30 credits in residence, overall; and</li><li>• 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit.</li></ul>
Quality of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2.000 in all coursework at UW-Madison</li><li>• 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level coursework at UW-Madison</li></ul>

NON-L&S STUDENTS PURSUING AN L&S MAJOR

Non-L&S students who have permission from their school/college to pursue an additional major within L&S only need to fulfill the major requirements. They do not need to complete the L&S Degree Requirements above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL MAJOR

Students are required to complete at least 30 credits after the term in which approval is given, and complete their approved individual major course plan (see below)

The student takes primary responsibility for developing an individual major proposal. A well-written proposal must meet the requirements and rigor for a major in the College of Letters & Science; therefore, a proposal must be more than a list of courses that are similar in content area or subject matter. The student proposing an individual major must also demonstrate that the proposed individual major is not currently available as an option in any of the L&S majors or certificate programs.

Students interested in the individual major should consult with the individual major coordinator as part of the process of defining the theme or topic for the individual major. The coordinator will provide information

and feedback about the construction of the major and how it might relate to other majors in the college as well.

- Once a theme or topic has been identified, the student must find a tenured faculty member in the College of Letters & Science who is willing to serve as the individual major adviser. This designated faculty advisor will:
- assist the student in constructing the individual major proposal by defining the relevant themes, learning objectives, and rationale for the major and by sharpening presentation of the student's individual major proposal;
  - assist in the review and selection of courses for the major plan included in the proposal;
  - advise the student in course selection after the proposal is approved and, in consultation with the individual major coordinator, track progress toward completion of the major.

As soon as the topic and the advisor (i.e., a tenured faculty member in an L&S academic department) are known, the student should meet with the individual major coordinator within L&S Academic Deans' Services by calling 608-262-0617 to set up a meeting. *The purpose of this meeting is to review the details of individual major requirements and to review procedures.*

HONORS IN THE INDIVIDUAL MAJOR: REQUIREMENTS

- To earn Honors in the Individual Major, students must:
- Complete 36 credits toward the individual major
  - Complete 20 credits, taken for Honors, with individual grades of B or better, toward the individual major, to include a two-semester Senior Honors Thesis for a total of 6 credits.

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.

## FOUR-YEAR PLAN

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Due to the nature of the Individual Major, the following four-year plan is meant solely as a guide. Once/if a student is approved to pursue an Individual Major, the student will develop and discuss their four-year plan with their advisor.

#### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Communication-A (complete during your first year)	3 Ethnic Studies (complete within your first 60 credits)	3
Quantitative Reasoning-A (complete during your first year)	3-4 Foreign Language (if needed)	4
Foreign Language (if required)	4 Elective	3
L&S Breadth	3 L&S Breadth	3
	I/A Comp Sci, Math, or Stats (if required for the BS degree)	4-5
	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>

#### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Quantitative Reasoning-B	3 Communication-B	3
I/A Comp Sci, Math, or Stats (if required for the BS degree)	3-4 INTER-LS 215 (optional)	3
INTER-LS 210 (optional)	1 L&S Breadth	3
L&S Breadth	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	3	
	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

#### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
L&S Breadth	3 Approved IM Major Course	3
Approved IM Major Course	3 Approved IM Major Course	3
Approved IM Major Course	3 L&S Breadth	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

#### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Approved IM Major Course	3 Approved IM Major Course	3
Approved IM Major Course	3 Approved IM Major Course	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3

Elective	3 Elective	2-3
	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>

**Total Credits 120**

## ADVISING AND CAREERS

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Students interested in learning more about the L&S Individual Major should contact L&S Undergraduate Academic Deans' Services to set up an individual appointment with the coordinator for the Individual Major prior to starting this process. The purpose of this meeting is solely to review the details of Individual Major requirements, go over procedures, and determine whether an Individual Major is a viable option based on the student's academic interest and the resources available within the College of Letters & Science. Read more at [deans.ls.wisc.edu/policies-forms/individual-major/](https://deans.ls.wisc.edu/policies-forms/individual-major/) (<https://deans.ls.wisc.edu/policies-forms/individual-major/>).

### SUCCESSWORKS

SuccessWorks (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/>) at the College of Letters & Science helps you turn the academic skills learned in your classes into a fulfilling life, guiding you every step of the way to securing jobs, internships, or admission to graduate school.

Through one-on-one career advising, events, and resources, you can explore career options, build valuable internship and research experience, and connect with supportive alumni and employers who open doors of opportunity.

- What you can do with your major (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/what-you-can-do-with-your-major/>) (Major Skills & Outcomes Sheets)
- Make a career advising appointment (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment/>)
- Learn about internships and internship funding (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/finding-a-job-or-internship/>)
- Try "Jobs, Internships, & How to Get Them," (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/canvas/>) an interactive guide in Canvas for enrolled UW-Madison students