INDIVIDUAL MAJOR, B.S.

The individual major within 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 or interdisciplinary program. 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 faculty committee consisting of faculty from appropriate faculty from the College of Letters and 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 at 608-262-0617 in 110 Ingraham Hall and set up an individual appointment with the coordinator for the individual major prior to starting this process.

HOW TO GET IN

ELIGIBILITY

Any student working toward an L&S degree may elect to develop an individual major. (Students earning degrees in other undergraduate schools and colleges on the UW–Madison campus are not eligible to pursue an individual major within Letters & Science.) The individual major must receive approval during the second-semester of the sophomore year or first semester of junior year to ensure that they can complete the major within four years. All students are required to earn at least 30 degree credits after the term in which approval is given. A student may complete only 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 all items outlined below:

1. The individual major application form;
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;
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.

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.

Requirements Detail

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 BREADTH AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.S.)

Students pursuing a bachelor of science 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. View a comparison of the degree requirements here. (https://pubs.wisc.edu/home/archives/ug15/images/babs2009.pdf)

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements Detail

Mathematics

Two (2) 3+ credits of intermediate/advanced level MATH, COMP SCI, STAT
Limit one each: COMP SCI, STAT


REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL MAJOR

Any student working toward an L&S degree may elect to develop an individual major. (Students earning degrees in other undergraduate schools and colleges on the UW–Madison campus are not eligible to pursue an Individual Major within Letters & Science.) This major must receive approval during the second-semester of the sophomore year or first semester of junior year. Students in the individual major are required to earn at least 30 degree credits after the term in which approval is given. A student may complete only one individual major.

Developing an Individual Major. 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 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.

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;

A letter of recommendation and support for the proposal from the individual major advisor; and

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.
INDIVIDUAL MAJOR WITH HONORS

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

HONORS IN THE INDIVIDUAL MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

To earn a B.A. or B.S. with Honors in the Individual Major students must satisfy both the requirements for the major (above) and the following additional requirements:

• 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Degree</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Work</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADVISING AND CAREERS

Students interested in learning more about the individual major should contact L&S Undergraduate Academic Deans’ Services at 608-262-0617 in 110 Ingraham Hall and set up an individual appointment with the coordinator for the individual major prior to starting this process. 

The purpose of this meeting is to review the details of individual major requirements and to review procedures.