

Student-Initiated Majors

Students who complete the freshman year and whose major interests span two or more recognized academic fields, if they have a cumulative B average (3.0 or above), may arrange a specialized major which combines these two fields, such as biophysics, biopsychology, chemical biology or comparative literature.

In order to set up such a specialized major, the student and the appropriate department heads, in consultation with other department members, must draw up a written statement of all courses and additional major requirements, which may include a comprehensive or an oral examination by members of both departments at the end of the program of studies. The proposal must identify the courses that will satisfy the College's requirements for intensive writing, oral presentation, and capstone experience. This proposed course of studies must then be submitted to the Dean of the College, whose approval is needed. Upon successful completion of the major requirements so specified, the student will graduate in the subject field specified on the program proposal.

Ursinus College Catalog.

SIMS Guidelines

Based on the College guidelines for SIMs, a student must meet the following minimum requirements prior to submitting a draft proposal for a SIM:

- Sophomore or above standing
- GPA 3.0 or above
- Identification of the two or more fields that will be combined to form the SIM
- Meet with the department chairs in each area.
- Develop a document with all courses that will be completed for the proposed interdisciplinary major including a rationale for pursuing this course of study.
- Identify the SIM courses that will fulfill the college requirements for capstone, writing and oral presentation and if necessary, the ILE.
- Include alternate courses in the event of scheduling conflicts or cancellations.

The proposal should contain the following information:

Title. Include the title of the course of study to appear on the transcript. Title must be approved by the Dean's Office.

Statement. Why the student is proposing the SIM; the goals of the SIM,

Comparative Information. Does this major exist at other schools and what are the required courses? This comparative information can be presented in support of the proposal.

Spreadsheet. This should include a list of courses already completed that will count towards the SIM as well as proposed courses to be completed as part of the major. Include several alternate courses that can be taken in the event a course is not offered when anticipated or if there is a scheduling conflict.

Rigor and Challenge. Note that courses should indicate a progression through the proposed major with increasing levels of challenge and rigor. The proposed major should not be an accumulation of introductory lower level courses with few connections among the courses.

Core courses. Identify the courses that are central to the SIM and cannot be substituted; similarly identify the electives within the major.

College Requirements. Identify how you will complete your College core Writing, Oral and Capstone requirements (COW) and your ILE requirement.

Methods. Identify a methods course that can be taken in the 2nd or 3rd year prior to the capstone

Double /Triple Majors. If you are creating a SIM as a second major, no more than two courses can count towards the requirements in both majors

Next Steps

After developing your SIM proposal with your advisors and have their approval, submit a draft to the Dean's Office for review. Once the document is received and reviewed, you will be invited to discuss the proposal with one of the Deans. You may be asked to make some revisions or adjustments to the proposal.

Final procedures

- Once you have approval of your SIM, you will need to submit a final draft in both hard copy and PDF.
- Obtain the approval signatures of the faculty members (department chairs) from all departments participating in your SIM as well as the signature of the Dean. Create a signature page for these signatures. You may also do this using the signature option in your PDF document.
- If you are using a separate hard copy signature page, scan that signature page and include a copy in your PDF document. Place the original signature page in your hard copy. Submit both copies to the Dean's Office and keep a copy for your records and distribute copies to your faculty advisors. Distribution copies may be electronic PDF copies.
- The last step is to submit a Declaration of Major Form (or Declaration of a Second Major Form) with the required signatures including a Dean's signature noting approval of the SIM to the Registrar.

NOTE: All SIMs must be approved by faculty advisors and the Dean, and filed with the Registrar no later than one year prior to anticipated graduation date.

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