

INDIVIDUALLY PLANNED MAJOR

Guidelines for Construction

The individually planned major permits the development of a concentrated study in some area which crosses two or more disciplines, or which currently does not offer a standard major, thus permitting an area of concentration not available in other major study programs.

The process of establishing an individually planned major involves creating an individually planned major committee. With the committee, the student develops a proposal consisting of a title, rationale and a schedule of coursework. The proposal is submitted to the Board of Review for approval and is subject to review by the Curriculum Committee.

Deadline: The deadline for applying for an individually planned major is prior to the end of a student's second semester of their sophomore year, or equivalent. No applications from seniors will be entertained by the Board of Review.

Individually Planned Major Committee: The first step in establishing an individually planned major is selecting at least two faculty members to form an individually planned major committee, which will oversee the construction of the major, the student's progress and the comprehensive examinations. Students need to ascertain that the members of the committee, or suitable replacements, will be present throughout the entire course of study.

Title and Rationale: With the advice and consent of the major committee, the student must develop a title and rationale for his or her individually planned major. The title should be concise and accurately describe the content of the individually planned major. The rationale must clearly establish the need for an individually planned major rather than a double major, an established combined major or a departmental major plus a minor. The statement should include a justification of the appropriateness of each course to the individually planned major. The program must contain work of an interdisciplinary nature.

In order to insure the rigor of the major, the following guidelines should be observed:

1. There must be a minimum of 32 credit hours.
2. There should be a full range of courses from the introductory to the advanced level. A minimum of 12 credits should be in 300 and 400 level courses.
3. There should be a capstone course consisting of at least four hours of integrative work. (This course may be one of the courses above the 300 level.)
4. At least 12 hours should not yet be completed at the time of application.
5. No more than 2/3 of the courses should come from any one department or program. The individually planned major is not supposed to be an established major minus one or two courses.
6. No more than 1/3 of the courses may be taken off campus and no more than 1/3 of the courses should be independent studies. Students need to reflect realistically on whether Whitman has the ability to offer an individually planned major in the proposed field. Will the faculty who share their interests be available to teach the courses they need for their major? Are there enough regularly offered courses (excluding independent studies) to provide enough credit hours for an in-depth, coherent course of study in their proposed individual major?

Proposal: After being approved by the individually planned major committee, the title, rationale and schedule of courses are submitted as a proposal for an individually planned major to the Board of Review for approval, subject to review by the Curriculum Committee.

Oversight: The individually planned major committee has responsibility for overseeing the progress of the student. A student with an individually planned major must maintain a grade point average of 2.000 in the courses specified for the major.

Changes: The individually planned major committee evaluates proposed alterations in the individually planned major and submits them to the Board of Review for approval.

Comprehensive Examination: Like any other major, the individually planned major must have comprehensive examination. The individually planned major committee will administer the examination. The student should work in consultation with the individually planned major committee to determine that enough qualified faculty will be available to administer the examination at the appropriate time in the student's course of studies.

Honors: The student requesting honors in the individually planned major must meet the same requirements (concerning grade point average, etc.) as students in other majors. An honors proposal must receive the support of the individually planned major committee and the Board of Review.

Diploma and Transcript: Upon successful completion of the course of study in an individually planned major, the student will receive a diploma stating the title of the major.

The transcript will list the major as the actual title of the Individually Planned Major.