

# B.A. WITH AN INDEPENDENT MAJOR

## Overview

The Independent Major allows students to pursue a BA or a BS degree (depending on the field of study) in the College of Arts and Sciences in consultation with and under the oversight of a Faculty Guidance Committee. Students will fulfill all requirements for the BA or BS degree.

Students may begin to develop a proposal for the IM when they have reached sophomore standing. The proposal should explain why existing majors are inappropriate or inadequate to satisfy the student's interests. Students will be ineligible for declaring the IM upon reaching senior standing, that is, they must declare as a sophomore or a junior and spend at least two (2) full semesters in residence at UM in the IM. Students must have a cumulative UM GPA of 3.5 or higher to be eligible for the IM.

A student's Faculty Guidance Committee should be comprised of two tenured or tenure-track faculty from different departments in the College of Arts & Sciences, who represent the disciplinary breadth of the courses selected for the IM. A third Faculty Guidance Committee member might be appropriate when the proposed course of study encompasses expertise from three Departments or disciplines. The Faculty Guidance Committee Chair, who has primary oversight responsibility regarding satisfactory completion of the major, will serve as the primary advisor for the student's senior research/creative project under most circumstances, and must be a tenure-track faculty member. Exceptions to the Chair serving as the primary advisor might include situations where there are co-advisors. It is the role and responsibility of the student to assemble their Faculty Guidance Committee.

## Curriculum Requirements

The Independent Major proposal must include at least thirty (30) credit hours of coursework beyond those needed to fulfill General Education requirements. Of those thirty (30), at least six (6) must be at the 300 level; additionally, six (6) credit hours will be satisfied by a Capstone project/thesis in the last two (2) semesters of the Bachelor's degree. Because many courses have variable availability and conflicts are inevitable, strong proposals will identify more than 30 credit hours of coursework before being submitted to the Faculty Guidance Committee for approval. If a student wishes to pursue the IM as a double-major, the Faculty Guidance Committee should give particular attention to the appropriateness of the student's plan of study; in keeping with the College's regulations, the Independent Major must consist of at least 24 graded credit hours that are not counted towards any other major or minor.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
<b>Independent Major Requirements</b>		
Approved courses 100-500 level		18
Approved courses 300-500 level		6
Capstone project/thesis project (to be completed during the last two semester)		6
<b>General Education Requirements</b>		
Written Communication Skills:		
WRS 105	First-Year Writing I	3
WRS 106 or ENG 106	First-Year Writing II Writing About Literature and Culture	3
Quantitative Skills:		
MTH 108	Precalculus Mathematics II (or higher)	3
Areas of Knowledge:		
Arts & Humanities or People & Society or STEM Cognate (9 credits) (fulfilled through the major)		
People & Society or STEM or Arts & Humanities Cognate (depending on which one is fulfilled through the major)		9
STEM or Arts & Humanities or People & Society Cognate (depending on which one is fulfilled through the major)		9
<b>Other Graduation Requirements</b>		
UMX 100	The University of Miami Experience	0
Minor (may be used in lieu of a cognate to satisfy an Area of Knowledge in General Education)		15
Second Language Proficiency Requirement (3-9 credit hours, depending on the student's initial placement in the language chosen)		9
Electives		39
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>120</b>

<sup>1</sup> A minimum of 120 credits is required for graduation. Sufficient credits must be earned in electives to enable the student to complete this minimum of 120 credits. The exact number of elective credits required will vary depending on the number of credits needed to complete all other graduation requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Advanced Writing and Communication Proficiency: Degree candidates must complete at least four writing courses, and at least one writing course must be in the student's major discipline.

<sup>3</sup> See the College of Arts and Sciences Bulletin Overview (<http://bulletin.miami.edu/undergraduate-academic-programs/arts-sciences/>) page for more information about general graduation requirements.

## Sample Plan of Study

This Sample Plan of Study represents one possible version of a new first-year student's 8-semester plan. The individual student's plan may vary depending upon the initial placement into English Composition, Mathematics, and modern language. Moreover, numerous plan variations are possible if a student enters the University with advanced college credits, wishes to participate in study abroad, chooses a special program option, or selects additional majors or minors.

Independent Major students construct their individualized plans in collaboration with their Faculty Guidance Committee and assigned academic advisor(s).

<b>Freshman Year</b>		<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>Fall</b>		
WRS 105	First-Year Writing I	3
MTH 108	Precalculus Mathematics II	3
UMX 100	The University of Miami Experience	0
Cognate Course		3
Language (first course)		3
Elective		3
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
WRS 106 or ENG 106	First-Year Writing II or Writing About Literature and Culture	3
Cognate Courses		3
Language (second course)		3
Elective (2)		6
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Sophomore Year</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
Independent Major courses (2)		6
Cognate Course		3
Language (third course)		3
Minor (first course)		3
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
Independent Major courses (2)		6
Minor (second course)		3
Cognate Course		3
Elective		3
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Junior Year</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
Independent Major courses (2)		6
Minor (third course)		3
Cognate Course		3
Elective		3
<b>Credit Hours</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
Independent Major courses (2)		6
Minor (fourth course)		3
Cognate Course		3

Elective		3
	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Senior Year</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
Independent Major course (capstone)		3
Minor (fifth course)		3
Electives (3)		9
	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
Independent Major course (capstone)		3
Electives (4)		12
	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>Total Credit Hours</b>	<b>120</b>

## Mission

The BA or BS degree in the Independent Major allows highly self-motivated students to explore either an existing field that is not an explicitly designated major in the College and at UM (e.g., linguistics) or one that is emerging (e.g., peace studies). The course of study incorporates greater interdisciplinary breadth than is currently offered in existing majors by including complementary courses from at least two departments, programs, or colleges/schools.

## Goals

The Independent Major allows students to pursue a BA or a BS degree in the College of Arts & Sciences in an area or combination of areas not covered by existing majors and minors and in close consultation with and under the oversight of their Faculty Guidance Committee.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- analyze and synthesize material and approach it critically.
- write cogently and clearly in the manner appropriate to their field of study, in keeping with the College's Advanced Writing and Communication Skills guidelines.
- formulate research questions and learn how to begin to find answers to them, in keeping with the creative and interdisciplinary nature of their major.