

B.S. WITH AN INDEPENDENT MAJOR

Overview

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) under the supervision of a Faculty Guidance Committee.

The Independent Major must consist of 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. 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.

A student's Faculty Guidance Committee should be comprised of two tenured or tenure-track faculty, typically 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
Independent Major Requirements		
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
General Education Requirements		
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:		
Fulfilled through the Calculus Sequence		
Areas of Knowledge:		
Arts and Humanities Cognate		9
People & Society or STEM Cognate (depending on which one is fulfilled through the major)		9
STEM or People & Society Cognate (fulfilled through the major)		
Other Graduation Requirements		
UMX 100	The University of Miami Experience	0
Calculus Sequence:		8
MTH 140 & MTH 141 & MTH 162	Calculus Concepts with Foundations A and Calculus Concepts with Foundations B and Calculus II	
MTH 171 & MTH 172	Calculus I and Calculus II	
MTH 161 & MTH 162	Calculus I and Calculus II	

Approved statistics or computer science course	3
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	31
Total Credit Hours	120

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 See the College of Arts and Sciences Bulletin Overview (<https://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 freshman** 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).

Freshman Year		Credit Hours
Fall		
WRS 105	First-Year Writing I	3
MTH 161	Calculus I	4
UMX 100	The University of Miami Experience	0
Cognate Course		3
Language (first course)		3
Elective		3
Credit Hours		16
Spring		
WRS 106 or ENG 106	First-Year Writing II or Writing About Literature and Culture	3
MTH 162	Calculus II	4
Cognate Course		3
Language (second course)		3
Elective (1)		3
Credit Hours		16
Sophomore Year		
Fall		
Independent Major courses (2)		6
Cognate Course		3
Language (third course)		3
Minor (first course)		3
Credit Hours		15
Spring		
Independent Major courses (2)		6
Minor (second course)		3
Approved statistics or computer science course		3
Cognate Course		3
Credit Hours		15

Junior Year	
Fall	
Independent Major courses (2)	6
Minor (third course)	3
Cognate Course	3
Elective	3
Credit Hours	15
Spring	
Independent Major courses (2)	6
Minor (fourth course)	3
Cognate Course	3
Elective	3
Credit Hours	15
Senior Year	
Fall	
Independent Major course (capstone)	3
Minor (fifth course)	3
Electives (3)	9
Credit Hours	15
Spring	
Independent Major course (capstone)	3
Electives (4)	12
Credit Hours	15
Total Credit Hours	122

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 ~~currently~~ 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.