

## **Committee on Educational Policy Guidelines for Individual Majors**

The Individual Major is an opportunity for students to work with a committee comprised of three faculty members to craft a coherent degree program in an area or a combination of areas not offered as an established major. Before embarking on creating such a major, be sure that there is no established major, combined major, major and minor, or a double major that would appropriately cover the area of investigation.

Because individual majors do not have the advising and support structures of established majors, students pursuing an individual major must be highly motivated. Students must have consistently maintained good academic standing and progress prior to the petition for an individual major, and may be required to transition to an established major if good academic standing or progress is not maintained. Students must meet the relevant deadlines to declare a major (end of the sophomore year or in the second quarter of attendance for junior transfer students). In order to ensure that adequate progress in the individual major has occurred, the student and Chair of the committee must hold an interim advising meeting at least once a year (every third term), at which an Individual Major Advising Sheet is completed and forwarded to the student's college.

Individual majors must always include alternative courses in the event that courses originally planned are not offered.

The comprehensive/senior exit requirement may be satisfied with a thesis, capstone project, completion of an appropriate Subject GRE test at the 50% level, a comprehensive written or oral examination on the area of the individual major, the offering of a student-directed seminar, or some other integrative experience consistent with the Committee on Educational Policy's 2004 [\*Report on the Comprehensive/Senior Exit Requirement\*](#). When a student-directed seminar is proposed for this requirement an alternative means of satisfying the capstone requirement must also be specified in case the student is not approved by the sponsoring agency, college, or CEP to teach such a seminar.

On completion of the comprehensive/senior exit requirement, the committee will meet with the student to discuss and evaluate the exit requirement, and to award it a grade of honors (H), pass (P), or fail (F). A report on the completion of the major requirements (including the thesis, capstone project report, GRE scores, written or oral examination report, or other such documentation) is submitted to the college for final degree verification. The committee may recommend Honors or Highest Honors in the major.

### **Preparing the Individual Major Proposal**

The student should first assemble a committee of 3 faculty members, chair must be a Senate member and all other members must be Senate members or continuing lecturers. The committee and student then develop a coherent plan and rationale for the major, and decide upon the comprehensive/senior exit requirement.

The proposal for the individual major should address the following questions:

1. What is the intellectual merit of the major?
2. What presently offered majors and minors are most similar to the proposed Individual Major? What advantage does the Individual Major have over some combination of these majors and minors?
3. What is the comprehensive/senior exit requirement?
4. What upper-division courses are required? How do the upper-division courses form a coherent body of work in support of the major and the comprehensive/senior exit requirement? [A minimum of 40 upper-division credits are required.]

5. What lower-division courses are required? How do the lower-division courses form a coherent body of work in support of the major, a comprehensive/senior exit requirement, and the upper-division courses? [A minimum of 10 courses including upper-division are required.]
6. Considering what makes the list of proposed upper-division courses unified and coherent, what courses (up to 5) will be alternates should the required upper-division courses not be available?
7. How will the Disciplinary Communication requirement be satisfied (1 or a combination of up to 3 upper-division courses, at least 5 credits) Students should select a course or courses that are appropriate to the individual major discipline and or interdisciplinary focus for the writing component. Please use the DC guidelines to explain how the course or courses you are proposing would satisfy writing in the discipline. Here is the link to guidelines for the DC requirement:
8. Provide a proposed schedule for completion of the degree requirements. Indicate all courses that have been already completed.
9. Provide a copy of your current unofficial transcript.

The Committee Chair must write a letter of support that briefly discusses the need for the individual major (rather than an established major), the academic accomplishments of the student, and the process of developing the individual major.

The proposal is submitted to the College office, which will verify compliance with this policy. The proposal is then forwarded to CEP for final approval. CEP will consult with appropriate program chairs as necessary.

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Santa Cruz Divisional bylaw for CEP (2004 version):

- 13.17.4** The Committee approves the content and periodically reviews the content and administration of all requirements of colleges and departments and committees of studies (and equivalent agencies as defined in Divisional Regulations) for the Bachelor's degree.

Santa Cruz Divisional Regulation (2004 version)

**10.4.5 Individual major.**

Students may undertake an individual major by presenting a proposal<sup>1</sup> and a petition for declaration of individual major to the appropriate agency of their college. The proposal must be supported and the petition signed by the student's adviser and all members of a three-person faculty committee that will supervise the individual major. The committee must have at least one member with special competence relevant to the major who will serve as chair of the committee. All of the committee members must be continuing<sup>2</sup> faculty members in fields related to the proposed major. This committee shall supervise the major program and administer the appropriate comprehensive examination or senior thesis. An individual major may not serve as part of a combined major. The name and content of the individual major must be distinct from those of any approved major program or of any possible double or combined major made up of approved major programs. The Registrar shall periodically report to the Committee on Educational Policy on the nature of the individual majors program.

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<sup>1</sup> A proposal must consist of: a) title and general description of the major; b) list of courses required for the major; c) description of the proposed senior thesis or comprehensive examination.

<sup>2</sup> A continuing faculty member is a person with an academic appointment of a duration that could be reasonably expected to equal at least the proposed term of the major.