

Proposing an Individual Major

Standards

- * You may propose an individual major on any subject matter that permits coherent, in-depth study using resources available through the college, and that does not duplicate an existing program of the college.
- * You may propose any sequence of courses, seminars, independent studies, internships, and other learning experiences as the means of pursuing your major. Your proposal must explain both the basic idea that unites these learning experiences, and the reason you think each specific component should be included.
- * Your proposal must be approved by a faculty review committee, and the completion of your major will be certified by the director of the CIS on the recommendation of a faculty certification committee.
 - * The CIS and its faculty committees will be guided by the standards for departmental majors at St. Olaf, and especially by the following:
 1. Your plan must be sufficiently coherent and substantial to meet the aims of integrative study, and it must be appropriate to the mission of a liberal arts college like St. Olaf.
 2. Your plan must provide a) a foundation of skills, concepts, and methods appropriate to the proposed area of study; b) ways to develop appropriate analytical methods and greater understanding of sub-topics within the major; and c) opportunities to increase the sophistication of your approach to your topic.
 3. Your plan must include significant advanced work, usually at least two Level III courses, in addition to the two units reserved for the senior integrative project.
 4. Your major will include an integrative project to be completed during your last two semesters. The project is a sustained, focused exploration of a selected topic supported by your major, using methods appropriate to your subject, and permitting reflection on and creative use of material encountered earlier in your studies. Your project may take any form, including (for example) laboratory, field, or other empirical research; a substantial essay or research paper; an intellectual autobiography; a performance, panel, or public presentation; a community program; a web site, or some other that you choose. Projects in all formats must be supported by appropriate independent research.
 5. When your major is approved, you will begin and maintain a web portfolio that allows you to reflect on and make connections throughout your work in the major.

Procedures

- * Discuss your proposal with your academic adviser, faculty and staff of the CIS, and anyone else whose advice you value. Use the **worksheet** to help clarify your idea for an individual major. Use the **check list** to help put together the parts of your proposal.
- * When your proposal is complete, the director of the CIS will convene a faculty review committee (FRC) to evaluate it. The FRC will include you, your adviser, the CIS director and program coordinator, a librarian, a student currently pursuing an individual major, and at least one other faculty member who has expertise relevant to your proposal. FRC meetings are public. The committee may approve your proposal as it stands, approve it with recommendations or conditions, or return it for further refinement. When your proposal is approved, you may declare your major and carry out your proposed plan.
- * If, as you proceed with your studies, your plan for the major changes, it will be possible to amend your major in consultation with your adviser and the director of the CIS.

- * When your work is completed at the end of your senior year, the director of the CIS will convene a faculty certification committee to review your project and web portfolio, and to certify whether you have met the requirements for your major as defined in your original or amended plan.