

The Self-Designed Major

The self-designed major enables highly motivated non-traditional students to pursue a unique program of studies for compelling professional or academic reasons. The self-designed major must be multidisciplinary, including courses from more than two departments or schools. It must have the same academic quality as existing College of General Studies (CGS) majors, and it must be substantially different from CGS majors.

A minimum total of 120 credits is required for the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree with a major in self-designed studies. Of this total, the major consists of at least 36 credits (12 approved courses). Eighteen of the 36 approved credits that constitute the central theme must be at the 1000 level. The remaining credits for the degree are outlined on the Requirements for the Bachelor's Degree information sheet.

A CGS faculty committee grants approval for all self-designed major proposals. Students considering this alternative should schedule an appointment with a CGS advisor.

A. Characteristics of the Self-Designed Major

- It must be multidisciplinary (from more than one department or school).
- It must have the same academic quality as existing CGS majors.
- It must be unique and differ significantly from standard CGS majors.

B. Faculty Sponsorship and Advisor Responsibilities

- a. The major will be designed in consultation with one or more University of Pittsburgh faculty members.
- b. In special cases where the student has research interests for which there are few available courses, the faculty member(s) may agree to serve on a continuing basis in an advisory capacity, directing independent study or an undergraduate thesis. Faculty sponsorship is terminated when the student changes to another major or completes requirements for graduation.
- c. CGS advisors will monitor the progress toward the degree for the student.

C. Student Contract

- a. After consulting with a CGS advisor, the student will identify a faculty sponsor to provide advice on the academic plan of study. A student who requests guidance in identifying a sponsor (and those students pursuing option "b" above) will be assisted by the CGS faculty committee.
- b. The student must submit a written proposal to the CGS faculty committee outlining the purpose, rationale, and courses in the self-designed major.

D. Written Proposal

Title Page

- Title of proposed major and degree sought (BA, BS).
- Student contact information.
- Name, department(s), and contact information for faculty sponsor(s).
- Signature of approval by faculty member(s).

Content of Proposal

- A clear statement(s) of the purpose(s) and rationale for the major must be made. Include the scope of the program of studies and relevance of the courses proposed.
- List the courses, course numbers, titles, and number of credits.
- A minimum of 36 credits (12 courses) in the central theme is required, with 18 of the 36 approved credits at the 1000 level.

E. Final Approval

The CGS faculty committee grants final approval of the major in a letter to the faculty sponsor, the dean of CGS, and the student. Any changes to the major must have approval from the dean.

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College of General Studies

The College of General Studies (CGS) provides adult and continuing education programs that are designed to address changing employer and student needs. The high-quality, flexible programs include courses, certificates, and degrees. CGS provides a single point of access to the University's innovative programs and services that both enrich lives and promote the economic health of the region.

Requirements subject to change. Check with an academic advisor before registering.

An internship program is available through the College of General Studies. Please see your advisor for additional information.

For more information, contact:

**University of Pittsburgh
College of General Studies
412-624-6600
www.cgs.pitt.edu**