

Special Major

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Special Major Program
College of Arts and Sciences
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Web: casadvising.buffalo.edu/majors/special_majors.html

Overview

The Special Major Program was developed to provide capable students with an opportunity to create their own academic majors. Students initiate and develop their own programs under the guidance of two faculty members and an advisor and then obtain approval from the Special Major Committee.

Although the special major is individualized and often completely original, there are several concentrations or themes that have emerged over the years. Whereas these themes do not yet correspond to existing academic majors, there are nonetheless impressive curricular and faculty resources to support them. Such concentrations include religious studies, biophysics, animal science, comparative literature, language and linguistics, and arts management, among others.

About our Degrees

The special major proposal is a well thought out and deliberately formulated plan of study in which the student, in consultation with faculty sponsors, defines his or her educational objectives.

The special major integrates specific kinds of knowledge; it is not simply a collection of courses. When proposing a special major, a statement of intent and purpose must be written. This statement serves as the rationale for the individualized program of study. The statement may include biographical information that gives the committee an appreciation of the student's motivation in selecting this degree option. The statement should specify the unique ways in which the curricular resources of the University have been selected and combined in support of the proposed major. In short, the statement of intent and purpose gives the student an opportunity to highlight the major's educational integrity and vocational potential.

The coursework must demonstrate both breadth and depth in the student's topical area. While a specific number of upper-division courses is not prescribed, it is assumed that a special major will reflect the rigor of existing bachelors programs and uphold the academic standards set forth by the University. Faculty mentors chosen to assist the student in the development of the special major must have expertise in the chosen area(s) of study and must be appointed at least at the assistant professor level in a tenure-track appointment.

Acceptance Information

Application to the special major program is a multi-step process that begins with the development of an academic concept and a written rationale. The final step is the approval of the proposal by the Special Major Committee and the Dean. The proposal is presented to the committee by the special major advisor/chairperson on behalf of the student. Therefore, all prospective special major candidates must meet with the special major advisor prior to submitting a final application. Applications must be submitted no less than two full semesters before the expected graduation date. The Special Major Committee meets three to four times per semester (excluding summer sessions).

Acceptance to the special major does not guarantee access to major courses in departments that limit their enrollments to majors only. It is the student's responsibility to negotiate with the respective departments for enrollment in restricted courses which are integral to the proposed major's curriculum.

A special major student is one whose proposal has been approved by the Special Major Committee and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences or his/her designate. The committee evaluates proposals that have been submitted on the student's behalf by the chair of the committee, who is a senior academic advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences Student Advisement and Services office in 275 Park Hall. Students interested in this option may consult the special major web site at http://casadvising.buffalo.edu/majors/special_majors, where they may download the application and advisement manual.

Special Major

Minimum 2.0 GPA overall required for acceptance and graduation
Minimum 2.0 GPA in major courses required for acceptance and graduation

Degree Options

Both BA and BS degrees in special studies may be proposed. A special major may be combined with another major as a double major or a double degree. Minors may be added as well. Joint majors are not permitted.

The proposed academic curriculum may not replicate or approximate the intent or course content of any existing degree granting program, nor may it be designed to circumvent the requirements of existing departmental majors.

Special majors in areas that require licensure or professional certification may not be proposed. Additionally, special majors may not suggest that the student has acquired professional competence as a therapist or allied health professional. For example, major concentrations entitled Art Therapy, Psychotherapy, Athletic Training and the like are prohibited.

Degrees Offered

Undergraduate: BA, BS