

**HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES**  
**INDIVIDUAL MAJORS**  
**(revised September 2024)**

Individual Majors

The Individual Majors program provides students the opportunity to design an individually tailored major when the focus of study lies outside an established department or program-based major, and/or combines multiple disciplines. To create an Individual Majors proposal, the student works closely with a faculty advisor and designs a specific curriculum of study (including a capstone course or experience), articulating the focus and goals of the major. The student's proposal and advisor's recommendation are submitted to the Individual Majors Committee, which reviews the proposal. The Individual Majors Committee consists of four faculty members from across HWS, one dean, and a representative from the Office of the Registrar. Once an Individual Major is approved, any subsequent changes to the student's curriculum or major must be pre-approved by the Individual Majors Committee and the student's advisor through a formal course change request.

The process of designing and submitting an Individual Major requires a substantial time commitment. Students who are interested in pursuing an Individual Major are encouraged to begin the process in their sophomore year by contacting a faculty advisor, reviewing the Individual Majors proposal form, and contacting the Individual Majors Committee chair for additional advice on submitting a proposal. Individual Majors can be designed as either disciplinary or interdisciplinary majors.

Course requirements: An Individual Major requires 11 courses if it is a second major, or 12 courses as a single major, of which at least 6 courses must be unique to the major. Normally only one of the 11-12 courses may be an introductory course, with several of the courses at the 300- or 400-level. An Individual Major may include a course equivalent, courses from study abroad, Honors, and/or an independent study but normally does not contain more than two courses at the 450, 495, or 499 level. All coursework for the major must be passed with a grade of C- or better. Courses taken credit/no credit require special approval by the Individual Majors Committee to be applied to a student's program of study. Normally the Committee will not approve more than three courses taken at another institution, or more than three courses from any program or department offering its own major.

While most Individual Majors earn a B.A., it is possible to create an Individual Major with a B.S.; this requires a minimum of 16 courses, all from within the natural sciences division. The Individual Majors Committee takes the role of departmental/program chair for certifying the student's completed program of study (senior audit).

**Individual Major Declaration**

Return this form to the Registrar's Office, Lower Level, Demarest Hall  
(or send as a PDF to registrar@hws.edu)

Committee Action

- Approved
- Not Approved
- Revise & Resubmit

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Box # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Major Adviser \_\_\_\_\_ Is this your Primary Adviser? \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Major \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one: \_\_\_\_\_ Disciplinary major  
\_\_\_\_\_ Interdisciplinary major

Please check one: \_\_\_\_\_ First Major  
\_\_\_\_\_ Change of Major (from \_\_\_\_\_)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Second Major (first major is \_\_\_\_\_)

Intended minor: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you intend to earn credit in your Individual Major by taking courses through another university or college? Pre-approval of transfer courses is required from the deans and the Individual Majors Committee.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you intend to earn credit in your Individual Major by completing a course equivalent?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you intend to earn credit for courses in your Individual Major by completing an independent study or Honors?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is "yes" to any of these questions, please list and describe the courses in Part III of the Individual Major Record (see p. 5).

**Individual Majors Record**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title of Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

I. Please list the courses you wish to include in your Individual Major. **Be sure to include the department, course number, and title of the course.**

Department, Course # and Title	Semester and Year of the course
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____
11. _____	_____
12. _____	_____

*Some courses (particularly those restricted by class year or by major/minor status) may require approval from the instructor to enroll during your registration time.*

\_\_\_\_\_

Adviser's Signature / Date (if applicable)

**III. Description of the proposed major**

Please attach a typed description of your Individual Major (two full page minimum).

Include in this description:

- the central theme of your major,
- why this is a viable major,
- why an individual major will address your academic needs better than a department or program major,
- how **each** of your courses (including any independent study, Honors or course equivalent) is relevant to your major.

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Ask your adviser to fill out the adviser's recommendation form and attach. **The proposal will not be reviewed without it.**

**Individual Major - Adviser Recommendation Form**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

I. Please give a brief description of the subject matter of the major.

II. If there are independent study courses, course equivalents, or Honors included in the major, please indicate the nature of such in as much detail as possible.

III. Other comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adviser's Signature / Date

**Please return this form to the student to be attached to the proposed major form.**