INDEPENDENT MAJOR

Independent Major Requirements

The Independent Major (INM) offers students the opportunity to create a cohesive major program of study outside of the majors offered. To earn an INM, students develop a proposal (described below), obtain letters of support from two faculty sponsors, receive approval from the department chairs of the constituent departments and be approved by the Curriculum Committee. Given the maturity and academic ability needed to successfully complete an independent major, students must have a minimum 3.00 cumulative GPA when they submit their proposal. Students may not request an Independent major if they have completed 70 credits at Washington College.

Students begin the process by articulating a vision for their INM, including potential course work. Once formulated, students finds two faculty sponsors, one in each of the departments from which the majority of the intended INM coursework is in, with the understanding that one of the faculty members serves as the primary academic advisor if the proposal is approved. The faculty sponsors and the student then work together to develop a curriculum for completing the INM.

The proposed major must meet the following criteria:

- At least twelve courses (48 credits) from no fewer than two academic departments.
- No more than four introductory courses.
- At least four upper-level courses (300-level or above).
- No more than 8 credits of for-credit internship.
- No more than 8 credits of independent study or faculty-led research.
- Clearly defined requirements for completing the Senior Capstone Experience.
- Clearly defined requirements for obtaining Honors in the Independent major, if applicable.

In addition to a detailed course plan, the proposal must also include two letters of support from the faculty sponsors and a cover letter, written by the student, describing how the proposed INM creates a cohesive program with a clear academic focus that is distinct from current majors offered at Washington College.

If the major proposal appears reasonable but is not polished, complete, or otherwise ready for approval, the subcommittee may suggest revisions. The subcommittee will send feedback directly to the student, after which the student will have thirty (30) calendar days to revise and resubmit the proposal for reconsideration. The subcommittee will then accept or reject the revised proposal, but no further revisions to the proposal will be considered.

Once the application is complete, the proposal is submitted to the department chairs of the constituent departments for review. Upon approval by the department chairs, the student submits the application to the Provost's Office for consideration by a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee. If the proposal is accepted by the Curriculum Committee, the student is an official candidate for the proposed INM and the specified faculty advisor is assigned as the student's academic advisor. In the event the approved course plan must be modified, e.g. due to new course offerings or schedule conflicts, changes to the approved proposal must be approved by both faculty sponsors.

Given the unique nature of the INM, students must complete at least 32 credits of the INM at Washington College or in a Washington College approved program. While completion of the INM satisfies the graduation requirement for an academic major, it does not preclude a student from completing a secondary major or one or more minors. In addition, all students approved for an INM must also complete all general education requirements appropriate to their Catalog year. As with traditional majors, courses counted toward general education requirements may overlap with major requirements.

To ensure the INM program adheres to the same standards as other majors offered by Washington College, the Associate Dean of Academic Success oversees assessment of all INMs and makes recommendations to improve learning outcomes, as necessary.