

Carleton College — Special Major

Application Instructions

Why Special Major?

A major at Carleton is important because it gives students access to a methodology within a discipline as a part of a department or framework that communicates the standard practices of a community of scholars devoted to a field of study. If your educational goals cannot be fulfilled within a standard major, an alternative may be a special program of study.

The Academic Standing Committee also recognizes that there are a class of majors (Dance, Japanese, and Chinese) that may be considered Special Major Templates. While they are not considered standard majors, they do follow a significantly different process. If you are considering one of these majors, please consult with the heads of their respective departments or the department web pages.

Developing your proposal

Freshman Year

- Explore and discuss thoroughly your thoughts about designing a special major.
- Talk with friends, faculty advisors, potential faculty sponsors, and class deans. Can you accomplish what you want within an existing major and/or minor?

Sophomore Year

- Continue exploring and discussing.
- Work with two faculty sponsors to develop a proposal that will meet the criteria on page 2.
- One faculty member must agree to serve as your primary sponsor. Write a draft.

Junior Year

- Write a draft of your proposal, submit this to your faculty sponsors for preliminary approval.
- Submit a completed Application Form to the Academic Standing Committee through the Dean of Students Office. ASC meets only when classes are in session; expect at least three weeks for a decision.

Freshmen and Sophomores

If you are a Freshman or Sophomore thinking about applying for a special major we highly encourage you to read and answer these questions in addition to talking with your advisor, class dean, and friends. As you work through these questions, expect to revise your answers multiple times as you come up with new perspectives and ideas. The process of thinking about and revising your answers will help you develop a more complete and compelling case for a special major.

Reasoning

1. What is your special major? Title it and describe it in 2 sentences.
2. Why do you want to explore this special major? What would getting to pursue this topic mean to you?
3. How does this connect with your future goals? Does this prepare you for your post-Carleton career?

Structure

4. What departments will be the focus of this major?
5. Is there a methodology that will be the focus of this major?
6. At Carleton, the methodological class is an important part of the major process. How do you plan on receiving this type of learning?

Community

7. How will you pursue this major without the traditional community structure found in a regular major?
8. Are there any individuals currently in existing majors that you can turn to for (minor) support and guidance when necessary?
9. Are there support structures outside of the college that you can turn to if necessary?

Time

10. How will this major fit into other plans you have at Carleton? (Extracurriculars, study abroad, independent research)
11. If you do not receive the major, will you be able to pursue your plans to study this topic independently?
12. At what point would it be not worth it do attempt a special major? Is there anything that might make it too difficult?

Suggestions

1. **Select your faculty sponsors carefully.** They need to have interest and expertise in your area and be able to judge the merits of your proposal; they must also be available until you graduate.
 2. **Timeline: think about it early and often.** Ideally, develop it during Freshman and Sophomore years and submit it for approval early in your Junior year.
 3. **Let your ideas develop over time.** Talk with faculty, staff, advisors, dreams, and friends about your ideas. Determine the best course of action for your goals.
 4. **You may include off-campus study in your plans.** If more than one term, provide rationale and explicit faculty endorsement. Carleton majors are expected to be completed primarily on campus.
 5. **Expect suggestions or even required changes from the Committee.** It is not unusual to be asked to resubmit a proposal for final approval.
 6. **Your responsibilities continue after approval.** Any changes from the approved proposal must be approved by your faculty advisor and the ASC. Get approval before you act on the changes.
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WAIT!!

Make sure you have the following:

- Faculty Sponsors Support
- Rationale and Description
- Integrative Exercise Outline
- Course of Study
- Graduation Requirements

Special Major Petition Form To The Academic Standing Committee

(Return to the Office of the Dean of Students)

Criteria for approval

The Academic Standing Committee uses the following criteria as it considers petitions:

1. A rationale that is clear and coherent with compelling academic reasons for a special program.
2. A program of courses that has breadth and depth.
3. An integrative exercise topic that fits the rationale and coursework.
4. Faculty approval and comments that specifically evaluate the academic merit of the proposal and your ability to manage it successfully.

Name:	Class Year:	Current Major:	Drop Current Major?
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Special Major Title

I support this student's proposal to the Academic Standing Committee that the above named major should be approved.

Student: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervising
Faculty: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Secondary
Faculty: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Academic Standing Committee: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Granted Denied Returned

Faculty Sponsors Supporting Statements:

Faculty Sponsors are critical to the development and approval of the Special Major. Please specifically assess the academic merit of this proposal and the student's ability to manage a Special Major successfully.

Please consider the following items:

- Why isn't this course of study available within a currently offered major (perhaps with a few additional courses)?
- How does the Special Major fit as a course of study for undergraduates?
- How does the Special Major fit within the spirit of Carleton's Liberal Arts Philosophy?
- What role do you see yourself playing in the students' special major?
- How well will this student function without the support structures of a traditional major?

Supervising Faculty Sponsor:

Date:

Comments:

Second Faculty Sponsor:

Date:

Comments:

Rationale and Description

State clearly the nature of your Special Major, and why you wish to create it. Explain how it differs significantly from the standard departmental majors offered at Carleton. *(Use this space or attach rationale; type or print clearly)*

- Describe the major you wish to have approved (check departmental websites for examples.)
- Tell us why you want to take this special major. (Suggestions: Personal passions, future goals, etc.)
- Detail why this course of study won't work within a major already offered at Carleton.
- Explain as why this major is an ideal fit for a Carleton education.
- Finally, examine how this major is personally important or impactful in your life.

Please list other colleges or universities that offer this major. List both the university as well as the title of the major. (Attach any relevant curriculum or course materials on the back.)

Integrative Exercise (Comps)

Briefly describe an intended (or possible) integrative exercise; describe how it will relate to your rationale and coursework.

General Graduation Requirements

Check off the requirements you have completed.

Argument and Inquiry Seminar (AI)

Arts Practice (ARP)

Formal or Statistical Reasoning (FSR)

Humanistic Inquiry (HI)

Literary/Artistic Analysis (LA)

Science with Lab (LS)

Social Inquiry (SI)

Language Requirement

International Studies (IS)

Intercultural Domestic Studies (IDS)

Quantitative Reasoning Encounter (QRE) - 3 courses

Physical Education - 4 courses

Writing Portfolio

Graduation Requirements

In the table below please outline the requirements you have completed up to and including the current term. Then, please indicate which future courses you will take to complete remaining major requirements. You may leave any additional courses blank.

Dept.	Course Title	Course #	Credits	Requirement
Fall ____ Credit Total: ____				
Winter ____ Credit Total: ____				
Spring ____ Credit Total: ____				
Fall ____ Credit Total: ____				
Winter ____ Credit Total: ____				
Spring ____ Credit Total: ____				

Freshman/Sophomore Years

Dept.	Course Title	Course #	Credits	Requirement
Fall ____ Credit Total: ____				
Winter ____ Credit Total: ____				
Spring ____ Credit Total: ____				
Fall ____ Credit Total: ____				
Winter ____ Credit Total: ____				
Spring ____ Credit Total: ____				

Junior/Senior Years