

Guidelines for Faculty Proposing an Interdisciplinary Minor, Emphasis, or Major

Guidelines for the Program Designation *Interdisciplinary Major*

Definitions: An *Interdisciplinary Major* is a course of study that offers in-depth preparation in a field at the crossroads of two or more academic disciplines. The field may be established or emerging. An *Interdisciplinary Major* should prepare students at a level sophisticated enough to pursue graduate work in the interdisciplinary field or one or more of its constituent disciplines.

Guidelines for creating an *Interdisciplinary Major*:

1. An *Interdisciplinary Major* must be housed in an interdisciplinary program.
2. A program that offers an *Interdisciplinary Major* will provide in its proposal to the Curriculum Committee a written mission statement that includes an explanation for (a) how the major comprises both groundwork and in-depth preparation in an interdisciplinary field; and (b) how the requirements for the major provide a specified set of courses that support the study of that area; and (c) names an advisory board or steering committee with representatives from multiple departments.
3. An *Interdisciplinary Major* must include specific courses that are interdisciplinary in approach, rather than being composed entirely of courses that each take the approach of a single discipline. That is, an *Interdisciplinary Major* must be distinct from a double-, or other multiple-, major in some of its constituent disciplines.
4. An *Interdisciplinary Major* will culminate in a capstone experience that is interdisciplinary in approach.
5. The requirements for the *Interdisciplinary Major* will a minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 units.
6. Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry will not be part of the requirements or elective options for the *Interdisciplinary Major*.

Guidelines for the Program Designation *Interdisciplinary Minor*

Definitions: The program definition *Interdisciplinary Minor* constitutes an introduction to an emerging or established interdisciplinary academic *field*. Whereas a *major* is typically designed to offer a curriculum that provides a foundation in an academic field adequate for the pursuit of graduate work, and a *minor* is designed to provide an introduction to an academic field, an *Interdisciplinary Minor* does the work of a minor in relationship to fields that draw on two or more disciplinary traditions and which therefore requires structures that allow crossover course requirements and specific courses designed to address the interdisciplinary area of study in its own right.

Guidelines for creating an *Interdisciplinary Minor*:

1. An *Interdisciplinary Minor* must be housed in an interdisciplinary program.
2. A program that offers an *Interdisciplinary Minor* will provide in its proposal to the Curriculum Committee a written mission statement that includes an explanation for: (a) how the minor constitutes an introduction to an interdisciplinary field; and (b) how the requirements for the minor provides a distinctive sequence that supports the study of that area; and (c) names an advisory board or steering committee with representatives from multiple departments.
3. Although an *Interdisciplinary Minor* will be designed in relationship to particular academic fields and areas of study, the requirements will not prevent a student with any major or minor from earning an *Interdisciplinary Minor*. Likewise, the minor should not be something that can be “automatically” earned by fulfilling the requirements of any particular major.
4. The program offering an *Interdisciplinary Minor* will establish a series of courses, including a gateway course, introducing students to the field of study and a culminating capstone experience (e.g., seminar, project, or experience).
5. The requirements for the *Interdisciplinary Minor* will consist of 5-6 units.
6. Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry will not be part of the requirements or elective options for the *Interdisciplinary Minor*.

Guidelines for the Program Designation *Interdisciplinary Emphasis*

Definitions: The program definition *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* constitutes an enhancement or overlay on a topic for academic study by providing an interdisciplinary context that extends beyond traditional study in a major or minor. Whereas a major is typically designed to offer a curriculum that provides a foundation in an academic field adequate for the pursuit of graduate work, and a minor is designed to provide an introduction to an academic *field*, an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* is designed to complement an academic field by providing a curriculum or set of experiences that extend beyond coursework in a major or minor, and makes a loose concentration in a *theme* that crosses and combines several disciplines.

Guidelines for creating an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis*:

1. An *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* must be housed in an interdisciplinary program.
2. A program that offers an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* will provide to Curriculum Committee in its proposal a written mission statement that includes an explanation for: (a) how the emphasis constitutes an enhancement or overlay for a substantial number of academic majors; and (b) how the requirements for the emphasis provide a distinctive enhancement that extends beyond traditional study in a major or minor*; and (c) names and advisory board or steering committee with representatives from multiple departments.
3. Although an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* will be designed to complement particular academic fields, the requirements will not prevent a student with any major or minor from earning the designation of *Interdisciplinary Emphasis*. Therefore, unlimited double-counting of requirements should be allowed in the program design.
4. The program offering an *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* will establish a mechanism to ensure that students reflect carefully on the relationship between the *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* and their educational goals. Examples of mechanisms that have been successfully implemented include a curriculum contract, a required letter of intent, and required advising sessions.
5. The requirement for the *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* will number at least 7 units.
6. Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry will not be part of the requirements or elective options for the *Interdisciplinary Emphasis*.

*Such requirements may include common courses or experiences (for example, core categories, a gateway or capstone course, a study abroad experience) as part of the designated curriculum.

Comparison of *Interdisciplinary Emphasis* and *Interdisciplinary Minor*

Interdisciplinary emphasis	Interdisciplinary minor
Draws together multiple departments and areas of expertise to provide a collection of classes that can be taken in overlay of major and minor coursework to create an enhancing concentration on a topic that concerns several disciplines.	Provides a course of study in an interdisciplinary field. Interdisciplinary minors feature sequencing and a narrower set of courses that are in some aspects discrete in relation to major study, not an overlay.
Emphases aim to create a breadth of experience an interdisciplinary themes.	Minors aim to create an introductory focus in relationship to an established or emerging interdisciplinary field.
Emphases offer a collection of classes that illuminate aspects of the interdisciplinary topic, out of which students may choose options and track connections.	Minors offer a sequence of study, beginning with one or more gateway courses, in relationship to the interdisciplinary field.
Emphases establish mechanisms to ensure students reflect carefully on the relationship between the emphasis and their educational goals.	Minors culminate in a capstone course.

Curriculum Committee requests that <i>Interdisciplinary Emphases</i>	Curriculum Committee requests that <i>Interdisciplinary Minors</i>
Have a steering committee or advisory board with representatives from multiple departments.	Have a steering committee or advisory board with representatives from multiple departments.
Require at least 7 classes to that allow for a breadth of engagement with the topic.	Keep the course requirements to 5-6 units of focused study.
Allow unlimited double-counting of requirements because of the overlay nature of the program.	Limit double counting in relationship to majors in a way that keeps the minor area of study distinctive.
Feature a shared syllabus description about the program that allows students to see the relationship of the classes in the emphasis.	Discuss in syllabus front matter the nature of the field of study pursued by the minor.

Some questions to consider if you would like to propose a new interdisciplinary course of study at the University of Puget Sound:

Is this Interdisciplinary Program about an interdisciplinary field (Minor) or is it a pathway for seeing connections around a theme in multiple disciplines (Emphasis)?

Do I want to create a program that is loosely organized with lots of options for creating a set of conversations and connections across classes (Emphasis) or do I want to create a more sequenced and focused introduction to an interdisciplinary area of study (Minor)?

Am I interested in overlaying various coursework in other majors and minors and allowing double counting of classes for requirements (Emphasis) or I am interested in a more discrete structure (Minor)?

How do I want to organize the culmination of the course of study? Minors are asked to create a capstone experience or thesis. Emphases can do so, or they can organize another type of reflection.

If you are considering proposing an Interdisciplinary Major:

Interdisciplinary majors offer a curriculum that provides a foundation in an academic field defined by intersections of traditional disciplines. Interdisciplinary majors must be administered by an interdisciplinary program created cross departmentally. Some interdisciplinary majors may require coursework in a first major of choice to complement the foundation of study in the interdisciplinary major.

Please note that all proposals for new majors, minors, interdisciplinary minors, interdisciplinary emphases, and other courses of study must include a completed Curricular Impact Statement (CIS).