

Individualized Studies Application Process

1. **Exploration:** Discuss your idea with the Program Director and explore how to pursue it (e.g., classes, internships, study abroad). You must have a 2.75 GPA (or 2.5 at the discretion of the program director) after your first 30 credit hours. You may join the program at any stage.
2. **Draft Application:** Draft a Statement of Purpose and Plan of Study and then meet with the Program Director.

The Plan of Study should be organized chronologically, showing when you will complete the specified courses and other activities (e.g., internships).

The Statement of Purpose must convince the faculty coordinating committee (think "Review Board") that you have carefully thought through your goals and are proposing a rigorous program of study with clear academic merit. It should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in 12pt font, well-organized, clearly written, and free from grammatical errors. Include the following four components:

- a. **Academic focus:** Identify the major's themes, issues, questions and/or problems. Be sure the focus is conceptually coherent. Title the major accurately, avoiding names of traditional majors where possible. For example, "Science Communication and Sports" might be confused with the existing "Science Communication" major. Consider instead "Sport Promotion" or "Sport, Communication, and Society." Other acceptable titles would include "International Child Welfare and Rights," "Environmental Writing," and "Mass Media, Popular Culture, and Entrepreneurship."
 - b. **Academic Content:** Identify departments and courses drawn upon to cover the specified academic focus. Carefully consider the courses you will take. Explain the themes that emerge and what will be gained from those themes. Additionally, explain internships, field experiences, and/or study abroad experiences that will enhance the major. You must provide a coherent, academically rigorous plan and show why existing majors fail to meet your learning objectives.
 - c. **Personal Background:** Identify past experiences (courses, research projects, jobs, internships) that have shaped your decision to design this individualized major.
 - d. **Academic and Career Goals:** Explain your specific academic and career goals and how your major will help achieve them. For example, you might explain how your major might enhance your chances of participating in a competitive study abroad program, secure a highly desirable internship, or gain admission to a specific sort of graduate school program. You may need to research specific graduate school or career options to present a convincing argument. You need not specify only one plan as you might instead detail a number of options that your major will provide.
3. **Identify Faculty Advisory Committee:** Identify your primary advisor and two additional Winthrop faculty members who will form your faculty advisory committee and meet with them to help you develop your ideas. Solicit feedback on your Plan of Study, Statement of Purpose, and proposal's

focus, title, and academic content. Consult advisors well before the submission deadline. Each will need to sign the Plan of Study and Statement of Purpose.

4. **Submit Application:** Revise your materials based on feedback from your advisors and obtain their signatures on the appropriate form. Submit to the Program Director your (1) Statement of Purpose, (2) Plan of Study, and (3) unofficial transcript obtained from Degree Works. The Coordinating Committee will evaluate whether the proposal is cohesive and conceptually sound, and the feasibility of completing the planned courses and related experiences (e.g. internship, study abroad) within the projected time frame.
5. **Proposal Presentation:** Attend the Individualized Studies Coordinating Committee meeting. Prepare a short (two to three minutes) explanation of your major and be prepared to answer questions about it and your future plans. The Committee meets only once each Fall and Spring semester.