

Bachelor of Arts with Special Major

Requirements (36 units)

Total units required for graduation: 120

(Program Code: SINT)

Occasionally, students with specialized educational or professional objectives may find that the existing degree programs offered at the university do not satisfy personal needs or career plans and that a carefully structured, interdisciplinary program of study is more appropriate.

The B.A. with Special Major is an interdisciplinary program intended for students with unusual interests and abilities who have the initiative and desire to design their own major with the aid of faculty and professional advisors. The purpose of these individually-designed special majors is to provide a carefully controlled opportunity for exceptional students to design, with faculty approval, a flexible interdisciplinary course of study that leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Admission normally is limited to students who can design (with the aid of a faculty committee) individualized programs organized around a coherent topic or cross-disciplinary subject that involves two or more departments. Occasionally, short-term interests in interdisciplinary programs may be served by more structure and degree plans organized by faculty for groups of students.

The B.A. with Special Major is not intended to bypass normal graduation requirements or to avoid certain requirements of a regular major offered at CSUSB or at other nearby institutions. The self-designed major should not substantially duplicate any existing degree offered at CSUSB. Likewise, a Special Major cannot be developed in areas such as architecture, agriculture, or engineering where the campus lacks the necessary faculty expertise to guide the student and supervise the culminating project. Students must have an overall grade point average of 3.0 including work taken at all institutions and must maintain a 3.0 average in the courses required for the self-designed major.

Although the Special Major is a unique program that suits individual goals, has potential to combine fields and functions, and can add distinction to the degree, such an interdisciplinary program may pose professional obstacles and be difficult to explain to graduate schools and employers. Career goals and prerequisites for higher degrees should be reviewed before proceeding with this major. In particular, students who will be seeking a teaching credential should consult with faculty in the College of Education to see how a Special Major might impact subject matter requirements for teachers.

Interested students should contact the Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising to begin the application and screening process. Prospective majors should be prepared to present a one-page description and justification of the program which outlines the concepts, goals and objectives to be fulfilled by the Special Major. If, after discussing the tentative interdisciplinary interests of the student, the Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising believes the student should be encouraged to prepare a formal application and proposal for a Special Major, a packet of information and forms for justifying and submitting the proposed interdisciplinary curriculum will be provided to the student. If the student has not yet found faculty members who are interested in helping

the student develop the curriculum and guide their study, the Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising will suggest possible faculty committee members.

Requirements for the Major

1. Only regularly matriculated students with a 3.0 overall grade point average may be admitted to the Special Major program.
2. The minimum requirements for a Special Major will be 36 units (with at least 24 units in upper-division coursework) of carefully structured coursework in two or more fields. Additional units beyond the minimum may be required by the faculty committee.
3. The Special Major must include at least one 3-unit upper division required 'writing-intensive' (WI) designated course as part of the structured coursework.
4. The Special Major must be proposed prior to the senior year. A student should have completed no more than 84 units at time of application for the Special Major and have a minimum of 36 units left to complete.
5. Neither lower-division nor upper-division General Education courses may be counted in the major, though they may supplement, strengthen and provide background for the major.
6. The Special Major is not available as a "double major," nor is it available to students pursuing a second bachelor's degree.
7. A culminating experience (project, research paper or other written documentation) and verification of accomplishment of project is required. Up to three units of credit for this may be built into the requirements of the major.

Application Process

1. Determine the feasibility of pursuing a Special Major by reviewing the requirements and examining available programs and majors to see if the proposed major could be met through any of these. Explore the resources of the campus needed for a Special Major in terms of course offerings, library resources, facilities, and faculty expertise.
2. Develop a statement of goals and objectives and the interdisciplinary program proposal which specifically addresses the following: What is the purpose or focus of this specially designed major? What skills does the student already have? What additional knowledge is needed? What is the best way to reach the goal? What is the student's career objective? Are there plans for advanced training and study?
3. Consult with the Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising about the process as well as interests and goals. One week prior to this meeting, the student must submit a written description and justification of the area of study based on goals and objectives. The Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising will contact departments and faculty members to discuss the feasibility of this area of study. If the draft proposal is acceptable, forms for formally developing and proposing the degree requirements will be provided.
4. A faculty committee will be appointed at this time based on recommendations of the Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising and appropriate departments. A chair will be elected by the committee. Normally, the faculty committee will be made up of faculty from the departments and disciplines of the interdisciplinary interests, e.g., a program in Arts Management would usually have faculty committee from the arts and business.
5. Work with the faculty committee to determine the best and most appropriate courses to include in the Special Major. Consideration should be given to prerequisites courses needed as preparation for

the 36 units (24 upper-division) minimum of study required in the Special Major.

6. The Special Major proposal must be signed by three faculty members who have worked with the student in developing the proposed course of study. The faculty member who will chair the advisory committee must write a statement of support which includes a brief evaluation of the proposal.
7. On the form provided, list the lower-division support courses which were taken in preparation for the upper-division component. These may include General Education and transfer courses where appropriate and directly related to your planned area of study.
8. List the minimum of 36 units of course work to be included in the Special Major. As an interdisciplinary program, these courses should include work from at least two and usually three or more departments. To avoid later difficulties with key courses that are not offered prior to graduation, reasonable substitutions should be listed where possible.
9. Submit the Special Major proposal along with a copy of transcripts of all college work completed to the Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising. This proposal will be forwarded to the University Curriculum Committee for consideration. The committee meets regularly throughout the academic year and applications can be submitted at any time, though every effort should be made to turn in the proposal early enough in the term to receive approval prior to registration for the next term. Applications cannot be considered during the summer quarter. (The application materials should be filled out with great care and accuracy. Hastily done or carelessly prepared proposals are unlikely to convince the Curriculum Committee of the seriousness of the proposal.)
10. In some cases, the University Curriculum Committee may invite students and/or their faculty advisor to discuss the proposal with the committee, especially where clarification or changes are requested.
11. The Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising will notify the student in writing of the decision of the University Curriculum Committee. This may be approval, conditional approval based on recommend changes/revisions in curriculum or disapproval.
12. Any change or substitution of courses in the approved program must be approved by the student's faculty committee and the Office of Academic Success and Undergraduate Advising.
13. Upon approval of the Special Major proposal, the student may formally declare a Special Major. At graduation, the diploma will show only a B.A. with Special Major, but the transcript will reflect the nature or title of the special interdisciplinary study in this fashion: B.A. with Special Major in (subject area).