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# Independent Interdisciplinary Major

Courses of Study:  
Major (BA)

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## Objectives

An independent interdisciplinary major (IIM) offers students with interdisciplinary intellectual interests the opportunity to design a course of study not available in the regular curriculum. Each IIM is designed around a topic, theme, issue, or set of questions that cannot be adequately addressed within the context of existing majors or minors. A proven record of academic achievement, seriousness of purpose, and intellectual curiosity are prerequisites for this endeavor. The skills necessary to pursue an IIM include the ability to work independently, to analyze and synthesize materials from different disciplines, and to work one-on-one in sustained dialogue with faculty members.

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## How to Become a Major

An IIM must be designed in collaboration with three faculty members from at least two, preferably three, different departments. Although it is acceptable to have faculty from the International Business School or the Heller School, the primary adviser of the committee must be from the College of Arts and Sciences. Students must present and receive approval of a proposal no later than the end of their junior year.

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## Requirements for the Major

- A.** Students must receive approval by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee before the end of their junior year.
- B.** Core Courses: Twelve courses (48 credits) from various academic departments. A maximum of four courses (16 credits) may be from study abroad, summer school, or cross-registration.
- C.** One Senior Experience: IIM 98b: Independent Study (one semester), or the full-year IIM 99d (Senior Research).
- D.** Students who wish to be considered for "departmental" honors must achieve a 3.25 cumulative GPA and must complete the two-semester (eight-credit) IIM 99d option to produce a senior honors project or thesis.

The proposal should describe the role each potential course plays in their curriculum and how the various courses relate to one another. In addition to discussing their intellectual, academic, and career goals, students must address why designing an IIM is more desirable than completing two separate majors or a combination of major and minor. The proposal consists of four parts: the proposed curriculum forms, a proposal statement no longer than three pages in length, a letter of endorsement signed by all three members of the faculty committee, and evidence of comparable majors offered at other colleges and universities. The proposal will ultimately be reviewed by faculty members from the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and the Committee on Academic Standing (COAS), which meets during the second half of each semester. This group will evaluate the proposal and make recommendations to the UCC, which grants final approval of all IIM proposals.

Students who wish to develop a proposal for an IIM should consult with the Office of Academic Services.

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**E.** Courses graded Pass/Fail cannot count toward the major.

**F.** No more than four courses may double-count toward another major or two courses toward another minor. No more than six courses may be used toward any additional major(s) and minor.

**G.** No course with a final grade below a C- may count toward the major.

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## Special Notes Relating to Undergraduates

Interested students should stop by the Office of Academic Services or visit [www.brandeis.edu/as/advpol/IIMmajor.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/as/advpol/IIMmajor.html) to view the entire IIM guidelines and proposal.

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## Courses of Instruction

### IIM 98b Senior Essay

Usually offered every year.  
Staff

### IIM 99d Senior Research

Usually offered every year.  
Staff