

INDIVIDUAL MAJOR PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

What is an Individual Major?

If your academic interests cannot be accommodated in one of the many majors already offered on this campus, and your scholastic record demonstrates that you are an above average, serious, and highly motivated student, you may wish to develop a proposal for an Individual Major.

Before starting a proposal, examine available majors and meet with staff and faculty advisors to be absolutely certain that none permits you to develop your interests fully. Bear in mind that it is sometimes possible to make substitutions in existing majors and that some areas of interest may be pursued by taking related courses as part of your electives outside the major. If you cannot find an appropriate "home", you may submit a proposal for an Individual Major. It must present a course of study with a solid academic base, unified in theme, supported by a list of courses with the requisite focus and depth required of all majors.

Standards for approval of an Individual Major are extremely stringent, and few are approved. You should be aware that an Individual Major may limit your options for graduate study or job opportunities. In addition, the degree will not be ABET accredited.

How to qualify for an Individual Major

You must have been a student in the University of California for three quarters and must have earned at least 36 units in resident courses on this campus. You must submit your proposal no later than the end of your junior year. Transfer students who will be seniors by the time they complete the 36-unit requirement may submit their proposal during the junior year and request approval contingent upon the successful fulfillment of the residence and grade point requirements.

Students who would need to change colleges in order to declare the Individual Major in the College of Engineering will be held to the policies for changing majors for the year in which they are applying (see Change of Major website for details). Students must have taken coursework and earned a GPA comparable to students who have recently changed major into the most closely affiliated major in the College of Engineering. Review and approval of a change of college request for Individual Majors is at the discretion of the Associate Dean.

An applicant's academic record is important; recent approvals suggest a UC grade point average of well above 3.5 will be needed.

How to prepare a proposal

If after looking carefully through the *General Catalog*, you cannot find a major which will permit you to pursue the focus you desire, you should first make a list of available courses which will support your academic plan, distinguishing between those courses which constitute the preparation for the major

(lower-division) and those which are central to the major (upper-division). You should also prepare a general statement concerning your goals in this proposed major and how the courses you list will support these goals. When you have a concrete, well-organized proposal, you should discuss it with faculty members who would be appropriate sponsors and advisors for your major.

You will need two faculty sponsors, one of whom will serve as your primary advisor. Both must be senate faculty members. For individual majors proposed in the College of Engineering it is required that the primary advisor hold an appointment in a College of Engineering department.

After consulting with your faculty sponsors and completing a first draft of your proposal, you should make an appointment with an academic advisor in the College of Engineering, Undergraduate Studies Office. The proposal will be reviewed carefully on behalf of the Associate Dean, and modifications may be suggested.

The Proposal

The proposal must be well organized and well written. It should be typed and include the following:

1. Your name, perm number, and UCSB email address.
2. The title of your major, which should be clearly indicative of its focus.
3. A description of the general nature of the major.
4. The educational objectives of the major, with particular attention as to how the courses selected will assure the focus and depth required for all majors.
5. A careful and detailed explanation of why your educational goals cannot be achieved within an existing major on this campus.
6. A list of lower division courses by number and title which constitute the preparation for the major.
7. A list of upper division courses by number and title which constitute the major. The minimum number of units required in this area is 36. This portion of the major must include a one-quarter 199 course (1-5 units) which serves as the senior thesis. Indicate by means of an asterisk (*) those courses in both preparation and upper division work that already have been completed or are in progress at the time of the proposal.
8. A statement from your faculty advisor, indicating that he or she a) approves of your proposal, b) verifies your competence to pursue the Individual Major successfully, and c) consents to serve as your advisor. Your other faculty sponsor should also endorse the proposal.

What will happen to your proposal

When the proposal is in its final form, return it to the COE Office of Undergraduate Studies with the endorsements from your advisors. The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies will review your proposal and transmit the proposal to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in the cognate department. Typically, this is the department where the primary faculty advisor holds an appointment or where the majority of the proposed courses are housed. The curriculum committee will forward their recommendation to the Associate Dean who will bring the proposal and recommendation to the College of Engineering Faculty Executive Committee. You will be advised in writing whether your proposal is approved or denied. If

it is approved, the appointment of your faculty sponsors will be confirmed. If your proposal is denied, you may revise it for further consideration or choose an existing major.

Senior Thesis

As a synthesis of your course of study and a demonstration of the coherence of the subject matter, you are required to complete a written senior thesis as part of a 199 Independent Studies course under the supervision of your primary advisor, usually during your final quarter. Two copies of the senior thesis should be prepared. After your primary advisor has read and approved it, the second copy is sent to the Associate Dean with a statement indicating that you have completed the final major requirements satisfactorily. The Dean will place the statement and the thesis on file to confirm that major requirements have been fulfilled at the time of graduation.