

SPECIAL MAJOR

Office: WH D-440, (310) 234-3308

General Description

Students who have academic or professional goals that are not easily met by one of the regular degree programs at CSU Dominguez Hills may find that the undergraduate Special Majors program or Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies/Special Major is more suitable to their unique needs and interests. Through these programs, students will integrate studies from two (or more) departments or colleges, either concentrating on each equally or choosing one department or option as the primary emphasis with the other(s) as secondary.

Both undergraduate Special Major and Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies/Special Major programs are intended to be focused, pre-planned progressions toward well-defined objectives. A Special Major or Minor student will need an appropriate advisory committee chosen from the departments involved. The program of study for either the undergraduate Special Major/Minor or the Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies Major must be chosen from the represented departments and must be supportable by:

1. courses already offered in the regular degree programs; and
2. the expertise of members of CSU Dominguez Hills permanent faculty.

Restrictions

There are some restrictions with regard to the Special Major/Minor. Specific restrictions are described under each program; general restrictions include the following:

Undergraduate Special Major

This major is not to be used to:

- substitute for a recognized undergraduate major offered by the University.
- bypass normal graduation requirements.
- serve as an alternative to a program in which the student is in academic difficulty.

Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies/Special Major

This graduate option cannot be granted if the student's objective(s) can be met by regular programs offered by other colleges or universities in the Los Angeles area, nor can it be used in place of degree requirements or graduate degree programs already offered on campus.

A student working toward the Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies/Special Major is subject to the University's policies and must complete all academic requirements prescribed by the University.

Features

For selected students, the Special Major Programs provide an opportunity to pursue an individualized course of study in order to attain a Bachelor of Arts/Science or a Master of Arts/Science Degree. Thus, such a program would enable students to cut across regular academic areas to develop an integrated major, minor or graduate option tailored to their own educational and career goals.

Each Special Major (or Minor) or Graduate IDS has a specially appointed faculty Advisory Committee. This committee works with and gives

special attention to the student. With careful planning, most programs of study can be completed by attending evening and/or daytime classes.

Programs at both the bachelor's and master's level provide students with three unique features:

- the ability to create an educationally sound and intellectually rich program of study that answers the student's own particular needs, including career needs;
- a course of study that draws upon the diverse curriculum of the University yet focuses on study areas of particular interest;
- the opportunity to work closely with a selected group of faculty advisors.

Academic Advisement

Undergraduate

Undergraduate students who wish to pursue a Special Major or Minor should contact the Office of Academic Programs at (310) 243-3308 for more information.

Graduate

The Office of Graduate Studies will assist the Graduate Interdisciplinary Studies major. Students interested in pursuing this program should phone (310) 243-3693 for an appointment.

Undergraduate Special Major/Minor

Preparation

Since students must prepare a proposal in consultation with a faculty advisor and obtain approval from that advisor, and members of the Advisory Committee, before taking the courses comprising the major/minor, it is imperative that they do the necessary planning and paperwork as early as possible. Students should complete all lower division General Education requirements before beginning Special Major or Minor coursework.

Procedures for Declaring an Undergraduate Special Major or Minor

To initiate a Special Major or Minor, contact an appropriate faculty advisor directly. In consultation with this advisor, prepare a proposal for either the undergraduate Special Major or Minor Program.

The proposal must include:

1. a written statement giving reasons for undertaking the Special Major or Minor in terms of academic and professional goals and explaining
 - a. why these goals cannot be met through the standard programs of the campus and
 - b. how they may be best pursued in a special program;
2. The proposal is then forwarded to Graduate Studies for approval. The student is not enrolled as a Special Major or Minor until this formal procedure is complete.

Graduation with Honors

An undergraduate student may be a candidate for graduation with honors in Special Major provided he or she meets the following criteria:

1. A minimum of 36 units in residence at CSU Dominguez Hills;
2. A minimum grade point average of at least 3.5 in all courses used to satisfy the upper division requirements in the major.

Major Requirements - B.A./B.S. (minimum 24 units)

Special Major Guidelines

1. Students must formally request admission to a Special Major Program following the procedures described above for declaring a Special Major or Minor.
2. Students may not use a Special Major to substitute for a recognized degree program not offered at CSU Dominguez Hills, e.g. Psychobiology.
3. The Special Major may not be used to bypass normal graduation requirements.
4. Students may not substitute the Special Major for a major in which they are having academic difficulty.
5. A student working toward the Special Major is subject to university-wide policy relative to admission, scholastic standards and graduation requirements.
6. In order to be admitted to the Special Major Program, students are required to have more than one full year of academic work still to be completed to meet minimum degree requirements. That is, students will not be admitted to the undergraduate Special Major unless they have 31 or more semester units to complete out of a total of 120 semester units.
7. The minimum requirement for the Special Major Degree is a program of at least 24 semester units of upper division work recommended by a student's major advisor.
8. Students cannot use the following types of courses to meet the minimum degree requirements for the undergraduate Special Major:
 - a. neither upper division or lower division courses used to meet General Education requirements,
 - b. nor professional educational courses,
 - c. nor graduate courses (500 level).
9. Students may not also pursue a Special Minor.

Minor Requirements (15 units)

1. Students must follow the formal procedures for declaring a Special Major or Minor.
2. Students may not pursue a Special Minor if they also have a Special Major.
3. A Special Minor must contain at least 15 upper division semester units, at least 10 of which must be taken after the proposal is approved.
4. Students cannot use the following types of courses to meet the minimum requirements for the Special Minor:
 - a. neither upper division or lower division courses used to meet General Education requirements,
 - b. nor professional educational courses.

Major Requirements - M.A./M.S.

Admission Requirements

To be admitted into the Interdisciplinary Studies/Special Major graduate program the student must:

1. possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college, with a grade point average of 3.0 or better in the last 60 semester units attempted (not including lower division or extension units);

2. submit two letters of recommendation from individuals who can evaluate the student's potential for graduate school;
3. schedule an interview with the Coordinator of the Graduate Special Major Program;
4. submit, along with the formal application to the program, 150-200 word, typed Statement of Purpose which describes the academic qualifications and educational goals of the applicant, and explains how the Special Major will support those goals;
5. be able to demonstrate the eligibility to take proposed graduate level courses;
6. complete the GRE General Test and score at least 4 on the GRE Analytical Writing Test;
7. demonstrate above average writing skills;

Degree Requirements

The Advisory Committee, which consists of at least three faculty members including the coordinator of the Graduate Special Major, helps the student prepare a program of study. The program of study must:

1. be in support of the student's major objectives as specified in the accepted program; (If a bachelor's degree and/or background does not adequately prepare the student for the proposed program, he/she may be required to take additional prerequisite coursework before admission to the program.)
2. include a minimum of 30 upper division and graduate level semester approved units;
3. include a minimum of 21 semester units of 500 level courses;
4. include no lower division courses;
5. include no undergraduate courses in lieu of comparable graduate level courses;
6. include no more than 18 units from any one department;
7. make provision for a capstone activity (thesis or project); satisfactory completion of this requirement will be determined and certified by the Advisory Committee and the Associate Vice President of Academic Programs;
8. include no more than three thesis units; descriptions of the Capstone Activity courses, signed by the faculty advisor must be attached to the program-of-study;
9. include no more than nine units of work completed prior to approval of this program;¹
10. include no more than six units of independent study type courses; descriptions of these courses, signed by the faculty advisor must be attached to the program-of-study;¹
11. be approved by the Associate Vice President of Academic Programs, the faculty committee and the chair of the departments involved;
12. meet all university requirements for the master's degree. Students should consult the section of the catalog entitled "Graduate Degrees and Postbaccalaureate Studies (<https://catalog.csudh.edu/general-information/graduate-degree-postbaccalaureate-studies/>)."

¹ Any units in excess of the maximum cannot be counted in the required 30 units.

The student's transcript will read: Master of Arts/Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies in the focus or theme of study in three words or less; the use of the name of an academic unit must first be approved by the unit and the Associate Vice President of Academic Programs.

Students wishing to alter their program after it has been approved must repeat the same review process: they need to secure the approval of their Advisory Committee, the approval of the appropriate graduate coordinator(s), and the Associate Vice President of Academic Programs, prior to any change.

Program Learning Outcomes

1.

Bachelor of Arts and Sciences Special Major Learning Outcomes

1. Ability to construct and complete an interdisciplinary curriculum that is cohesive and meets the idiosyncratic needs of a unique focus of study.
2. Ability to apply the methods, theories and protocols of research in the work products of the various courses selected for the program.
3. Ability to think critically and to express oneself clearly and thoughtfully in the work products of the various courses selected for the program.
4. Ability to apply an interdisciplinary focus of two or more disciplines to the work product of the various courses selected for the program.