

PROCEDURE FOR THE PROPOSAL OF NEW MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY

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I. Overview of the Procedure

The approval of a major represents an endorsement by the University faculty and administration of the intellectual merit and academic rigor of a particular program of study, as well as a commitment of long-term academic and financial support. As a result, proposals for new majors receive careful consideration before any proposal is approved.

Major proposals should be submitted to the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (capc@sewanee.edu) and will be posted in Google Docs for a two-week period prior to placement on the CAPC agenda. All faculty are invited to respond to major proposals.

CAPC will consider proposals from an academic perspective. If CAPC approves the academic program, the proposal will be submitted to the Budget Priorities Committee (BPC) for review. BPC will consider the budgetary implications, in particular, whether or not resources and funding are available and sustainable. With the BPC report and, possibly, information from the Dean of the College, CAPC will render a final decision on the proposal. If endorsed by CAPC, the proposal, together with the BPC report, will be sent to the faculty for its consideration.

It is recommended that proposals are submitted one year in advance of the academic year in which the program is to commence.

II. Required Materials for Inclusion in the Proposal

- Proposals must include a clear and coherent plan of study for the major (see guidelines below).
- Proposals for a new major should clearly reflect the support of those departments and programs, and faculty, whose participation (by offering courses, advising, or supervising capstone projects or internships) is envisioned. Letters of support, or dissent, from those departments and faculty should be included with the proposal. Copies of email messages are sufficient. No curricular changes should be proposed unless all faculty whose participation is anticipated have been consulted.
- Interdisciplinary majors must have a faculty steering committee to oversee the curriculum and communicate with relevant administrators when staffing or curricular issues arise. The chair and members of the committee must be named in the proposal.
- A brief overview of the major for the University Catalog must be submitted with the proposal.
- Once a proposal for a new major has been approved, course additions, deletions, or substitutions, revisions of requirements or lists of optional courses must be approved by the CAPC.

III. Guidelines for Writing the Proposal

A. Background and Rationale

- Describe the intellectual merits of the proposed major.
- If there are multiple tracks within the proposed major, describe and provide the rationale for each.
- Consider the benefits of the proposed major vis-à-vis related majors and programs already existing in the College curriculum.
- Provide a list of peer institutions that offer the major, and discuss any unique aspects that differentiate the proposed major from similar programs.
- Where appropriate, name the graduate programs, professional programs, or professional environments that have been reviewed to determine expectations for the major.
- Provide information regarding student demand for the major.
- Estimate the total number of students who will likely pursue the major over the first five years.
- Address the impact the proposed major may have for existing programs.
- Discuss the ways in which the proposed major serves the mission of the University as well as the goals established for the institution in the strategic plan.

B. Curriculum

- Provide a description of the curricular components of the major, including courses from the general education curriculum, required upper-division courses, elective courses, and capstone courses, with prerequisites. As specified in the College Catalog, no major can require more than eleven courses in the major field (courses with the same disciplinary prefix).
- If there are multiple tracks within the proposed major, list courses from the general education curriculum, required upper-division courses, elective courses, and capstone courses, with prerequisites for each track.
- List new courses to be included in the major, including prerequisites. (Proposals for new courses must be submitted separately to the CAPC.)
- Address the structure, progression, and coherence of the courses within the proposed major. Is there a particular time frame in which required and elective courses in the major must be taken?
- Is there a capstone course, senior thesis, or culminating experience in the major?
- Are there additional requirements for the major, such as an internship, study abroad, or community service?
- Because some courses are not taught on a regular basis or during faculty sabbaticals, projected course availability must be carefully considered. Looking ahead over a five-year period, name the faculty eligible for sabbatical leaves and the courses, required or elective, that each contributes to the major.
- If new courses are proposed for the major, will offering these necessitate elimination of courses currently taught by participating faculty?

C. Learning Outcomes and Assessment

- Identify the student learning outcomes or objectives achieved by the proposed major.
- Describe the assessment tools that will be used to show that the learning outcomes are met.

D. Personnel

- In the case of new interdisciplinary majors, identify the director of the major as well as the members of the steering committee.
- What University faculty have the appropriate professional credentials to participate in curricular development and teach within the major? Please specify whether the faculty are tenure-track, term, part-time, or adjunct.
- Name the faculty who have agreed to advise students and track their progress through the proposed major.
- Are new faculty positions required to fully realize the goals of the major?
- Are new staff positions necessary to support the major?
- What will be done if student enrollments exceed projections?

E. Resources and Timetable

- Provide a sample budget for the proposed major, including the costs of faculty, support personnel, and other required expenditures to be covered by the budgets of the sponsoring department(s).
- All projected costs must be quantitatively understood, and there must be a clear plan for funding the program within realistic budget forecasts.
- The proposal should be accompanied by a statement on the appropriateness of current library holdings for supporting the proposed major and a plan for expansion of library holdings, if needed.
- If the proposed major has implications for the allocation of space to accommodate faculty or student projects, or equipment needs, in the immediate or near future, these should be thoroughly described.
- What new instructional space or technology will be required to fully realize the goals of the major?
- List and explain all other anticipated expenses associated with the establishment and growth of the major.
- Note any related grant proposals or outside funding.
- What is the proposed academic year for offering the major?

F. Guidelines for Course Descriptions

If new courses will be proposed for the program, please reference the following guidelines.

Course descriptions are brief summary statements that communicate course content.

- The opening statement provides the overarching purpose and content area of the course.
- The second and third sentences describe the essential subject matter of the course as well as pertinent information regarding the manner in which the subject matter is approached.
- The course description should be oriented toward the student and should not include acronyms or academic jargon, especially in the case of beginning-level courses.
- Course expectations and requirements should not appear in the course description—e.g., the class has lectures, discussion, papers, presentations.
- Course descriptions should be written in the third person, present tense.
- Course descriptions should not exceed 100 words.