

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, BACHELOR OF (B.I.S.) [UNIVERSITY COLLEGE]

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The Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies is an individualized and interdisciplinary program for students who wish to create an individualized curriculum not available in traditional curricular pathways within existing VCU degree programs. Students in this undergraduate degree program are able to design an individualized degree compatible with academic, career or personal goals.

## The B.I.S. declaration process

To apply to the B.I.S. program, students should:

- Have learning goals that are suited to an interdisciplinary program of study
- Meet with the B.I.S. adviser
- Complete the B.I.S. application documents, including the detailed proposed curricular plan and rationale for interdisciplinary study, in consultation with the B.I.S. adviser, and submit the application for review

Students interested in the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies design their own curricula in consultation with the B.I.S. adviser. The B.I.S. adviser and faculty work closely with students to develop an appropriate curricular program and provide guidance on the application process. Each student's plan must define a specific focus area that combines two or more areas of study and define their educational goals by designing their interdisciplinary curricula from a variety of course offerings.

The proposed interdisciplinary curriculum plan will be evaluated by the B.I.S. adviser and program administrators before final approval by the director. Each application will be evaluated based on compliance with university degree requirements as well as B.I.S. curriculum and individualized program requirements. After admission to the B.I.S. program, students will follow an approved individualized curriculum plan. The finalized curriculum plan is the official record of the student's degree requirements. This document records all transfer credits applicable to the B.I.S. degree and lists the courses required to complete the degree.

## Individualized program requirements

### Core education requirements

#### 1. Writing and research

Six credit hours: UNIV 111, UNIV 112 – This two-semester sequence is required of all first-year students and provides the foundation of the Core Education Program. Students begin their Core shared experiences through the summer reading program with follow-through in the FI sequence as they engage in similar assignments and projects both in and out of class.

Three credit hours: a research and academic writing course that emphasizes academic argument, information retrieval, analysis and documentation. UNIV 200 may be used to fill this requirement or an equivalent course designed by the department/school.

#### 2. Quantitative literacy

Three credit hours (minimum) selected from following list of approved courses:

MATH 131	Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics	3
MATH 141	Algebra with Applications	3
MATH 151	Precalculus Mathematics	4
MATH 200	Calculus with Analytic Geometry	4
SCMA 171	Mathematical Applications for Business	3
STAT 208	Statistical Thinking	3

#### 3. Core general education

Nine credits, including one course from each of the following areas:

##### a. Natural/physical sciences

BIOL 101	Biological Concepts	3
BIOL/ENVS 103	Environmental Science	4
CHEM 110	Chemistry and Society	3
ENVS 201	Earth System Science	3
FRSC 202	Crime and Science	3
INSC 201	Energy!	3
PHYS 103	Elementary Astronomy	3

##### b. Humanities/fine arts

ENGL 215	Reading Literature	3
HIST 201	The Art of Historical Detection: ____	3
HUMS 250	Reading Film	3
MASC/INTL 151	Global Communications	3
PHIL 201	Critical Thinking About Moral Problems	3
PHIL 250	Thinking About Thinking	3
RELS 108	Human Spirituality	3
WRLD/INTL 203	Cultural Texts and Contexts: ____	3
WRLD 230	Introduction to World Cinema	3

##### c. Social/behavioral sciences

ANTH/INTL 103	Introduction to Anthropology	3
ECON 101/ INTL 102	Introduction to Political Economy	3
GSWS 201	Introduction to Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies	3
HUMS 300	Great Questions of the Social Sciences	3

INTL 101	Human Societies and Globalization	3
POLI 103	U.S. Government	3
POLI/INTL 105	International Relations	3
PSYC 101 Play course video for Introduction to Psychology	Introduction to Psychology	4
SOCY 101 Play course video for Introduction to Sociology	Introduction to Sociology	3

#### 4. Additional general education requirements

Nine credit hours: Select at least three courses offered by the College of Humanities and Sciences that are not required in the focus area.

#### 5. Capstone course

Three credit hours: This requirement may be fulfilled through a service-learning project, a research project with a faculty member, a study abroad program, a senior thesis paper or a practical internship. This requirement ties learned experience in the Core Education Program with a practical application and will be completed through an upper-level course in the student's focus area. Students may use the capstone in either of their minor areas or they can propose a unique capstone appropriate for their focus area.

## Focus area

The individually designed interdisciplinary focus area requires a minimum of 36 semester credits, 24 of which must be upper-level credit. The focus area has to combine at least two areas of study. One way to accomplish this is to complete the requirement for two minors as designated in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

## Electives

Maximum of 57 credits

## Other requirements

The curriculum plan must also meet the following university policies and degree requirements:

- At least 12 credits must be taken in the focus area after acceptance into the program.
- B.I.S majors are required to participate in assessment activities (e.g., focus groups and exit surveys) as determined by the B.I.S. adviser. Assessment information is used to assist faculty in evaluating program effectiveness.
- Students have a variety of credit options, including CLEP examinations, credit for formal military training and credits for certain professional certifications when they do not duplicate college course work.