Special Approaches to Study

Policy/Procedure

Independent research and study, internships, special majors and tutorial study all encourage Dickinson students to pursue individual academic interests and allow students with the requisite ability and motivation to undertake more self-directed programs of study under faculty guidance. The following areas can be explored on the self-developed academic path.

- Tutorial study
- Independent study and research
- Student-faculty collaborative research
- Transcript notation (internship or research experience)
- Honors in the major
- Integrated independent study/research
- Foreign language integration option
- Special majors

TUTORIAL STUDY, INDEPENDENT STUDY AND RESEARCH

The following options describe programs of tutorial study, independent study, and research possible in any academic area in which faculty have training and in which the student has the approval of the appropriate department or coordinating faculty committee. These general guidelines may vary among individual programs.

**Tutorial Study:** Tutorial study is occasionally approved for students who, by agreement with the instructor, need to take a course listed in the bulletin on a one-to-one or limited enrollment basis. Such a need might be justified in the case of a course which is offered only on an alternate year basis or at some other frequency which would not allow for the completion of the student's program. Approved tutorial studies are added during the schedule adjustment period in the Registrar's Office.

**Independent Study and Research for First-Year Students:** First-year students who, on the basis of advanced placement, have qualified for credit in an introductory course (except foreign language courses below 230 and such other courses as may be designated by the departments) and desire to work more extensively at the survey or principles level...
of a discipline may enroll for a tutorially directed course or half-course in independent study within the same body of knowledge.

A first-year student who wishes to take a second independent study, or a course of independent study or research on terms available to sophomores, juniors, and seniors, must petition the Subcommittee on Academic Standards, with supporting statements from the academic advisor and proposed supervisory instructor.

**Independent Study for Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors:** Independent studies allow a student to pursue an academic interest outside the listed course offerings. The study may include experimental work and reading and may culminate in several short papers, a single paper, or any other project acceptable to the supervising faculty member and the student. The work may be supervised by one or several instructors from one or several departments. Such interdepartmental studies must be approved beforehand by the Subcommittee on Academic Standards. Sophomores may undertake one independent study or research course and may, with the support of the student's academic advisor, petition the Subcommittee on Academic Standards for permission to take two independent studies or independent research courses in one semester. Juniors and seniors may undertake two such courses without special approval and may petition the Subcommittee on Academic Standards for additional independent study or research courses. In addition, the student must have a cumulative average of 2.00 or the permission of the Subcommittee on Academic Standards.

**Independent Research for Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors:** Independent research allows a student to pursue an academic interest beyond the listed course offerings. The project should be designed as original research and practice in presenting the results of an investigation. This pursuit must culminate in the student's own contribution to a discipline, whether in the form of fully-supported conclusions or in the form of a creative effort. Students may initiate a research project independently or in consultation with supervising faculty from one or several departments. The final project must be presented to the advising faculty no later than two weeks prior to the end of the evaluation period. The program may be elected for a maximum credit of four full courses. Programs of independent research involving more than two such courses per semester must be approved by the Subcommittee on Academic Standards.

**STUDENT-FACULTY COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH**

Student-faculty collaborative research allows a student to conduct original research in close partnership with faculty collaborator(s). The project should be designed as an investigation yielding novel results that contribute to the area of study. With the faculty collaborator(s), students will develop the project and participate in all aspects of the research. It is expected that the faculty member will work closely with the student for at least half of the time the student is pursuing the research. The final project must be presented to the faculty collaborator(s) no later than one week prior to the end of the evaluation period. The course will typically earn one half or one full course credit per semester.
TRANSCRIPT NOTATION (INTERNSHIP OR RESEARCH EXPERIENCE)

The following options describe the non-credit transcript notation programs for internship and research experiences. If students have questions about the notation options, they should contact the Director of Internship Programs.

- **Internship Notation Program (INP):** Through reflective exercises, assessments, and feedback, students address program goals related to self-assessment, self-directed learning, values integration, career exploration and professional development. The INP is available to matriculated students in any class year or major who have secured an eligible internship experience. The program runs in the fall, spring, or summer terms. Several majors and certificate programs allow or require the INP to fulfill a requirement. Students receive a non-credit notation upon successful completion of the internship and INP components through the INTR 7xx course number. Arrangements for the internship and INP registration must be coordinated at the beginning of the experience; retroactive notations are not granted.

- **Research Experience Notation (REXP):** The Research Experience transcript notation is intended to provide formal documentation of non-credit scholarly research experiences that take place under the supervision of a professional researcher at Dickinson or at another institution. The principle activity and focus of the research experience is original investigation designed to create new knowledge in a recognized field of inquiry. Examples include student-faculty research with a Dickinson faculty member (on campus or at a field site), or participation in a summer research project at another research organization (typically a college or university, private research foundation, or research and development division of a corporation). Upon successful completion of a research experience and corresponding departmental component (overseen by the department chair and supported/processed by the Director of Internship Programs), documentation is placed on the official transcript through the REXP 7xx course number.

HONORS IN THE MAJOR

Honors in the major are conferred at graduation upon students who meet the departmental standards for graduation with honors. Every department is responsible for specifying and communicating what the standards are. Every department is also responsible for specifying and communicating the procedures, these would include but are not limited to eligibility criteria, the nature of and submission process for an honors proposal, a calendar for conducting and completing the project, and how the project will be evaluated. The nature of the project may vary depending upon field and the goals of the student. It is a normal expectation that an honor's project would conclude in an evaluated oral presentation, performance, or critique. Departments are responsible for approving the professor/advisor to each honors project. In departments where the senior capstone experience (e.g., a seminar paper) is considered a potential project for honors, the
seminar professor may serve as the advisor. Granting of honors will be based on a vote of the department.

If, in the judgment of the department, a candidate meets the standards for graduation with honors, the designation will appear on the student's record (official transcript and diploma). Consult the web page of the academic program and/or program contact person to clarify the procedure. For specifications regarding format for the honors thesis see the Library Services web pages.

INTEGRATED INDEPENDENT STUDY AND/OR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS

This provision allows a student, with the guidance of his or her major department and any supporting departments, to plan an entire program either for the last two years of study or for the senior year. The program, which must be approved by the Academic Program and Standards Committee (APSC), may combine independent study, independent research, and course participation. Work under the program normally proceeds without grade, but, upon the student's completing the plan, the supervising department will prepare a precise description of the work accomplished and an evaluation of its quality which will become part of the student's permanent record.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTEGRATION OPTION

A number of courses are designated each semester as carrying the foreign language integration option. These are courses in which students who wish to try their language skills in courses outside the language departments can choose to do some work in the designated foreign language. The amount and type of language work involved (readings from articles, newspapers or books and/or some paper writing) is determined by the professor in conjunction with the student. Foreign language work is tailored to meet the needs and language level of the individual student. Typically, work in a foreign language is substituted for English language materials, so as not to constitute an added responsibility. Successful completion of the foreign language integration option is noted on a student's transcript, thus certifying the student has had extra training in the language. This option is entirely voluntary. Students who register for courses with this option are not required to do work in a foreign language and may take the courses on the regular basis. Evaluation of the foreign language integration work does not affect the student's grade in the course.

SPECIAL MAJORS

Tutorial Departmental Major: Some departments may approve superior students as tutorial majors. Such a program differs from independent studies and research in several ways. For one, the student is guided in a program in the component areas of an entire discipline for approximately two years. That program's balance is ensured by prior departmental approval. Secondly, the student is free to take regular courses in the student's major discipline with the approval of the tutor. Normally, the student will
receive a letter grade for a 600 series course, but the Pass/Fail option is also available under the same restrictions as in standard courses.

The student meets on a regular basis with a tutor to discuss essays and readings dealing with particular problems posed by the tutor. Finally, the student sits for a comprehensive examination, both written and oral, administered by a committee composed of the department and one person outside the department. Normally, at least one-quarter of the student's final semester is given over to preparation for these examinations. One reexamination may be permitted within the calendar year. Students will be graded on the examination as having passed, failed, or passed with honors in the major. Approved students may register for up to four courses per semester under the tutorial rubric.

**The Self-Developed Interdisciplinary Major:** Students, after completion of one semester of study at Dickinson (2nd semester of first year), who believe their academic goals cannot be met by the current 22 disciplinary and 21 interdisciplinary majors, 8 stand-alone minors, 4 certificates and use of electives, may make a proposal for a self-developed major.

A proposal for a self-developed major must be:

1. in a coherent area of study
2. relevant to the liberal arts and
3. not substantially addressed by any existing programmatic options at the college.

Pursuing a self-developed major is a rigorous and time-intensive process. The Academic Program and Standards Committee (APSC) reminds students and faculty that self-developed majors:

1. will meet the same rigorous review as any new or revised major at the college
2. are expected to have the structure of an existing major: learning goals, hierarchy, depth, senior capstone
3. have at least 10 and no more than 16 courses and at least half of the courses completed in residence (i.e., either Carlisle or Dickinson course on a Dickinson program)
4. must include courses taught by at least two different faculty members and
5. will be the student's only major since such a proposed course of study when approved acknowledges that the student is released from the structure of a major offered at the college.

Early on, a student interested in a self-developed major will identify four (4) faculty members who will serve as the core faculty members for the self-developed major. These faculty should have expertise and/or research experience relevant to the proposed self-developed major field of learning. One of these faculty members will be the student's primary advisor.
Once the proposal is finalized, the student will submit the completed self-developed major proposal form, the completed and signed statement from the faculty committee via email to the Academic Program and Standards Committee for approval. Deadline for submission to APSC is the end of Add/Drop in the semester in which the student will complete his/her 16th course toward graduation.

If approved by the Academic Program and Standards Committee, the student will work with the primary advisor from The Core Faculty Committee. The student is expected to complete the program as proposed and approved. Should changes become necessary, the student will submit a request for change of the approved program, along with written support from the primary advisor.

Upon the completion of every semester, the student will submit to the Academic Program and Standards Committee (with a copy to the primary advisor) an evaluation statement of progress and commitment to the major as a whole, experience in individual courses, and work with the primary advisor. The primary advisor submits to the Academic Program and Standards Committee, and to the student, an evaluation describing the student's progress, achievement, and commitment.

At the conclusion of the student's work, the transcript describes the major as follows: Self-Developed Major: [Title].

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**Related Information**

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**History/Revision Information**

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