

Student-Defined Majors

Student-Defined Majors

Carnegie Mellon offers the opportunity for undergraduate students to pursue a Student Defined Major. Some colleges have specific processes for Student Defined Majors within their college (see relevant college section of the catalog). For information and advice, interested students are encouraged to speak to the associate dean of their current home college or the college most relevant to the proposed course of study.

The requirements for successful completion of a Student Defined Major include a student proposal approved by an advisor, relevant college(s), the vice provost for education, and successful completion of the approved course of study. In brief:

- A student interested in pursuing a student-defined major must develop a proposal which outlines an intellectually coherent area of study (with degree title) and a plan of study (courses to be taken, pedagogical rationale, and proposed schedule). The proposal should include an explanation of why it is not appropriate or possible to pursue such a program through the curriculum of any one of the colleges. It should outline a program of study for both general education (for example, the core requirements of one of the most relevant colleges or equivalent general education plan) and major requirements. The proposal should designate one of the participating colleges as de facto "home college" for tracking and verification purposes.
- **Proposals must be approved at least one academic year prior to expected graduation.** Students should therefore submit their proposals by the end of their fifth semester, to allow ample time for approval.
- The student's proposal must be approved by a faculty advisor within a college who takes pedagogical responsibility for the program, by the de facto "home college" and by any other colleges involved in granting the degree. The signed proposal will be submitted to the Provost's Office for a final review and approval.
- Once approved by the faculty advisor, colleges, and the Provost's Office, the student's major will be administered by the advisor and their progress tracked by the dean's office of the "home college." The "home college" will be responsible for monitoring the student's progress and reminding any collateral colleges of the approval of the Student Defined Major so that these colleges may insure the student's ability to enroll in the necessary courses. Upon successful completion of the course of study, the "home college" will be responsible for contacting all the relevant colleges and verifying the completion of the degree. Upon consultation with the "home college", students may receive their diploma in the most relevant department's ceremony.

Note: To distinguish Student Defined Majors from regularly offered majors at Carnegie Mellon, the phrase "(Student Defined Major)" will be added to the end of the major name. This notation will appear on all official documents (transcripts, verification letters, diplomas, etc.).