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1. Planning an Individualized Major

1.1 What is an Individualized Major?
An individualized major is a self-designed, interdisciplinary major that allows you to create a program of study to fit your own specific interests. It is particularly appropriate if your interests cross disciplinary boundaries and are not met by an existing major at the University of Connecticut. The Individualized Major (IMJR) Program was established in 1974; since then more than 1900 students have graduated with a self-designed major. Students have chosen a wide range of topics for their majors, some unique, others more popular. International studies, health studies, and law, rights and justice themes are among the most popular. But there are many other themes, including individualized majors focused on religion, human sexuality, Deaf studies, sport, neuroscience, and film studies.

An individualized major is a structured plan of study that incorporates at least 36 credits of courses at the 2000-level or higher, is thematically focused, draws from at least two academic departments, and often includes an internship, research, or study abroad. It concludes with a capstone project.

Individualized majors receive their degrees from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS) or the College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources (CAHNR). They may enroll in courses in either of these colleges as well as select courses in other schools and colleges. Acceptance into the Program is based on submission of a formal proposal, for approval by the Individualized Major Advisory and Admissions Committee.

1.2 How do I apply?
You will need to create a set of three documents for your application to the IMJR program:

- Statement of Purpose
- Plan of Study
- Unofficial Transcript

If you are planning a double major or additional degree, you will need two additional documents:

- Double Major or Additional Degree Worksheet
- Double Major Declaration Form or Additional Degree Petition

Your proposal must have the support of three faculty advisors with expertise in the areas addressed by the major. You should consult with faculty well before the admissions deadline and request their feedback on all parts of the proposal. The faculty advisors must sign the plan of study form before you submit the proposal.

When should I apply for admission to the IMJR program?
You may submit a proposal for admission to the individualized major once you achieve third semester status or have completed 30 credits. The latest you may submit a proposal is prior to registration for
your final 30 credits of study. We encourage first year students to meet with an IMJR advisor to begin the planning process.

**What are the criteria for admission?**

The Individualized Major Advisory and Admissions Committee, which is comprised of faculty from CLAS and CAHNR, with representatives from ACES, the School of Business, and the School of Education, makes the admissions decisions. In evaluating an application, the committee will consider two broad criteria:

- **Cumulative GPA.** You must be in “good standing” at the university, and have a GPA of 2.0 for an IMJR in CLAS or a GPA of 2.5 for an IMJR in CAHNR. To graduate with an individualized major (in both CLAS and CAHNR), you must achieve a GPA of 2.5 in the courses in your plan of study. The committee will consider not only whether the you meet the minimum GPA standard at the time of your application, but also whether you will be likely to meet the GPA requirements for graduation.

- **Coherence and feasibility of the proposed major.** The committee will evaluate whether the major theme (as presented in your statement of purpose) and the plan of study together form a cohesive and conceptually-sound degree. Your proposed major must be academically rigorous and on par with other majors in the university. The committee will also consider whether you will be able to take the courses and complete the related experiences (e.g. internship, study abroad) as planned.

**1.3 Who will help me with my proposal?**

IISP staff and faculty advisors will help you define your focus, choose courses, and advise you until you graduate. We also suggest enrolling in UNIV 2600 (see below).

**UNIV 2600**

Every semester we offer a one-credit course, UNIV 2600 Individualized Study Across Academic Disciplines, that is designed to promote the skills you need to create your own interdisciplinary major and provide you with a structured opportunity to prepare your proposal.

Focusing on your own area of interest, you will learn about:

- the commonalities and differences among the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities
- the key characteristics of disciplines in which you are particularly interested
- what it means to be interdisciplinary (or multidisciplinary) and how an interdisciplinary approach might be effective in understanding certain issues

You will explore these themes by analyzing TED Talks on such issues as HIV/AIDS prevention or the decline of bees and delving into some intriguing multidisciplinary case studies such as the Salem witch trials or the privatization of water in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

This course is especially appropriate for second-semester freshmen, sophomores, and first-semester juniors.
2. Preparing an Application

The principal elements of an application to become an individualized major are the statement of purpose, the plan of study, and the unofficial transcript. (For supplementary materials that you may need to submit, see below.) The statement of purpose provides you an opportunity to explain the focus of your individualized major. The plan of study details the courses that will make up that major and the faculty advisors with whom you will be working. The transcript provides an overview of your coursework to date. The Individualized Major Advisory and Admissions Committee will carefully consider these three documents when it makes its admissions decisions.

2.1 Statement of Purpose

Your statement of purpose should be 2-3 pages long (double-spaced, 12 point font), well-organized, and thoroughly edited. It should address the following four questions:

- **What is the academic focus of your proposed major?** What themes, issues, questions or problems does your major focus on? What departments and courses will be included and how will they allow you to develop an understanding of the key themes of your major? Why is the IMJR the best venue for your major?

- **How will you build the major?** Discuss the disciplines, and the specific courses that you will include in the major. Explain the unique insights that each of these disciplines will provide your major and how they will come together to make a coherent whole. Explain how an internship, a field experience, or a period of study abroad will enhance your major.

- **Why have you chosen this academic focus?** How have past experiences (courses, research projects, jobs, internships etc.) shaped your decision to design this individualized major?

- **How does this major fit into your long-term academic and career goals?** Are you planning a double major or a minor? How do these relate to your individualized major? Do you plan to go to graduate school in a particular field? Do you have a particular type of career in mind?

You do not need to consider these questions in any particular order, nor do you need to consider every sub-question, but be sure that your statement of purpose considers the four questions in bold.

2.2 Plan of Study

Your individualized major plan of study will consist of at least 36 credits of 2000-level or higher courses, 18 of which must be from the college granting your degree, and must include the following:

**Research Methods Course**
A research methods course will introduce you to how knowledge is produced and evaluated in a particular discipline. Choose one from an academic department that is integral to your major. Some examples include: COMM 3000Q, POLS 2072Q, SOCI 3201, HIST 2100, and PSYC 2100Q.

**Capstone**
The three capstone options are: UNIV 4600W Capstone Course, UNIV 4697W Senior Thesis, or an approved alternative. Note: Honors students must complete the thesis option.
**Writing Intensive Course**
A writing intensive course that is relevant to the major theme. This will normally be designated “W” in the course catalog and is in addition to the capstone.

**Experiential Learning**
We strongly recommend that you include an experiential learning component, such as an internship, research, or study abroad, in your plan of study.

**Bachelor of Science**
Students intending to complete a Bachelor of Science IMJR in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences must include 24 credits of science in their individualized major plan of study and fulfill the CLAS general education requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree.

**Transfer Credits**
You may include transfer credits in your plan of study in accordance with the following guidelines.

- CLAS plans of study: Up to 9 credits of transfer coursework. Students seeking the inclusion of transfer credit in their major that is not equivalent to a specific UConn course (generic transfer credit) must provide (1) a transcript from the previous institution and (2) course descriptions for the courses they wish to include. Such generic transfer credit will be reviewed for inclusion in the major when the student is admitted to the Program. If the inclusion of generic transfer credit is sought after the student has already been admitted to the program, the student must seek approval from his/her faculty advisors and the IISP office.

- CAHNR plans of study: Up to 6 credits of transfer coursework that is the equivalent to UConn courses as stated in the catalog. If appropriate, the Program may seek exemptions from the CAHNR Dean’s office for generic transfer credit.

**2.3 Double Major or Additional Degree**

**Double Major**
IMJR students in both CAHNR and CLAS may choose to double major and a significant number, especially in CLAS, choose to do so. If you are one of those, you will need to prepare the following for your application:

- A CLAS or CAHNR Double Major Declaration Form (available at the CLAS or CAHNR advising centers).
- An IMJR Double Major Worksheet (worksheet for CLAS IMJRs available on the IISP website, for CAHNR please see an IMJR advisor).

**Note:** For CLAS majors, at least 24 credits of your individualized major plan must not overlap with your other major and its related field courses. For further information, please see the CLAS Double Major Worksheet on the IISP website.
Additional Degree
If you would like to double-major in two different colleges, you must opt for an additional degree and you must meet all of the requirements for each degree. Additional degrees require at least 30 degree credits more than the degree with the higher minimum-credit requirement. Thus for an IMJR that is in addition to an engineering degree, for example, you would need a total of 158 credits to graduate (128 for the engineering degree, plus the extra 30 for the additional degree). The extra 30 credits must be 2000-level courses or higher in the additional degree major or closely related fields.

If you are planning an additional degree you will need to prepare the following for your application:

- CLAS or CAHNR additional degree petition (available on the Registrar’s website).
- An additional degree worksheet (ask IISP advising staff)

2.4 Honors in the IMJR
Honors and prospective Honors IMJRs should be aware of the following:

- If you are double-majoring, you may choose the major in which you complete the Honors Scholar requirements.
- For honors in the IMJR, you must complete 12 honors credits in the major, six of which must constitute a thesis project. See the chapter on the “Capstone” below.
- We recommend that you discuss your plans with an IMJR advisor and your primary faculty advisor. It may also be helpful to confer with the Honors Directors of the departments most relevant to your individualized major.
- If you are completing your honors requirements in the Individualized Major Program, then the Director of IISP will be your honors advisor and IISP will be listed as your department.

2.5 Working with Faculty Advisors
Because you are designing an interdisciplinary major, you will need to ask faculty members from two or three different departments to serve as advisors for your individualized major. One of these faculty advisors will be your primary advisor, who must be from a department in the college from which you plan to graduate.

Who are appropriate faculty advisors?
You will want to choose faculty members who teach or do research in the academic areas that interest you. Consider instructors of courses you have taken or are planning to take. Faculty advisors are usually tenure-track or tenured faculty, but you may include an adjunct instructor as a second or third advisor if his/her department permits and s/he plans to be at UConn as long as you.
How to make the most of the advisor-student relationship
Below are some helpful hints on how to develop good relationships with your faculty advisors.

- Do your homework. It may be best to meet with your prospective advisors once you have a draft statement of purpose and a draft plan of study. The more clearly you can articulate your aims, the more easily you will evoke interest from a faculty member.

- Come prepared with questions. Does my plan of study include the courses that are most relevant to the theme of my major? Does my statement of purpose effectively convey my plans for my major? Do you have suggestions for revisions?

- Be open to new ideas and insights your advisors may have to offer. Follow up on any advice or suggestions that you receive.

- Communicate effectively. Respond promptly to e-mail messages and phone calls.

- Use office hours. You may find that you cover more ground and achieve better results if you approach your prospective advisor in person and at a time that s/he has set aside for student consultations.

- Keep your appointments and be punctual.

- Plan ahead and leave yourself plenty of time. Once you have finalized your statement of purpose and completed your proposed plan of study, you will need to meet with each of your faculty advisors again. Each of them will need to sign your application.

- Keep in touch. Your advisors will continue to be good sources of advice and information as you pursue your studies, choose internships and study abroad programs, and make plans for employment or graduate school.
3. Experiential Learning

3.1 Internships
An internship can be an invaluable part of an individualized major. The knowledge, skills, and connections that you acquire through an internship will be a key asset as you seek employment or apply to graduate or professional schools. We strongly recommend that you include one in your plan of study.

You may choose whether you wish to complete your internship for credit or not. Note that some internship sites will require their interns to earn academic credit. Completing an internship for credit provides you with opportunities to reflect on and write about your experiences and connect them to your academic work.

Finding an Internship
Obtaining an internship can be time consuming. You should start the process 6-9 months in advance. If you are unsure where to start, visit the Center for Career Development, in Wilbur Cross 201 or on the web at www.career.uconn.edu. A portion of the CCD website is devoted exclusively to internships: www.internships.uconn.edu.

Earning Credit
When completing an internship for credit you will enroll in an internship course in a relevant department. A credit-bearing internship is a three-way agreement among you, your internship site supervisor, and your faculty supervisor. This agreement is formalized in a learning contract.

What steps should you take to set up an internship for credit?

- **Identify a relevant department where you will seek faculty supervision.** Consider the content of your internship and the focus of your major as you select a department.

- **Make sure you have met that department’s internship course prerequisites.** A common prerequisite is one or more courses at the 1000-level in the department. Some departments require one or more courses at the 2000-level or higher. Some have a minimum GPA requirement. Check the catalog and department websites.

- **Enroll in an internship course:** Registration for an internship course will require a permission number. Most departments designate one of their faculty or staff as the primary contact person for students who wish to enroll in the department’s internship course. Don’t wait until you have an internship offer in hand before you find a faculty supervisor/internship course. Explore your departmental supervision options at the same time as you apply and/or interview for an internship.

- **Know that each credit of internship must entail at least 42 hours of work** and the required number of work hours must be clearly stated in your internship contract.

- **Consider cost:** Your regular tuition will cover the cost of internship credits during the academic year, but if you do an internship during the summer, you will be charged tuition based on the
number of credits that you will earn. If cost is an issue, consider enrolling in fewer internship credits.

- **Remember that there is no retroactive credit:** To receive credit for an internship, you must register **prior** to undertaking the work; you **cannot** receive retroactive credit for internship work you have already completed.

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### Departmental Contacts for Internship Courses

If you wish to complete an internship for credit, you will need a faculty supervisor from a relevant academic department. Make sure that you meet departmental prerequisites and/or GPA requirements.

- **Communication**
  COMM 4991 – Arthur Vanlear, artvanlear@uconn.edu
  COMM internship page: [http://coms.uconn.edu/undergraduate/internships.html](http://coms.uconn.edu/undergraduate/internships.html)

- **Human Development and Family Studies**
  HDFS 3080 – Kathryn Andrew, kathryn.andrew@uconn.edu

- **Political Science**
  POLS 3991 – Kimberly Bergendahl, kimberly.bergendahl@uconn.edu

- **Psychology – Kelsey Keefe, kelsey.keefe@uconn.edu**
  PSYC 3880 – PSYC internship page: [http://undergrad.psych.uconn.edu/ind/field-experience/](http://undergrad.psych.uconn.edu/ind/field-experience/)

- **English**
  ENGL 3091 – Ruth Fairbanks, ruth.fairbanks@uconn.edu
  ENGL internship page: [http://www.english.uconn.edu/undergraduate/undergrad_docs/internships.html](http://www.english.uconn.edu/undergraduate/undergrad_docs/internships.html)

- **Sociology**
  SOCI 3990/1 – Katherine Covey, katherine.covey@uconn.edu

- **Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies**
  WGSS 3891 – Marita McComiskey, marita.mccomiskey@uconn.edu (Fall) and Barbara Gurr, barbara.gurr@uconn.edu (Spring)
  WGSS internship page: [http://web2.uconn.edu/wgss/?page_id=154](http://web2.uconn.edu/wgss/?page_id=154)

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### Additional Information:

The Individualized Major Program has adopted the CLAS policy on internships for all individualized majors (both CLAS and CAHNR) and therefore the following restrictions apply (for the full text of the policy: [CLAS Policy on Internships](http://www.clas.uconn.edu/student-support/policy/internship-policy.html)):

- **Payment.** The College does not forbid monetary payment for internship work, provided that such payment is incidental to the experiential learning to be gained from the work.

- **Lobbying.** Some internships allow students to participate in organizations and advocacy groups
that perform or disseminate research, or engage in legislative lobbying, in order to affect the content of legislation or budgetary decisions. The Committee recommends that internship supervisors not assign student interns to activities on behalf of legislation or budget decisions directly affecting the University of Connecticut. It is especially in the best interests of the University that none of its interns be engaged in face-to-face legislative lobbying for the University.

3.2 Study Abroad
Studying abroad can help you build new knowledge, acquire new skills, and see the world from a new perspective. Education Abroad provides a wide array of high quality programs in every corner of the globe.

If you plan to include study abroad in your individualized major, be sure to select a program that offers relevant courses. Careful research will ensure that you find an appropriate program. The Education Abroad Fair, held each semester, and the Education Abroad website are good places to start. Take the time to explore the course offerings for the programs in which you are interested.

Education Abroad Course Approval
Including study abroad courses in your individualized major requires two types of approval.

1. The course needs to be approved for UConn credit by the relevant UConn department.
   - Carefully review the guidelines listed on the Education Abroad website on how to receive academic credit for the courses you take while you are abroad.
   - It is best to seek departmental approval for your study abroad courses before you take them. But this is not always feasible. If you seek approval upon your return you will be asked to present not only the course description, but also the course syllabus, copies of the work you completed for the course, and a study abroad transcript or grade sheet.

2. If you would like a course that you took abroad to be included in your individualized major, your faculty advisors and IISP staff advisor will need to approve it as appropriate for your major.
   - If you plan to include study abroad courses in your major, these must be the equivalent of 2000-level or higher courses at UConn. If the course you are taking is described as an “introduction” or “core” and is the first course in a sequence of courses at a foreign university, then it will likely be assigned 1000-level credit at UConn.
4. Info for Current Majors

4.1 Course Registration
As an individualized major you will be registering for courses in a variety of departments and schools or colleges within the university. Some schools or colleges may restrict access to certain courses for students from other programs and some departments give first priority to their own majors at course registration time, but don’t let this discourage you!

Two weeks before course registration begins, we will ask you to provide a list of courses in your plan of study for which you wish to register in the coming semester. We share this information with select departments which refer to these lists when responding to student requests for permission numbers. Please respond to this email in a timely manner.

You are responsible for registering for your courses. Here are some helpful hints for course registration:

- Be sure you have met the course's prerequisites. If you have not met the prerequisites, the Student Admin system will block your registration. IMJRs are not excused from prerequisites!
- Try registering via the Student Admin system. Use Dynamic Class Search to see if seats are available and to check if remaining available seats are reserved for majors.
- When a course is full, some departments use the waitlist system in Student Admin. If a waitlist exists, be sure to put yourself on it. See the Registrar's Waitlist Questions and Answers for more information.
- If all the remaining seats are reserved, you may need to request a permission number. You should be prepared to state your case politely and coherently to the correct person. Some departments handle permission number requests centrally, others leave it to individual instructors, and some departments have specific procedures for IMJRs. Please see the course registration page on the IISP website for up-to-date information.

If you have been unable to enroll in your preferred course, be sure to enroll in a relevant alternative. In addition, attend the first several classes of your preferred course and speak with the instructor; many students alter their schedules in the first week of class and a spot may open up.

4.2 Changing Your Plan of Study
Many students make some changes to their plans of study.

In the case of relatively small changes (such as the inclusion of one or two courses consistent with your plan of study):

- You must discuss these changes with the IISP Director and your primary advisor and obtain their approval, preferably before you enroll in the course and certainly before you start the course.
- You must consult with your second and/or third advisor and obtain his/her approval if the changes are in his/her field.
• You must file a Change in Plan of Study form, either when you obtain the approval of your faculty advisors or when you file your final plan of study.

If you wish to alter the concept of your major, you will need approval from the Individualized Major Advisory and Admissions Committee. Consult with the director about the steps you need to take in this process.

4.3 Preparing to Graduate
There are a number of steps that you must take in order to graduate.

Diploma Application
You must apply to graduate. This can be done on Student Admin: Steps to a Successful Graduation.

Final Plan of Study Submission
No later than the third Monday of the semester you plan to graduate, you need to submit to the IMJR office the following documents:
• Final plan of study, signed by the primary advisor
• Change in plan of study form (if applicable), signed by the primary advisor and other advisors if necessary
• For Double Majors: updated double major worksheet and copy of final plan of study of the other major

Once the IMJR Director has reviewed and authorized a student’s final plan of study, she will file it with the Degree Auditor in the Office of the Registrar.

Graduation Checklist:
Final Plan of Study:
• The final plan of study should list all courses that you have taken or are taking as part of your major.
• These should be courses completed that were part of the “A” or “B” list on your approved proposed plan of study and any additional courses/changes approved by advisors.
• Any changes made must also be listed on a “change in plan of study form” (see below).
• Your primary advisor must sign your final plan of study before it is submitted to the IMJR Director.

Change in Plan of Study:
• If you have made changes to your proposed plan, you must also submit a change in plan of study form.
• This form is required only if you have taken courses that you wish to include in your major that were NOT on the A or B list of your approved proposed plan of study.
• This form must be signed by your primary advisor and will also need the signatures of your second and/or third advisors if the changes are in their area of expertise.

Double Majors:
• If you are earning a double major, you must submit an up-to-date double major worksheet and a copy of the final plan of study from your other major.
  o Each major’s final plan of study must match the list of courses on the double major worksheet.
  o The IMJR office needs this documentation in order to verify that any overlap between the two majors is acceptable.
• Please note: The IMJR office will not submit the final plan of study for your other major to the Registrar. To file the final plan of study for a NON-individualized major, you should follow the procedures of the relevant department.

5. Capstone

All individualized majors are expected to fulfill a capstone requirement. The capstone requirement provides you with the opportunity to integrate the knowledge you have acquired in your major courses. You may fulfill the requirement in one of three ways:

• **Capstone course** (UNIV 4600W, 3 credits)
  Most students in the program fulfill the capstone requirement by taking the capstone course.

• **Thesis project** (6 credits: typically an independent study in the Fall and UNIV 4697W in the Spring, all under the supervision of the thesis supervisor)
  Students in the Honors Program who plan to fulfill their Honors Scholar requirements in their individualized major must fulfill the capstone requirement by completing a thesis. Other students outside of Honors who are motivated to complete a substantial, independent capstone project are also encouraged to complete a thesis.

• **An approved alternative capstone**
  Occasionally a student may identify a departmental senior seminar or other advanced course that provides him/her with the opportunity to integrate the themes of his/her individualized major. Such alternatives must be approved in advance by the director and the student’s primary advisor.

**Note:** Double majors or additional degree students may be able to satisfy the capstone requirement with a capstone course or thesis in their other major/degree if that capstone course or thesis allows them to explore the theme of their individualized major. Such substitutions must be approved at the admissions stage and at the final plan of study stage by the director and your primary advisor.

5.1 Capstone Course - UNIV 4600W

Most students take the capstone course (UNIV 4600W, 3 credits), the centerpiece of which is a research essay of at least 15 pages in length. The research paper provides an opportunity to investigate a question or issue you have not yet had the chance to explore and to integrate the themes of your major. The research and writing projects of the capstone course, as well as the oral presentations required in this course, also allow you to clarify what you have achieved during your interdisciplinary course of study.

To register for the capstone course, you must obtain a permission number from the IISP office.
5.2 Thesis – Research/Independent Study and UNIV 4697W

The thesis offers you the opportunity to pursue an in-depth project of your choosing. Thesis projects may take a variety of forms. Typical is the lengthy written study, the traditional thesis. Other forms are also possible: for example, photo essay, piece of fiction or collection of poetry. Substantial projects, such as a website or a film, would produce a permanent record, but a thesis project report would also capture a summary of the research, planning, and creative work undertaken. The unifying thread for all thesis projects is that they contribute to the development of knowledge or practice in new ways, involve significant background research, require sustained attention in the implementation of the project, and result in a piece of written work that documents the student’s learning process and outcomes.

An Honors Thesis in the IMJR program consists of a six credit sequence, typically completed over the course of two to three semesters. A non-honors thesis may be either three or six credits.

*Expectations and Learning Objectives*

Disciplines and individual faculty will differ in their expectations regarding methodology, theoretical approaches, and presentation of findings. Nonetheless, the Individualized Major Program has set out some broad expectations of learning outcomes for individualized major thesis writers.

Your research, analysis, and writing on the thesis project should be relevant to your individualized major and represent an opportunity for you to integrate and deepen at least several aspects of study in the major.

Your thesis should do more than summarize the existing literature on a particular topic. It should make an original contribution to the field of study, present new findings in the form of new data or critical interpretations of existing material, and it should reflect a good command of the research methodologies in the relevant discipline(s).

At the end of the thesis project, you should be able to:

- Define a research question and design a substantial research project.
- Identify relevant primary and secondary sources and collect reliable data that addresses your research question.
- Analyze the strengths and limitations of different approaches scholars have taken to the research question and recognize interpretative conflicts resulting from these different approaches.
- Select an approach or several approaches appropriate to addressing your research question.
- Develop an argument that is sustained by the available evidence and present that argument in a clear, well-organized manner consistent with disciplinary or interdisciplinary practices.

*Planning a Thesis: Topic/Faculty Supervisor*

A thesis is typically a year-long project completed during your senior year. But you will need to begin planning your thesis well in advance, no later than the second semester of your junior year.
• Decide on a research topic and identify a faculty member who can serve as your thesis supervisor. Choose someone whose research interests match your own. Discuss your interests with the faculty member and begin to define the contours of your project.

• If you are planning a thesis in the sciences you will need to begin the planning process even earlier: in the second semester of your sophomore year and no later than the first semester of your junior year.

• If you are an Honors student, you will also be expected to identify a second reader. The second reader should be a faculty member from a discipline relevant to your thesis; this individual may be in the same discipline as that of the supervisor or in a different discipline, or may be drawn from your individualized major advisors. You should discuss with your thesis supervisor when to bring the second reader on board.

Planning a Thesis: Establishing Expectations with Your Thesis Supervisor
You and your thesis supervisor will need to establish what the specific expectations will be for your thesis. In order to do this, you might ask your thesis supervisor the following questions:

• What are the expectations for a thesis in your department?
  Each discipline typically has expectations for a thesis. Your thesis supervisor should be familiar with the thesis expectations in his/her department and these may be an appropriate starting point for a discussion of expectations.

• Are these expectations also appropriate for a thesis in my individualized major?
  Because your thesis will be for an interdisciplinary major, the expectations for your thesis (in terms of methodology, presentation, etc) may diverge from those of your thesis supervisor’s department. It is important to establish early on how they might diverge, so that both you and the faculty member are clear about the expectations for your thesis.

• Considering my prior course work and my interests, what kind of preparatory work would be most appropriate for me?
  You may be able to benefit from participation in a departmental methods or thesis seminar during the fall semester. Some well-qualified students may be admitted to a relevant graduate seminar.

• How should I present my findings? What is the typical length of a thesis?
  Different disciplines have different conventions regarding the presentation of research findings. Most combine a review of relevant scholarly literature with a presentation of research findings. Some expect an explicit, detailed discussion of research methodologies. In other fields research methods are implicit. In some fields the written element of the thesis may be relatively short, while in others it may constitute the bulk of the work.

• What arrangements for supervision should we make?
  You may want to meet with your thesis supervisor on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. You may want to establish expectations regarding when and how you will report on the progress of your research and submit drafts of your writing.

• We advise you to summarize the answers to these questions in the form of a learning agreement with your supervisor.
Planning a Thesis: Submitting a Thesis Proposal

You will be expected to prepare a written proposal to be submitted to the Individualized Major Program office no later than the last day of classes of the semester before you begin your thesis sequence of courses, typically the spring semester of your junior year. The form is available on the forms page of the Individualized Major Program website.

A proposal is just that: a proposal. It helps you define the scope of your research. You should expect to refine your topic as you do your research and discuss your ideas and progress with your thesis supervisor.

Planning a Thesis: Important Issues

- **Human Subjects Research:**
  If your project involves human subjects research (for example: interviews or surveys), then your project will need to be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board before you begin. You should discuss this with your thesis supervisor and the Individualized Major Program office.

- **Research Funding:**
  The earlier you begin to consider the sources you plan to use and the resources you will need for your thesis the better. You should consider whether your research will require support in the form of lab time, travel funds, or other such arrangements.

  The Office of Undergraduate Research awards grants for research projects conducted during the summer as well as the academic year.

  Students in the humanities can turn to the Humanities Institute, which administers two research awards for undergraduates: undergraduate fellowships and undergraduate student awards.

  Your thesis supervisor may also have suggestions for how you can obtain the resources you need.

Registering for Thesis Coursework

Most theses will consist of a six-credit sequence completed over the course of two to three semesters. Students intending to complete Honors Scholar requirements in their individualized major must complete a six-credit thesis sequence.

- In the social sciences and humanities, you will typically enroll in a research seminar, graduate course or independent study with your thesis supervisor during the Fall semester. This Fall semester course should provide you with an opportunity to explore the existing scholarship on your major theme and explore the specific topic of your thesis. During the spring semester, you will typically enroll in UNIV 4697W Senior Thesis, for which your thesis supervisor is the instructor. During this semester you will engage in a close investigation of your research question and write the thesis. You will meet regularly with your thesis supervisor who provides feedback on analysis and writing.

- In the sciences, you may follow a somewhat different sequence with two or more semesters of data collection and laboratory work (during which you register for a research course or independent study in your thesis supervisor’s department) followed by the writing stage, when you register for UNIV 4697W Senior Thesis.
To register for UNIV 4697W you must use an Independent Study Authorization form. Your thesis supervisor signs on the instructor line; your primary advisor or the IISP director signs on the advisor line. The IISP director signs on the Department Head line.

Presenting Your Research
If you are an Honors student, you must make a public presentation of the thesis research in a format agreed on with the supervisor. It is for the supervisor to decide if the presentation forms part of the assessed work for the thesis course. Where possible, the audience should include your thesis supervisor and second reader. Ideally, an IISP staff member would also be part of the audience (not in an evaluative role).

We encourage you to make use of existing arrangements for your presentation. The “Frontiers in Undergraduate Research” exhibition, put on semi-annually by the Office of Undergraduate Research, is an excellent venue for a presentation. Some departments, such as Political Science, also have exhibitions of student work. For students without another venue for presentation, the IISP will arrange opportunities for public presentations during the last two weeks of classes in consultation with faculty supervisors, second readers and Honors students.

Non-Honors students are also encouraged to make a public presentation.

Thesis writers also have the opportunity to submit their work for inclusion in UConn’s Digital Commons, an electronic repository for materials produced by UConn faculty and students. For further information see http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/.
6. Career Resources

Planning for employment or graduate study is a long process. It begins when you design your individualized major and continues as you consider internships, study abroad programs, and research projects. These experiences will help you to plot your post-graduation path. Information on graduate study and careers is available from a variety of offices and programs at UConn. The internet is also a rich source of information and in this section we point you to some particularly useful websites.

6.1 Career Exploration

If you are unsure about what kind of work you would like to do, the Center for Career Development website includes a section focused on career exploration, and their office in Wilbur Cross 201 includes an extensive career library. Also helpful is the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Outlook Handbook which provides overviews of hundreds of occupations. You may want to do more in-depth research into your chosen career or field of study than these general sources provide. Some suggested strategies are:

- Research the website of the professional association of your chosen career. These associations typically are clearinghouses for information on training, employment, policy issues and other such questions affecting that profession.
- Talk to people doing the kind of work you would like to do. You can do this through informational interviewing or job shadowing.
- Seek career-related job experiences. Focus your internships, cooperative education, and summer employment in fields that are relevant to your career goals.

6.2 Exploring Specific Careers and Graduate Programs

If you are considering graduate study, the Center for Career Development has put together a general document “Considering Graduate School.” In addition, the websites of UConn’s own graduate programs or those at other universities can provide insights on what is expected for admission. More specific suggestions are listed below.

Law school

If you are interested in law school, a key resource is the Pre-law Office. For general information on undergraduate training for law school you should also read the American Bar Association’s advice about preparing for law school.

Health Professions

If you are interested in a career in the health professions, Explore Health Careers is an excellent resource. It offers detailed information on a wide variety of health careers including medicine, physical therapy, optometry, alternative medicine and others. Similar overviews of the health professions are available in UConn’s Center for Career Development resources library.

- For specific information on careers in medicine or dentistry visit the website of the Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental Office.
You will find excellent information on public health at the Association of Schools and Programs in Public Health. In addition, UConn’s Public Health program has some information as well.

Social Justice
UConn Center for Career Development has an extensive guide to “Careers for the Common Good”

International Careers
Information on a wide range of international careers can be found at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School’s Career Guides.

Arts and Sciences
If you want to pursue a graduate degree in the arts or sciences, you may want to begin by speaking with faculty in the discipline that interests you. The professional associations specific to your discipline are also useful resources.

K-12 Teaching
The Neag School of Education has information on Masters in Education and teacher certification. If you are interested in learning more about the issues affecting K-12 teaching from the perspective of teachers go to the website of the National Education Association.

Business School
If you are interested in getting an MBA, you might find some useful information on the UConn School of Business website. The School of Business also hosts the Diversity in Business Lecture Series and the Global Business Leadership Seminar Series, in which business leaders offer their insights in person. Students can also join the wide variety of student organizations at the School of Business focused on business themes such as marketing and entrepreneurship.