Multidisciplinary Academic Programs

To enrich the curricular opportunities available to students and faculty, the Yale College Faculty authorized the creation of multidisciplinary academic programs in the Yale College and a framework for approving them. These programs provide opportunities for Yale College students to examine pressing social challenges from a variety of disciplinary perspectives among a community of students and faculty who have shared interests. Students from any major can apply to these programs, and faculty from across the university participate in them. Each program focuses centrally on a distinct and different set of issues, but they all share common features, including a core curriculum—beginning with a gateway course and culminating in a senior capstone project—and opportunities for practical experience that allow students to combine theory and practice, applying what they have learned in the classroom and in their research. Education Studies, Energy Studies, Global Health Studies, and Human Rights Studies are the current multidisciplinary academic programs offered in Yale College.

The Committee on Majors uses the following guidelines for the consideration of proposals for new multidisciplinary academic programs in Yale College:

- Any proposals for new MAPs require approval from the Committee on Majors before being presented to the Yale College faculty for consideration.
- All such proposals need to include provision for a specific gateway or core course, a set of 5 or more courses drawn from the available roster of existing courses, and a capstone project. Normally, the MAP also requires a capstone course for seniors. Each proposal should include at least three examples of what would constitute an acceptable capstone project. No MAP may permit an overlap of more than two courses with a student’s major, and, normally, the capstone project may not significantly overlap with the student’s senior project. Any student seeking an exception to the rule about a senior project’s overlap with a MAP, and are interested in producing a longer and more involved product, should obtain permission from both the DUS and the MAP Director.
- The capstone project can take several forms: an independent research paper or project comparable to a senior essay; a paper or project completed in a senior seminar within the program; or a non-credit project report based upon field work.
- Each MAP proposal must demonstrate sufficient financial resources to sustain itself from its existing resources, whether through a gift, a grant, or an existing university fund. Funding must be sufficient to cover the cost of the staff salaries, salaries for external faculty brought in expressly for the MAP, and funding for student projects.
- Each MAP must demonstrate sufficient faculty interest through the constitution of a faculty advisory committee, each member of which would commit to advising a capstone project if asked. One of these faculty members should be designated as the Faculty Director of the MAP who will be responsible for the intellectual direction of the program.
- Each MAP must demonstrate sufficient student interest, normally through the successful pilot of the gateway or core course, prior to the instantiation of the MAP itself. The proposal should also include the roster of existing courses acceptable in fulfillment of the course requirements.
- As per the 2013 report, a program Executive Director, generally a person with a faculty appointment, will be appointed by the Dean of Yale College to coordinate advising and mentoring of students, the application and admission to the program, and to oversee the curriculum and any co-curricular requirements, such as internships.
- A MAP should plan to admit 15 to 20 students per year. A program seeking to admit more than 20 students in any given year should seek permission from the Yale College Dean’s Office.
- As per the 2013 recommendations, there should be a presumption that no specific program will become a permanent feature of the Yale College curriculum, but that each requires periodic review and re-approval to continue. Once a program is approved for an initial set period (usually five years), a faculty-led steering group for the program shall regularly review and revise the requirements and evaluate the commitment of instructors, mentors, and advisers to the program. Outside review shall be conducted by the Committee on Majors in the penultimate year of the term for which such programs may be initially approved.

Some details may vary from program to program, as appropriate.

For purposes of consistent and reliable record keeping, the University Registrar’s Office is the official repository of information about who has been admitted to and who has completed such multidisciplinary programs.