

MAJOR PROGRAMS

All candidates for a bachelor's degree in Yale College must elect a major program. The requirements for a major are described in general terms in the sections below, and in more detail under Subjects of Instruction. Students should acquaint themselves fully with all the requirements of the major they plan to enter, considering not only the choice of courses in the current term but also the plan of their entire work in the last two or three years in college. Advising in the major is provided by the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) or an adviser designated by the department or program, and students should plan a schedule of courses in their major in consultation with them. In addition, after a student has declared a major, the DUS or the DUS's designee is normally the person who reviews the student's course schedule.

Students seeking the B.S. or the B.A. degree with a major in science or engineering are expected to declare their majors at the beginning of sophomore year, although a student who has completed the prerequisites may elect a science major later. Sophomores interested in majoring in science or engineering should discuss their major course of studies with the director of undergraduate studies or an adviser designated by the department or program. Students seeking the B.A. degree with a major in a field other than science or engineering are expected to declare their major by the end of the sophomore year and should do so no later than the beginning of the junior year.

SELECTION OF A MAJOR

In designing a program of study, the student ought to plan for depth of concentration as well as breadth of scope. To study a subject in depth can be rewarding and energizing and can form the basis of the interests and occupations of a lifetime. Knowledge advances by specialization, and one can gain some of the excitement of discovery by pressing toward the outer limits of what is known in a particular field. Intense study of a seemingly narrow area of investigation may disclose ramifications and connections that alter perspectives on other subjects. Such study also sharpens judgment and acquaints a person with processes by which new truths can be found.

In order to gain exposure to this kind of experience, students must elect and complete a major—a subject in which they will work more intensively than in any other. Yale College offers more than eighty possible majors. The department or program concerned sets the requirements for each major, which are detailed under Subjects of Instruction.

Some students will have made a tentative choice of a major before entering college. Others will have settled on a general area—for example, the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences—without being certain of the specific department or program of their major. Still others will be completely undecided. Many students who arrive with their minds made up change them after a year or two. Even students who feel certain of their choices should keep open the possibility of a change. In selecting courses during their first two years, students should bear in mind not only the distributional requirements, but also the need for some exploration of the subjects to which they feel drawn.

THE MAJOR (B.A. OR B.S.)

A major program usually includes at least twelve term courses in the same area, progressing from introductory to advanced work, which become the focus of a student's program in the junior and senior years. Majors are offered by departments, interdepartmental programs, or interdisciplinary programs. In many departments and programs, a limited number of courses in related fields may be offered in fulfillment of the requirements for the major. Many majors have prerequisites, usually taken in the first year or sophomore year.

In all majors, the student must satisfy a senior requirement, usually a senior essay, senior project, or senior departmental examination. In an intensive major, the student must fulfill additional requirements, such as taking a prescribed seminar, tutorial, or graduate course, or completing some other project in the senior year.

SPECIAL DIVISIONAL MAJORS

A Special Divisional Major affords an alternative for the student whose academic interests cannot be met within one of the existing major programs. Such students may, with the approval of the Committee on Honors and Academic Standing, design special majors of their own in consultation with members of the faculty and in accordance with the procedures outlined under Subjects of Instruction. A Special Divisional Major may not be offered as one of two majors.