

Self-Designed Majors

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Students at The College of New Jersey can earn an undergraduate degree with an approved self-designed major. The self-designed major enables students with exceptional drive and creativity to gain major credit for a course of studies that cannot be accommodated by existing degree programs. This is particularly attractive for students who are prepared to undertake extensive work in interdisciplinary areas like biochemistry, cognitive science, environmental studies, political economy, and religious studies. However, it may also afford opportunities for in-depth studies in a single discipline, such as a language in which TCNJ does not offer a major.

TCNJ's Self-Designed Major has been designed as an honors-level program for highly motivated and independent students who are willing to commit themselves to a rigorous course of studies. To be eligible for consideration, students must have at least a 3.0 GPA and submit a proposal no later than the beginning of their junior year. The major proposed should consist of not fewer than twelve courses. No more than four of the courses may be completed at other institutions. No more than three of the courses may be conducted as independent studies. At least half of the courses must be at the 300-400 level. The proposed courses must include a senior capstone project that serves as a means of unifying the major. (Under special circumstances, exceptions to these requirements may be granted by the Self-Designed Major Committee.)

Students interested in developing a proposal should consult with faculty in each of the departments in which they expect to take extensive coursework and secure the support of full-time faculty advisors from those departments. Students who have questions or concerns that cannot be fully addressed by their advisors should consult the Coordinator of the Self-Designed Major program. With the assistance of their advisors, students should prepare a formal proposal including: (1) a statement of justification and the goals of the specific interdepartmental major, (2) a list of the courses that will constitute their program of study, and (3) a preliminary description of the senior capstone project and the way in which it will serve to unify the course of study.

Approval of a proposal requires endorsements from the chair(s) of the department(s) in which principal coursework will be taken as well as the Deans of the Schools that house these departments. Completed proposals should be reviewed by the program Coordinator before being sent to the Self-Designed Major Committee.

Among the majors that have already been approved are biochemistry, classical studies, film and television production, cultural anthropology, religious studies, French, Italian, and Chinese. But students are encouraged to use their imagination and the advice of faculty members to explore new possibilities.