

**WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY**  
**MAJOR or PROGRAM PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**  
**for Creating or Altering a Major or Non-Major Program**

These guidelines are intended to assist in proposal development, and to maximize the likelihood that a complete, thoroughly vetted proposal for curricular change comes to the Committee on Courses and Degrees for review. All proposals for adding or modifying a major or non-major program should be reviewed with the Dean of the College, who chairs the Committee on Courses and Degrees. Proposals should be prepared in consultation with the Dean of the College, who chairs the Committee on Courses and Degrees, and the University Registrar.

From the W&L Mission Statement: Washington and Lee University expects every student, in pursuing a liberal education, to attain both "broad exposure to the principal areas of human knowledge [General Education OR Foundation and Distribution Requirements] and intensive exploration of a single field or discipline [the major]." In addition, we allow for the completion of a limited range of specialized courses to count toward completion of a non-major program of study (e.g. Environmental Studies, Women's Studies, Global Stewardship), and to have this noted on the transcript at graduation.

The following guidelines should be used in preparing a proposal to create or modify an area of curricular emphasis (e.g. any major or non-major program of study) at Washington and Lee University.

Essential Requirements

- Prepare a clear and coherent plan of study for the major or non-major program (see guidelines below). If modifying an existing course of study, clearly identify areas of proposed change, and provide all of the information requested in the guidelines below.
- Proposals for a new major or a new non-major program should clearly reflect the support and thorough understanding of those whose courses or departments will be most affected by the change (letters of support from those affected are helpful; minority reports may be attached). The proposal should include statements from those who are willing and qualified to serve as advisers to students in the new area. No curricular changes should be proposed unless all affected faculty members have been consulted.
- Once a proposal is approved, subsequent changes (e.g. course additions, deletions, or substitutions, revisions in requirements or optional courses, or substantial modifications to key courses) must be approved by the Committee on Courses and Degrees.

Guidelines for preparing a proposal

For new majors or new non-major programs, the proposal must be a clear and coherent statement demonstrating need, goals, and benefits not obtainable in an already-established major or program.

Modifications to existing majors or programs must be fully described and justified in relation to curricular or pedagogical goals.

Please include the following (any previously reviewed materials do not need to be re-created if they already exist in the Curricular Assessment File – see below):

**1. Background & Rationale**

What is the impetus for the proposed curricular modification?

Provide information about student demand for the new curriculum.

What other schools with similar majors or programs have you consulted?

What graduate programs or professional programs or work environments (in the case of pre-professional courses of study) have you reviewed to determine their expectations?

How does the proposal serve W&L's mission (refer to the Mission Statement in the *Catalog*)?

## **2. Goals of the major or non-major program**

What are the pedagogical goals served by the proposed curriculum?

Comment on the means that will be employed to show that these goals are being met (*e.g.* discipline-specific standardized testing, increase in number of graduate school applicants within the department or program; higher GRE scores; increase in number or caliber of professional placements for pre-professional program, or any other appropriate measure used by the department or program).

Why would the proposed new program of study be more beneficial to students than an already-established major or program?

## **3. Courses in the major or non-major program**

List existing and planned courses to be included in the program or major at the 100- 200- and 300-levels, and the frequency with which each has been offered in the past three years.

How do the courses at each level serve the stated goals of the major or program?

For existing programs, include revised Catalog-style language.

## **4. Capstone (if applicable)**

Describe any proposed capstone activity (or options), and explain the goals of the senior-level experience.

For interdisciplinary programs, which affiliated faculty members have been identified as potential capstone mentors?

## **5. Personnel**

What W&L faculty have the appropriate professional credentials to participate in curricular development and teach within the major or program?

## **6. Projected schedule and course availability**

Because some courses are not taught during faculty sabbaticals or for other reasons, proposals will benefit from letters of support from department heads whose faculty members' courses will contribute to an interdisciplinary curriculum.

The department head(s) should elaborate on projected course availability over a five year period (*e.g.* when are the relevant faculty members due for sabbatical leave; how frequently the courses in question are typically offered; whether relevant faculty members teach the courses cited as relevant to the major or program).

## **7. Ancillary resources**

The proposal should be accompanied by a statement on the appropriateness of current library holdings for supporting the current or proposed program, as well as a description of planned expansion of holdings related to the area(s) represented by the proposed curricular initiative.

In the event that the proposed initiative has implications for allocation of space to accommodate faculty or student projects or equipment set-up in the immediate or near future, those anticipated needs should be fully described.

What new faculty positions, classroom space, or technology will be required to fully realize the proposal's goals?

For new majors or programs, a sample budget designed to provide appropriate support for meeting the goals of the major or concentration should be included with the proposal, for the appropriate dean's review.

NOTE any related grant proposals or submissions.