

Important Facts for Students interested in Individualized Programs of Study (Individualized or Interdisciplinary Studies Degrees)

Students who desire to pursue a degree that provides them with a broader background in several areas rather than a more specialized plan of study may choose an Individualized or Interdisciplinary Studies degree at Liberty University. **Students considering these degree programs must complete a multi-step process prior to acceptance in the program.**

1. Students must schedule an appointment with the Career Center to take the FOCUS 2 Assessment. A follow-up appointment with a Career Counselor must be held to determine if the student should proceed with declaring a traditional major or following the application steps for the Interdisciplinary Studies or Individualized Studies degree program. (Frequently, new students misunderstand the purpose of the IPS degrees and are really undecided in their career choice. The Career Direct Assessment is a tool which can help determine educational direction.)
2. Every student interested in an IPS degree should be scheduled for their first semester at Liberty as if an “Undecided” student.
3. Begin the **Preliminary Application Steps** as described on the IPS website **after** beginning classes for the first semester (www.liberty.edu/individualstudy).
4. Application Requirements

Individualized Studies:

- Students may pursue a B.A. or a B.S. degree in Individualized Studies. The B.A. degree requires 12 hours of language.
- 42 hours in the major will comprise the focus of the degree. Students will choose 2 cognate areas in which to complete 21 hours for each cognate. The remaining 78 hours is compromised of the general education requirements and electives, (including two Integrative Courses for the B.A.)
- A 3.0 GPA is required for entrance and continuance in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program.
- Complete 60 hours following admission to the program.
- The B.A. requires a final essay synthesizing both cognates with a view to career application. The essay will be evaluated by the LU Research Rubric for Written Communication and the Individualized Studies Final Essay Rubric for Integration (links to each rubric are available on the IPS website)

OR

Interdisciplinary Studies:

- 45 hours in the major will comprise the focus of the degree program. Students will choose at least 2, but no more than 3 cognates, with no more than 30 hours and no less than 15 hours from any one cognate. The remaining 75 hours is compromised of the general education requirements and electives.
 - A common starting point for these cognate areas is the requirements for the “Minors” offered by the University.
 - Students are required to complete **30 hours after being accepted into the program**. This may include the courses in which the student is currently enrolled.
5. After completing Steps 1 and 2 of the application process, the student will work with the Professional Advisor to review and complete an unofficial copy of the Degree Completion Plan (DCP). The student will be responsible to complete and submit a digital copy of the DCP file to the Professional Advisor for verification prior to securing signature approval. An appointment will be scheduled to review/sign the final DCP, to review the status of the application packet, and discuss the remaining steps of the application process.
 6. Upon receiving signed approval from the Professional Advisor and Department Chairs for each cognate, the entire application packet and DCP will be submitted to Mrs. Barbara Sherman, Director, Individualized Programs of Study. At the time of submission, pending completion of the full application packet, the student will be asked to schedule an appointment with the Director, for final acceptance into degree program.
 7. Individualized Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies applicants should note:
 - The entire process from the time of receiving the application packet to final approval and declaring the Individualized/Interdisciplinary major **may take up to 4 weeks**.
 - CSER credit must be current prior to meeting with the IPS Director (one credit required for every full-time semester at Liberty University).
 - Applications will only be accepted during the following times:
 - Fall Semester
September 1 - November 15
 - Spring Semester
February 1 - April 15
 - Internships are recommended. This adds a dimension of experience that reinforces a cognate area. The Washington Fellowship is a potential possibility. For additional information on the Washington Fellowship, please contact the Career Center at washington@liberty.edu or 434-592-3889.
 - General internship information can also be found on the Career Center Website: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=6149>.

Frequently Asked Questions – Individualized Studies or Interdisciplinary Studies

1. Can I create my own major at Liberty?

Individualized Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies are both majors that allow you to use multiple areas of specialization (cognates). In designing a cognate, students must choose from the courses that are available at Liberty.

2. How many hours do I need to complete an Individualized Studies degree?

120 is the minimum required. In addition to fulfilling the degree requirements, you must complete a set number of hours after being accepted into the program. (Individualized Studies = 60 credits; Interdisciplinary Studies = 30 credits)

3. Why can't I find a DCP online for Individualized or Interdisciplinary Studies?

These degrees require completion of an application process and approval by several campus offices. In addition, each student's DCP is unique to their cognates (specializations). Initiating the application steps listed on the IPS website will lead to receiving an unofficial copy of the DCP.

4. Can I change the classes I want to take for my degree program?

If you want to take a different course, other than what is approved for each cognate listed on your DCP, you will need to complete a course substitution approval form and have it signed by the Department Chair.

5. Is an internship required for either of these degree programs?

An internship is not required, but it is recommended because it adds experience in an area of specialization and enhances your resume.

6. If I declare one of these majors, how do I present my degree in a resume?

When presenting your Individualized Studies or Interdisciplinary Studies degree on your resume, you would state something to this effect: "Individualized Studies Degree with Specializations in Business and Communications."

7. Can I have a minor with either of the IPS degrees?

A minor is possible with these degrees because you need to fulfill a certain number of elective credits, as do all other degree programs at Liberty.

8. What is the difference between an Individualized Studies degree and an Interdisciplinary Studies Degree Program?

An Individualized Studies degree only allows 2 cognates and requires a minimum 3.0 GPA. An Interdisciplinary Studies degree allows you to choose 2 or 3 cognates and requires a minimum 2.0 GPA. Additional information about each degree program can be found on the IPS website.