Guidelines for the Self-Designed
Interdisciplinary Studies Minor

Understanding and seeking answers to complex issues often requires integrating knowledge and methods drawn from the natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities.

Students who design a liberal arts interdisciplinary minor should want to study a problem, question, or area of knowledge using and integrating multiple disciplinary approaches.

A self-designed minor contains six units.

Faculty advisors play an important role in working with students to design and implement these minors.

Recent self-designed interdisciplinary minors have included:

- Music Therapy
- Cognitive Science
- Human Development
- Ethnomusicology
I. The Interdisciplinary Studies Program and Committee

The Interdisciplinary Studies program enables Beloit College students to explore and address complex issues through inquiry between and beyond disciplinary boundaries. In this program, students analyze and synthesize information from multiple perspectives and construct new forms of knowledge. The interdisciplinary offerings include courses, program-supported majors, and self-design majors and minors.

The Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST) Committee supervises the interdisciplinary major and minor program, and consists of the Provost, three additional faculty members and one student. Students interested in designing an IDST minor should contact the Provost’s office. The Committee approves or rejects interdisciplinary major and minor proposals after their approval by the faculty members consenting to serve as advisors.

A student may design an interdisciplinary minor that integrates perspectives from several academic disciplines, although the manner in which such integration is accomplished will vary with the minor and may include special projects.

II. Application Deadlines and Eligibility

1. Students may submit proposals as early as their third semester, but no later than four weeks after classes begin in their sixth semester.

2. The deadline for application is four weeks before the last day of classes if the application is to be acted on that semester.

III. Procedures

Each student who wishes to pursue an IDST minor needs to:

1. Consult the Provost’s Office to learn about the application process, and to discuss the possible shape of the proposal. This constitutes the beginning of the application process for purposes of eligibility.

2. Consult at least one faculty advisor who will agree to supervise the minor. The minor advisor(s) may or may not be the same as the student’s major advisor(s). These advisors should assist the student in planning the minor and preparing the proposal.
3. Submit a preliminary proposal to the Provost’s Office no later than **four weeks after classes begin in the sixth semester** (see section V for instruction on the proposal). Letters of support from the student’s faculty minor advisors and at least one major advisor (see section IV for instruction on advisors) should also be sent to the Provost’s Office by this deadline. The IDST Committee will accept or reject the proposal, or ask for revisions. If the proposal is approved, the Chair of the IDST Committee will send a statement of acceptance to the student, the student’s minor and major advisors and the Registrar. A copy of the successful proposal will go into the student’s advising file and will be sent to each advisor.

4. If course substitutions for the approved minor must be made in any given semester, the student must submit the proposed changes to the Provost’s Office for approval prior to registration. Submit proposed changes as early as possible. Because of the quick turnaround between the release of the schedule of classes and registration, proposed changes can be fast-tracked through the Committee under some circumstances.

**IDST MINOR PROPOSAL CHECKLIST**

1. Proposal with title, abstract, conceptual rationale, list of courses, and date

2. Copy of academic transcript

3. Letter of support from at least one faculty minor advisor

4. Letter of support from at least one faculty major advisor

Deadline: four weeks after classes begin in the sixth semester

**IV. Advisors**

Students planning to propose an interdisciplinary minor must select at least one minor advisor who may or may not be the student’s major advisor(s). The minor advisor(s) will work closely with the student in developing the proposal, supervising the work done, and certifying the completion of the minor. Faculty members willing to serve as advisors for an IDST minor shall send a letter indicating such support to the Provost’s Office at the same time that the student submits the proposal.

At least one major advisor of the student must send a letter of support to the Provost Office at the same time that the student submits the proposal. The letter should explain how the student’s proposed IDST minor might impact his/her progress toward the completion of the major and toward graduation.
The Provost’s Office will also receive from the Registrar an advising folder for each student whose proposal is accepted.

Minor advisors’ specific responsibilities are described in the Faculty Agreement Form, which is to be signed by each advisor once the student’s proposal is accepted.

V. The Proposal

1. In preparing final proposals, students should keep in close touch with their intended minor advisor(s).

2. The proposed minor should have a descriptive and appropriate title. This title will appear on the student’s transcript.

3. An abstract of one page should introduce the proposal. The abstract should answer as precisely as possible the question, “What is the essence of this proposal?” The abstract should include:
   a. Title of the proposed minor.
   b. Name(s) of minor advisor(s).
   c. A one or two-paragraph statement of goals and objectives containing a precise indication of the focus and intentions of the minor.

4. A conceptual rationale (approximately 750 words) should cover the total interdisciplinary minor plan and experience. The rationale should state how the proposed courses will tie together to serve the student's intellectual and career goals, and how it will complement the student’s major rather than act as a mere extension of it.

5. A list of courses should include all courses pertaining to the proposed minor. These courses should reflect depth as well as breadth. Courses should number six units in total, covering at least two disciplines, with at least two units from each discipline. Students are advised to pay particular attention to pre-requisites for courses chosen, as these will not be waived. A total of one unit special project credit may count toward the minor.

Additional course requirements:

- No more than two-thirds of the units required for the minor may be taken in one department.
- No more than four units that count toward the minor may be in progress or completed prior to approval of the minor.
• No more than two courses from an institution other than Beloit College (excluding courses from off-campus study programs) may count toward the minor. These courses must be subject to the student’s IDST minor advisor’s approval.

• No more than two units from off-campus study programs (including domestic or study abroad programs) may count toward the minor. These courses must be subject to the student’s IDST minor advisor’s approval.

• No more than two courses counting toward the minor may also count toward the student’s major.

6. A copy of the academic transcript must be included.

Note: Please date the proposal, and if revisions are requested, provide a new date for each new version of the proposal. Be sure to include your name.

VI. Graduation

During the last semester of study, the student completing an IDST minor will:

1. Summarize in writing the academic substance of the IDST minor.

2. Evaluate in writing the IDST minor experience, describing its range and its conclusions.

3. Submit items (1) and (2) above to the minor advisors and request evaluation letters from them.

4. Send items (1) and (2) along with the advisors’ evaluation letters to the Provost’s Office two weeks before classes end in the semester that the student plans to graduate.

Copies of the student’s approved proposal, final evaluation, and all other relevant material will be kept on file in the Provost’s Office.