



INDIVIDUALIZED CONCENTRATION

The Residential College offers the opportunity to formulate an individualized concentration to RC students unable to find an existing degree program within the Residential College or in LSA, which meets their specific academic needs and interests. Highly motivated and self-directed students with strong academic records who wish to pursue this option must have a good idea of what they want to achieve, consult with RC faculty and (where appropriate) other UM faculty, and develop a carefully thought out academic plan of study.

Students interested in this option should start by discussing the matter with the designated facilitator for the RC Individualized Concentration Program (ICP), whose name can be obtained at the RC Academic Services Office in 134 Tyler. With the assistance of the ICP Facilitator, the student will need to identify one or two faculty members -- at least one of whom is on the RC faculty -- willing to serve as her/his concentration advisor(s). The ICP concentration advisor(s) will help the student formulate an appropriate academic plan of study, and that plan must be approved by the advisor(s), the ICP Facilitator, and the RC ICP Review Committee before the student can formally declare the individualized concentration. After the concentration is declared, the student must continue to consult with her/his ICP advisor(s) at least once a term before registering for courses in the following term; and completion of the concentration must be certified by an ICP concentration advisor who is a member of the RC faculty.

Note: Students who wish to declare an individualized concentration are strongly advised to do so by the end of their sophomore year. Under exceptional circumstances an individualized concentration may be approved as late as during the junior year, but in no cases during the senior year.

THE CONCENTRATION PROPOSAL

Students who wish to declare an individualized concentration must first prepare a concentration proposal that includes the following elements:

1. A descriptive title for the concentration (as brief as possible).
2. A characterization of the concentration, describing in a coherent fashion the themes and issues to be studied, how they are related, what disciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches will be brought to bear, and why the student cannot attain her/his educational objectives within any already existing RC or LSA concentration (this statement ordinarily requires 3-5 pages of well-considered text).



3. A cumulative listing of all those courses the student has already taken (or is currently enrolled in) which form part of the plan of study for the concentration (including any appropriate prerequisites). Each course* should be identified by title, division or department, course number, section number (if applicable), credit hours; and the term and year of completion should be indicated. No more than half the proposed concentration courses can be completed and/or currently elected at the time the ICP proposal is submitted (some leniency in this requirement may be possible under very unusual circumstances).
4. A listing of courses the student expects to take in the future to complete the plan of study for the concentration -- supplemented by a listing of at least half as many alternate courses the student may elect to substitute for some of the courses in the initial listing; all these courses* must be identified by title, division or department, course number, section number (if applicable) and credit hours.
5. The name of the student's ICP concentration advisor(s), followed by the (dated) signature(s) of the advisor(s) indicating approval of the proposed concentration and plan of study. At least one of the advisors approving an individualized concentration must be a member of the RC faculty; but a second advisor may be associated with any other UM unit.

Once the concentration proposal is completed as outlined above, a copy must be submitted to the ICP Facilitator (along with the ICP Progress Form) who will pass it on to the RC ICP Review Committee. After approval, the ICP Facilitator will then sign the official declaration of concentration form to be filed with the RC Academic Services Office.

* Note: in the case of courses taken at another university and/or in a foreign country, at least the course title and (transferred) credit hours must be provided.

CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The academic plan of study for an individualized concentration should meet the following requirements:

- a. at least 30 credit-hours of upper-level (300-level or above) courses;
- b. no more than 20 credit-hours outside of the College of LSA;
- c. either an honors thesis, a non-honors thesis project, or a "graduating essay" in the senior year.

The "graduating essay" is a concluding report that summarizes the student's experience with the individualized concentration. Ordinarily about 10 pages in length, it is intended to be in part a



reflective intellectual autobiography describing the development of the student's understanding of her/his chosen field, and in part an evaluation of the strengths and the weaknesses of the concentration. The graduating essay is to be submitted to the student's RC ICP advisor, with whom the student may sign up for one credit-hour of independent study.

PROCEDURES

1. Concentration Declaration. Students seeking to declare an Individualized Concentration must develop, with the help of their ICP advisor(s), a concentration proposal meeting all the above guidelines and requirements. When the student's proposal has been developed to the point where it meets the approval of the ICP advisor(s), the RC ICP advisor signs on the appropriate line of the ICP Progress Form and the student turns in the entire proposal to the ICP Facilitator (with a copy to the RC ICP advisor). The ICP Facilitator reviews the proposal and passes it along to the ICP Review Committee. If the proposal is approved, the ICP Facilitator prepares and signs an official concentration declaration form; the Individualized Concentration is then entered into the student's official academic record.
2. Concentration Progress. Once the Individualized Concentration has been approved and declared, the student must continue to consult with his/her ICP advisor(s) at least once a term – generally before registering for courses in the following term – keeping the RC ICP advisor's copy of the ICP Progress Form up to date. No later than January of each calendar year (or September if the student is off campus in January), the student must check in with the ICP Facilitator to update the list of courses on the Facilitator's copy of the ICP Progress Form.
3. Concentration Completion. To be certified as having completed all the requirements of the Individualized Concentration, a student must have a concentration release form filled out and signed first by the RC ICP advisor and then by the ICP Facilitator. If the RC ICP advisor needs assistance with completing this form, he or she should consult with the ICP Facilitator. For this purpose the student should make an appointment to see the ICP advisor some time before the student's last semester at the RC; the ICP advisor will then list on the form what remains to be done in order for the Individualized Concentration to be completed. Completion of the Concentration will depend upon (a) satisfactory completion of all courses listed on the ICP Progress Form and concentration release form and (b) satisfactory completion of the honors thesis, non-honors thesis project, or "graduating essay."