

Bachelor of Special Studies (B.S.S. Degree Program)

The Bachelor of Special Studies degree offers Cornell students the opportunity to design their own liberal arts degree program in order to meet their particular educational goals. This opportunity permits students to combine courses in an individualized fashion and to broaden or deepen their studies beyond the traditional framework of the Bachelor of Arts. The B.S.S. has no general education requirements and no restrictions as to either the number of courses that may be taken in any one department or the level of such courses. Moreover, while students pursuing a B.S.S. degree may complete one or more departmental, interdisciplinary, or individualized majors, they are not required to complete an academic major.

The particular requirements for the Bachelor of Special Studies degree are:

- Complete a minimum of 31 course credits;
- Achieve a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher;
- File for candidacy by submitting the Prospectus after October 1 of the sophomore year;
- Complete a minimum of 12 course credits after the Prospectus is approved (transfer students admitted with senior standing must complete a minimum of 6 course credits)

The Bachelor of Special Studies degree is defined by the Prospectus, a detailed plan outlining the student's B.S.S. degree program. The Prospectus incorporates a rationale of the program and a chronology of courses that will be taken by the student to fulfill the goals outlined in the rationale description. The Prospectus is to be written by the student, reviewed and signed by a faculty committee composed of a primary advisor and two readers. It is then filed with the Registrar, who verifies that it is complete and meets current academic regulations as set forth by the faculty. The signed Prospectus is considered an agreement between the student and the College.

Course changes that involve a substitution accomplishing the same goals as courses originally proposed require only an add/drop form. However, significant deviations from the program outlined in the Prospectus must be justified in a letter to the Registrar written by the student and approved by the student's B.S.S. faculty committee *before* the student may change the agreement. Significant deviations would include:

- a shift in emphasis or direction of the program of study
- the addition or deletion of a major or minor
- a decrease in the ratio of upper-level to lower-level courses
- the substitution of three or more independent studies or internships for scheduled courses

If you have questions concerning the Bachelor of Special Studies Degree, please contact the Registrar or your faculty advisor.

Instructions & General Information for Students Contemplating the Bachelor of Special Studies

1. Discuss your proposed B.S.S. program with your advisor or one or more members of the faculty.
2. Choose a committee of three faculty members composed of a primary advisor to help you create your B.S.S. program and two faculty readers who, along with your primary advisor, will review and sign your Prospectus. **The primary advisor and faculty readers must either be members of the full-time teaching faculty or part-time members who have been selected by the Department or Program to advise B.S.S. students and to sign their Prospectus.** Some departments may choose certain members to advise all of their B.S.S. students. If you declare one or more majors, your primary advisor *must* be a member of a department in which you will have a major.
3. In conjunction with your primary advisor, begin planning your B.S.S. program *prior to registering for your junior year*. Write a 500-1000 word Rationale and complete the Chronology. Rewrite until your primary advisor gives initial approval to your Prospectus.
4. Circulate your Prospectus to two faculty readers and schedule a group meeting with your primary advisor and your two faculty readers. After this review, your faculty committee may either approve and sign your Prospectus, or suggest revisions to strengthen it. If revisions are suggested, rewrite and re-circulate the revised document to each of your three committee members for their approval. Once approved, the Prospectus must be signed by each member of the faculty committee and filed with the Registrar, who will verify that it is complete and meets current academic regulations as set forth by the Faculty.
5. File your Prospectus with the Registrar any time after October 1 of the sophomore year. If it is complete and found to conform to current academic regulations, the Registrar will notify you of its approval. The Prospectus will become part of your permanent file at the College.
6. You must obtain the written permission of your faculty committee for any significant changes from the Prospectus *before* implementing such changes. If in doubt as to whether the changes are significant, consult the Registrar.
7. In the fall of the student's senior year, the Registrar will review each candidate's B.S.S. program to determine whether the student has registered for the same or similar courses as are listed on the Chronology of Courses included in the student's Prospectus. (This review occurs during the senior audit, described in the *Catalogue* section on Degree Programs.) *A student who has made significant deviations from the B.S.S. Prospectus without prior written approval of the faculty committee will not be awarded the B.S.S. degree.*

B.S.S. Preparation and Submission Checklist for Advisors

Advisors: Please use this tool to review B.S.S. proposals to ensure that they are ready to submit.

Candidate's Name: _____

| Advisor | Please initial each section indicating your approval |
|---------|--|
| | Prospectus Cover Sheet |
| | Information complete and signatures obtained |
| | If a major is declared, the advisor for the primary major is the primary B.S.S. advisor |
| | Submission date: 1. Students will complete a minimum of 12 course credits after approval of B.S.S. proposal. 2. If a transfer student who entered with senior standing, the student will complete a minimum of 6 course credits. |
| | If no majors/minors are listed on prospectus cover sheet, student understands that s/he is dropping any previously declared majors/minors |
| | Prospectus Rationale |
| | 500-1000 word typed rationale that identifies and connects Cornell's Educational Priorities and Outcomes to the proposed BSS program. Student has provided examples of specific courses and/or assignments, projects, activities and how they help achieve the EPO's. Student has also clearly shown how the courses weave together to create a comprehensive liberal arts degree program. |
| | Prospectus Chronology |
| | Ensure transcript and chronology match for courses already completed. Include all adjunct courses. |
| | Does chronology include at least 31 course credits? |
| | Major/Minor Checklists (if majors/minors declared) |
| | Check that all courses necessary for declared majors/minors appear on transcript (completed) or chronology (proposed) |
| | B.S.S. Declaration Card |
| | Include any majors intended |
| | Include signatures from all readers |

Prospectus Cover Sheet

Candidate's Name _____ Date _____

Primary B.S.S. Advisor (must be advisor for primary major, if any) _____

Faculty Reader 1 _____ Faculty Reader 2 _____

B.S.S. Title: _____

Major, if any (as a B.S.S. candidate, a major is not required). If your program includes an individualized major that you have not already declared, please include your Contract for an Individualized Major.

Minor, if any (as a B.S.S. candidate, a minor is not required)

Submission Deadline (check the deadline that applies to you)

___ I will complete at least 12 course credits after submitting my B.S.S. Prospectus.

___ I entered Cornell as a transfer student with senior standing and will complete 6 course credits after submitting my B.S.S. Prospectus.

Candidate's Signature _____ Date _____

Primary B.S.S. Advisor's Signature _____ Date _____

Faculty Reader 1's Signature _____ Date _____

Faculty Reader 2's Signature _____ Date _____

Registrar's Office Use Only

Registrar Signature _____ Date _____

B.S.S. Start Date (Block, Year) _____

Guidelines for the Rationale

In your 500-1000 word rationale for the B.S.S. Prospectus, please address the following questions in detail:

- How does this B.S.S. program align with your educational and professional goals?
- The Educational Priorities/Outcomes of Cornell College are outlined in the [Catalogue](#) - describe the extent to which your proposed B.S.S. program will enable you to achieve these intended outcomes (understanding that not all areas will be equally emphasized).
 - Provide examples of specific courses and or/assignments, projects, activities and how they help achieve the EPO's.
 - Explain how the courses in your chronology weave together to create a comprehensive liberal arts degree program.
- What other activities or experiences will enable you to achieve the above goals and outcomes? (Such activities may include extracurricular activities at Cornell, jobs, travel, hobbies, or private study).

Your faculty committee will evaluate your rationale according to these criteria:

- Is it technically well-written (grammar, spelling organization)?
- Is it conceptually well-written (clear articulation of program, achievable goals, reasonable means)?
- Is this B.S.S. program consistent with the educational goals of the College?
- Does the rationale align with the attached chronology of courses?

Guidelines for the Chronology

Please attach a chronology of proposed courses for your B.S.S. program.

- Using the academic years the courses were taken as headings, list all courses from your transcript in the order they were taken, as well as any adjunct courses.
- Include the course code (i.e. PSY 161), course title, and number of credits.
 - For any transfer courses, indicate (transfer) after the title.
- Make sure your total number of credits at the end is at least 31.