CONTRACT MAJORS

The purpose of the contract major is to enable highly motivated students to develop individual programs of study most appropriate to their particular academic interests. Contract majors should be considered only in those cases where students’ academic interests are substantially different to the point that they cannot be accommodated by an existing major program. A minimum of a 3.0 GPA is normally expected.

A contract major is interdisciplinary in nature, and may include regular courses, independent study, fieldwork, study at other institutions, and study overseas. As with other majors, at least half of the credits must come from New Paltz and at least half should be upper division (300 and 400 level) credits. Each contract major must include at least thirty credits and all other general degree requirements must be completed.

A student interested in a contract major must be sponsored by three faculty advisors from academic disciplines related to the contract. No more than two of the advisors may be from the same department.

Students seeking a contract major should ideally apply before the end of their sophomore year, or at the latest by the end of the first semester of their junior year. A prospective contract major applicant should first consult with a representative of the appropriate dean’s office to discuss the proposed contract major and the composition of the contract committee/advisors.

The final proposal should consist of:

• an essay describing the major, how it fits in with the student’s plans after graduation, and why a combination of majors/minors and electives won’t accomplish the same thing
• a major plan organized by subject matter (with course number and credits for each) and the semester courses are to be taken. The total number of credits, including how many of them are upper division, should be indicated
• a signature sheet for the three faculty advisors, their corresponding deans, and the student.

Materials are to be submitted to the primary dean’s office for approval before declaring the major. A primary advisor should be designated on the major declaration form and the major plan along with the signature sheet should be turned in to Records & Registration along with the declaration form.

For further information, contact the appropriate dean (Business, Fine & Performing Arts, Liberal Arts & Sciences, and Science & Engineering). Contract majors are not available to students in Education.