

# TIPS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL

## BIS/IDIM STATEMENT



When **framing your academic program**, you are expected to demonstrate its coherency. Although you may have to explain why you are departing from the traditional path of a departmental major, you need, above all, to demonstrate that your program stands on its own as a rigorous and carefully planned academic program.

The focus of the statement should be your academic goals as an undergraduate, although it may be relevant to include the source of your interest in a particular field or subject or talk **BREIFLY** about your post-graduation plans (e.g., medical school or a career in business). You should present the experiences or activities that explain your academic interests and then connect them with the content of your IDIM or BIS, thereby giving specific reasons why you are interested in the areas you have chosen.

BIS concentration areas can stand distinct from each other, but you must explain why you are choosing to study these three areas. IDIM requires a thematic focus that represents an original academic program. For both programs, you must demonstrate that you have an understanding of the disciplines in your program.

When **describing your courses**, you should indicate whether the course provides methodology, theory, history, or research experience. Why is this course important for your understanding of the overall discipline, concentration area or specific academic goals? How might this course better prepare you to take other courses? Avoid giving course descriptions that simply paraphrase what is written in the Undergraduate Catalogue. Think about and explain how each course fits into *your* program.

Avoid indicating that you are taking a course because it meets a requirement—you should explain why the course makes sense for your program. If the course is a requirement, there is most likely a good reason **WHY** it is a requirement. In addition, avoid mentioning that a course meets some other sort of requirement (such as writing intensive). If you found a prerequisite course to be particularly useful, you can mention it in your proposal. However, do not list or mention prerequisite courses just so the reader knows you took them—it is assumed that you have these courses completed when you submit your proposal.

The **format** of your proposal should read **SMOOTHLY**. The proposal should take the format of an essay (not an outline). At the top of the first page, provide your name, ID number and the title of your program (no title page). For BIS, the title will contain your concentration areas (e.g. BIS: Art, French and Management) and for IDIM you should provide the title of your major (e.g. IDIM: Theater and Social Change). You can use headers for the sections of your proposal (for example for each concentration area) but you do not have to. When you introduce a course, you should offset it with italics or boldface. You should list the course designator/number and the course title (e.g. ArtH 3921 Art of the Film).

Avoid presenting your courses in a monotone list format (I took this course....Then I took this course). Similarly, avoid indicating which term you have or will take the course (that information can be found on the courselist). In addition, you do not need to mention the course instructor.

As you work on your proposal, remember that it represents the explanation of your focus of study as an undergraduate student—you will draw on this proposal in the future for job resumes, graduate school applications and the like. Take time to put together a thoughtful statement that you can use in the future.

**Finally, have a BIS/IDIM advisor and the Student Writing Center (306B Lind Hall; 612/625-1893; <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>) review your drafts.**

To access samples proposals, go to <http://idp.class.umn.edu> and click on Writing the Proposal.