

Center for Individualized Learning
Instructions: IDP Major Rationale Essay

Requirements

- At the top of the first page on separate lines, include your (1) name; (2) 900#; (3) “IDP Major Rationale Essay,” “Individualized Studies: [your IDP major title];” and (4) the current date of the draft. Optional: You may also include a title for your essay if it is different from the title of your IDP major.
- Insert each heading below and follow the corresponding instructions/writing prompts.
- The finished essay should be 4 - 7 pages, 12-pt, double-spaced, and include page numbers.

Introduction (1-2 paragraphs)

Discuss your background, experiences, and educational journey that explains how and why you decided to pursue the IDP option for your degree. To conclude and transition to the next section, briefly introduce your IDP title.

IDP Title (1 paragraph)

Based on the combined coursework in your IDP, provide a concise description of your proposed field of study that defines your IDP title. Explain how the key terms in your title come together to form the overall concept for your IDP. How would you explain this title to future employers, graduate programs, or others who might ask you what your IDP major is?

IDP Content and Learning Outcomes (5 – 8 paragraphs) (*address each bullet point*)

- Identify and explain at least 3-4 clusters of courses in your IDP major that are integral to your IDP’s focus. When listing each course, include the course prefix, number, and title.
- For each cluster, briefly explain how the courses support your IDP title and how they have or will help you build the knowledge and skills you need to reach your goals.
- For each cluster, identify a learning outcome from the list on the second page that you have or will achieve as a result of the courses in the cluster.
- For each learning outcome, identify at least one class project, assignment, discussion, or experience that you have already completed and then explain how it helped you develop the learning outcome based on your success or failure. If you have not completed a sufficient number of courses in your IDP major to address this item, see your IDP Specialist.
- Conclude this section with a statement that explains how the courses/subjects you combined to build your IDP major integrate to form a comprehensive program that will allow you to achieve excellence in your chosen field of study.

**** Attend the IDP Workshop to see different methods for writing and organizing this section of your essay.**

Senior Experience (1 paragraph)

- Identify your Senior Experience and describe what you hope to learn, or what you have learned from the experience.
- Discuss how the experience has or will allow you to apply the knowledge you gained from your prior coursework in your IDP major.

Conclusion (1 paragraph)

Explain what steps you will take immediately upon graduation to reach your post-degree goals. Describe how you have or will become a **lifelong learner** as a result of completing your IDP major by continuing to improve your knowledge, skills, and competence.

Key Learning Outcomes (from the Association of American Colleges and Universities)

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving: A habit of thinking you develop from learning how to thoroughly explore issues, facts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. This way of thinking develops your ability to define a problem and then design and implement a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal.

Intercultural Knowledge/Global Learning: Your ability to identify your own cultural patterns, compare and contrast them with others, and adapt empathically and flexibly to unfamiliar ways. This knowledge/learning enables you to 1) be open-minded and attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences, 2) understand how your actions affect both local and global communities, and 3) possess the ability to address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.

Ethical Reasoning: Your ability to reason about right and wrong conduct by assessing your own values and the social context of problems in a variety of settings. This reasoning enables you to practice ethical decision-making skills by thinking about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and how to consider the ramifications of alternative actions.

Integrative and Applied Learning: An understanding you build throughout your curriculum, by making simple connections among ideas and experiences, and by synthesizing and applying your learning to new, complex situations encountered in your coursework and beyond.

Communication Skills: Your oral and/or written ability to effectively convey your thoughts and ideas to diverse audiences in different settings through various media, which is designed to inform, foster understanding, or promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Teamwork Skills: Your ability to collaborate with or lead others to reach shared goals or objectives. This ability to collaborate includes your successful individual efforts towards team tasks, respectful interactions with other team members, effective contributions to team discussions, and fostering a constructive team climate.

**** If you would like to see a list of additional learning outcomes to discuss, please ask your IDP Specialist.**

(Rev. LK; KVC; LC 10/21/19)