

# IS Program Academic Advising Handbook

2024-25

## Components of the IS Major

The IS major requires at least 45 credits in 14 approved courses, *plus* certification of language proficiency. Nearly 90% of our students also study abroad.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. The IS Major Core         | 24 credits earned in 7 courses   |
| 2. An elective concentration | 18 credits earned in 6 courses   |
| 3. Language proficiency      | Advanced proficiency in one modern language or intermediate proficiency in two modern languages. (Credits not counted for IS.)                         |
| 4. Study abroad              | Students can transfer up to 2 classes or 8 credits from abroad in one semester, or 12 credits across a full year, usually toward their elective track. |
| 5. Senior seminar or thesis  | 3 credit senior seminar or 6-credit senior thesis<br>(3 credits from thesis can apply to an elective concentration)                                    |

## 1. The IS Major Core

All current IS majors must earn **24 credits in seven courses**:

- **Where on Earth: Foundations in Global History** (INTL2200): 3 credits taken Sophomore fall; counts for BC History II Core and Cultural Diversity Core.
- **Where on Earth: Foundations in Political Geography** (INTL 2204 lecture + Geo studio): 3 credits taken Sophomore fall; counts for BC Social Sciences Core
- **Intro to International Relations** (INTL 2501): 4 credits taken Sophomore spring; counts for BC Social Sciences Core
- One pre-approved **comparative politics course** (usually POLI x4xx): 3 credits taken any time
- **Principles of Economics** (ECON 1101): 4 credits taken any time; counts for BC Social Sciences Core
- One **Economics elective** at the 2000 level (ECON 2xxx): 3 credits taken any time
- **Ethics, Religion, and International Politics** (INTL 5563): 4 credits in junior or senior year, preferably after returning from abroad; counts for BC Cultural Diversity Core (Justice & the Common Good)

## 2. Elective Concentrations

Students choose one concentration/track in which to focus their studies, earning **18 credits in six courses**.

**IS Majors have four options for elective concentrations:**

### A. Conflict and Cooperation

- 2 courses (6 credits) from approved list of C&C Foundations courses: F1 = theory; F2 = methods.
- 4 courses (12 credits) from list of pre-approved electives; others if approved by Director/DUS

## B. Ethics and Social Justice

- 2 courses (6 credits) from approved list of ESJ Foundations courses: F1 = theory via moral philosophy, theology, religious ethics, or political theory; F2 = social science methods.
- 4 courses (12 credits) from a list of pre-approved electives; others if approved by Director/DUS
- McGillicuddy-Logue Fellows may count only one of their two required seminars as an ESJ elective.

## C. Global Cultures

- 2 courses (6 credits) from approved list of GC Foundations courses: F1 = theory; F2 = methods.
- 4 courses (12 credits) from a list of pre-approved electives **in their cluster** (Cultures at Work or Cultures and Social Movements); others from other cluster or beyond if approved by Director/DUS
- GC concentrators may elect to complete a 1-credit internship either in the creation of a cultural product or in grassroots mobilization and other participatory approaches to issues of global importance and cultural representation. *Contact Ms. Joyce for info on internships.*

## D. Political Economy and Development Studies

- 2 courses (6 credits) from approved list of PEDS Foundations courses: F1 = theory; F2 = methods.
- 4 courses (12 credits) from a list of pre-approved electives **in either cluster** (Political Economy or Development Studies); all are approved for both clusters, others if approved by Director/DUS.

## 3. Language proficiency:

All students completing the IS major, regardless of school (MCAS, CSOM, Lynch, etc.) must demonstrate **advanced proficiency in one modern foreign language or intermediate proficiency in two modern foreign languages**. This is a more strenuous requirement than the MCAS minimum, and it must be met by all majors; **make sure your advisee has a plan to complete this language requirement.**

**Advanced proficiency** can be demonstrated in several ways:

- Successful completion (with a passing letter grade) of the second semester of the third-year sequence of a modern foreign language (e.g. *Spanish or French CCRII, or Third Year Russian part II.*)
  - *Exceptions: Arabic and Chinese courses have 2x the credits as others, so the IS Program considers advanced proficiency to be reached after the Intermediate I course is completed.*
- Successful completion (with a passing letter grade) of one semester of a modern foreign language course beyond the advanced level, taught in that language (e.g. French courses in the 3000+ level)
- Earning a 5 on an AP language exam or a 700+ on an SAT subject test in a modern foreign language;
- Demonstrating advanced proficiency to a faculty member in one of BC's language departments, with a report sent by that professor to Ms. Patricia Joyce in the IS Program office.

**Intermediate proficiency** in a language can be demonstrated in several ways:

- Successful completion (with a passing letter grade) of the second semester of the intermediate-level sequence of a modern foreign language course.
- Earning the following minimum scores on an AP language exam or SAT Subject Test: Chinese (AP4/650), French (AP3/550), German (AP4/600), Italian (AP3/550), Japanese (AP4/650), Korean (AP4/650), Modern Hebrew (AP4/650) or Spanish (AP3/550).
- demonstrating intermediate proficiency to a faculty member in one of BC's language departments, **with a report sent by that professor to Ms. Patricia Joyce** in the IS Program office

Note: Language instruction courses such as CCR may not be used as IS electives, but subject courses taught in a foreign language may be used as electives where applicable, if approved by the DUS/Director. **Language courses that count in any way toward the IS major/minor proficiency requirements must be taken for a grade;** those taken pass/fail through Spring 2020 will be honored.

## 4. Study Abroad

Nearly 90% of IS majors study abroad for a summer, semester, or academic year—almost twice the BC average. **Students studying abroad may claim two courses per semester toward their major, and a maximum of four abroad courses in total toward their major.**

- **Sophomore majors must discuss study abroad with their academic advisor** (who must verify this conversation with OGE) **during the Fall semester**, before applying to OGE in early January. Advisors should emphasize the academic component (the “study” in study abroad) in part by reminding students to research the specific academic programs, not just pick a country or a city.
- **All courses taken abroad for IS credit must be pre-approved via this form.** Abroad courses are usually credited as electives, but in certain circumstances may be applied to IS Core or IS Foundation courses.
- Because of the peculiarity of credit assignment, it may be possible to claim up to two 4-credit electives in a semester, but generally no more than 12 credits in a year. Exceptions occur; students should contact the DUS with inquiries.
- IS majors can count a maximum of four non-BC courses toward their major, including those taken at international or American universities.

## 5. Senior Seminar or Thesis

Seniors must choose either to take a senior seminar (which entails a substantial research paper) or write a senior thesis to complete the major.

### Senior Seminars

These are 3-credit courses taught by IS faculty with an IS course number; topics and instructors vary.

### Senior Thesis: Requirements, Honors, and Prizes



- See thesis program details on the ISP web site under Academics > Thesis.
- Students must be in good academic standing with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 to write a thesis in the IS major.
- Seniors writing a thesis enroll in a 3-credit thesis-writing course each semester, for a total of 6 credits. **Three of these credits can be used toward an elective in their IS concentration.**
- All IS majors who complete a thesis graduate with **IS Program honors** and earn a “BA in International Studies with Honors. (NB. Boston College Academic Honors such as *summa cum laude* are distinct from IS Program honors.)
- Students with a cumulative GPA of 3.700 or higher are eligible to apply for the MCAS **Scholar of the College (SOC) designation**, which allows students to claim 9 or 12 credits for their thesis project in exchange for increased expectations for quality of work.
  - Students interested in pursuing a Scholar of the College thesis should speak with their faculty advisor, thesis advisor, and the IS Program thesis coordinator (Prof. Nakazato) in the Spring or Summer before senior year.
  - Applications for a 12-credit SOC thesis are due to the MCAS Dean's Office the first week of the fall semester; applications for the 9-credit SOC thesis are due in mid-December.
- Students who **submit a completed and approved thesis by April 15** are considered for the **Matteo Ricci, SJ International Studies Thesis Prize**, given to an exceptional IS thesis.
- Scholars of the College who submit a completed and approved thesis by April 15 may be considered for the **McCarthy Prize**, given to the best Morrissey College thesis project in each of the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities. McCarthy Prizes are awarded at the Scholars Banquet and recognized at the university's Commencement Awards Ceremony.
- IS majors selected for the prestigious **Phi Beta Kappa** honor society are usually thesis writers.

# Academic Advising Tips

## What is the degree audit?

The degree audit is an official report about a student's progress toward meeting graduation requirements. It should be reviewed by faculty and students each time you meet for advising sessions. If it is inaccurate, students should contact Ms. Joyce.

## How do I find a list of my advisees and their degree audits?

1. Connect to the [Agora Portal](https://portal.bc.edu) (portal.bc.edu)
2. In the "Academics and Courses" section, click **Advisors List of Advisees**. You should see a list of your advisees and basic information about them.
3. Pull the drop-down "List of Services" menu for a student, and select **Degree Audit**. A new browser window will open with that student's Student Info Page, defaulting to the "Degree Audit" tab.
4. To see an updated degree audit for that student, click the  icon under the "Request" column, then click the  icon to download a PDF of the audit. (Faculty only see PDF audits; students see HTML.)

## What should I look for in an advisee's degree audits?

- **Red text** (usually the word "NO") indicates requirements that are not yet completed; **blue text** (often the letters "IP") indicates courses in progress; **green text** (usually "OK") indicates requirements completed.
- When a requirement is not completed, a list of eligible course numbers appears in that area of the degree audit. [Because EagleApps is new, this may not be an exhaustive list; students can also see course listings on our web site (Academics > Courses), which also includes a link to the Central List of Approved Electives.
- Review the section at the bottom of the audit called "Other Courses Counting Toward Degree Credits." If there are courses in that list that should count for the IS major, students must fill out a [Degree Audit Course Substitution and Waiver Form](#) (also linked on the IS Program home page).

## Key concepts and rules for academic advising:

- **MCAS students need 120 credits in four years to graduate, 96 of which must be from MCAS courses**
  - Students often wrongly believe that a non-MCAS course (e.g. international management) that counts for the IS major also counts toward the 96 MCAS credit requirement, but this is not the case.
  - The degree audit clearly distinguishes credits a student has "earned," are in progress, or still "needs."
- **Every MCAS major requires that students earn 27 credits unique to that program.**
  - Although IS requires 45 credits to complete the major, most other MCAS majors require 30 credits.
  - Thus students double-majoring in IS and a 30-credit major (e.g. PoliSci or Theology) may only count one course (3 credits) toward both majors simultaneously. This is the **"double count" scenario** students ask about frequently.
  - By the same principle, students double-majoring in IS and higher-credit majors can double-count more courses: ECON & COMM majors can double-count 2 courses; ICS & ENVS majors can double-count 5.
  - **One course cannot fulfill two IS requirements**, even if Eagle Apps mistakenly puts one course in two places (this happens sometimes for Comparative Politics and electives).
- **Courses taken while abroad must be pre-approved to receive credit toward the IS major.**
  - As soon as possible (usually just before and after their classes start), students studying abroad must send the following to the DUS (Nakazato): name of course, syllabus, and what IS major requirement the course is to fulfill (e.g. elective for their track). Students should retain the email approval he provides.

- **Language proficiency, internships, and AP credits:**

- **Advisors must confirm that students have completed the IS Program's language requirements**, which are more strenuous than those of the MCAS at large (and thus also satisfy MCAS requirements). Advanced language proficiency rules are noted in the Advising Handbook.
- Students may earn 1 credit (pass/fail) for one internship that counts toward the 120-credit graduation requirement; **only GC concentrators may count an internship toward the IS major**. To apply for the internship credit, contact Ms. Patricia Joyce.
- Students may use AP credits to satisfy an IS major course requirement (e.g. micro/macro-econ), but they still must take an IS elective course to accumulate the credits required. This needn't be a course on the same topic (e.g. economic theory), as long as it fits in their elective IS track.

- **Pass/Fail rules**

- Pass/Fail rules: After freshmen year, students may register to take one course Pass/Fail each semester, and up to six total, but cannot switch to pass/fail after the drop/add period ends. Courses that fulfill a major, minor, BC Core, or language requirement may not be taken Pass/Fail; no courses in the Carroll School of Management may be taken Pass/Fail.
- IS majors or minors cannot take language courses pass/fail if they serve to meet our language requirements (advanced or intermediate proficiency). There were exceptions to this policy allowed in recent academic years that are no longer allowed, per the dean.

- **Accelerated graduation**

- Students are ordinarily expected to complete eight full-time semesters to graduate; meeting all graduation requirements does not necessarily mean a student can graduate early. Students seeking accelerated graduation should consult their class dean.
- The only courses that fulfill University Core requirements are those listed on the Core web site. Core courses are clearly marked as such on course descriptions.

- **AP credits and alternate course sequences:**

- Economics: Students with a score of 5 on both Microeconomics and Macroeconomics AP exams may skip ECON 1101, but they are required to take another Economics elective (ECON 2xxx) in its place. Students with a score of 5 on either AP Micro or AP Macro, but not both, are required to complete the IS core Economic requirement through Principles of Economics (ECON 1101).
- Political Science: Students with a score of 5 on AP Comparative Politics may skip the required Comparative Politics course at BC but must take an upper-level elective in its place.
- Students with AP credits may re-take their university equivalents for IS purposes, but students should be urged to take alternate courses on the approved list.
- Transfer students from other universities may have other IS core and electives approved on a case-by-case basis by the IS Director or Associate Director.

## How to correct errors in the degree audit:

- If courses are not properly credited on the audit, students should complete the [Degree Audit Course Substitution and Waiver Form](#) (also linked from the Student Resources dropdown on the Academics > Major page). **For abroad courses, students must attach the course approval they received from the DUS (Prof. Nakazato) or Director (Prof. Owens).**

## Getting Additional Help for Students

### Mental Health

#### Counseling Services

Gasson Hall 001, M-F 8:45am-4:45pm  
617-552-3310

### Physical Health / Disability

#### University Health Services

Thomas More Apart. Building (Ground floor) 617-552-3225, uhs@bc.edu

#### Center for Student Wellness

Gasson Hall 025. 617-552-9900.  
healthpromotion@bc.edu

#### Disability Services

Maloney Hall 448; 617-552-3470,  
disabsrv@bc.edu or deanofstudents@bc.edu

### Title IX

Title IX officers address issues of exploitation, intimidation, and discrimination based upon gender, including sexual assault or sexual misconduct of any kind.

#### Institutional Diversity

129 Lake St., Rm 211 (Brighton Campus)

**Melinda Stoops**, Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students, records and investigates all Title IX reports involving students. (stoopsme@bc.edu, 617-552-3482)

**Patricia Lowe**, University Title IX Coordinator, handles issues involving only faculty/staff: patricia.lowe@bc.edu; TitleIXCoordinator@bc.edu; 617-552-3334)

### Academic Support:

#### Connors Family Learning Center

O'Neill Library, 2nd floor, M-Th 10:00am-9:00pm,  
Fri 10:00am-3:00pm, Sun 12-8pm. 617-552-0611

#### Student-Athlete Academic Services

Yawkey Athletic Center, 4th Floor,  
M-F 9:00am-5:00pm. 617-552-8533

#### Montserrat Program

*Serves students with the highest levels of financial need.*

36 College Road; M-F 9:00 am-5:00 pm.  
617.552.3140 | montserrat.coalition@bc.edu

#### Pine Manor Institute

*The institutional center for first-generation, high financial need, and underrepresented students, offering academic, personal, and career advising.*  
72 College Road; @bc.edu; (617) 552-4551

#### McNair Scholars Program

*Graduate school preparation program for BC undergrads who are both low-income and first-generation college students.*  
50 College Road; M-F 9am - 5pm; ltl@bc.edu

### Gender & Sexuality-Related Services

#### Women's Center

Maloney Hall 441, M-F 10:00am-4:00pm; 617-552-3489, women@bc.edu

#### **Women's Health at University Health Services**

Ground Level - Thomas More Apartments,  
Entrance located on St. Thomas More Rd.,  
Hours: Tue-Fri by apt. 617-552-3225

#### LGBTQ+ Resources

Maintained by the Thea Bowman AHANA and Intercultural Center.

### Spiritual Counseling/Communities

#### Pastoral Counseling

Rick Rossi, LCSW and campus minister:  
McElroy 227; rick.rossi@bc.edu' (617) 552-6592.

#### Service-Immersion and Solidarity

For info on 4Boston, Appa, Arrupe, Global Public Health, Habitat for Humanity, Ignatian Solidarity Network, and Magis

#### Student Faith Groups (multi-faith)

see Mission & Ministry