

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

# **Integrative Arts Program**

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**August 2012**

**University Park, PA**

## ***What is Integrative Arts?***

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The Integrative Arts Program at University Park is a multi-disciplinary, theme-oriented, student-designed major that leads to a Bachelor of Arts in Integrative Arts. Typically, students in Integrative Arts focus their programs of study on vocational, scholarly, or creative interests in the arts that exist outside or across the boundaries of existing majors at Penn State. Integrative Arts students identify a unique theme for their degree program that may focus on a particular topic, creative path, or a unique career goal in the arts. In consultation with an adviser, students then devise an individualized academic plan that will best help them to explore and to investigate their chosen theme and to do so by combining study in two or more arts areas with explorations in other subject areas such as science, engineering, business, or communications. The Integrative Arts Program is specifically designed to encourage and to provide students with the broadest opportunities to explore unique and unexpected creative, intellectual, and vocational pathways. The Integrative Arts Program is dedicated to helping its students acquire the unique intellectual and creative tools they will need to achieve their individual career goals and creative aspirations.

The Integrative Arts Program also provides opportunities for students to engage in career-related internships, self-directed research projects, as well as independent study courses. Such opportunities for hands-on work and research experience add extra levels of enrichment to a student's academic program and assist the student in further defining their creative and career goals.

## ***Who Should Consider Applying to the Integrative Arts Major?***

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In order to be successful as an Integrative Arts major, you should be able to answer "Yes!" to the following:

- I am passionate about several areas in the arts and am committed to finding a way to bring them together in my studies and future career.
- I have investigated the other majors in the College of Arts and Architecture and found that none of them will really prepare me for what I want to do in the arts.
- I understand and am willing to make the commitment of time and effort required to design and complete my own academic plan and to do so in a clear and coherent manner.

If your response to these statements is "Yes!," then Integrative Arts may be the major for you.

## ***The Integrative Arts Major Is Not for Everyone***

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Integrative Arts is not designed to accommodate students who have been unsuccessful at meeting their academic goals in another major. Similarly, Integrative Arts is not designed to provide a major for students who have accumulated many credits and wish to use them most efficiently as a means to simply graduate with a baccalaureate degree. As an Integrative Arts student, you are required to think about your goals and plan more thoroughly and thoughtfully than you would in many other majors. Since the Integrative Arts major is not composed of prescribed coursework, you must plan several semesters of coursework for yourself around a theme you choose, and you will be called upon to periodically evaluate your proposed choices of coursework and adjust your plan accordingly. You may have to revise your initial plan because of the availability of courses, or your understanding of your theme or your specific vocational goals may shift as you progress through the major. Unless you are prepared to assume these responsibilities, you should not consider entering the Integrative Arts major.

## ***Where Can I Learn About the Program Requirements in Integrative Arts?***

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To earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Integrative Arts, a minimum of 124 credits is required in the following areas:

**GENERAL EDUCATION:** 45 credits (for additional information, refer to the description of General Education in the University Bulletin at: <http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergrad/generaleducation/>)

**BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:** 24 credits

**NOTE:** Three of these 24 credits are included in the REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR, GENERAL EDUCATION, or ELECTIVES and 0-12 credits are included in ELECTIVES if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR:** 36 credits\*

**NOTE:** All major courses must be completed with a “C” grade or better. At least 15 credits must be completed at the 400-level or its equivalent.

Select 24 credits from Primary Arts Area (Arts Area I) (Semesters: 1-8)

Select 12 credits from Supporting or Dual Arts Area (Arts Area II) (Semesters: 1-8)

**ELECTIVES:** 19 credits

**FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR (credits vary):** (Included in ELECTIVES or GENERAL EDUCATION course selection)

**UNITED STATES CULTURES AND INTERNATIONAL CULTURES (6 credits):** (Included in ELECTIVES, GENERAL EDUCATION course selection, or REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR)

**WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (3 credits):** (Included in REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR)

\*The individualized academic plan must contain a core component of 36 credits (“Requirements for the Major”) organized around a clear and coherent theme. Twenty-four credits must be focused in one arts/design area and the remaining 12 selected from other arts/design areas. At least 15 of the 36 credits must be at the 400 or equivalent level. The theme of a student’s program should clearly identify an idea, topic, or issue the student wishes to explore that is not covered in another art or design major within the College of Arts and Architecture. A sample academic plan can be viewed at:

- [http://artsandarchitecture.psu.edu/students/current/academic\\_plans/integrative\\_arts](http://artsandarchitecture.psu.edu/students/current/academic_plans/integrative_arts)

## ***The Application Procedure***

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The application procedure for admission to Integrative Arts is designed to help you decide if the major is right for you, make sure that you understand the major and its requirements, and have a clear idea of the effect that choosing Integrative Arts as your major will have on your undergraduate career. It will also help us decide if Integrative Arts is the “right fit” for your interests and allow us to direct you to other options if it is not. In order to do this you must have a clear sense of what you want to do and be able to articulate your interests, plans, and goals in a formal written proposal. It is, obviously, important that you take time and give carefully consideration to this proposal.

### ***Step One: The Initial Request for Consideration for Admission to the Integrative Arts Major***

**Compose a one-page Admission Request letter.** In your letter, identify your current semester standing, the major in which you are currently enrolled, and the reason(s) you are considering the Integrative Arts program. Also, provide a description of the area(s) of study you hope to pursue in Integrative Arts and list

some potential courses offered at Penn State that would allow you to accomplish this goal. If you are entering the University as a first-year student or are transferring from another institution, please indicate the semester in which you intend to begin your studies at University Park. Finally, make sure you include your current contact information: your name, address, telephone number, and an E-mail address.

Mail the completed **Admission Request** letter to:

Integrative Arts Program Coordinator  
104 Borland Building  
University Park, PA 16802

Or, if you prefer, E-mail the letter to the Integrative Arts Program Coordinator at:

jhartranft@psu.edu

If sending your request by E-mail, please place "Integrative Arts Admission Request" in the subject header of the E-mail message.

Once the **Admission Request** letter is received, an Integrative Arts staff assistant will contact you to arrange an appointment for you to meet with the Integrative Arts Program Coordinator to review your request and to help you in preparing a formal proposal for admission into the Integrative Arts major.

### ***Step Two: Preparing and Submitting a Formal Proposal for Admission to the Integrative Arts Major***

To be eligible to enter the Integrative Arts major, you must submit a formal written proposal no later than the eighth week of the fall or spring semesters. The **Formal Proposal for Admission** will be reviewed by the Integrative Arts Program Coordinator who will notify you when your proposal has been approved. Once your proposal is approved, you will then be permitted to formally enter the Integrative Arts Program; entrance into the major will become effective no later than the tenth week of the semester in which a **Formal Proposal for Admission** is submitted. Proposals that are rejected may be resubmitted but will generally not be considered until the following semester's review.

The **Formal Proposal for Admission** is required to include the following sections:

#### **Section 1: A Written Statement**

The written statement should explain your reasons for seeking the Integrative Arts major and carefully outline the "theme" or focus of your intended program of study. The written statement should also articulate the professional, scholarly, or creative goals that you wish to achieve through the major.

#### **Section 2: A Course List**

The course list should indicate those courses that you believe will support and advance your interests in the major. While the course list is not intended to be a binding or set "curriculum," it should indicate a clear approximation of the coursework that you plan to explore in your major. It's important that when preparing a course list that you pay careful attention to necessary prerequisites and the need to include 15 credits of 400 or equivalent level coursework in the major. You must also consider the requirement to complete 24 credits of course work in a "primary" arts area.

#### **Section 3: A Semester-By-Semester Plan**

The semester-by-semester plan should outline how many semesters you see as being necessary to complete your degree work and what classes you intend to schedule during those semesters.

#### **Section 4: Evidence of Aptitude, Background, or Ability**

Evidence of Aptitude, Background, or Ability relates specifically to your area of intended focus. This could and most often should be based on the successful completion of coursework in that area. However, it could also be based on portfolio review, examples of work in that area, and the recommendations of faculty or professionals who can speak to your qualifications and potential.

### Section 5: A Current Transcript

A current transcript will provide a sense of your overall academic performance and offer some indication of your qualifications and potential for achieving your indicated goals.

You are undertaking a significant responsibility by choosing Integrative Arts as your major. In most academic majors, it is the department's faculty that chooses courses they believe will best develop students' competency in a discipline. As an Integrative Arts major, however, you are required to investigate courses and design an individualized program for yourself that reflects academic integrity worthy of a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Key points to remember as you work on your **Formal Proposal for Admission** include:

- You must propose to investigate and study a theme or concept from the viewpoint of at least two different arts areas.
- In designing your program, you may not attempt to duplicate existing majors at Penn State.
- Completion of the proposal in a timely fashion is your responsibility, not your adviser's.
- Be sure to allow ample time for drafts, review, and revision.

The **Formal Proposal for Admission** should be sent to:

Integrative Arts Program Coordinator  
104 Borland Building  
University Park, PA 16802

Or, if you prefer, E-mail the **Formal Proposal for Admission** as an attachment to an E-mail message to the Integrative Arts Program Coordinator at:

jhartranft@psu.edu

If submitting your **Proposal** by E-mail, please place "Formal Proposal for Admission" in the subject header of the E-mail message.

### ***Tips for a Successful Integrative Arts Proposal (Adapted from an essay by Ellen A. Knodt, Professor of English and former Division Head of Arts and Humanities at Abington College)***

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As you are well aware, one of the requirements for completing the Integrative Arts degree is the presentation of a proposal in which you discuss the courses you have scheduled or will schedule in order to complete your degree. One way to think about this assignment is as a personal essay in which you present your understanding and justification of the degree program in which you are participating. Your proposal design must illustrate that your plan has clarity, purpose, and cohesion.

Essentially, your choice of courses needs to be explained. Students may use various routes to justify their choices. The first is that particular courses may have a direct and obvious relationship to their workday or professional existence. The second method of justification is that there may be some coherence among the courses themselves, particularly as they relate to an interest you articulate in your paper. For instance, you may combine a study of theater, finance, and management in order to plan a career in arts administration; or you may correlate work in the biological sciences with a study in the visual arts in order to become a medical illustrator.

Because the Integrative Arts major allows you to design your own individual program emphasis, your career direction may be in whatever arts-related area that you desire. Graduates have embarked on careers in theater administration, music publishing, historic renovation, bicycle design, and public education in the arts. Independent study opportunities with professors and internship experiences in a

variety of cultural communities or arts and design-related fields will help you enrich your program of study and should be part of your proposal design.

While these two traditional means of program justification serve useful purposes in successful Integrative Arts proposals, another way of approaching this task is to emphasize another aspect of your academic training: the development and exercise of academic skills.

Finally, as you finish the draft of your proposal, you should pay attention to mechanics, style, usage, “flow,” and other writing concerns. The Writing Tutors at the Penn State Learning centers (<http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/>) are available to help you with these matters and will offer advice for refining your writing. Also, remember to consult your adviser to obtain specific advice for improving your proposal. After all, this essay will be kept on file in the Integrative Arts Program as a representation of YOU and the Bachelor of Arts degree you have designed and earned in Integrative Arts at University Park.

## ***Acknowledgments***

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- Ms. Lynell Morris,
- Dr. Thomas Smith, and
- Dr. Karen Weekes

Most especially, we wish to acknowledge that several sections of this guide contain language directly quoted from the Abington College guide. Those sections include:

- “The Integrative Arts Major Is Not for Everyone”
- “Preparing and Submitting a Formal Proposal for Admission to the Integrative Arts Major”