



The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Division of Emerging Interdisciplinary Areas (EMIA)
Individualized Interdisciplinary Major Program (IIM)
Proposal Outline

The overall purpose of the proposal is to demonstrate how your interests, strengths and experiences connect to the academic goals you hope to achieve in your IIM program. The proposal should explain why your areas of study interest you and the contribution of each course to your proposed major. You should follow this outline while drafting your proposal.

Attention: The purpose of this major is to allow students to design a major which is interdisciplinary, yet forms a conceptual holistic framework of study. **It is not intended to allow a student to randomly select courses which of interest to them or to selectively omit one or two requirements from another major currently offered in HKUST.** The major must have a theme, an in-depth examination of a particular topic, or a defined field of study.

How to develop an Individualized Interdisciplinary Major Proposal?

1. Define your area of interests and the connection to a specific academic pursuit.
2. Take courses in your area of interests to explore.
3. Schedule an appointment with the UG Coordinator of EMIA, Dr. Rong ZHANG, as soon as you have a tentative definition of the major and an idea of the courses you would like to take which would shape your study program. He will discuss with you the feasibility of a major in your area of interest and make suggestions about courses and advisors.
4. Scan through the course catalog and develop a tentative list of courses related to your area of interests.
5. If you find that you have selected courses primarily from one department, you should reconsider your plans, for you do not need an IIM.
6. Check the offering pattern of the courses with the offering departments or, from the HKUST Class Schedule and Quota website.
7. Look for the instructors of courses that are related to your proposed program to be your advisors.
8. Identify your two faculty advisors from two different departments when you have a list of possible courses and a draft of your description of your major. ***[Do not be afraid to ask for help and it may take a few weeks to get it done.]***
9. Discuss with your advisors whether the courses you have chosen are appropriate, given your expressed interests.
10. Discuss your final proposal with the UG Coordinator. He will be presenting your application to the Approval Committee, so you must be sure he understands what you are trying to do. ***[Do not wait until the last moment to schedule an appointment.]***

What should be included in the proposal?

1. A cover sheet, listing your name, student ID, ITSC account, proposed IIM title, advisors, etc.
2. Introduction and background (approximately 1 page)
Describe your interests, strength and background and explain how it is related to your proposed major.
Provide specific reasons why you are interested in the area you are chosen.
3. A clear statement of the central academic purpose of your proposed IIM (approximately 3-4 pages)
Discuss your academic purposes, and if appropriate, your personal and/or professional objectives - indicate what you will know at the end of your study, and how the courses you have chosen are related to your proposed major, why you cannot accomplish the program with a regular existing major, and how this program of study fits into your future plans. ***[Be thorough, yet concise.]***
4. Conclusion (approximately 1 -2 paragraphs)
Briefly summarize the strengths of your proposed program and demonstrate how your areas of study enable you to meet your academic goals. Explain how your plans for the future relate to your chosen course of study in IIM.
5. Attach a proposed course list (using the template provided).
6. Attach a proposed study pathway (using the template provided).
7. Attach the signed faculty advisor evaluation form (using the template provided).
8. Attach a benchmarking table (using the template provided).

Conclusion

The process of developing your IIM is demanding, sometimes frustrating, but at the end rewarding. It forces you to examine what and how to meet your educational goals. Throughout the process of research and discovery, you may find out that some existing programs may have already satisfied your goals. If that is the case, congratulations and go for that! If, however, you find that the IIM is more suitable for you, then, be persistent. Pursuing an IIM takes effort, and it may seem like a challenging task at first. However, ***NEVER give up!*** The beginning is always the hardest. It is always worthwhile if you can have a more meaningful and unique learning experience by designing your own major. Remember, the faculty members and staff at the Division of Emerging Interdisciplinary Areas will be happy to help you along the way.