

B.A. Special Major

Special Major Table of Contents

[What is the Special Major?](#)

[Requirements for Special Major candidates](#)

[Guidelines for Special Major Requirements](#)

[Can I apply and be admitted to SF State as a Special Major?](#)

[What should I do first?](#)

[What should the Special Major Statement contain?](#)

[How to get a Special Major Advisor?](#)

[What classes should I take in my first semester?](#)

What is the Special Major?

The Bachelor of Arts: Special Major is offered by San Francisco State University for those students who have unique academic goals which cannot be satisfactorily attained through one of the undergraduate major programs of San Francisco State University or other colleges and universities in the Bay Area.

The Special Major consists of a combination of courses planned in advance to focus on an integrative and coherent theme identified by the student. A written statement must be developed which describes the goals of the proposed major.

The program must be compatible with the general objectives of the university.

Courses must be chosen by the student from at least three different departments in at least two different colleges of the university. (Department means any program area of the university offering course work.)

A Special Major may not duplicate any existing major programs, by name or content, which are offered at San Francisco State University, nor may it be used as a means of bypassing regularly prescribed graduation requirements. It must be planned and approved in advance, not created as an afterthought to utilize previously completed courses.

The program must be pre-planned and approved before nine units applicable to the degree have been completed, be based upon regular courses already offered in the university, and be supported by members of the faculty with expertise in the area of the theme planned. The program cannot utilize independent study or transfer credits to meet the basic, minimum requirements for the program.

Requirements for Special Major candidates?

- In order to apply for a Special Major, a student must first be admitted as an undergraduate student at San Francisco State University. Special Major status is granted only after consultation with an Advising Center advisor and approval of the student's proposal.
- Special Major applicants are expected to have completed a minimum of 45 and a maximum of 90 semester units of university study with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B).

B.A. Special Major

- Records of such work; e.g., unofficial transcripts, DARS and/or Advanced Standing Evaluation (if a transfer student), must be presented to the appropriate academic advisor in the Special Major program.

Guidelines for Special Major Requirements

1. The Special Major consists of a planned combination of courses chosen to focus on a theme identified by the student. The courses proposed for the Special Major must be carefully selected for their support of and specific applicability to the unique objectives described in the thematic statement written by the student in advance.
2. The major must be planned and formally approved by the Special Major Advisor, Department Advisors, Department Chairs, and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for final approval.
3. The major consists of a minimum of 45 approved units. A minimum 36 units must be at the upper-division level.
4. Course work to support the identified theme must be selected from at least three different departments within two Colleges of the University. At least nine units, but no more than 21, must be completed in each of three departments.
5. At least 30 units of work in the Program must be completed after final approval has been obtained. Thus, students proposing the major must have the equivalent of at least two semesters of full-time undergraduate study remaining at SFSU.

Can I apply and be admitted to SF State as a Special Major?

It is not possible to be admitted to San Francisco State as a Special Major. Therefore, students interested in becoming a Special Major who are applying this or next semester must select another major or "Undeclared" as their primary program. If you apply online using CSU Mentor and indicate "Special Major" as your major choice, you will be notified by the SFSU Office of Admissions that this major requires pre-approval. You will be thus categorized as Undeclared or given your second major choice.

B.A. Special Major

What should I do first?

STEP 1 - Your Application to SFSU:

You cannot be admitted as a Special Major. You may indicate another existing major or even "undeclared" on your application for admissions.

Keep an unofficial transcript of all of your previous college work. You will need it when meeting with advisors at SFSU.

Read all materials sent to you in your admissions packet. Read the "Steps For New Students" brochure. It will come to you after your admissions.

STEP 2 - After you apply to SFSU:

Learning about and declaring the Special Major:

- Read the SFSU Bulletin to find about the Special Major program.
- Read the Special Major Guidelines and the Process for Completing a Special Major information sheet. This information is within the Special Major website you are now reading.

STEP 3 - Orientation

If this is your first semester at SF State, attend a New Student Orientation for guidance in selection of first-semester courses. You may, if you wish, begin to take classes in the proposed Special Major. Be aware that until Step 4 and 5 are completed, these classes do not automatically count in the Special Major.

STEP 4 - During your first semester at SFSU

After you are enrolled in classes, make an appointment to see a Special Major Coordinating Advisor. Visit ADM 211 or call 415-338-2101 during business hours. Make an initial appointment of 1 hour. Bring these materials with you to the appointment:

- Transcripts (SF State and any previous colleges)
- Evaluation (ASE – Advanced Standing Evaluation and/or DPR - Degree Progress Report)
- Statement draft (more info in next section)

STEP 5 - Meet with Advisor and maintain GPA

Meet periodically with your Coordinating Advisor. You must maintain a GPA of 3.0 and above while a Special Major. If you are having any difficulties, seek advising.

STEP 6 - Meet the semester before you plan to graduate

Meet the semester before you plan to graduate with your advisor in the Advising Center. Schedule a Special Major Graduation Review appointment. Bring all advising materials with you to the appointment.

B.A. Special Major

STEP 7 - File for graduation

The semester of your final coursework is the semester you will file for graduation. Take a completed graduation application to your Advisor in the Advising Center. You have the first 3 weeks of each semester to file for graduation.

What should the Special Major Statement contain?

In order for your advisor to understand your proposed integrated major and review your proposed coursework, a thematic statement must be drafted first. Bring a draft to your first Special Major appointment, if possible. It is a helpful process for you and for your advisor if you have something drafted initially. But Don't worry! Your Special Major advisor will work with you to make your draft a solid submission. The Thematic Statement is an essay with the following items to cover. It is strongly suggested that you word process your statement and realize that it may take several meetings to get the draft into shape. Plan ahead!

You may bring a course list with you to your first meeting, but remember your advisor will look at the statement first!

Paragraph 1: Introduction

The purpose of this paragraph is to briefly introduce yourself and describe your academic goals. What has lead you to choose to become a Special Major? Conclude this paragraph by explaining the theme of your special major.

Paragraph 2: Justification

This is an important paragraph. It shows that you have researched existing majors and minors at SFSU. Why is it not possible to be in an existing major? Why not be a major with a minor combination? Describe the reasons why these options will not do for you. (Hint: it is acceptable to mention time, financial constraints, but really the reason is more along the lines of what elements are missing from existing majors or minors.)

Paragraph 3: Department #1

What will I learn from this component of my Special Major? Specifically define the learning involved in this department: delineate the concepts, knowledge, and skills, which are inherent in this department. Describe how this will be integrated with the other pieces of your Special Major. (Hint: you will not describe specific classes you are taking or planning to take, rather learning objectives, skills, theory, backgrounds, techniques, etc. It may be helpful to look at Bulletin descriptions of courses you plan to take. It is always OK to discuss this with a departmental advisor in the specific department you plan to choose.)

B.A. Special Major

Paragraph 4: Department #2

What will I learn from this component of my Special Major? Specifically define the learning involved in this department: delineate the concepts, knowledge and skills, which are inherent in this department. Describe how this will be integrated into your Special Major.

Paragraph 5: Department #3

What will I learn from this component of my Special Major? Specifically define the learning involved in this department: delineate the concepts, knowledge and skills, which are inherent in this department. Describe how this will be integrated into your Special Major.

Paragraph 6: Conclusion

Tell us your goals upon graduation. How will the Special Major which you are undertaking assist you in your future goals?

How to get a Special Major Advisor?

Academic counselors in the Undergraduate Advising Center are designated by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to provide advising for students who wish to pursue the Special Major. The Dean is responsible for the coordination and overall administration of the program.

To initiate the special major approval process, students must meet with advisors in the special major program in the Undergraduate Advising Center after they are enrolled in classes. Special Major appointments are not made for students who are not yet admitted and attending SFSU. These students should go to an Orientation for transfers students to get any pre-advising for the major.

We recommend an initial appointment length of 1 hour. The student should bring to the appointment all of their advising materials, including transcripts, transfer evaluation, Degree Progress Report and a draft of the theme of the major.

The Special Major Coordinating Advisor will confer on a regular basis until their program is completed.

The Special Major Coordinating Advisor will:

- Meet initially with a Special Major candidate in an advising appointment. For newly admitted students, an orientation is highly recommended in order to be prepared for the first semester of attendance.
- Assist the student in defining, refining and focusing the Special Major theme, statement and list of courses. Since the major is a BA, the usual unit size of the major is 45 units minimum. Many majors exceed this number. Thus each course must lend to that integrated focus.
- Recommend advisors in the major departments for further consultation.

B.A. Special Major

- Approve the Proposed Special Major Form. The Advisor's signature must be on the Form.
- Maintain all files for the student including the Approved Special Major, ASE (if appropriate), unofficial transcripts, etc. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of all the forms as well.
- Revise the Special Major if any substitutions need to be made after the major is approved.
- Sign the graduation application as the Faculty Advisor and obtain the Dean's signature.

What classes should I take in my first semester?

It is important to remember that until you have met with an advisor in the Advising Center and created the Special Major Proposal, all courses in progress will not be automatically approved for the Special Major.

Therefore, attend an Orientation and meet with one of the Advisors in the Advising Center who are leading the Orientation. They will tell you that the safest classes to take would be:

- Any prerequisite courses for those you plan to use in the Special Major. (e.g.: If you plan to use Marketing classes in your major, you must always have economics as a prerequisite.)
- Any missing General Education courses, as recommended by your Orientation advising. Remember all students, even entering juniors and seniors will need at least 9 units of upper division GE to graduate.
- Any missing Additional graduation requirements, such as US History, Government, etc.