

Division II is your negotiated, individualized major. Writing your contract and putting together a committee is not difficult. The number of choices to make is exciting to some people, unsettling to others. Keep in mind that your initial contract represents your best idea of where you want to go with your studies at this moment. It generally shifts over the course of your Div II as you gain experiences and reflect on them.

Div II is a fabulous part of your study here, because it allows you to consider your interests, articulate your questions, and set goals for your own learning. You have the ability to adjust your goals over time as you assess your own learning and add new questions throughout Div II. At the end of Div II, you think across all your experiences to consider how your ideas have changed, why they have changed, and what meaning you have taken from the sum total of your experiences. This is very different from what students in other colleges are asked to do with their majors. It is totally geared to help you dig in to questions that matter to you!

Div II is not only a time to answer your questions and gain valuable experiences, it is also a time to develop the skills that prepare you for a large capstone experience – Div III. You want to make sure you are learning to manage a project, manage your time, write about ideas to create an argument, and develop important research methodologies, as well as develop connections to potential community partners for your Div III.

Some ideas for starting to write your Div II proposal

The Div II proposal is composed of the following parts. As you draft your contract, get as far as you can with each, but don't let any uncertainty prevent you from sharing the draft with faculty. No one expects it to be exactly right when you begin. It is an editable document because it will change as your ideas develop. Also, discussions with faculty will help you flesh it out.

- a. An overview – a short description of what brings you to the area(s) of study that interest you (who you are and what you are passionate about) and what those areas of study are (what would you tell people you are “majoring” in) or the set of questions you have that you hope to answer in Div II
- b. The goals you have for what you want to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of Div II (consider here any research methods courses, independent work, analytic writing, production, second or third language, and other skills)
- c. Your plan – An idea of the *types* of courses, *specific* courses, internships, independent work, study abroad, and other experiences you think will help you meet your goals.
- d. An idea of how you will meet the multiple cultural perspectives and your community engaged learning requirements (read more about them in non satis, non scire)

Putting Together a Committee and Filing

1. Post your first draft (preliminary) contract and select people you might want to work with. Sign up on their doors, on Hampedia, or email to make appointments with them to discuss your interests. Do not allow the posting of this early draft to sidestep the process of talking with faculty.
2. Talk to the faculty who work and teach in the disciplines in which you are interested. Also consider people who can help you in other ways. For example, someone who helps you to stay organized or works with you on your writing, someone with whom you talk with easily, etc. Select a balanced committee. They do not have to work directly in the fields you are studying.
3. Revise the draft of your contract and run it by people who have agreed to work with you. The contract asks for a description and for types of courses. The contract should help faculty guide you to courses and other experiences that will help you meet your own learning objectives.
4. After you have gotten feedback on your draft contract and revised it, post it on the Hub and email your committee members that it is up and ready for signatures.

Throughout your Division II

1. Organize a full committee meeting early in your Div II so everyone is on the same page. Consider using the advising day on the filing deadline.
2. Introduce yourself at the GEO office early on to learn about study abroad options. This will help you plan if you are considering study abroad or taking a field study course during your Div II.
3. Meet with your advisor before pre-registration every semester. Discuss classes, but also shifts in your interest or focus as they arise. Revise your contract as necessary.
4. Keep final papers and other important work in a binder that is ongoing (ask me for one when you file if that would help – I do recycle them periodically). I'll also give you a handout on creating a Div II portfolio.
5. Bring your binder to your chair (or to a committee meeting) at the halfway point so we see how you are progressing. Things we'll look for: a. analytical writing b. evidence that you are working on creating arguments using the literature c. evidence that you are gaining the skills you need to reach your goals d. appropriate documentation of non-course experiences, e. integration of field and community experiences into your academic experiences, and f. engagement with multiple cultural perspectives, g. progress on important cumulative skills.
6. Stay in touch.
7. Don't leave portfolio building and reflection to the last minute.
8. Organize a committee meeting for the end of your final Div II semester to make sure you use the summer or Jan Term well to propel you into Div III.