

BIS DEGREE COMPLETION PLAN

The Bachelor of Individualized Study (BIS) program is an undergraduate degree completion program. It is individualized and there is a minimum age requirement of 25 years old. However, there is an exception to the age requirement for students who have completed the AAS in Early Childhood Development at Northern Virginia Community College. Students enter the program with a range of past learning experiences and credit for prior learning including:

- transferrable college credits (max 90 transfer credits total)
- acceptable professional or military training credits (max 45 of 90 transfer credits)
- transferrable portfolio credits (max 30 of 90 transfer credits)

In addition to these credits, BIS students often have many transferrable college credits and may have completed a degree at the community college level. The time needed to complete a BIS degree will be directly impacted by the following:

- number of transfer credits transferred during the admission process and through a second review by BIS
- number of transfer credits that meet the Mason Core/general education requirements
- number of transfer credits used in the BIS concentration (9 credit maximum)

A BIS degree plan will require at least three semesters to complete because each of the BIS core courses must be taken in sequence:



- BIS students must earn 120 credits total, to include
 - no more than 90 transfer credits, 30 credits taken at Mason
 - 45 of the 120 credits must be upper level (300-400) credits.

The following are examples of a three and six semester BIS degree completion plan:

By taking courses in the summer, a BIS student with at least 75 transfer credits who has met the Mason Core/ general education requirements could potentially complete a BIS degree in one year.

EXAMPLE STUDENT 1 (Three-Semester Degree Completion)

Student 1 has transferred 90 credits to BIS, has met all Mason Core/general education requirements and will use 9 transfer credits in the BIS concentration. This student will be full-time (12-15 credits/semester).

First semester in BIS:

- BIS 300 – Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies (Students will develop a BIS concentration plan here)

- UNIV 304 – BIS Transfer Transitions (1 credit – introduction to campus resources, student success support, and helps students to meet BIS faculty, advisors, staff, and other students)
- ENGH 302 (a Mason Core/general education requirement and a prerequisite to BIS 390)
- Prerequisite courses for any concentration courses, if previously identified through BIS advising
- Concentration courses, if previously identified through BIS advising

Second semester in BIS:

- Planned Concentration courses
- BIS 390 - The Research Process (only if the majority of concentration courses are complete)

Third Semester in BIS:

- Planned Concentration courses (no more than 6 credits of Concentration may be completed in the same semester as BIS 490).
- BIS 490/491 – BIS Senior Project and Presentation of Project (only if all concentration work is complete)

Students who wish to pursue a similar plan, but on a part time basis, may complete a degree program in six or more semesters. Below is an example of a six semester plan. A student may progress at his/her own pace in BIS.

EXAMPLE STUDENT 2 (Six Semester Degree Completion)

Student 2 has transferred 90 credits to BIS, has met all Mason Core/general education requirements and will use 9 transfer credits in the BIS concentration. This student will be full-time (12-15 credits/semester).

First semester in BIS:

- BIS 300 – Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies (Students will develop a BIS concentration course plan here)
- UNIV 304 – BIS Transfer Transitions (1 credit – introduction to campus resources, student success support, and helps students to meet BIS faculty, advisors, staff, and other students)
- ENGH 302 (a Mason Core/general education requirement and a prerequisite to BIS 390)
- Prerequisite courses for any concentration courses, if previously identified through BIS advising
- Concentration courses, if previously identified through BIS advising

Second semester in BIS:

- Planned Concentration courses (these courses may be more closely mapped by determining when courses are typically offered: Fall, Spring, or Summer)
- Prerequisite courses for any concentration courses.
- Consider potential faculty mentors

Third Semester in BIS:

- Planned concentration courses
- Consider potential faculty mentor

Fourth Semester in BIS:

- Planned concentration courses
- Confirm faculty mentor, complete concentration contract
- Consider a BIS 495 Internship or a BIS 489 Independent Study with a faculty mentor
- Consider BIS 391 Honors track or OSCAR Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

Fifth Semester in BIS:

- Planned concentration courses (at this point the majority of concentration courses should be complete)
- BIS 390 - The Research Process

Sixth Semester in BIS:

- BIS 490/491 – BIS Senior Project and Presentation of Project (only if all concentration work is complete)

The BIS program requires an in-depth review of past course work, good pre-planning for future course work, and consistent communication with BIS advising staff. With these elements in place, every student should be able to determine the total length of his/her program through advising appointments and through the concentration planning assignments in BIS 300. BIS degree programs may move as quickly as three semesters from admission to graduation, or as slowly as ten years or more from admission to graduation. This is determined by the student, with consideration of the total number of college-level credits transferred to Mason.