School of Individualized Study

Undergraduate Handbook

Because every tiger’s stripes are different.
The Undergraduate handbook was developed to assist prospective and current students navigate all aspects of their college experience, from the first class to graduation.

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(585) 475-6631
Fax: (585) 475-7424
2255 Bausch & Lomb Center

Barnes & Noble @ RIT
Textbooks & Supplies: http://rit.bncollege.com
Digital Den: http://www.rit.edu/digitalden
100 Park Point Drive

Career Services & Cooperative Education
Morgan Leonard
(585) 475-5469
mclorce@rit.edu
https://www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/
1125 Bausch & Lomb Center

Campus Safety
http://finweb.rit.edu/campussafety
General: (585) 475-2853, Text Msg: (585) 205-8333
Emergency: (585) 475-3333, TTY: (585) 475-6654
Parking: (585) 475-2074
1332 Grace Watson Hall

Campus Ministry
http://www.rit.edu/religion
1402 Interfaith Center

Counseling & Psychological Services
https://www.rit.edu/counseling/
(585) 475-2261
2100 August Center

Financial Aid & Scholarships
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http://www.rit.edu/financialaid
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2125 Bausch & Lomb Center

IT Services - Help Desk
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(585) 475-4357, TTY: (585) 475-2810
1113 Frank E. Gannett Hall

NTID Admissions Office
http://www.ntid.rit.edu/apply
(585) 475-6700 (V/TTY)
Fax: (585) 475-2696

NTID AAS to SOIS BS Liaison
Vicki Liggera
(585) 286-3485 (VP)
valnca@ntid.rit.edu

Graduate & Part-Time Enrollment
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(585) 475-2229
A130 Bausch & Lomb Center

Registrar’s Office
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Fax: (585) 475-7005
1202 George Eastman Hall

RIT Online
http://www.rit.edu/ritonline/
(585) 475-2261, TTY: (585) 475-5077
Wallace Library - Basement

Student Financial Services
http://finweb.rit.edu/sfs
(585) 475-6186
Fax: (585) 475-5487
University Services Center

Teaching & Learning Student Support
https://www.rit.edu/tls/student/
(585) 475-2551, TTY: (585) 475-6295
Wallace Library - Basement

Wallace Library
http://library.rit.edu/
(585) 475-2562

Wellness & Recreation
http://www.rit.edu/ciar
1212 Hale Andrews Student Life Center
Introduction to the School of Individualized Study

The School of Individualized Study (SOIS) offers students interested in more than one area of study the ability to create a personalized undergraduate program directly related to their interests and goals.

Today’s business world values and looks for individuals with diverse academic backgrounds. SOIS offers students this valuable opportunity through its applied arts and science degree programs. These programs focus on providing the student an integrated approach to learning that can be applied to the professional environment.

The SOIS student population is diverse. Some SOIS students are full-time undergraduate students who have unique ideas about what, and how, they want to learn. Some are adults with families and careers, attending classes online or at night. Through customizable programs, students follow plans of study tailored to their individual interests that incorporate courses from the SOIS and RIT’s nine colleges.

Degrees

Bachelor of Science in Applied Arts and Science

(120 semester credit hours, maximum of 90 transfer credits)

The Bachelor of Science in Applied Arts and Science degree is 120 semester credit hours and allows students to develop individualized degree plans which will assist them in achieving their educational and career goals. The degree’s focus is 2-4 areas of customizable, professional core (60 semester credits), complimented by an additional 60 semester credits in general education. Each professional core area consists of a minimum of 15 semester credit hours in a specific discipline or knowledge theme.

Associate of Applied Science in Applied Arts and Science

(60 semester credit hours)

The Applied Arts and Science Associate degree is 60 semester credit hours and allows students to develop individualized degree plans which will assist them in achieving their educational and career goals. The degree utilizes 1-2 professional core areas of study, consisting of a minimum of 15 semester credit hours each.

Applied Arts and Science Diploma

(24 semester credit hours)

The Applied Arts and Science Associate diploma is 24 semester credit hours and also allows students to develop one individualized area of study. The Diploma can be pursued for a variety of reasons:

1. as a stepping stone on the way to an AAS or BS degree
2. as a way to package “bridge” courses (for example, pre-medical coursework)
3. as a way to package courses being taken to update an existing skill-set, or learn a new one (for example, computer graphics).
Applying to SOIS

How to apply for the Diploma, AAS and BS Degree in Applied Arts and Science:

1. Meet with a SOIS advisor
Contact the SOIS main office to set up a meeting with a SOIS academic advisor. During the meeting, you will discuss your career and educational goals, and if SOIS is the best fit to achieve these goals. If you have unofficial transcripts from colleges you attended, email these to SOIS or bring them to the meeting and a draft evaluation of your transfer credit will be done.

2. Design your Individualized Degree Plan (Plan of Study)
Your advisor will discuss the number of concentrations needed for your Plan of Study, the available areas of study, and the possible courses you could take to achieve your stated goals. If you have already designed your own area(s) of concentration, notify your advisor of the courses you have chosen for your Plan of Study. Also indicate any interest in applying for credit by experience, independent study, or other experiential learning. You will also discuss course ideas to complete any needed general education requirements.

3. Complete application for RIT admissions or a change of program form
Students not currently enrolled at RIT must first apply to Undergraduate Admissions: http://www.rit.edu/admission.html and be accepted as an RIT student. Current RIT students should complete the Change of Program form with their current Academic Advisor.

- Current RIT students interested in transferring into this program must complete FYW: Writing Seminar (UWRT-150) or another first-year writing course with a grade of C or better and have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher.
- Current NTID students interested in transferring into this program must also have completed their degree requirements for their Associate (AAS or AS) degree program or be within one semester of satisfying all Associate degree requirements. NTID change of program students should meet with Vicki Liggera (LBJ 60-2638, valnca@rit.edu), Counselor/Academic Advisor and SOIS liaison to complete paperwork necessary to change into the SOIS program.

4. Write your Statement and Resume, and finalize with a faculty advisor
In addition to your Plan of Study, you will need to provide 2 additional documents for your proposed educational path, the Statement of Educational and Career Goals and your Resume. See the next page for details.

These documents are submitted through the SOIS Undergraduate Application Portal. Your advisor will provide you with the link to the SOIS Undergraduate Application Portal and instructions when you are able to apply. This is usually after steps 2 and 3 above are completed. In the portal, your statement and resume will be reviewed by an SOIS faculty member who will provide you with feedback on your ideas and the clarity of your writing. You will need to make revisions (as needed) and submit your materials for final approval.
1. Statement of Educational and Career Goals
A one to two-page typed, double spaced statement in which you reflect on your academic experiences and address how SOIS can help you achieve your professional and academic goals. Use the following prompts to help you write your narrative:

- Where are you today (education and career wise)?
- Where do you want to end up (education and career wise)?
- Explain why you are choosing these particular concentrations or groups of courses.
- Explain how the concentrations you have chosen are connected and how they are going to help you achieve your goals going forward.
- What courses can you take to help you get there?
- In addition, please indicate any areas where you feel that your substantial work experience should be reviewed for credit by experience

See statement rubric and sample statement on the next two pages for more information. If you need assistance writing your statement, we recommend you visit the RIT Writing Commons (https://www.rit.edu/writing/schedule-appointment). Bring a copy of the writing prompts and rubric with you.

2. Resume
If you need assistance writing or formatting your resume, we recommend you meet with Morgan Leonard in the Office of Co-op and Career Services. Be sure to use the correct credential and professional concentration titles when referring to your chosen program in your resume and educational statement:

- Diploma in Applied Arts and Science
- Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Applied Arts and Science, [list concentrations]
- Bachelor of Science (BS) in Applied Arts and Science, [list concentrations]

5. Plan of Study proposal/admissions review process
After you and your advisor design the individualized degree plan, and you submit your Statement and Resume through the application portal, the advisor presents the your proposal to the SOIS Admissions Review Committee for evaluation. The committee usually meets bimonthly.

If you are approved by the SOIS Admissions Review Committee, you will receive a letter of acceptance from the Director of SOIS along with a final, signed copy of your Plan of Study. If significant changes were suggested during the SOIS review meeting and/or your plan was not accepted, your advisor will contact you to indicate the next steps.

6. After acceptance, remember to:
1. Complete any additional requirements or forms as stated in your acceptance packet from RIT Admissions (if new to RIT).
2. Review ALL materials in your SOIS acceptance packet. Contact your SOIS advisor with any questions.
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<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Connections to Life Experience:</strong> Connects relevant experience and academic knowledge - high school - work experiences - past majors - volunteering - family - study abroad</td>
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<td><strong>Reflection and Self-Assessment:</strong> Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (may be evident in self-assessment, reflective, or creative work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it you want to learn?</strong> Educational &amp; Career Goals <strong>Make a Connection:</strong> Connect your goals to the classes and disciplines you have chosen to study, sees/makes connections across disciplines, perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How/Why have you decided this is what you want to do?</strong> Multidisciplinary Life Goals <strong>Knowledge Transfer:</strong> Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations</td>
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Example Educational and Career Goals Statement

Samantha Smith         June 20, 2015

The main requirement to be a Certified Quality Auditor is a substantial knowledge of quality systems and quality tools and to be able to apply that knowledge in practical situations. The concentration in Quality Management will expose me to the needed quality and auditing education. The classes offered at RIT cover, in detail, the particular terminology and methodology required in the quality field. As I have already completed two of the required quality classes, Introduction to Quality and Basic Statistical Quality Control Techniques, and gained considerable applicable knowledge, I know a Quality Management concentration will be of enormous benefit to my goal of becoming a CQA.

In order to function fully as a CQA, I need to have knowledge of business processes. The concentration in Management will better prepare me to enter the business world with a basic knowledge of how businesses operate. Additionally, the classes in this concentration will aid me in helping to make business decisions concerning our family company.

Another requirement for becoming certified in quality is to be able to correctly document audit results and create detailed audit reports. The concentration in Technical Communication will prepare me for the responsibility of writing these technical documents. I have a BA in English, so I have an extensive education in grammar and writing. I feel I need to improve my skills in the technical writing arena. Through my position at the family company, I have on the job experience with this aspect of writing, but I lack formal training.

The BS in Applied Arts and Science will expose me to all the areas of quality, business, and writing. I need to become a better internal quality auditor for our company, and it will prepare me to become a Certified Quality Auditor. I am quite excited about the prospect of earning a second degree, and I look forward to continuing my education at RIT.

Stacking the Deck for Winning Hand
© 2005, Rochester Institute of Technology

NOTE: Please make sure that you put your name and date on your statement.
Explanation of the Applied Arts and Science Curriculum
In the next section, you will find a sample Plan of Study worksheet that outlines the Bachelor of Science in Applied Arts and Science degree program. The AAS curriculum is the first page of the BS degree, minus one math course and one wellness course.

Curriculum Goals
The goal of the Applied Arts and Science curriculum is to offer students the opportunity to tailor their courses to best fit their career/personal goals. The curriculum is made up of all RIT courses, or a combination of RIT and transfer credit. This curriculum is determined by the student and advisor during their initial meetings, and confirmed by the SOIS Admissions Review Committee. Changes to a student's curriculum is allowed, but only with the approval of the student's advisor (and SOIS Admissions Review Committee, if needed).

General Education Requirements for Undergraduates
General Education competencies comprise the core knowledge and skills that educated people need regardless of what career or vocation they enter. The goal of general education courses is to prepare students to:

- Read, write, and think critically to evaluate and draw reasoned conclusions.
- Communicate effectively.
- Demonstrate the ability to organize and understand systems.

How to Search for the General Education “Perspective” requirements:

1. In SIS, click on the “class search” link,
2. Under “advanced search criteria”, find the “course attribute” box
3. Click on the magnifying glass and choose the “PERS” option (“Gen edu perspective category”)
4. In the next “course attribute value” box, click on magnifying glass and choose the perspective category you need to complete.
5. Choose other search criteria that can help narrow your search (days, times, mode of instruction, etc.)
Wellness Education Requirement

RIT recognizes the need for wellness education in today’s society. To meet this need, RIT offers an exceptional program of specifically designed courses to help students develop and maintain a well-balanced, active lifestyle. Our programs involve optimal development of the physical self, the constructive use of stress energy and effectiveness in communicating and dealing with emotions. Consistent application of the above concepts, plus other aspects of the body-mind connection assist students to enhance their health.

The wellness education requirement is designed to assist students in making healthy decisions and choices to support their academic and social interactions in college and beyond. The learning experiences provided throughout the wellness curriculum are an integral part of the total educational experience at RIT.

The wellness requirement applies to students who are under 25 years of age when they matriculate into a degree program.

- **All upper class students seeking an Associate Degree** must successfully complete one wellness activity course to satisfy their graduation requirement.
- **All upper class students seeking a Bachelor’s Degree**, must successfully complete two different wellness activity courses to satisfy their graduation requirement.

**NOTES:**

- Two different courses would include different levels of and/or forms of a course that may have the same course number (e.g. Karate/Beginners and Karate/Advanced would count as 2 different activity courses).
- More information can be found on the Wellness and Activity requirements via the website at http://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/ciar/wellness.php
These are **General Education perspective** requirements. They are intended to make students more “well rounded” in terms of the disciplines they study.

**FY Writing:** Several options can be used for this requirement.

**FY Seminar/Gen Ed:** At some point in the future, this will become a writing intensive requirement. Until that has been put in place by the institute, any General Education course can be used to fulfill this requirement.

**General Education Elective:** Any course deemed “General Education” can be used to fulfill this requirement.
First Page - Professional Core

**Professional Core:** Courses which make up a student’s concentration(s). Each concentration must have a minimum of 15 semester hours, maximum of 27. Concentrations can be multi or interdisciplinary.

AAS students must have a total of 30 semester hour credits (as shown here. This includes 1 or 2 concentrations.

BS students must have a total of 60 semester hour credits to (as shown on this page and page 2). This includes a minimum of 2 concentrations, maximum of 4.

**Important:** Students may only have a total of 9 courses from the Saunders College of Business, unless they were taken prior to joining SOIS.

**Wellness:** Every student aged 24 and under is required to take wellness courses (or transfer them in from another accredited institution) at zero credits each. Requirement is 2 for BS and 1 for AAS.
### Additional General Education Electives

Any course deemed “general education” can be used to fulfill this requirement. You can check this by seeing if “general education” is listed as a course attribute in SIS.

### Immersion

BS students are required to take 3 upper level liberal arts (general education) courses from the same discipline. The immersions are predetermined and students need to select and declare the immersion through SIS, then select three courses listed within that immersion.

### Writing Requirements

This section is a reminder built into our worksheet to make sure that each student fulfills the minimum of 3 writing courses. One from each core area is required to graduate.

### Optional Co-op

This program does not require a co-op, however students may take one that will appear on their transcript.
Second Page - Professional Core
Applies to BS degree only.

**PROFESSIONAL CORE (cont..)**

- **Remaining Professional Core:** The remaining 30 semester hour credits for the BS degree. These make up one or more concentrations.

- **Free Electives:** Each student has the option of taking 3 free elective courses. These can be from any discipline, but pre-reqs must be met and the courses must be credit bearing.

- **Professional Core Writing:** This is a writing intensive course requirement. Speak to an advisor regarding which courses fulfill this.

- **Multidisciplinary Life:** A capstone course that must be completed by each student within this program.
These requirements are ONLY for the Bachelor’s Degree

General Education Electives, 18 semester hours
General Education courses can come from many different departments around campus, including SOIS. These electives can be searched for using the same search function as the perspective directions listed on page 8, but by choosing course attribute of “GE - Gen Edu” and then “GE - Gen Edu”.

The following School of Individualized Study courses have been approved for use in the General Education area:

- Business Communications TCOM-325
- Technical Writing & Editing TCOM-333
- Research Techniques TCOM-361
- Proposal Writing TCOM-414
- Science Writing TCOM-444
- Contemporary Science: Physics MTSC-233
- Contemporary Science: Oceanus MTSC-234
- Harmonica & the Blues CMDS-240
- Creative Critical Thinking & Problem Solving CMDS-441
- Wicked Problems CMDS-333

Immersions and Minors
All students are required to complete an Immersion (pre-approved grouping of courses) in Liberal Arts. Students also have the option to extend this Immersion into a minor, and/or complete a different minor than that of their immersion.

- All Immersion options can be found at: http://www.rit.edu/programs/immersions
- All Minor options can be found at: http://www.rit.edu/programs/minors-and-concentrations

Declaring and Approval: Immersions are declared through the SIS homepage (http://infocenter.rit.edu). Minors must be approved by the department offering the minor, through the use of the “Minor Authorization Form”.
CMDS-510: Multidisciplinary Life
In this seminar capstone course, required of all Applied Arts and Science degree candidates prior to graduation, students reflect upon their multidisciplinary education and identify the learning experiences that arose from individual courses or concentrations within their academic program. Students will identify the changes, and other developments within their lives and workplaces, that have the most significance to their future. Class topics include creativity, problem-solving, planning and design, learning including life-long learning, group dynamics, and the multi-disciplinary aspects of contemporary life. Students will articulate how they might use this new knowledge to foster life-long learning, multi-disciplinary understandings, and success in their careers and other endeavors.

In general – we want to help you make the transition from the world of the university to the world of work.

Institute Writing Requirement
All RIT students must complete the Institute Writing Requirements in order to graduate. These requirements include completion of the following:
1. Completion of First Year Writing
2. Completion of a Professional Core writing elective
3. Completion of a Writing Intensive (WI) perspective course

SOIS students are required to choose one of the following to complete their Professional Core writing elective. This choice is based on the nature of and writing skill that best compliments their professional concentrations: TCOM-333 Technical Writing & Editing, TCOM-325 Business Communications, TCOM-444 Science Writing, TCOM-356 Strategic Communications, or ENGL-211 Intro to Creative Writing
**Policies**

Students must comply with RIT policies and Procedures as outlined in the RIT Policy and Procedures Manual located at https://www.rit.edu/policiesmanual/. Please make special note of Section D, Educational Policies.

**Scholarships & Financial Aid**
The RIT Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships offers a wide variety of scholarships, loans, and grants. All of these opportunities are offered to many students each year according to their eligibility and application process. To find more information about financial assistance through RIT’s Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships, please visit http://www.rit.edu/financialaid.

Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA - available at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/). RIT’s federal school code is 002806.

SOIS offers scholarships to matriculated students in SOIS programs based on merit and need. For more information, visit https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/cms/getting-started/financial-aid.

**Alternative Ways to Earn Credit**
The Applied Arts and Science degree allows students the option to earn credit towards degree completion through a variety of methods, including:

- CLEP
- Prior Learning Assessment (credit by experience)
- Independent Study
- Dante/Ponsi credits
- Military Credits
- ACE credit

**PLA (Prior Learning Assessment)** is a way to convert your professional experience into academic credit. This process helps individuals who have acquired a significant amount of knowledge and skills, i.e., “experience,” in their life to earn college credit that can shorten the process of earning an Associate or Bachelor’s degree through the RIT School of Individualized Study. The experience considered for this process does not have to come from a formal educational experience, like a college course. The process considers experience gained through professional experience as well as a wide range of nontraditional learning activities, such as corporate training programs and seminars, mentoring programs, and military service - just to name a few. To find out more about this process, visit our new online tutorial: https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/SOIS/portfolio/.

More information regarding these options can be discussed with a SOIS advisor, and found through the SOIS website at: http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/SOIS/getting-started/alternative-forms-of-credit.
**Policies**

**Leave of Absence Policy**
A student who is contemplating a leave of absence should meet with their advisor to assist them with the process. In most cases, a leave of absence is not to extend beyond one year. The value of the leave of absence is that your matriculation will be maintained in your academic department for the given period of time. After an absence of more than a year, a student must reapply for admission to the Institute.

If a longer period is requested, the student would be advised to withdraw from the Institute and reapply through the Admissions Office when appropriate.

**Changing a Plan of Study**
In certain circumstances, the student may wish to amend or alter their Plan of Study. Any and all course substitutions must be approved by the student’s academic advisor. A change of three or more courses, either one at a time or all together, must be re-approved by the SOIS Admissions Review Committee. Course substitutions or concentration amendments made without proper approval from the academic advisor and if necessary, SOIS Admissions Review Committee, could result in the student not being certified for graduation due to noncompliance with this policy.

**Graduation Requirements (Checklist)**
- Completion of all courses in approved Plan of Study
- Immersion declared through SIS
- Residency requirement - minimum 30 credits taken through RIT along with 20 of the last 30 credits taken through RIT courses
- Successful completion of the Institute Writing Requirement
- Successful completion of the Wellness Activity requirement (only applicable if under age 25)
- A cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above
- A GPA of 2.0 or above in each professional concentration
- Application for Graduation completed

**Other Resources**
- Student Support Services: https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/sois/current-students/resources