

Curriculum Committee

FAQs about Integrative Learning (IL) proposals

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What is Curriculum Committee looking for in reviewing IL proposals?

- At least two distinct perspectives sustained and integrated over the experience
- Intentional instruction in integrative learning, including highlighting when and how it can improve understanding of course material. Active facilitation of student learning about how to do integrative learning.
- Sustained over the equivalent of a semester, with graded integrative work (on-going project, series of assignments)
- Incorporating student reflection on their integrative learning skills and experience. There is no standard format for student reflection as it could happen in assignments, projects, conversations, and/or activities, but how this reflection happens must be clearly articulated in the proposal.
- Clear incorporation of IL instruction into the syllabus including at least one course learning goal directly related to IL definition and learning goals.

What does “perspective” mean on the CC IL Proposal form?

According to the language that we as faculty approved, “Integrative learning enables students to make connections that combine disparate disciplinary, methodological, ideological, or epistemological perspectives. Integrative learning entails applying multiple ways of knowing to concepts and experiences.”

Perspectives are the distinct lenses, ways of knowing, or approaches that the students will integrate in a sustained, intentional way throughout the semester. As stated above, these perspectives may be disciplinary, but may also take another form of distinction (for example, but not limited to, epistemological, methodological, or ideological approaches). For the IL, content alone cannot provide distinct perspectives; it may be also be helpful to think in terms of multiple ways of knowing.

Interdisciplinary work is often a good starting point for an IL, but is not sufficient. IL experiences and the proposals describing them need to disentangle and make distinct for the students (and for your faculty colleagues on CC) the distinct perspectives so that the integration of these perspectives is intentional and reflective. Some of the ways that CC has identified distinct perspectives include a clear “tension” or sense of argument between the identified perspectives and an expansion of world-view from the integration.

How many ILs have been reviewed? How many approved? What kinds of experience have received the IL designation?

CC received and considered 28 IL proposals last year and has approved 17 of these to-date:

- 7 linked courses
- 3 single-facilitator courses
- 3 community-engaged/service learning courses
- 2 MILA
- 2 team-taught courses

For the vast majority of the proposals that were not approved initially, CC encouraged revision and resubmission.

For proposals that have not been approved, why not?

Proposals have not been approved for some of the following reasons:

- ILs need to make the integrative learning **intentional and ongoing**. If integrative learning is happening but the experience does not explicitly draw attention to and actively cultivate it, it will not qualify for the IL designation.
- It is not clear that there are at least **two distinctive perspectives** which are integrated in a **sustained way throughout the semester**;
- IL-designated experiences need to incorporate **reflection** specifically on the integrative learning. Some degree of this reflection needs to be sustained throughout the semester.

The AY 17-18 was the first year of review of IL proposals. CC took time to consider proposals with particular thoroughness and attention, using careful review of these first proposals to help clarify what distinguishes an IL-designated experience from the many courses faculty teach that incorporate integrative learning in the broader sense. This process will set the framework for future IL-designated experiences and provide solid examples for faculty who are considering developing an IL-designated course.

I've heard that proposals for single courses are not being easily approved. Is this true? Is it possible for a single course to be approved?

Currently several single-facilitator courses have been approved by CC. CC is certainly open to the possibility that more single facilitator courses could receive an IL designation, but has currently not seen many proposals from a single facilitator that fit all the IL criteria:

- Some of the single facilitator proposals have not clearly articulated how at least two distinct perspectives are continuously integrated into the course.

- Some proposals have highlighted course content as the basis for the integrated perspectives. Subject material from multiple disciplines alone is not considered enough to fulfill the “intentional instruction in two distinct perspectives” criterion for the IL.
- Other single facilitator courses have not incorporated intentional reflection by students on their own integrative learning (This is another criteria for IL approved by the faculty; lack of structured opportunities for reflection on the integration has been a common reason that other types of IL proposals have been returned for revision as well.)

CC has found it easier to see the integration of at least two perspectives when a proposal has two distinct facilitators or components. When two facilitators (either two faculty members or a faculty member and a community partner) are working together to present different perspectives it is usually more concretely visible to students that these are distinctly different perspectives being integrated. A single facilitator will therefore need to ensure that they are making clear and visible that there are at least two distinct perspectives and how they are being integrated.

How many IL experiences do we need? When do we need them?

This year’s First Year students are the second class who will need an IL-designated experience as part of their graduation requirements. Unlike Clusters, where one seat was needed for each student during their Sophomore year, ILs operate more like other GARs. We will still need at least one seat for each student, but they may choose to fill that seat at any time from their second semester to the time they graduate. Some students will enroll in more than one IL-experience. So, we will need numbers similar to the numbers we need for other GARs.