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# Adult Degree Program

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## Mission Statement

The Bachelor of Individualized Study (B.I.S.) degree program is designed specifically to provide returning adult students an opportunity to pursue a college education according to individualized needs, goals and time schedules. This program is distinguished from other degree programs presently offered at JMU by students being able to tailor degree requirements to their personal needs and experiences.

## Admission

Applicants must have a lapse of at least three full years in their formal education, a minimum of 30 credit hours, and an approved individualized study program to be eligible for admission. Admission applications are submitted to the Adult Degree Program office.

## Program Requirements

- Completion of IS 201, Orientation to Academic Program Development, is required for entry into the program.
- A minimum of 120 credit hours will be required for graduation. The specific program will be designed in consultation with a faculty adviser.
- A proposal for meeting the requirements of the degree must be submitted to the director for approval while enrolled in the IS 201 course.
- A minimum of 41 general studies credit hours in the seven areas of social and behavioral science, humanities, natural science, written communication, oral communication, mathematics and U.S. history.
- A minimum of 30 credit hours in a particular concentration or field of study, at least 24 of which must be upper-division credits planned around some type of conceptual or cultural framework. Certain concentrations may require that students demonstrate competency in a "common body of knowledge" which may require course work or testing beyond the 30 hours. No more than 30 credit hours of course work can be selected from courses taught by the College of Business (COB). This 30 credit hour limit includes COB courses transferred from other colleges and nontraditional credit earned in the COB. The concentration must be completed with a GPA of 2.0 or better.
- A minimum of 15 credit hours in the concentration must be JMU credits.
- IS 498/499 (Individualized Study Project) is a capstone course that is directly related to the student's concentration or field of study. The project is coordinated by a faculty member and must be completed with a "C" minimum grade. A final oral report must be presented on the project.
- The B.I.S. program also requires that certain technology competencies be maintained.
- Each graduate must have earned a minimum of 30 credit hours at JMU (a maximum of eight non-traditional credits may be applied to the JMU hours requirement).
- At least 60 credit hours must be earned from four-year institutions.
- B.I.S. majors are expected to participate in assessment activities. Assessment information is used to assist faculty in modifying curricula.
- There is no residence requirement; however, programs that extend beyond six years may be amended by the adviser.

## Mechanisms for Earning Credit

The number of credits, which might be accepted or earned through the following methods, is determined by the student's approved program. It is reasonable to expect that the unique educational needs, background and personal circumstances of each student will determine to a great extent the manner in which credit has been and will be earned.

- Transfer credit
- Credit by departmental examination
- Credit for sponsored learning or independent studies
- Regular course work
- Credit for experiential learning
- Credit for educational programs of the Armed Forces

- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- American Council on Education College Credit Recommendation Service

## **Prior Learning Assessment**

College level learning, acquired through other than traditional classroom experience, must be validated by the student. Procedures for doing so have been established by the Adult Degree Program Committee. Requests for experiential learning credit are to be presented no later than midterm of the semester prior to that in which the B.I.S. major plans to graduate. Experiential learning credit is not transferable to a traditional degree program. Majors requesting experiential learning credit must complete IS 203, Portfolio Orientation to Prior Learning Assessment. The fee for each learning component evaluation is \$75.

## **College Credit Recommendation Service**

The B.I.S. program accepts credit as recommended in the National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs and the Guide to Educational Credit by Examination prepared by the American Council on Education. Additional information on the BIS program policies and procedures is available in the Adult Degree Program: Student Handbook.

## **College-Level Examination Program**

The B.I.S. program at JMU participates in the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). CLEP is a national program of credit by examination that offers students an opportunity to obtain recognition for achievement in specific college courses. The policy for earning CLEP credit is detailed in the student handbook.

The Adult Degree Program administers CLEP examinations for JMU and the surrounding area. Interested individuals may schedule a CLEP test by directly contacting the office. Requests for specific information on CLEP examinations should be directed to:

College Level Examination Program  
Box 592  
Princeton, NJ 08540

## **Credit/No-Credit**

Students enrolled in the program may take courses on a credit/no-credit basis if they have completed 28 credit hours of college course work and have a 2.25 cumulative average.

Courses in the area of concentration, including the BIS project, may not be taken on a credit/no-credit basis. Other provisions of the credit/no-credit option as described in this catalog will also be in effect.

## **Service Members Opportunity College**

JMU has been designated as an institutional member of Service-members Opportunity College. As an SOC member, the university recognizes the unique nature of the military lifestyle and has committed itself to easing the transfer of relevant course credits, providing flexible academic residency requirements and crediting learning from appropriate military training and experiences.

## **Second Degree Requirements**

Students who hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university may earn a second degree through the program following the general guidelines on page 24 in this catalog. Second-degree students must complete a minimum of 31-32 credits, including a 30 hour concentration and IS 201, Orientation to Academic Program Development. If appropriate, 8 nontraditional hours may be included in the 30-hour concentration. Second-degree students requesting experiential learning credit must complete IS 203, Orientation to Prior Learning Assessment.

## **General Education Program**

General Education program course work is designed to provide returning adult students with knowledge and skills that form the foundation for completing a baccalaureate degree, including a professional concentration, in the Individualized Study major. While providing a backbone for lifelong learning and graduate degrees, this program recognizes the individual goals of adult learners and encourages nontraditional students to become active in designing their own education.

	<b>Credit Hours</b>
Social/Behavioral Science	6
Sociology, psychology, economics, history, anthropology, geography, and political science	
Humanities	6
Art appreciation, art history, literature, theater and dance history, theater and dance appreciation, foreign language	

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literature or culture, music appreciation or history, philosophy,  
and religion (courses acceptable in the humanities area may not  
include all courses in the related academic departments)

Natural Science	6
Biology, chemistry, geology, physics, and integrated science and technology (selected courses)	
Written Communication	6
English composition (If waived by meeting writing assessment requirements, credits may be earned in advanced composition, English literature, or technical and scientific communication)	
Oral Communication	3
Speech communications	
Mathematics	3
U. S. History	4
Additional General Education credit	7
Courses accepted by <i>General Education: The Human Community</i> and appropriate additional courses from these academic departments	

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