3.2 Majors

Yale-NUS College is a dynamic innovation in the world of higher education. Its faculty are continuously engaged in the exciting process of formulating curricula that draw on the best from the tradition of liberal arts and science education, while rethinking old practices in light of pedagogical innovations, advanced learning technologies, and the needs of 21st century students.

Majors represent current thinking about the content, structure, and intellectual flavour of disciplinary study and are designed by faculty in collaboration with students. Students who enter the College are more than recipients of an education; they are crucial participants in the development of an education fit for a rapidly changing world.

Each major provides systematic training in a specific academic discipline or interdisciplinary area. The majors are designed to give students ample scope and flexibility to explore their interest in a chosen area of knowledge, while providing direction and depth to their studies. Every student’s selection and planning of a major is guided by close personalized interaction with faculty advisors at Yale-NUS. In establishing the majors and helping each student map a path through them, faculty members consider not only the merits of each component of the programme on its own, but also the way in which the components work together to build a coherent set of insights, skills, and knowledge for each student.

At the end of the second year, students select a Major; throughout the third and fourth years, students take courses appropriate to their selected Major, as well as one more Common Curriculum course and other electives. Each major builds on a foundation provided by the Common Curriculum, and requires a total of 11 courses in addition to the Common Curriculum. Most majors also require at least one ‘gateway’ course; this introductory orientation is completed before the beginning of the student’s third year at Yale-NUS when deep involvement in the major begins.

Every student at Yale-NUS completes a capstone project as part of his or her major, a year-long supervised endeavor that will develop initiative and independence in research, and represents two of the 11 courses constituting the major. Students will present the results of their work at the end of the fourth year in presentations to audiences of their peers in the field as well as to faculty and students in other disciplines.

Each major has its own support network for students engaged in capstone projects, including faculty-led seminars for sharing work-in-progress, laboratory and studio spaces, as well as resources for improving the quality of the oral, visual, and written presentation of ongoing research. Graduating students will enjoy the self-confidence and initiative that comes from having successfully conducted a sustained and independent research inquiry.