

## PREPARATION FOR GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDY

Although the principle function of Williams is to provide a broad and solid liberal education that will be of lasting value no matter what the vocation a student may pursue, the College recognizes that no fundamental conflict exists between a liberal education and preparation for a professional career; on the contrary, a foundation of liberal studies increases professional competence in any field. A student should plan his or her program of study so as to provide as much educational breadth and enrichment as circumstances permit. A student should also give serious consideration to post-college plans early in the college career.

Each departmental major provides the foundation for graduate study in the corresponding field. Students should consult the departmental programs listed under “Courses of Instruction” for requirements, and for special advice regarding preparation for graduate study. Students should also consult with the appropriate departmental chairman or the special faculty advisors as early as possible in their college careers to make certain they have taken all the necessary factors into consideration.

Particular attention is called to the foreign language requirements of graduate study. Candidates for the degree of doctor of philosophy at almost all graduate schools are required to have a reading knowledge of both French and German. Under certain circumstances another language may replace French. Many graduate schools require also a knowledge of Latin for students of English and Romantic Languages. Candidates for the master of arts degree are required to have a reading knowledge of either French or German. Students should consult departmental chairmen or the faculty advisors for the requirements in specific fields of study.

### *Visual Arts*

Students interested in graduate studies in art or architecture should meet with faculty with whom they have completed advanced work in the areas they wish to pursue. Their counsel and that of the Department of Art Academic Advisor, Ed Epping, can help the student narrow the search of programs that would best match the student’s needs. The specific requirements of all art and architecture schools offering Master of Arts and/or Master of Fine Arts is available from their online resource.

The College Art Association (CAA) has written:

“Admission to (graduate) programs should be based on the nature, extent, and quality of undergraduate preparation, including courses in studio, art history, and other academic subjects. Quality of studio preparation can best be judged on the basis of careful evaluation of work done at the undergraduate level; therefore, a portfolio review (usually represented by slides) is regarded as an absolute necessity in the admission process.

While many institutions consider the BFA to be the standard qualifying degree, the fact that the applicant has attended a BA- or BS-granting institution does not necessarily rule out acceptance in most MFA programs. Whatever the undergraduate degree, most entering graduate students tend not to be completely prepared in one or more of the areas cited above and will require remedial make-up work...

Some institutions use the MA degree as a qualifying prerequisite for final acceptance into MFA candidacy, allowing the student to apply the earned credits toward the higher degree.”

Students are advised to take into consideration not only current minimum requirements but also recommended courses.

### *Business Administration*

Williams offers no special course in preparation for a business career for graduate study in business administration. The qualities which are important to succeed in business, and which graduate business schools are seeking, are an ability to reason and to express oneself logically and clearly in written and oral exposition; a good understanding of the physical and social environment in which business operates; a solid background in quantitative skills; and an appreciation of human motivations and goals. This means that a broad liberal arts program is preferred over a highly specialized one.

Within this broad prescription it may be desirable to have at least one year of economics and one year of mathematics (including statistics and calculus). For those interested in production management or operation research, additional work in any quantitative course and/or a course in computer science would be helpful.

But there is no particular major at Williams that is designated as preparation for the business profession. Students interested in futures in business are encouraged to undertake a broad educational program in the arts, humanities, and sciences. It is important that one gets involved in extra-curricular activities, one holds a leadership position, and pursuing relevant summer internships is critical.

Students interested in graduate work in business administration should consult with the Pre-MBA Advisor, Robin Meyer, at the Office of Career Counseling.

### *Engineering*

Many Williams graduates enjoy productive careers in engineering, applied science, or technical management. Successful engineers need to be able to communicate effectively, reason logically, and understand both the technical and the social dimensions of a problem. A prospective engineer should major in one of the sciences (usually physics, chemistry, computer science, or mathematics), while pursuing a broad liberal arts education at Williams. Most often he or she will complete a Williams B.A. in the usual four years and then go to an engineering school for professional training leading to a master’s degree or doctorate in engineering. While it may be necessary to make up a few undergraduate engineering courses, the opportunities at Williams to participate in scientific research and the breadth of a liberal arts education prepare Williams graduates to succeed in engineering graduate study and in their careers.

The “Pre-Engineering” webpage can be found in the Physics Department section of the College website. It contains a list of Williams courses recommended to prospective engineers. Students interested in engineering also have the opportunity to take undergraduate engineering courses at other institutions. Williams maintains exchange programs with California Institute of Technology, Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth College, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Williams students can arrange to study at one of these leading engineering schools for one or two semesters, typically during the junior year. Please see the “Exchange Programs” section of this catalog for more information. The 3-2 program offers an opportunity to study engineering at the undergraduate level at Columbia. Please see the “Combined Program in Liberal Arts and Engineering” section for information.

The pre-engineering advisor, Professor Jefferson Strait, will be happy to help plan course selections and to discuss the possible paths to a career in engineering. Many more details about pre-engineering.

### *Law*

Williams graduates regularly proceed directly to law schools on the strength of their liberal arts education. As a rule, law schools do not require particular pre-law curriculum for undergraduates. Consequently, application and admission to law school is open to qualified students from all academic disciplines. This does not mean, however, that law schools are indifferent to one's undergraduate academic experience. In fact, law schools will be very conscious of the quality and rigor of one's undergraduate education. A serious student, considering law school, will heed this advice and undertake a challenging program.

Students intending to study law should consult with the Pre-Law Advisor, Dawn Dellea, at the Office of Career Counseling. Also, on a regular basis, law schools from around the country will visit Williams to provide information and to answer questions from potential applicants. Check the OCC calendar for notice of these visits.

### *The Health Professions*

Many Williams graduates elect to pursue a career in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, public health, or other health-related fields. All are welcome to seek guidance from the Health Professions Office within the Office of Career Counseling.

Students interested in medicine and related fields should pursue a broad liberal arts education, letting enthusiasm for subjects be a guide. In most cases, a student should acquire volunteer service and field-specific internship experience in an effort to confirm interest in the chosen field. With careful planning, any major can be studied.

In order to pursue a career in a health-related field, a student must pay particular attention to the courses required for graduate school admission. In certain fields, upwards of twelve courses are listed as prerequisites. The general requirements for many programs are outlined in "Choosing First Year Courses," but each student considering advanced study in health fields should meet with the Health Professions Advisor early in the college career to ensure that planned coursework will meet satisfy admissions requirements.

Jane Cary, the Health Professions Advisor, will be happy to discuss goals and specific steps that might help a student realize them. Detailed information is available at the Health Professions website ([www.williams.edu/go/careers/prehealth\\_welcome.php](http://www.williams.edu/go/careers/prehealth_welcome.php)).

### *Pre-College and College Teaching/Research*

A central qualification for careers in teaching at any level is proficiency in a major. Students interested in college teaching and research should prepare themselves at Williams for graduate work in the subject of their choice. Those interested in teaching at the elementary or secondary level should plan to attain state certification and/or earn an MAT or M.Ed at a good graduate school. There are many opportunities to do teaching internships and study education as an undergraduate while at Williams.

Students interested in college teaching should consult with the chairs of the departments in which they intend to major. Those interested in teaching at the elementary and secondary level should consult with the Director of the Program in Teaching. Additional advice for both of these options is also available at the Office of Career Counseling.

### *Teaching After Williams*

There are many options for teaching after Williams, including independent and public school teaching. Many states now offer streamlined programs to certify public school teachers, and many states offer a wide range of options for acquiring certification while you teach.

Students interested in teaching may want to consider participating in the Program in Teaching at Williams which is designed to enable undergraduates to study the ideas, questions, and practices involved in good teaching at all levels. The program is open to any student interested in education and offers opportunities for all levels of interest, including those who want to find out about certification and graduate study (see page ? for more details). Students should contact Susan Engel, the Director of the Program, to find out how they might participate in the program.

Students who want career advice should contact the Office of Career Counseling which has a very active on-campus educational recruiting program that includes many private schools as well as Teach for America and similar programs. The program begins in the fall and continues through the spring. Students interested in teaching at independent elementary- or secondary-level schools or participating in the Teach for America or similar programs directly after graduation from Williams (certification is not required) should consult with the Office of Career Counseling.

### *Religious Study*

There is no particular path through the Williams curriculum designed or recommended for students intending to prepare for a career as a religious professional, enroll in a seminary or pursue theological education. Undergraduate study in many fields within the liberal arts curriculum can be useful to the prospective minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or teacher of religion.

Students contemplating advanced academic work in religious studies in preparation for a career in teaching or scholarship should give serious consideration to concentrated undergraduate study in the field, in consultation with faculty advisors in the Department of Religion.

Students with vocational interests that may include ordination or certification as a religious professional in a field such as chaplaincy or religious education are urged to make themselves known to one of the chaplains (or, where appropriate, one of the local clergy) as soon as these interests begin to come into focus. Ordination requirements vary widely depending on the particular religious community or tradition; in some cases it may be possible to make progress on certain credentials in academic study or field experience during the college years. A basic foundation in the study of religion is certainly helpful—sacred texts, scriptural languages, history, philosophy, phenomenology and comparative studies, etc. Undergraduate study in other disciplines—music and the arts, political science and economics, anthropology, psychology and sociology—may also enhance preparations at the graduate level for future service to communities of faith.