Interdisciplinary Program in Organizational Studies

Crafting an OS Pathway: Your Pathway Development Workbook
Part I
Exploring Your OS Pathway

Your OS Pathway is designed to help you take full advantage of the benefits of an interdisciplinary education. Your journey through the world of organizational studies is just beginning. There is so much to explore and learn! Thinking about your interests and planning your path through the many courses offered in the OS major is one of the most important tasks you will undertake during your studies. This workbook is designed to help you start developing your Pathway immediately and to guide you through the entire process.

What is an OS Pathway?
Creating an OS Pathway is like creating a map of your major. The Pathway spells out your chosen intellectual terrain. It shows you the mountains you have to climb, helps you anticipate the valleys, and guides you as you navigate the rapids. In drafting a Pathway, we hope you will feel inspired and allow yourself to bask in what fascinates you. Think of your Pathway as a trip to a country you have never traveled—revel in what makes you feel most curious, most energetic, and most alive. Create the educational country where you want to live. Drawing your map of the particular Pathway you want to follow is one way that you can make the most of your education.

Why Create an OS Pathway?
Because organizations are complex, and because they are important in almost all aspects of our lives, they lend themselves to study from many perspectives. While the Interdisciplinary Program in Organizational Studies builds a strong foundation in economic, psychological, and sociological perspectives on organizations, it also allows you considerable freedom to craft a major that caters to your interests. As you complete your core requirements, your major will gain in focus and utility if you have prepared your interest cluster units and your additional courses in a thoughtful manner. Believe it or not, four years of college is not a very long time! Your coursework in Organizational Studies will go by before you know it. Planning now, and thinking ahead to match your coursework to your interests, is the best way to make full use of your limited time and units and get the most from your Organizational Studies major.

What if I've already taken some classes in Organizational Studies?
Perfect! You will have some experience with your intellectual interests and how they dovetail with courses in the Organizational Studies curriculum. You can design a pathway that is built around your interests and incorporates courses that you have already taken. However, don’t make the mistake of anchoring your pathway around courses you’ve already completed – there are many things you should consider in choosing your Pathway, including your interests, your future plans, your goals for graduation, and what kinds of courses you need to take to regard yourself as a truly educated person. Keep a list of the Organizational Studies courses you have already taken and use it as a resource in planning your Pathway—especially as a resource in Exercise 4 of the Pathway Development Workbook.

Can I modify my OS Pathway?
As happens on any path, as you progress the scenery may change; perhaps the landscape will even shift dramatically. When that happens, it is time to take out your Pathway and work it over again. You may need to revise it in some way, or you may decide to shift your focus. Your Pathway will help you be mindful about your course selection and your progress through the curriculum, so that you can see the impact of your course decisions. When you are establishing or thinking of changing your Pathway, first think through the steps in this workbook. Take some time to answer the questions in Part II of the workbook, and look over the curriculum materials you have in your Organizational Studies handbook. Once you are ready, contact the concentrator advisor to talk through your changes and have them approved. And remember, there are Pathway mentors to help you as well. The Pathway is intended to be a flexible guide to help you in planning your Organizational Studies education. We hope you use it well. If you do, it will serve as your guide to a fantastic journey.
When is my Pathway due to be on file with Organizational Studies?
The Pathways are due to the OS peer mentors by the end of the Fall semester of your junior year.

Where can I find help on my Pathway?
Peer mentors are available to consult with students about their OS Pathways. They have drop-in question hours and individual appointments. If you need help on your Pathway, you can email them or call the Organizational Studies office to set up a meeting.
Exercise 1: Exploring your deepest interests
Do this exercise when you have some time. Don’t rush. Sit down. Take a deep breath. Relax.

Now, read each question on this page, one at a time, and muse over them. You may have to sit with the questions for a while. Allow yourself time to think, but write down your answer as quickly as possible. Don’t edit or second guess yourself. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers here. Free associate. Imagine. Dream.

Question 1: Thinking generally, what makes you feel most curious?

Question 2: If you could find a book that would keep you up all night reading, what would it be about?

Question 3: When you think about work you have done, groups you have been a part of, or other organizations you know well, what fascinates you about being a member of an organization?

Question 4: When have you felt most alive in an organization?
Exercise 2: Exploring your intellectual interests
Do this exercise when you have your transcript, course catalog, and other Organizational Studies curriculum materials available. You will need full course descriptions, and not just course titles. Use these reference materials to help you examine your intellectual interests.

Question 1: Looking over your transcript, which courses have interested you the most?

Question 2: Of the courses that you have liked the most, what do you remember most vividly?

Question 3: Which of the courses that you have taken have offered you the best challenges? Which courses have helped you feel yourself grow?

Question 4: Now, look over the Organizational Studies Curriculum list of courses and read the course descriptions. If you could enroll in ANY COURSES you wanted, and you were guaranteed to get in, what courses would you want to take?

Question 5: Are there courses you want to take that aren’t offered? If you were going to invent your own course, what would it include? What department would offer it? What would it challenge you to think about and learn?
Exercise 3: Finding the common themes
You need to have completed exercises 1 and 2 before starting exercise 3. Refer back to your previous work as you think about these questions.

These questions are designed to help you see how your interests and your intellectual experiences are tied together, to help you see patterns in them, and to help you discover that there are core skills that tie your interests and classes together. Thinking about these core themes and underlying skills will help you discover the rationale behind your interest in Organizational Studies.

Question 1: Looking back at your answers to your deepest interests, what are the main categories? Can you distill your deep interests into two or three sentences?

Question 2: Looking back at your deepest interests and your intellectual interests, what are some of the kinds of organizations or organizational contexts that fascinate you? (e.g., Do you get excited about art and artistic organizations? Do you love the idea of working with non-profits?)

Question 3: Imagine that you have to pass a test to graduate, and the test is this: You have to tell the Director of Organizational Studies what it is that makes you worthy of a diploma in Organizational Studies. How would you answer that question? What would you NEED TO KNOW in order to consider yourself an educated person in Organizational Studies?
Exercise 4: Creating your OS Pathway
You need to have completed exercises 1, 2, and 3 before starting exercise 4.
You will also need your Pathway Declaration Form and a notebook or computer to begin writing your Pathway Rationale.

Question 1: Looking at your deepest interests, your intellectual interests, and the common themes that unite them, identify some micro organizational theory (Cluster A) courses that are most in line with your interests.

Jot them down here and on a draft version of your Pathway Declaration Form:

Question 2: Looking at your deepest interests, your intellectual interests, and the common themes that unite them, identify some macro organizational theory (Cluster B) courses that are most in line with your interests.

Jot them down here and on a draft version of your Pathway Declaration Form:

Question 3: Looking at your deepest interests, your intellectual interests, and the common themes that unite them, identify the Interest Cluster (Cluster C) courses that are most in line with your interests.

Jot them down here and on a draft version of your Pathway Declaration Form:

Question 4: Now, look at the courses you have selected and look back at your previous answers. What theme or underlying idea best unites them? Make this theme short – less than a sentence – and snappy. It should encapsulate your entire OS Pathway.
Exercise 5: Writing a Pathway Rationale

Rationale: Look back over all of your answers to these questions. Focus especially on Question 1 of Exercise 3 (What are the main categories that your interests fall in? How do you distill your interests into a few sentences?). Look at how Question 1 of Exercise 3 matches (or doesn’t match!) your answers to themes in your course choices in Exercise 4. If these don’t match well, you may want to go back to Exercise 4 and revise your course choices.

Once you feel you have a set of courses that truly suits your interests, look back at your answer to Questions 3 and 4 in Exercise 1 (what fascinates you and makes you feel alive?) and look back at your answer to Question 4 of Exercise 2 (what does it take to regard yourself as an educated person?)—use these answers to begin writing your rationale for the Pathway you have designed.

Write one or two paragraphs about what is at the heart of your Pathway, what intellectual interest it has for you, and how it meets your deepest interests. You have already done all of this work – just draw from the answers to your previous questions. Be sure to include something about why you deserve to be regarded as an educated person!
Exercise 6: The Easy Part
Congratulations! You've designed your OS Pathway!

Here are a few finishing touches to help you finish your Pathway and file it with Organizational Studies:

Step 1: Your answer to Question 4 of Exercise 4 is a good idea about the title of your OS Pathway.

Step 2: Your Pathway Rationale is what you developed in Exercise 5.

Step 3: Your answers to Exercise 4, Questions 1-3, are likely to be the core of your Pathway courses. Revise them as needed now that you've written your rationale, and fill them into the Pathway Declaration Form.

Step 4: Have you identified additional courses for Clusters A or B over and above the required number you need to take? If not, add some additional courses that fit the themes of your Pathway. If a course is cancelled or full, you want to have flexibility.

Step 4: Double check for any pre-requisites that you need to complete in order to finish your Pathway, and write them into the Pathway Declaration Form.

Step 5: If you don’t have some extra courses in your Interest Cluster (Cluster C), look at the course offerings again and find some additional courses that will round out your Pathway. Again, you want to have some backup courses planned in case a course is cancelled or full.

Step 6: Submit your OS Pathway to the OS Peer Mentors! You are ready to file your Pathway and continue your journey through the world of Organizational Studies.