

De-Mystifying the Divs

an informal guide for the perplexed

Division I

- The first stage of a Hampshire education – meant to expose students to at least one course (or other supervised learning activity) in all five of the Hampshire “schools”: Cognitive Science (CS), Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies (HACU), Interdisciplinary Arts (IA), Natural Science (NS), and Social Science (SS).
- To complete Div I, students must finish eight courses (or supervised learning activities): one tutorial, one 100-level or specially designated 200-level course in each of the other four schools in addition to the tutorial, and three electives, which can be any course or supervised learning activity in any school.
- After completing all the necessary courses, students pass Div I by 1) writing a retrospective essay that describes their intellectual development during Div I, and 2) handing in a portfolio of selected Div I work. The tutorial teacher, who is also the student’s advisor, can set the specific conditions for the retrospective and portfolio (number of pages, format, etc.). Once the advisor receives them (usually early in the fall of the second year, unless the student still needs to finish one or more of the eight requirements), s/he will schedule a final meeting with the student to discuss Div I, and then pass the student on the Hub and write an evaluation of the student’s Div I performance.

Division II

- The second stage of a Hampshire education, which begins in the fall of the second year, the third semester (even though the Div I is usually not yet passed until later in that semester). With rare exceptions, students are in Division II for their entire second and third years; during that time they develop a Division II concentration (roughly equivalent to what most schools call a “major,” but significantly different in that it is 1) interdisciplinary and 2) individually crafted by each student to meet his/her particular interests and needs) and also take courses outside the area of concentration to round out their liberal education. A possible source of confusion is that the Div II concentration is often referred to simply as the “Div II” – since it is the heart of the Div II stage, this is understandable.
- Students begin to design their individual concentrations in the fall of their second year. They do this by talking with faculty in their area(s) of interest, working toward the goal of both 1) having a two-person faculty committee, one chair and one member, who will oversee their Div II, and 2) formulating a concise statement of what their concentration will be: questions they plan to pursue, skills they plan to learn, goals they hope to accomplish, etc. Both the committee and the concentration statement (which are part of the “Div II Contract”) have to be finalized by the beginning of the fourth, or spring, semester.
- During Div II, students must also complete 1) a multiple cultural perspectives requirement, and 2) a community service requirement. The Div II contract also briefly describes the student’s plans for these.

- Most students complete Div II by the end of their third year, except in the occasional cases in which the Div II committee feels they have done insufficient work in their area of concentration. To pass Div II (like Div I), they must 1) write a retrospective essay and 2) hand in a portfolio of Div II work, as specified by their committee. Once the committee receives these, it holds a final meeting with the student to discuss the Div II, and the chair, with input from the member, writes an evaluation of the student's Div II performance.

Division III

- The final stage of a Hampshire education – a two-semester project or paper done during the fourth year. In addition to finishing this major project/paper, Div III students must also complete two “advanced educational activities,” one each semester. These can be upper-level courses or relevant internships, teaching assistantships, etc.
- Students begin to formulate their plans for Div III during the spring of their third year, or sixth semester, in a manner similar to how they formulated Div II two years earlier. They talk with faculty 1) to find a two-person committee, one chair and one member, to oversee their Div IIIs and 2) to draw up, in collaboration with their committee, a Div III contract that describes their Div III plan. These are finalized early in the fall, or seventh, semester.
- The Div III committee usually interacts with the student considerably more often than the typical Div II committee does – it might meet with the student once every other week or even, particularly in the final semester, once a week, to supervise progress on the Div III project. When the project or paper is finished, the Div III committee has a final meeting with the student and the chair, with input from the member, writes an evaluation of the student's Div III work.