

THE PLAN

Map a territory for study and practice

At Bennington you design your own course of study and work, taking full advantage of the College's resources both inside and outside the classroom. You identify one or more areas of interest that spark your intellectual curiosity and provide a foundation for your academic and field work, and you pursue that work with ongoing guidance from your faculty. **This is your Plan.**

By building, articulating, and advocating for the substance of your education, you hone your ability to thrive in a world without givens, to tolerate ambiguity, and to steer your work in compelling directions even when a path is not laid out for you.

The Plan: Year by Year

First Year

Your first year is one of grounding and exploration. You take a variety of courses, explore new subjects, and begin to build an education around your interests.

Second and Third Years

The second and third years allow you to dive into a particular discipline, a cluster of disciplines, or a question, discovering the power and limitations of immersion.

The Fourth Year

The final year is an opening outward, when you explore how your own work relates to others' and how your deepened understanding of a subject or craft might matter to the rest of the world. You may also choose to conclude your work at Bennington with a senior project or thesis paper.

A Bennington Education: Capacities

A Bennington education allows students to develop, through iteration and self-reflection and in increasingly sophisticated ways, several fundamental capacities:

Inquire

As students formulate questions to advance their studies they define and refine a clear line of inquiry that elucidates the unknown while questioning the known.

Research

Students expand their knowledge through active, self-determined investigation, learning the steps needed to master a topic, and to distinguish deep research from surface familiarity.

Create

Students make and revise original work, develop new ways of understanding, and engage in generative and critical problem-solving, often in collaboration with others.

Engage

Students participate in a community of learning, both in the classroom and in the world beyond.

Communicate

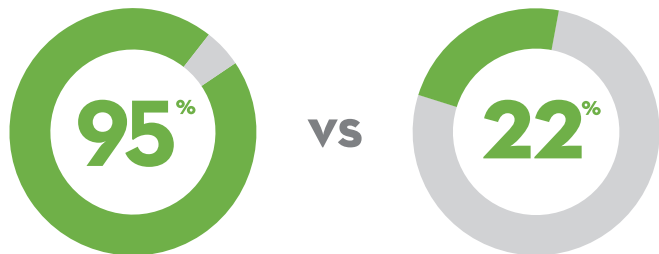
Students learn to express their ideas with clarity and effectiveness, and learn to listen and respond to the voices of others.

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Advising and Mentoring

In one-on-one sessions with your faculty advisor and in meetings with your faculty Plan committee, your teachers serve as both mentors and guides. They help you discover how your intellectual interests and professional ambitions might shape an education of depth, breadth, and rigor. They guide your progress to ensure that your Plan is challenging, academically sound, and significant.

In addition, Bennington has a cadre of staff advisors with expertise in the first-year experience, international student services, Field Work Term and career advising, co-curricular experiences, study abroad, grants and fellowships, and accommodations and support. They work in concert with faculty advisors to help you develop the habits of mind that contribute to success in your Plan and Field Work Terms.



95% of Bennington graduates say faculty encouraged them to pursue their goals vs **22%** of graduates nationally

— 2014 Gallup-Purdue Survey; 2016 Bennington College Senior Survey

Grades and Evaluation

Students may request letter grades for any and all courses they take. In addition to the optional grades, all students receive written narrative evaluations at the end of the fall and spring terms for each course they have taken. Faculty summarize the student's progress, appraise his/her work, and often make suggestions for further development. A narrative evaluation is issued whether the student elects to receive a letter grade or a pass/fail rating.

Plan Examples

RIVVY EISENBERG '16

Inquiry:

How does understanding human perception of the environment help shift policy?

Areas of Study:

- Environmental Science
- Chinese
- Society, Culture, and Thought

Courses:

- Studying Place By Metes And Bounds
- Environment and Public Action
- Romantic Poets

Field Work Term:

- Maine Sierra Club, Portland, ME
- Environment Maine, Portland, ME
- Neverland Organic Farm, Loja, Ecuador

TESS MORRISON '16

Inquiry:

How can tools from medical anthropology improve public health systems in Latin America?

Areas of Study:

- Public Action
- Biology
- Anthropology

Courses:

- Natural History of Plants
- Women in Latin America
- Traditional medicine in Chile

Field Work Term:

- Hospital Baca Ortiz Pediátrico, Quito, Ecuador
- New York Botanical Gardens, Bronx, NY
- Independent study, Cholchol, Chile