

Your Unique Concentration Narrative: Crafting Your Purpose-Driven Roadmap

The *Concentration Narrative* is more than just an assignment—it’s an opportunity to reflect deeply on your educational journey, articulate your academic vision, and shape the story of your self-designed major. Unlike traditional degree programs with predetermined structures, your major is a reflection of your intellectual curiosity, career ambitions, and the impact you want to have on the world. The *Concentration Narrative* helps you bring clarity to that vision.

**“Think of us as opportunity matchmakers—
the clearer your vision, the better we can connect you with
courses, resources, and experiences”**

You will not be confined to the ideas and goals that you include in your narrative. As you complete courses in your field, you will learn things that may change your mind or shift your focus. This is great! This narrative is not meant to set anything in stone; rather, it is a snapshot of your thinking at the very outset of your path of study. It will help CUNY BA and your Faculty Mentors understand your goals. Share this with your Faculty Mentor early in your process.

Think of us as *opportunity matchmakers*—the clearer your vision, the better CUNY BA and Faculty Mentors can help connect you with courses, resources, and experiences that align with your goals.

This assignment serves several key purposes:

- **Defining Your Uniqueness:** Your concentration is not a conventional, run-of-the-mill major—it’s uniquely yours. The *Concentration Narrative* allows you to explain what sets it apart from traditional programs and why your chosen path is the best way to achieve your goals.
- **Clarifying Your Goals:** The narrative is an opportunity to reflect on what you want to get out of your degree. Where do you see yourself after graduation? Whether you’re considering graduate school, a specific profession, or a broader impact on society, writing this narrative will help you define your aspirations and refine your ability to articulate them. You can begin with your personal statement from your application if it’s relevant, and expand it, adding your rationale, course choices, learning style, and enriching experiences.
- **Making Connections:** As an interdisciplinary student, you are weaving together knowledge from multiple fields. This is your chance to explain *why* you’ve chosen these areas of study, how they relate to one another, and how they connect to the real-world and your future plans. You’ll reflect on each course you are including and explain why it is important and what it contributes.
- **Meaning-making:** This assignment is not just about fulfilling a requirement—it’s about refining your sense of purpose and ensuring that your education is as meaningful and impactful as possible. By crafting your *Concentration Narrative*, you are not only shaping your own path but also giving your faculty mentors the tools they need to support and guide you.



- **Including Experiences:** This assignment encourages you to plan vital experiences, outlined in the Passport to Opportunity, such as study abroad, research, and internships.
- **Enhancing Your Storytelling:** Think of this as your intellectual autobiography—your declaration of uniqueness. Writing your Concentration Narrative will help you develop a clear and compelling way to talk about your degree, whether in job interviews, graduate school applications, or networking opportunities. (Join us also for the workshop “Telling my CUNY BA Story” to help you distill your narrative into a pithy, engaging pitch that describes your concentration succinctly and persuasively.)

“Use your authentic voice in this narrative. This isn't just an academic exercise — it's your story. And your story matters.”

What to Include in Your Concentration Narrative

To guide your writing, first reflect on the following questions:

- **Your Learning Style & Academic Growth:** How do you learn best? What are your strengths and weaknesses as a learner, and how do you hope to grow throughout your studies?
- **Course Selection & Interdisciplinary Connections:** Which fields make up your Area of Concentration (AoC), and why have you chosen them? How do your courses complement each other and contribute to your academic and professional goals?
- **The Bigger Picture:** What do you want to do with your education? How does your major prepare you for your career, graduate school, or the impact you want to have on the world? Identify at least two or three specific ways your Concentration connects to your future plans.
- **Beyond the Classroom:** How do your academic interests extend into co-curricular activities, such as research, internships, study abroad and creative projects? What experiences will help you grow outside of your coursework?
- **Your Evolving Story:** Revisit your original application essay—how has your vision evolved since then? What new insights have shaped your academic journey?

Use your authentic voice in this narrative. While well-researched and well-informed, it doesn't have to be in academic or more formal language. In fact, more impactful narratives showcase your unique voice. (Plus, it will also be helpful for writing personal statements). This isn't just an academic exercise—it's your story. And your story matters.

Your Framework: Connecting your Courses and Goals

You will respond to each of the following questions:

1. What fields comprise your Concentration, and what sets your Concentration apart from these individual fields? What makes your Concentration different from existing majors?
2. Explain your course choices for your Concentration. How is each course relevant to your field, and how do they, collectively, help you achieve your academic and professional goals?
3. After graduation, how do you intend to use the knowledge and skills you acquire from pursuing your Concentration? How does your Concentration prepare you for the world beyond the classroom? Make 2-3 concrete connections between your Concentration and the path that you wish to pursue when you graduate.
4. What are your current academic and extracurricular goals? For example, looking at the Passport to Opportunities (below), do you want to:
 - conduct research in an area of interest
 - produce and display your artwork
 - engage in volunteer work
 - join a student organization or club
 - participate in study groups
 - attend conferences
 - perform for an audience
 - find an internship
 - and/or apply for scholarships?
5. What are your current strengths and weaknesses as a learner? Do you learn better in some contexts than in others? What would you like to improve on during your course of study in CUNY BA? Be specific and set some goals for yourself.

Passport to Opportunities

Academic Engagement: create a unique degree, reflect, connect courses and experiences; challenge yourself. Find special courses (such as grad courses or special professors). Create a portfolio of academic and professional work samples. Work on your “CUNY BA story” to explain the value of your degree.

Study or work abroad: Spend a full semester, year, or short-term (winter/summer abroad. Apply for special Scholarships and Fellowships for opportunities (including post-grad, like the Fulbright).

Research & Creative Inquiry: Write a thesis and/or create an Independent Study; work in lab for credit or pay. Create a culminating project.

Leadership & service: Volunteer in campus clubs and organizations to get leadership experience, make friends, and learn new skills.

Professional development: Pursue work and internships. Participate in skills workshops.

