

UMSL Undecided Major

What is an Undecided Major?

An undecided major is a student who has not yet chosen a specific field of study. Nationally, between 30 and 40% of incoming freshmen are unsure of a major when they enter college. It is also estimated that 75-80% of students change their majors, and many do so more than once. Entering the university having an undecided major has great advantages. Your time with an undecided major can be used to explore your interests and develop fundamental skills that will be essential to your future career. If you wait to choose a major until you have settled into the university and have taken time to explore your interests and options, you may discover that your interests lie in a direction you had not imagined.

Undecided majors register for classes in the Center for Student Success, 225 Millennium Student Center.

Build a Foundation for Your Future

Your first year or two at the university can be used to complete the general education courses required of all students and to explore and experience a variety of possible university programs. Besides helping you choose a major, the general education courses help you build lifelong thinking and learning skills and a common body of knowledge that are critical for understanding yourself and the larger community.

Specifically, the University of Missouri–St. Louis is committed to assisting you to:

- Acquire knowledge, both in breadth and depth, through exposure to a wide variety of disciplines
 - Communicate with precision and style
 - Learn to think clearly and critically
 - Know the methods of inquiry and thought necessary for understanding nature, society, and self
 - Sharpen your awareness and appreciation of other cultures and their differing values, traditions, and institutions
- Develop lasting intellectual and cultural interests
 - Learn more about yourself and demonstrate mature decision-making skills
 - Achieve greater social maturity and appreciation for human diversity through the experience of working closely with a wide variety of fellow students and faculty members

General Education Requirements

All students completing a baccalaureate degree from the University of Missouri–St. Louis must successfully complete general education requirements.

The General Education Program of the university offers you an exciting and challenging program that develops the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in today's changing world. The following information outlines each of the six goals you must achieve to accomplish the designated skills and knowledge goals. The program also allows for individual choices in disciplines and skills to assist you in your under-graduate endeavors at the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

All students completing a baccalaureate degree must successfully complete a 42-hour block of courses in six areas:

Skill Goals

Communication Skills (minimum of 6 hours): Develops students' effective use of the English language and quantitative and other symbolic systems essential to their success in school and in the world. Students should be able to read and listen critically and to write and speak with thoughtfulness, clarity, coherence and persuasiveness.

Managing Information Skills (minimum of 3 hours): Develops students' abilities to locate, organize, store, retrieve, evaluate, synthesize and annotate information from print, electronic and other sources in preparation for solving problems and making informed decisions.

Valuing Skills (minimum of 3 hours): Develops students' abilities to understand the moral and ethical values of a diverse society and to understand that many courses of action are guided by value judgments about the way things ought to be. Students should be able to make informed decisions through identifying personal values and the values of others and through understanding how such values develop.

Knowledge Goals

Social and Behavioral Sciences (minimum of 9 hours): Develops the students' understanding of themselves and the world around them through the study of content and the processes used by historians and social and behavioral scientists to discover, describe, explain and predict human behavior and social systems. Students must understand the diversities and complexities of the cultural and social world, past and present and come to an informed sense of self and others.

Humanities and Fine Arts (minimum of 9 hours): Develops the students' understanding of the ways in which humans have addressed their condition through imaginative work in the humanities and fine arts; to deepen their understanding of how that imaginative process is informed and limited by social, cultural, linguistic and historical circumstances; and to appreciate the world of the creative imagination as a form of knowledge.

Mathematics and Life/Natural Sciences (minimum of 12 hours): Develops students' abilities in the areas of mathematics and sciences. In mathematics, the goal develops the students' understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts and their applications, a level of quantitative literacy that would enable them to make decisions and solve problems. In the life and natural sciences, this goal develops the students' understanding of the principles and laboratory procedures of life and physical sciences and to cultivate their abilities to apply the empirical methods of scientific inquiry and understand how scientific discovery changes theoretical views of the world. Students should also understand that science is shaped by historical and social contexts.

When Choosing a Major

1. Gather information

Now is the time to get started on the very important process of gathering the information you will need to choose your future major. Choosing a ma-

major requires you to gather information in three main areas:

- a. University majors and programs: the on-line University Bulletin (<http://www.umsl.edu/bulletin/>) provides a list of all academic programs, course descriptions and requirements for graduation. Professional staff are available to discuss these options with you and to recommend courses that would give you an opportunity to sample these programs. Taking a variety of courses will provide valuable information about your abilities and interests in these possible fields.
You can get started by doing the "What are you interested in studying?" exercise that follows.
- b. Self-awareness: Knowing your unique pattern of interests, values, abilities, personality characteristics, and lifestyle requirements will help you make a better match with a major or career. Research shows that a better match leads to greater life satisfaction and success. This information can be obtained through a variety of means, such as discussions with professional staff and/or professors, career assessments and counseling, job experience, classroom experience and life experience.
- c. Occupational information: Information about occupations can be obtained from websites such as the Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>) and O*NET (<http://www.onetonline.org/>), which also allows users to search occupations using the Holland Codes. Other useful ways to learn about occupations include volunteer/service experiences, student/professional organizations, and talking to professionals already working in your fields of interest. Professional staff in the Center for Student Success can teach you how to conduct informational interviews to hear the personal stories of those who truly enjoy their careers.

2. Make your decision

Choosing a major is a process that takes time and care. Once you have gathered a sufficient amount of information in the areas above, you can begin the decision-making process. Most people will have to recycle back to gathering information from time to time. Decision-making involves:

1. Putting all the information together and summarizing it.
2. Deciding how well each option fits your goals, strengths and skills.
3. Weighing the benefits and costs of each possible choice.

What Are You Interested in Studying?

The University of Missouri–St. Louis offers courses in the following fields of interest. You may want to scan this list on the **back page** and check off areas that seem interesting to you. Professional staff can help you match your fields of interest with academic majors.

University Services for Undecided Majors

The university is committed to your success in your General Education studies and to assisting you in choosing an appropriate and satisfying major.

Advising

Undecided majors at the University of Missouri–St. Louis are admitted into the College of Arts and Sciences and are advised in the Center for Student Success, 225 Millennium Student Center. Professional staff will help you explore your interests, values, experiences and abilities and help you clarify your academic goals, as well as assist you in decision making and help you choose the courses that fit your skills, while fulfilling requirements.

Major and career exploration

Professional staff can meet with you to determine which career assessments would be most helpful at this point in your decision making process. It is a myth that career assessments will “tell you what you should be.” Rather, these instruments will facilitate the process of gathering information about yourself and help you to think about careers in a more structured way. Career counseling sessions can also help you to learn more about yourself and about the process of choosing a career. Major and career exploration is offered through the Center for Student Success, 225 Millennium Student Center.

Career Services

It is important to be able to check out what it would actually be like to work in a particular field. The Office of Career Services, 278 Millennium Student Center, will help you to find internships, co-ops, or jobs that will give you experience in a variety of fields. Career Services encourages you to get career/degree related job experience before you graduate, both to make sure you have chosen the right field and to enhance your résumé. Some companies will even help with your educational fees!

You can access Career Services online 24/7 during the job search process. You can create your résumé, search the jobs database, access the Occupational Outlook Handbook, dis-

cover career paths in a particular major field, view a sample résumé and cover letter and more.

Visit our website umsl.edu/career and navigate through all the services that we offer to the University of Missouri–St. Louis students.

Career Experience and Employment Program

Students who gain career related experience while completing their degree are more likely to find satisfying employment upon graduation, a higher starting salary, and rapid promotion potential. Blending your academic career and your work experience will definitely pay off!

Career Resources

In our state-of-the-art career lab, you will have access to information about salaries, employer information and current job opportunities. Find out what careers are in demand. You can research employers, what skills they are seeking in a student or graduate and what type of training is required to reach your professional goals.

Career Workshops

The Office of Career Services offers workshops to help you accomplish your goal of finding a degree-related job. Interviewing techniques, job search strategies and résumé writing workshops will give you the competitive edge in the job market and help you develop the necessary skills that you need to be successful in your job search.

Career Readiness/Coaching

Professional staff are available to help you identify career choices that fit with your education, your skills and abilities. Self-assessments and online tools are available to identify your professional interests, matched with different job titles. Explore all of the possibilities available to you in a specific academic area.

The University of Missouri–St. Louis offers courses in the following fields of interest.

Accounting	Fine Arts	Optometry
Adult Education	Finance	Painting
African Studies	French	Philosophy
American Studies	Gender Studies	Philosophy of Science & Technology
Anthropology	Geography	Photographic Studies
Archaeology	German	Physical Education
Art	Gerontology	Physics
Art History	Graphic Design	Political Science
Astrophysics	Greek	Political Theory
Astronomy	Greek Studies	Pre-Dentistry
Athletic Coaching	Higher Education	Pre-Engineering
Biochemistry	History	Pre-Journalism
Biology	History of Science & Technology	Pre-Law
Biotechnology	Home Economics	Pre-Medicine
Business Administration	Human Resource Management	Pre-Optometry
Ceramics	Information Systems	Pre-Pharmacy
Chemistry	Interdisciplinary Studies	Pre-Veterinary Science
Chinese	International Affairs	Printmaking
Classical Studies	International Business	Probability and Statistics
Communication	International Relations	Professional Writing
Comparative Politics	Japanese	Psychology
Computer Science	Jazz Studies	Public Administration
Conservation Biology	Labor Studies	Public Affairs Journalism
Counselor Education	Latin American Studies	Public Law
Creative Writing	Latin	Public Policy
Criminology and Criminal Justice	Literacy	Public Relations
Dance	Logistics and Operations Management	Radio and Television
Disaster & Risk Management	Management and Organizational Behavior	Reserve Officer Training Corps
Drawing	Management Science	Sculpture
Early Childhood Education	Marketing	Secondary Education
East Asian Studies	Mathematics	Social Work
Ecology	Mathematics Education, K-5	Sociology
Economics	Media Studies	Spanish
Educational Administration	Medical Physics	Special Education
Educational Foundations	Middle School Education	Statistics
Educational Psychology	Modern European Studies	Studies in Religion
Educational Research & Evaluation Methods	Modern Language & Study Abroad	Studio Art
Educational Technology	Music	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, P-12
Elementary Education	Music Education	Theatre
Engineering (Civil, Electrical, Mechanical)	Museum Studies	Trauma Studies
Engineering Physics	Neuroscience	Tropical Ecology
English	Nonprofit Organization Management	Urban Education, P-5
English as a Second Language	Nursing	Urban Politics
Environmental Studies	Optical Biophysics	Urban Studies
European Studies		Writing
Film Studies		