

College of Arts and Science

Undecided Major

What is an undecided major? If you are entering the University without a specific field of study, you are an “undecided major.” Nationally, between 30 and 40 percent of incoming freshmen are unsure of a major when they enter college. It is also estimated that between 75 and 80 percent of students change their majors, and many do so more than once.

Entering the University as an undecided major has great advantages. Choosing an academic major is a journey. Your time as 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 are “housed” under the College of Arts and Science, and academic advising takes place in the Academic Exploration and Advising Services Office located in the Student Success 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 degree 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 is critical for understanding yourself and the larger community.

All baccalaureate graduates of the University of Missouri should have a sound intellectual foundation in the liberal arts and sciences which provides the ability to:

- Reason and think clearly,
- Write and speak coherently,
- Understand important issues confronting society,
- Understand the importance of international affairs in an increasingly interdependent global environment,

- Understand our culture and history,
- Appreciate the fine arts and humanities,
- Understand major scientific and technological influences in society.

General Education Requirements

General education requirements are the foundation of knowledge upon which all MU degrees are built. They are specifically intended to prepare students as citizens who must make informed judgments about issues that go beyond the narrow area of their academic specialization. All MU students must complete the general education requirements listed below. With careful planning, some courses may be chosen to meet both University general education requirements, and one or more of the divisional, degree and major requirements. Students are strongly encouraged (and in some divisions required) to meet with an academic adviser in their field to ensure adequate progress toward the selected degree and major.

Common general education requirements for all MU degrees include:

- College algebra (*Math 1100 or 1120*) or transferable equivalent — 3 hours
- *English Exposition and Argumentation* (English 1000) or transferable equivalent — 3 hours
- Writing-intensive courses
- Math reasoning proficiency course* (*Above courses with a grade of C- or better*)
- American history or government — 3 hours *
- Distribution Requirement — 27 hours (must include at least

- one course numbered 2000 or higher)
- 9 hours of biological science, physical science, and/or mathematical science (including at least one biological or physical science and its related laboratory component; *two different areas of science must be represented*)
- 9 hours of behavioral and/or social science (*with at least one course from each of the two different departments*)
- 9 hours of humanities and/or fine arts (*with at least one course from each of the two different departments*)

How to Choose a Major

1. *Gathering information:* Now is the time to get started on the very important process of gathering information you will need to choose your future major. Choosing a major requires you to gather information in three main areas:

a) *University majors and programs:* the Undergraduate Catalog (printed or online version) provides a list of academic programs, course descriptions and requirements for graduation. Your academic adviser is 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.

b) *Self-awareness:* Research shows that a better person-career match leads to greater life satisfaction and success. 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. This information can be obtained through a variety of means, such as discussions with your adviser and/or professors,

* Designated courses may also be used toward the distribution requirement.

career testing and counseling, Web-based self-assessment programs, job experience, classroom experience or life experience. Make a commitment to find out more about yourself and keep a record of what you discover for use in future decision making.

c) *Occupational information:* Information about occupations can be obtained in books and career files in the Career Center; internship, co-op or employment experiences; volunteer/community service experiences; talking to professors or people who are already working in fields of potential interest (also known as “informational interviews”) and Web-based information sites.

2. *Making 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 cycle back to gathering information from time to time. Decision making involves:

- Putting all the information together and summarizing it.
- Matching your summary to possible majors.
- Weighing the benefits and costs of each possible choice.

You may want to seek assistance in the decision making from a professional. Your adviser, professors or a career counselor can be a supportive, yet objective, assistant in this process.

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.

Academic Exploration and Advising Services

Undecided majors at MU are admitted into the College of Arts and Science and are advised in the Student Success Center. Your academic adviser will help you explore your interests, values, experiences and abilities and help you clarify academic goals, as well as assist you in decision making and help you choose the classes that fit your skills, while fulfilling requirement's.

Visit: success.missouri.edu/advising

Career Center

Undecided students can take advantage of the array of services that the MU Career Center offers on the main floor of the Student Success Center. Services include career information, career assessments and a career-exploration course. The Career Center staff can help you find experiences

What Are You Interested in Studying?

MU offers courses in the following undergraduate majors. You may want to scan this list and check off areas that seem interesting to you. To find out more information regarding these majors, research the undergraduate catalog (registrar.missouri.edu/Catalog/index.htm) or speak with an academic adviser in the Student Success Center.

<i>Accountancy</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Music</i>
<i>Agribusiness Management</i>	<i>Environmental Design</i>	<i>Nursing</i>
<i>Agricultural Economics</i>	<i>Environmental Geology</i>	<i>Nutritional Sciences</i>
<i>Agricultural Education</i>	<i>Fisheries and Wildlife</i>	<i>Occupational Therapy</i>
<i>Agricultural Journalism</i>	<i>Food Science and Nutrition</i>	<i>Parks, Recreation and Tourism</i>
<i>Agricultural Systems Management</i>	<i>Forestry</i>	<i>Personal Financial Planning</i>
<i>Animal Sciences</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Philosophy</i>
<i>Anthropology</i>	<i>General Agriculture</i>	<i>Physics</i>
<i>Art</i>	<i>General Studies</i>	<i>Plant Sciences</i>
<i>Art History and Archaeology</i>	<i>Geography</i>	<i>Political Science</i>
<i>Biochemistry</i>	<i>Geological Sciences</i>	<i>Pre-professional Physical Therapy</i>
<i>Biological Engineering</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Psychology</i>
<i>Biological Sciences</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>Radiological Sciences</i>
<i>Business Administration</i>	<i>Hotel and Restaurant Management</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>Chemical Engineering</i>	<i>Human Development & Family Studies</i>	<i>Respiratory Therapy</i>
<i>Chemistry</i>	<i>Industrial Engineering</i>	<i>Russian</i>
<i>Civil Engineering</i>	<i>Interdisciplinary (Black Studies, Environmental Studies, Peace Studies, Women's & Gender Studies)</i>	<i>Secondary Education</i>
<i>Classics</i>	<i>International Studies</i>	<i>Social Work</i>
<i>Communication</i>	<i>Journalism</i>	<i>Sociology</i>
<i>Computer Engineering</i>	<i>Linguistics</i>	<i>Soil and Atmospheric Sciences</i>
<i>Communication Science & Disorders</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Special Education</i>
<i>Computer Science</i>	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>	<i>Spanish</i>
<i>Diagnostic Medical Ultrasound</i>	<i>Middle School Education</i>	<i>Statistics</i>
<i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<i>Microbiology</i>	<i>Textile and Apparel Management</i>
<i>Economics</i>		<i>Theatre</i>
<i>Electrical Engineering</i>		
<i>Elementary Education</i>		

that will build skills and clarify career choices such as: part time jobs, work-study jobs, internships and community service. The Career Center can also help you with résumé and cover-letter writing, job-searching skills and preparing for interviews.

Visit: career.missouri.edu

Residential Life

The Department of Residential Life offers a supportive environment for undecided students through the Pathways Learning Community and Freshmen Interest Groups. The goal is to create an experience that links the residence halls, coursework and academic support in order to give you the tools needed to make informed decisions about your future. The Pathways community helps you explore and learn about yourself and your values,

as well as discover a wide variety of careers and related majors.

Visit: reslife.missouri.edu/housing/lcs.html

Additional information may be obtained from:

Academic Exploration and Advising Services

M110 Student Success Center

University of Missouri

Columbia, MO 65211

573-884-9700

Web: success.missouri.edu/advising

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

