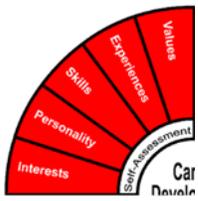


MAJOR EXPLORATION

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Frequently Asked Questions about Exploring Majors

When must I make a decision about my major?

Actually, there is no real deadline for choosing your major. Believe it or not, you can declare up through your senior year. The general advised time is spring of your sophomore year.

Are there any advantages to being “undecided”?

Yes, as an undecided major you may find yourself exploring and discovering a major you never considered before. Many students coming to college with a major already chosen end up changing their major anyway.

Where can I get help choosing my major?

The Career Development Center and Academic Counseling are always ready to help you in this process. You can make an appointment to walk through the process of exploration, and complete the exercises in this guide. The Career Development Center also offers workshops on “Choosing a Major.” There is also an extensive library of career resource information online and in the Resource Center located in room 124 Murray-Herrick Campus Center.

Will being undecided delay my graduation?

It depends on how your credits fit into the major you ultimately choose. But because there are Core curriculum requirements and other electives required for every major, you certainly have time to do some exploration throughout your college career.

What courses should I take while I am “undecided”?

You should take all of the Core Curriculum courses that are required at UST, and any courses you think look interesting or might lead to a major. Try taking some introductory courses in a major you might pursue. Then, if intrigued, take one or two more in the same subject to get a more in-depth look as to what is involved in that discipline.

How are majors related to careers?

Each major at St. Thomas can lead to a wide variety of career choices. Oftentimes, a major does not predict the kind of job or career a person will pursue after graduation. Majors in the liberal arts can help you develop many types of skills. If you want to be an engineer, a doctor, an artist, or a biologist, there are certainly majors that lead to those professions. However, there are many jobs and careers that can be developed after graduation with any kind of liberal arts degree.

Should I choose a minor?

Whether or not you choose a minor is entirely up to you. However, it can show a potential employer of your varied interests or extra skills. A minor can give you a chance to study some area of interest in further depth without actually majoring in that subject.

Where should I declare my major and minor?

Pick-up a Major or Minor Field Card from Academic Counseling and meet with the department appropriate to the intended major/minor.

Clarify Your Work Values: Know what’s important to you

Values are a set of principles that determine attitudes, choices, and action. Mapping your value priorities can help lay important groundwork for making sound career decisions that fit your values, interests, and talents. Work-related values lie behind our choices about work. Some people value creativity; others place a premium on income or contributing.

Underline all the values most important in your work life for the next few years. Then narrow down the list and circle the top ten values that are absolutely essential to express or satisfy in your work. Prioritize those top ten.

Work Content

flexibility
 leading
 competence
 mastery
 risk
 leading edge
 detail-oriented
 social activism
 learning
 excellence
 focus
 creativity
 variety
 growth
 knowledge
 control
 adventure
 helping
 initiating

Work Setting

challenging
 deadline pressure
 surroundings
 time freedom
 security
 high earnings
 action-oriented
 structure
 relaxed pace
 casual
 quiet
 organized
 excitement
 pressure
 predictability
 location
 public contact
 comfortable
 income

Work Relationships

teamwork
 trust
 cultural identity
 caring
 competition
 cooperation
 diversity
 collaboration
 humor
 harmony
 autonomy
 recognition
 support
 communication
 people contact
 independence
 fun

Inherent Values

integrity
 status
 prestige
 achievement
 respect
 responsibility
 power
 influence
 appreciation
 helping
 belonging
 community
 equality
 independence
 contributing
 service
 authenticity
 commitment
 balance
 honesty
 having an impact
 fairness

Top ten:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Evaluating Skills

Skills represent your talents and abilities. Discovering your skills and abilities is an important key to making career choices. There are different types or groups of skills:

Self-management skills are personal characteristics or traits, such as being accurate, open, logical, or thoughtful. Place check by the self-management skills you have:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable | <input type="checkbox"/> Logical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive | <input type="checkbox"/> Methodical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Organized |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Precise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frank | <input type="checkbox"/> Risk taking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Idealistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactful |

Transferable skills are skills acquired in one setting which can be applied to other settings. The same writing and research skills which helped you prepare a paper on "Business Ethics" can be transferred to an English paper. Below is a list of transferable skills. Check those which apply to you:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Producing | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating | <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comparing | <input type="checkbox"/> Explaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinating | <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Clarifying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing | |

Work content skills are crucial to one's performance in certain occupations, such as writing a computer program, speaking Spanish, or knowing how to operate certain types of equipment. These are usually the types of skills that are developed in your classes as well as through on-the-job training.

Exploring your Personality and Interests

Personality

Your personality may influence the way you work independently, with other team members, customers or supervisors. For this part of your workbook you may like to seek the assistance of others, including peers, supervisors or friends. Ask them if they have any thoughts on how you operate in a role. Are you generally a positive person? Do you consider yourself creative or an imaginative? Are you driven by self-motivation or do you need to gain drive from others?

I like/am...	Example

Interests

List all the interests you hold. There may be an interest or hobby that could potentially be the focus of your work.

I like...	
Do I excel in certain areas or subjects? (What are they?)	
What things really excite me?	
What activities do I love to do?	
Do I enjoy some classes more than others? Which ones?	
My ideal job would be?	

Researching career options can involve a variety of sources to get accurate and up-to-date information. When researching career options keep in mind that job titles can vary, so it is important to be creative and use several variations in titles when researching. One source might call the position Human Resources Hiring Manager and another may call the position Personnel Recruiting Manager.

When conducting research, you need to consider several factors: 1) what type of information are you seeking, 2) what resources are available and 3) what should I know about this occupation/field?

Student Interview Form for Undecided Majors

Identify a student who is majoring in the area of studies you are exploring, and interview them to gain more information.

After the interview, reflect on what have you learned about the major and its potential suitability for you.

Suggested Questions

(These are only a suggestion. Please add your own. Check the ones you plan to use.)

Why did you choose this major?

What have you enjoyed most about this major?

What are the difficulties you have encountered with this major?

Which classes have you enjoyed most?

Have you decided on a career path with this major?

Have you joined any clubs or activities associated with this major?

What skills and abilities should I have to succeed in this major?

Additional questions you wish to ask:

Faculty Interview Form for Undecided Majors

Set up an appointment with a faculty member who teaches in the area/major you are considering.

Suggested Questions:

Why did you choose to go into this field of teaching?

What other kinds of experience do you have in this field?

What is involved in the academic study of this major?

What skills and abilities should I have to be successful in this major?

What kinds of career paths are alumni taking after graduating with this major?

Is graduate school necessary for further success in this field?

Is there internship possibilities associated with this major?

What kinds of classes will I need to take in this major?

Is there a minimum GPA associated with this major?

Is this Major Right for Me? A Checklist

Obtain the most up to date degree list from the University of St. Thomas Academic Counseling website at www.stthomas.edu/academiccounseling. As you look at each degree sheet and read about each major you are considering, complete the following checklist. It will help you eliminate many majors and determine which ones deserve further consideration.

Be honest with yourself. Remember that you will be happiest with a major that you are interested in, rather than pursuing a major because it is a "hot major" or because there is pressure from friends and family to go a certain direction.

Question	Major 1	Major 2	Major 3
Content area something you would enjoy?			
Do you have the skills for this major?			
Are you motivated by a strong academic interest in this major?			
List positive reasons why this major could be an acceptable choice.			
List any negative aspects to choosing this degree.			
List three or more career possibilities associated with this major.			
Are this major and its career possibilities consistent with your values?			
Department Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size • Activities and clubs 			

Based on my research, is this field a good fit for who I am and where I want to go?

Options and Activities for Major Exploration

Meet with a Career Development Center Counselor. Call (651) 962-6761 to make an appointment.

Meet with an Academic Counselor by calling (651) 962-6300 to make an appointment.

Take the MBTI and Strong Interest Inventory career assessments. The Strong and the MBTI provide a basis for the self-exploration phase of career investigation. You can sign up to take these interest inventories through the Career Development Center and have a counselor help you understand your results.

Attend a workshop series on choosing a major by checking the Career Development website at www.stthomas.edu/careerdevelopment/events for times and dates.

Enroll in Core Curriculum courses, introductory and survey courses.

Consider job shadowing and conduct interviews to gather career information.

Complete the exploratory activities in this guide such as interviewing students, faculty, and exploring your interests.

Visit the Career Development Center website for more information about Exploring Majors and Careers at www.stthomas.edu/careerdevelopment.