

Minnesota State University Moorhead

Major Exploration Workbook





Major Exploration Workbook

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Welcome

Congratulations on taking the first step in being intentional in the search towards your major! Thinking about declaring a major or finding the career that fits you can elicit anxiety and stress, however you will find that the purpose of this major exploration workbook is to help you facilitate the discovery of your passions, promote intellectual and personal development, and connect to supportive relationships on and off campus. MSUM utilizes a four-year discussion guide when assisting students with academic advising. Each academic year, students should be actively participating in self-reflection, and gaining self-awareness in regards to your future. Below are the four questions that students should be asking themselves each year:

First Year: Exploration- Who am I?

Second Year: Reflection- Who do I really want to become?

Third Year: Clarification- What is my place in the world?

Fourth Year: Transition- How can I shape a changing world?

This workbook focuses on the questions you should be asking yourself in the first, and second years as a student at MSUM. In these pages you will find strategies to help you explore who you are, and who you want to become. Remember, the staff of the Academic Support Center, faculty and other departments on campus want you to succeed- employ interdependence and ask for assistance throughout your college experience.

Exploring Majors

(Adapted from “Choosing Your Major” by Mary Lou-Taylor, www.jobweb.com)

Before you begin the major exploration journey it is important to think about the external and internal factors that may affect your major decision.

- ▶ **“External factors** are not personal and are easier to manage than internal factors.
 - > **Un-relatedness of majors and careers:** Understanding that majors and careers have developed independently of each other will help you avoid becoming stuck wondering what you can do with a particular major.
 - > **Lack of information:** Often you just don’t have enough information to be comfortable making a decision. You have had very little opportunity up to this point to learn about different majors and careers. Your career center is an excellent place to begin. If you’re more independent-minded, begin researching on your own.
 - > **Too much information:** This is particularly true since the advent of the internet. A huge amount of information is available, and it’s easy to become overwhelmed. Don’t give up: you can learn how to quickly and efficiently find good, accurate information on the web, and there are offices on campus that can help.
- ▶ **Internal factors** are more personal. Sometimes, these concerns must be addressed before the decision-making process can be completed.
 - > **Lack of self-confidence:** If your choice of major or career seems especially critical, you may not feel confident in your ability to make a good decision. Often, obtaining additional information can solve this problem. Other times, more counseling may be needed.
 - > **Fear/anxiety:** While a little anxiety is positive and can help you stay on your toes, too much can wear you down. Fearing that you will make “bad” decisions can paralyze you. A career counselor can help you separate your rational from irrational fears.
 - > **Conflicting values:** You may be considering paths that are not compatible with each other. Perhaps you want to earn a good salary, but also want to work in the not-for-profit sector. Or perhaps you would love to work as a performer, but also need job security. Doing some values clarification work may help you here.
 - > **Conflict with others:** Parents, spouses, and significant others often have definite ideas about your career choice. Desiring to please others and the need for continued financial support are two ways significant others can put undue pressure on you.
 - > **Multi-potentiality:** If you have many interests and many abilities, your problem may be one of narrowing down options rather than creating them.”

Exploration- Who Am I?

Phase 1

► Assess your goals, values, strengths, weaknesses and interests.

> Assessments via MSUM's Career Development Center (Flora Frick Hall)

■ **Get Focused - Career Assessment:** FOCUS2 is a free, computerized assessment and career resource tool that is available free of charge to all current and prospective MSUM students and alumni. The FOCUS2 will help you to explore your unique interests and skills and suggest possible MSUM majors and career paths.

■ **Strong Interest Inventory:** The Strong measures your interest in a broad range of occupations, work activities, leisure activities, and school subjects. The questionnaire compares how these interests are similar to the interests of people successfully employed in those occupations. It is used to help people understand their work interests and to illustrate the kinds of work in which they might be most satisfied.

■ **Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator:** MBTI is the most widely used personality assessment in the world. It is a computerized assessment that clarifies your personality characteristics and generates ideas for potential careers that might fit your specific traits.

■ **Clifton StrengthsQuest:** Your Clifton StrengthsQuest journey begins with a 30-minute online assessment. After you take the assessment, you'll receive a customized report that lists your top five talent themes, along with action items for development and suggestions about how you can use your talents to achieve academic, career, and personal success.

> Assessments via Minnesota State CAREERwise Education (www.careerwise.mnscu.edu)

■ **Interest Assessment:** Indicate your interest level in a variety of activities. View your Interest Profile and explore a list of related careers and majors.

■ **Career Cluster Interest Survey:** Select the activities you enjoy, your personal qualities, and school subjects you like to see which career clusters are a match for your interests.

■ **MnCareers Interest Assessment:** Select activities you like to create your Interest Profile. Learn what types of careers people with similar profiles often enjoy.

► Enroll in UNIV 131: Career Life Planning.

> This course is intended to help students assess their values, interests, skills and temperament and relate them to career choices. Through self-assessment and career information research, students will be able to identify a broad base of career options and describe a variety of career goals. Students will acquire tools with which to make decisions and plans regarding major and future career choice.

► Join a student organization or club.

> You will find many ways to meet new people, improve your leadership skills, build self-esteem, take on more responsibility, and accomplish goals that will enhance your future.

► Set realistic expectations for this process.

> Ask your academic advisor to assist you with setting expectations in regards to the major or career exploration process.

> Utilize StudentLingo's student success workshop on setting and accomplishing goals (www.studentlingo.com/resources)



Exploration- Who Am I?

Phase 2

- ▶ **Intentionally research possible areas of focus to assist your achievement of your goals.**
 - > Be intentional with choosing Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum (LASC) courses as these courses often inform students of possible majors or careers.

 - > Take courses from several departments. Gather information, experiment, and see what interests you.

- ▶ **Speak with faculty/staff in your area of interest.**
 - > Discuss with faculty how they became passionate about their field, what recent graduates are doing with their majors, what skills or interests are common among students, etc. Learn about the degrees and majors from their department.

 - > Benefits of creating relationships with faculty/staff:
 - Guide student on which major to declare
 - Assist with time management issues and suggest effective study strategies
 - Connect students to internships, competitive awards, graduate programs, or summer jobs related to major
 - Provide letter of recommendation

Exploration- Who Am I?

Phase 3

- ▶ **Seek assistance with the Career Development Center or Academic Support Center advisors.**
 - > Staff can assist you with interpreting your assessments, guide you through the major/career research process, and help connect you to faculty and industry professionals.

- ▶ **Research different career options online, through articles and through in-person informational interviews.**
 - > **Informational Interviews:** Get an inside view of fields of interest. Informational interviews present an opportunity for an intimate and flexible inside view of a job field.
 - Some questions you may consider asking:
 - ◆ Can you describe your interest in your field?
 - ◆ What do you like most about this field and what do you like the least?
 - ◆ What types of courses in college did you find most interesting?
 - ◆ What did you major in?
 - ◆ How would you describe this major to someone who had never heard of it?
 - ◆ What are some of the current topics or trends in this industry?
 - ◆ What sort of research is currently being conducted?
 - Consider interviewing multiple people for multiple perspectives.

 - > **Job Shadowing/Volunteering:** Work with people in your field of interest. Job shadowing is a popular on-the-job experience that helps you explore the day-to-day experiences of professionals in a particular field.
 - At the end of the job shadowing experience, reflect on what you learned.
 - ◆ What did you like?
 - ◆ What did you dislike?
 - ◆ What were the critical components of the job?
 - ◆ What was the working environment?
 - ◆ Did you prefer an office environment, retail, outdoor, etc.?
 - Things to consider when job shadowing:
 - ◆ Dress to impress
 - ◆ Keep detailed and accurate notes and ask follow up questions
 - ◆ Avoid getting in the professional's way at work
 - ◆ Send a personalized, hand-written thank you note (send within a few days of experience)

 - > Visit What Can I Do With This Major...
 - Visit www.whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/ to view outlines of common career areas, employers, and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities.
 - Understand that the areas and website are representative of typical career paths associated with each major and not a comprehensive list.



Reflection- Who do I really want to become?

Reflection Question #1: What makes you happy or brings you joy?

Reflection Question #2: What are you good at? What skills or abilities do you find come naturally to you?
How do you measure this?

Reflection Question #3: In what areas do you find yourself most often struggling?



Reflection Question #4: What are your long-term goals and/or dreams?

Reflection Question #5: What careers did you want to pursue when you were a child? Why?

Reflection Question #6: What patterns or common threads do you see through your answers to the reflection questions above? You can also reflect on past jobs, volunteer work, student organizations, etc. Why did you choose these activities? What role did you play in them? What did you like or dislike?

MSUM Undergraduate Majors

College of Arts, Media and Communication

Advertising (BS)
Advertising and Public Relations (BS)
Animation (BA)
Art Education (BFA)
Art History (BA)
Art, Studio (BFA)
Broadcast Journalism (BS)
Commercial Music (BS)
Communication Studies (BA)
Documentary Journalism (BS)
Entertainment Industries and Technology (BS)
Film Production (BA)
Film Studies (BA)
Graphic Communications (BA)
Graphic Design (BFA)
Multimedia Journalism (BS)
Music (BA)
Music Education (BS)
Photojournalism (BS)
Public Relations (BS)
Theatre Arts (BA)

College of Business and Innovation

Accounting (BS)
Business Administration (BS)
Business Analytics (BS)
Computer Information Systems (BS)
Computer Information Technology (BS)
Computer Science (BS)
Construction Management (BS)
Finance (BS)
Global Supply Chain Management (BS)
Operations Management (BS)
Project Management (BS)

College of Education and Human Services

Early Childhood Education (BS)
Early Childhood Education- Non-Licensure (BA)
Elementary Inclusive Education (BS)
Social Work (BSW)
Special Education (BS)
Speech/Language/Hearing Sciences (BS)

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Communication Arts and Literature Education (BS)
Criminal Justice (BA)
East Asian Studies (BA)
Economics (BA)
English (BA)
English and Mass Communications (BA)
Gerontology (BA)
History (BA)
International Studies (BS)
Paralegal (BS)
Philosophy (BA)
Political Science (BA)
Social Studies Education (BS)
Sociology (BA)
Spanish (BA)
Spanish Education (BS)
Teaching English as a Foreign Language (BA)
Teaching English as a Second Language (BS)
Women's and Gender Studies (BA)

College of Science, Health and the Environment

Anthropology (BA)
Athletic Training (BS)
Biology (BA)
Biochemistry and Biotechnology (BS)
Cellular and Molecular Biology (BS)
Chemistry (BS)
Chemistry Education (BS)
Chemistry (BA)
Earth Science Education (BS)
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (BS)
Engineering Physics (BS)
Exercise Science (BS)
Geosciences (BS)
Health Education (BS)
Health and Medical Sciences (BS)
Health Services Administration (BS)
Life Science Education (BS)
Mathematics (BA)
Mathematics (BS)
Mathematics: Actuarial Science (BS)
Mathematics Education (BS)
Nursing (RN to BSN)
Physics (BS)
Physics Education (BS)
Physical Education (BA)
Physical Education- Teaching (BS)
Psychology (BA)
Sustainability (BS)



Prospective Majors

Instructions: From the list on the previous page, write down the majors you are most interested in. Once you have your list, review the requirements of each major and rate your interest on a scale of 1 – 5. One being the least interested and five being the most interested in pursuing this major. Review each major department’s website and view course descriptions through the Undergraduate Bulletin. You can find more information about each major at www.mnstate.edu/degreesandprograms.aspx.

Rate

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



Major Investigation

This exercise is designed to help you learn more about a major you have declared or majors you are considering. Choose one or two of the majors you rated highly on the “Prospective Majors” exercise. Using the MSUM website and possible informational interview with faculty and other students, complete this investigation worksheet.

Major to Consider _____

What is the focus of this major? What areas interest you most?

Is this a major field you will enjoy studying? Why?

Which classes do you think will be most challenging for you? Why?

Which classes do you think will be the easiest for you? Why?

Are there GPA or other requirements to be accepted into this major/school? What are they?

Do you believe you can meet these requirements?

What LASC goals are fulfilled by this major?

Can this major be completed in four years?

Is graduate work usually required to work in the fields associated with this major?

What skills does this major require and develop?

What second major, minors, or other courses might complement this major?

Using the Undergraduate Bulletin, what are 10 courses that you would really like to take. Would you be able to take them if you chose this major?

What kinds of jobs do students with this major pursue?

Name up to four of these jobs that would be of interest to you.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Does the department this major is in provide an opportunity for internships or other experiential learning? What are they?

Are there any student organizations associated with this major? What are they?

How might study abroad or other exchange programs fit with your major?

Now that you know more about this major, will you keep it/continue to consider it? Why or why not?

How to Declare or Change a Major

The process is quite simple. Simply download the Major, Minor, Certificate or Advisor Change Form from the Registrar's Office (www.mnstate.edu/registrar -> Forms) or pick it up at the Academic Support Center (Flora Frick 154). Fill it out, obtain necessary signatures, and submit it to the Registrar's Office (Owens Hall 104). After you've declared your major or new major you will want to make an appointment with your new advisor to discuss next steps.

Additional Resources

Academic Support Center- Flora Frick 154 or 218.477.4318

Career Development Center- Flora Frick 151 or 218.477.2131

College of Arts, Media and Communication- Bridges Hall 250 or 218.477.2764

College of Business and Innovation- Center for Business 100 or 218.477.2763

College of Education and Human Services- Lommen Hall 107 or 218.477.2096

College of Humanities and Social Sciences- Flora Frick Hall 153 or 218.477.2668

College of Science, Health and the Environment- Hagen Hall 107 or 218.477.5892

Registrar's Office- Owens Hall 104 or 218.477.2565



Notes



Academic Support Center

1104 7th Ave South
Moorhead, MN 56563

Location: FR 154

p: 218.477.4318

f: 218.477.2420

Minnesota State University Moorhead is an equal opportunity educator and employer. This information will be made available in alternate format, or if a disability-related accommodation is required, please contact Accessibility Resources at 218.477.4318 (voice) or 1.800.627.3529 (MRS/TYY).



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