

Spartan Major and Career Planning Guide

Career Services Network ~ Michigan State University ~ 113 Student Services Building

CareerNetwork.msu.edu



Looking back for your future

Consider what you've learned about yourself from your past experiences. Taking time to complete this grid can help you discover patterns in your interests to make decisions about majors and careers you'd like to explore.

	I learned I'm good at...	I learned I like....	I learned I don't like...
Academics –classes & subjects you've taken, work you've accomplished			
Work experiences – part-time or summer jobs, volunteer work			
Activities – clubs & organizations, sports, summer programs, civic & spiritual involvements			
Personal interests – hobbies or things you just like to do			

What patterns do you see?

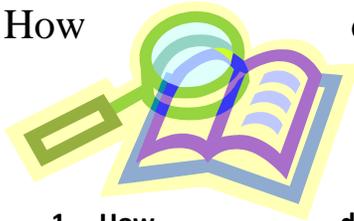
- I find that I'm best at things which _____
- What I like or enjoy doing the most involves _____
- What I dislike most or would rather not do includes _____



If you want to explore your interests more in depth, come talk to a career advisor in 113 Student Services or, if you want to explore on your own, check out:

- Bridges at careernetwork.msu.edu/resources-tools/career-resource-tools/career-options.html

How



do I know if a major is right for me?

You've got to ask some questions to see if a major fits what you want. You've got to look a little closer at what the major entails and measure it up with your interests and goals. Consider these questions:

1. How do the required courses for a degree program fit with your interests?

Take a look at the required courses and read the course descriptions. Do they interest you? (see reg.msu.edu/Courses/Search.asp). If you like experiential based courses, look to see what kinds of study abroad, practicum, or internship courses available for the major.

2. Will the major help prepare me for the career(s) I'm interested in?

To explore career options for majors you are considering, check out "What can I do with a major in..." at careernetwork.msu.edu/resources-tools/career-resource-tools/career-options.html. You'll see career areas for the major, kinds of employers, and information and strategies to consider in preparing for the career. Talk with a career advisor! We're here to help you explore and think through your options. Schedule a career advising appointment: careernetwork.msu.edu/services-locations/career-advising.html.

3. How can I find out more about the major?

Check out the department or major website and then talk with an academic advisor for the major. Bring a list of questions that will help you get the information you need. To find the college advisor you need go to careernetwork.msu.edu/exploring-options/choosing-a-career-and-major/academic-advising-list.html

Did you know there is a Marathon of Majors fair twice a year where you can talk to advisors from any undergraduate major on campus? Held every November and March, you can find information about upcoming Marathon of Majors events here: msu.edu/dept/uud/index.html.

4. What do students in the major do beyond the classroom? Here are three ways to find out:

- a. Explore student organizations related to the major or career field you're interested in. Often these are listed on the department or major website, or you can browse the Directory of Student Organizations listed here studentlife.msu.edu/current_students/rso/orgs.htm.
- b. Talk to alumni or other students majoring in the area you are interested in. **Spartan LINKS** is a group on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com) that connects MSU students to alumni working in their areas of interest who want to share their experience. See careernetwork.msu.edu/conducting-informational-interviews for more information on how to talk to alumni and people working in career fields of interest.
- c. SpartanLinks also sponsors the **Career Exposure Series**, events that bring alumni to campus to focus on different career interests or take students on the road to gain career insight on location.
- d. Check out venture.msu.edu to see undergraduate research opportunities related to majors.

5. How do the courses I've already taken fit into the major I'm considering? Meet with an academic advisor or check out Degree Navigator degnav.msu.edu/AppLogin.Asp. Degree Navigator helps you map your requirements toward your major degree program.



Gaining Career Related Experience

A lot of college students believe the myth that major = career. The truth is that majors = knowledge + skills that provide a foundation to build a career. To be competitive after graduation, employers and graduate/professional schools look at the experiences you've gained not only inside, but OUTSIDE the classroom. Here are some ways to get the experience and skills you need:

- **Get a part-time or summer job.** The work ethic and skills you develop as an employee in any organization are valuable to future employers in any field. Use [MySpartanCareer.com](https://myspartancarrier.com) to find jobs of interest to you.
- **Consider volunteer service.** As Spartans, we pride ourselves on what we contribute to communities. The Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement (servicelearning.msu.edu) has a database of volunteer opportunities where you can make a difference and gain experience in career areas of interest to you.
- **Join a student organization.** Involvement in student organizations can help you build a host of skills and professional relationships to build your career. You can find student organizations related to your major or personal interests here: studentlife.msu.edu/current_students/rso/orgs.htm. You can also start your own organization!
- **Land an internship.** Internships are paid or unpaid work experiences with specific learning goals related to a discipline (major) or career field. Some internships are offered for credit and some are not, it varies from college to college and major to major. It's never too early to start looking for internships! Here are some tips to help you explore internship options in your major or career field:
 1. See if your college or department has an internship coordinator, and meet them!
 2. Check out internship opportunities right here on campus! Learn about the Internships@State program at careernetwork.msu.edu/files/PDF/InternState-StudentToolkit.pdf
 3. Use MySpartanCareer.com to browse internship positions from employers who want to hire Spartans.
 4. Visit careernetwork.msu.edu/jobs-internships/internships.html for more resources

If I'm not sure about my career, how can experience help?

Jobs and internships, involvement in student organizations, activities, and volunteer work help you build skills and competencies valued by employers and graduate/professional schools. (See the Twelve Essentials Guide at careernetwork.msu.edu/files/PDF/12_Essentials_for_Success.pdf). More than that, experience outside the classroom helps you try out different career areas before you graduate so you can determine whether it's right for you.

The **Career Services Network** is here to help you explore your options and help you reach your goals.

Visit us online at careernetwork.msu.edu to find out all we have to offer.

