
Choosing A Major



**Messiah College
Career Center for
Vocation and Development**

CHOOSING A MAJOR AT MESSIAH COLLEGE

Many people have a difficult time choosing a major because they:

- Believe that their choice of major dictates what they are “limited” to do the rest of their life. (*In fact, a major is simply a base from which you can do many things.*)
- Think that choosing one major will restrict them from studying other subjects of interest. (*Most majors have free electives and all include a wide selection of general education options.*)
- Do not have enough information about the variety of academic choices available.
- Are influenced by others to choose a major they really do not like.
- Are struggling with a lack of confidence about integrating “God’s will” in the decision-making process.

These are valid concerns. Your challenge is to choose your major based on accurate information about yourself, the major, the ways in which knowledge and skills gained in the major can be applied in a variety of career fields, and your commitment to using your gifts to serve God.

MAKE IT YOUR CHOICE: Begin by asking yourself...

1. Do I enjoy subjects focused on data or on people? On numbers or on words?
2. Am I drawn to the fine arts, business, the life sciences, the liberal arts, mathematical sciences, technological areas or a combination of areas?
3. How do I learn best – lecture, small group discussion, case studies, hands-on application?
4. Are there courses that I have taken that I truly enjoy and in which I do well?
5. Do I prefer to study one subject in depth, or incorporate several subject areas into my major?
6. Are there areas of knowledge or special skills that I want to develop?
7. Do I sense confirmation when I use my gifts and direct my interests toward particular activities and disciplines?

TALK WITH YOUR ADVISOR OR A COUNSELOR IN THE CAREER CENTER ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

COMPLETE → The following pages and begin the process of finding your major

OBSERVE → Classes in departments of interest; choose exploratory course work

READ → Course descriptions in the Messiah College catalog which relate to majors you are considering
→ “Career Opportunities for Majors...” and other free handouts in the Career Center

INTERACT → With faculty and co-curricular educators
→ With students at events sponsored by academic departments and student organizations

TALK → To students majoring in this area
→ To academic advisors
→ To alumni/professionals who majored in the area you are exploring
→ To a Career Center counselor

WRITE → To professional associations representing particular disciplines and career areas

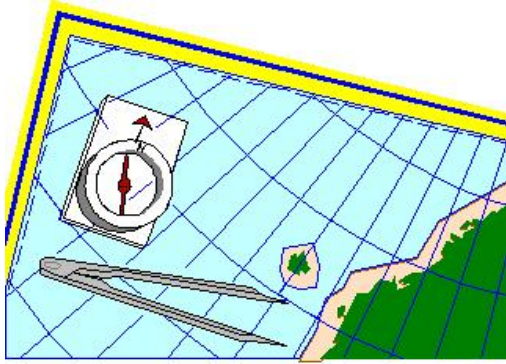
WORK/VOLUNTEER → In an on- or off-campus experience; pursue an internship in areas related to your interests
→ In clubs or outreach activities which will strengthen your skills and understanding

PRAY → For guidance as you move in the direction that seems right at this time
→ For wise counsel/friends to come alongside



REMEMBER, YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR MIND – Effective planning allows you to pursue what seems to fit you best “at this time.” But, no choice is irrevocable. Review and evaluate your choices ... frequently! Then, continue to ask the Lord to direct and teach you. *He is faithful.*





Over 50 Majors?

Where do I begin?

- Take a look at all the departments and majors listed on the next page.
- Circle those majors which interest you most at the time.
- Cross out the majors which you know you would definitely not pursue.

Now...look over what you have done:

- Are several majors found in one department?
 - Do you prefer certain departments over others?
 - Could you combine interests?
 - Is it possible to major in one area and minor, or develop a concentration, in another area or department?
-
- Review the following sheet, *Majors I Want to Investigate*, and begin by identifying two majors. You may copy the page or stop by the Career Center for additional forms in order to explore more than two majors.
 - Complete the *Major Option* section for each. Evaluate the pros and cons.
 - With assistance from your advisor or a Career Center counselor, compile information from the Messiah College catalog.
 - Ask your advisor or a Career Center counselor to go over the results with you and to clarify any questions you still have about majors or the selection process.
 - Look at “fit”. What choices seem best suited to your values, interests, and strengths and are consistent with what God seems to be revealing through your experiences?

Academic Majors 2005-2006

School of the Arts

Department of Music

Music
Music Education (K-12)

Department of Theatre

Theatre

Department of Visual Arts

Art Education (K-12)
Art History
Humanities (Art History)
Studio Art

School of Education & Social Sciences

Department of Education

Early Childhood Education (N-3)
Elementary Education (K-6) ++
Elementary/Early Childhood Education
Dual Certification (N-6)
Elementary/Special Education
Dual Certification (K-12)

Department of Human Development & Family Science

Human Development & Family Science
Family & Consumer Sciences Education (K-12)

Department of Psychology

Biopsychology
Psychology

Department of Sociology, Social Work & Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice
Social Work
Sociology

School of Health & Natural Sciences

Department of Biological Sciences

Biopsychology
Biology *
Environmental Science **
Environmental Studies

Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry

Biochemistry
Chemistry *

Department of Health & Human Performance

Adventure Education
Athletic Training
Health & Physical Education (K-12)
Sport & Exercise Science

Department of Nursing

Nursing

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics

Nutrition & Dietetics

School of the Humanities

Department of Biblical & Religious Studies

Bible
Christian Ministries
Religion

Department of Communication

Broadcasting
Communication

Department of English

English *
Humanities (Literature)
Journalism

Department of History

History *
Humanities (History)

Department of Modern Languages

French +
German +
Spanish +
Spanish Business

Department of Philosophy

Philosophy
Humanities (Philosophy)

Department of Politics

Politics

School of Mathematics, Engineering & Business

Department of Engineering

Engineering

Department of Management & Business

Accounting
Business Administration
Business Information Systems
E-Marketing
Economics
Entrepreneurship
Human Resource Management
International Business
Marketing

Department of Mathematical Sciences

Computer Science
Mathematics *
Physics

Pre-Professional Programs

Pre-Allied Health
Pre-Dental
Pre-Law
Pre-Medical
Pre-Physical Therapy
Pre-Veterinary

* Secondary Teacher Certification available (7-12)

** Environmental/Biology Dual Certification (K-12)

+ K-12 Teacher Certification available

++ Elementary / Early Childhood Dual Education (N-6)

Elementary / Special Education Dual Certification (K-12)

MAJORS I WANT TO INVESTIGATE AT MESSIAH COLLEGE



Use this exercise to answer questions about each major you are considering.
For assistance, go to messiah.edu → click on “academics” → then “academic advising”.
All majors and course requirements are listed under “Majors.”

Major Option #1: _____ **Dept.:** _____
Concentrations: _____ (if applicable)

1. How many credit hours are required to complete this major? _____
Free elective credits? _____ Total graduation credits required? _____
2. What major courses overlap with general education requirements? _____

3. Are there any prerequisites to entering this program or completing it? _____

4. Who is the chairperson of this academic department? <http://www.messiah.edu/academics/majors/>
5. Is it possible to minor in this area? Yes No
6. What, specifically, interests you about this major? _____

7. Why would you expect to do well in this course of study? _____
8. List 4 skills you would need to possess to be successful in the study of this major:
a) _____ c) _____
b) _____ d) _____
9. Does this major require any laboratory time, internships, study abroad, or a Philadelphia experience?
 Yes No If yes, what are the requirements? _____
10. Is there a minimum GPA required for this major? Yes No If yes, what is it? _____
11. Looking through the Messiah College catalog, how many of the courses offered in the major genuinely appeal to you? _____ out of _____ Which ones are most interesting to you? _____
12. What other major(s) might be similar to this one? _____
13. What is the connection between this major and your career plans? _____

14. Talk with your advisor about related career possibilities. Look at options listed on the departmental sections of Messiah College’s website under Academic Advising, the Career Center and specific academic departments. Explore resources in the Career Center (across from the Falcon). What occupations/graduate programs catch your attention? _____
15. What can you do to learn more about this major? _____

Career Center Services

Don't assume that there is only one major or one career area for you. God's will is not reduced to one "right" choice or path. As Gerald Sittser describes in The Will of God as a Way of Life:

"We come to know the will of God as a life calling through experience itself. We discover what our calling is in the same way an artist paints on a canvas or a person falls in love. We learn by trying, by experimenting, by doing. Our calling is inseparable from the journey. In one sense it is the journey."

The Career Center is here to help you with the journey. Keep exploring...!

- ❑ Meet with a Career Counselor.
- ❑ Take assessment inventories to help match your interests to majors:
 - ❑ Theme Cards: determine interests and possible majors
 - ❑ Self-Directed Search: identify interests, skills, occupations, majors
 - ❑ Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator: relate personality style to work areas
- ❑ Try DISCOVER, a computerized career planning program available through the Career Center.
- ❑ Take the Career Planning & Decision-Making course and/or enroll in exploratory courses in areas of interest.
- ❑ Talk with your advisor or a Career Counselor about expanding your skills & experience. Consider activities & leadership opportunities to *intentionally* explore different roles & interests.
- ❑ Pick up "What Can I Do With This Major?" sheets in the Career Center library.
- ❑ Check out the Academic Advising home page for major course requirements and related academic planning information.
- ❑ Informational Interviews: talk to professionals about what they do and why they chose their discipline or career field. Check with the Career Center or Internship Center for contacts.
- ❑ The Career Center Library houses materials on self-assessment, majors, careers, graduate school programs and job contacts – check it out!
- ❑ Visit the Career Center home page: www.messiah.edu; click on "Offices," then "Career Center."
- ❑ Learn to spend time with the Lord seeking His direction.

