



GETTING STARTED

Be proactive! Deciding on a major or career is a process, and it takes time. It is never too early (or too late) to begin exploring! Try not to feel overwhelmed. You do not have to choose your lifelong plan right now.



QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

- How do you feel about your current major and career plans?
- Has there been anything that prompted a change of major/career choice?
- Are you more interested in narrowing or broadening your choices?
- Would you prefer to start with exploring majors or careers? Confidence level in both?
- What is your dream job/current career goals?
- Are there specific fields you have in mind?
- What is the underlying interest behind your declared major?
- What are all the occupations you have thought about doing?



QUESTIONS A CAREER SPECIALIST MIGHT ASK

- What would you like to accomplish while working with the MU Career Center?
- What have you done already?
- What kinds of opportunities have you had to explore your interests/careers?
- What is one small step you can take in the next week to see if this major/occupation is a good fit?

GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

Explore your Interests. Think about fields or topics of study that interest you. Even though it seems like it should be easy to come up with things that you like to do, it can actually be overwhelming to list them out. Try to think about the kinds of things you enjoy doing and talking about on a day-to-day basis. See the *MU Career Center Guide to Holland Code* for more information.

Identify your strengths, abilities, and skills. You will likely want to choose a field that you will be good at, whether it is due to naturally occurring abilities or skills you've learned. Many skills, like communication and computer skills, can be transferred to other activities. Think about the ways in which your skills can be used more generally and see the *MU Career Center Guide to Transferable Skills* for ideas.

Talk with someone. Your network can be a great resource for you, including your family, friends, faculty members, academic advisors, and professionals in fields to which you are drawn. At the MU Career Center, you can talk with a Career Specialist any time we are open with or without an appointment, or with a Career Counselor by appointment.



TAKE A SELF ASSESSMENT

An assessment can help you identify your interests, abilities, and values. Focus 2 and CliftonStrengths are amazingly helpful and we are happy to work with you for either. Plan to spend 45 minutes to an hour for taking an assessment. Also, you may find playing the Career Interests Game to discover your Holland Code at <http://career.missouri.edu/career-interest-game> a helpful resource.

Focus 2	Focus 2 is an assessment that looks at your interests, values, skills, and personality. It helps to match you with occupations that fit your specific profile, allowing you to explore the career fields that are most compatible with you and help you make better career decisions. (Free)
CliftonStrengths	CliftonStrengths for Students helps you identify your own natural talents. Knowing your talents, you can build them into strengths that can help you explore areas you might like as well as with applying for jobs and being successful at work. (\$15)

EXPLORE YOUR VALUES

As you think about your future career, consider your work-related values. Many new employees only consider the job title and job description when looking for a job. However, your values play a crucial role in your career satisfaction. You can explore values and careers through the advanced search on O*Net as well.

Advancement	Moving up, making more money, having increased responsibility
Benefits	Health, medical, dental, retirement, vacation, paid sick leave, maternity leave
Challenge	Using your creativity, training, intelligence and other talents
Choice of Environment	Outdoor/indoor, work from home or in office, choice of space arrangement and design
Compatible Co-Workers	Having good friends at work, working with people who have similar interests
Competition	Striving for success, doing your best, competing with others
Creativity	Expressing yourself, achieving fulfillment from creating something yourself
Diversity	Learn from a diverse group of people, inclusive environment, different backgrounds
Excitement	Having fun at work, enjoying your work, learning new things, stimulating tasks
Family Life	Having time to devote to personal relationships, having time with your family
Flexible Hours	Being able to work at your convenience
High Earnings	Significantly improving your financial position, having financial resources
Independence	Freedom to "do your own thing", having flexibility, having autonomy
Leadership	Being in charge, having responsibility, leading others in a large or small group
Leisure Time	Enjoying the company of others, time for hobbies and relaxation, making new friends
Moral Fulfillment	Maintaining your moral, ethical, and/or religious standards without conflict
Prestige and Influence	Ability to influence others, high rank in organization, your opinion matters
Rewards and Bonuses	Job satisfaction, verbal praise, raises/bonus money, certificates, incentive gifts
Security	Feeling safe, free of unexpected and/or unpleasant changes, steady income
Structured Expectations	Clear instructions to follow, consistent responsibilities, process and goals
Technology Resources	Provided a laptop, phone, tablet, or technology allocation, software/hardware choice
Travel	Going places, seeing the world, enjoying cultural experiences
Variety	Many different job tasks, challenges rather than routines, no day is the same
Wellness Incentives	Access to healthy food, exercise, relaxation services, and other wellness related perks

Did You Know...

Mizzou offers a Career Explorations (SSC 2100) Course!

This one credit hour course is offered in both Fall and Spring semesters as a structured environment to learn about yourself and clarify your interests.

Talk to your academic advisor to learn more.

INVESTIGATE MU ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Majors. Explore <https://majors.missouri.edu> for an A-Z listing of all majors searchable by career path or by School/College. Go through the list and note which majors you are interested in exploring further. This online resource also has all the requirements needed for majors, minors and certificates at Mizzou.

FIND YOUR MAJOR

Discovery Center. Meet with an Advisor in Discovery Center if you are exploring or considering changing majors. Visit <http://discoverycenter.missouri.edu> for more information about majors at MU and to schedule an appointment.

Departments. Talk to your College and/or Department Advisors and Faculty members. They can give you specific information about majors and scheduling courses to pursue that degree.

Peers. Talk to current students in programs that interest you.

Graduate School. Check out grad school at Mizzou or at other universities as a possibility for careers that may need more advanced education.

RESEARCH OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Online Resources. The internet offers great access to free information about occupations that is up-to-date. In addition to the sites listed below, do a simple search using your favorite search engine for information on occupations you are interested in.

- The Occupational Outlook Handbook Online: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh>
- O*Net: <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- The MU Career Center web site: <http://career.missouri.edu>
- LinkedIn: <https://linkedin.com>



Informational Interview or Job Shadow. Shadowing a professional around work for a few hours or days can provide a lot of information that you may not find anywhere else. Job shadowing can allow you to make a more informed decision about whether you have a strong interest in that field. Most people like to share their experience as a professional with others interested in their field.

For more information: Check out our [Guide to Informational Interviewing](#)

Utilize Campus Resources and Talk to Knowledgeable Professionals. In addition to the staff at the MU Career Center, look for assistance from academic advisors, faculty members, librarians, and professionals in the field. Setting up an informational interview with a professional is a great method of seeing if you really fit with an occupation before you start your job hunt. Through an informational interview you can gain a better idea of how your skills and experience could fit into specific industries and fields.

Create a Meaningful Work Statement: Create a statement that defines the work that you're here to do. Meaningful work is work that combines the positive attributes you know about yourself and serving the needs of the world. Defining your meaningful work could be so profound, that it could help you decide your major, identify your career paths/options, create the business you want to start – and so much more

Life Mapping: Understanding how majors and careers relate to each other is a critical component in your exploration. Different majors can often lead to the same career and there are several majors that can lead to a variety of careers.

For more information: Ask a Career Specialist or a Career Counselor about creating a Meaningful work statement or a Life Map.

GAIN EXPERIENCE

ACADEMIC AND COURSE ACTIVITIES

Exploratory courses. Taking courses in an area or major that you are interested in is a great way to learn more information and see if you would be interested in pursuing that major. Talk with your academic advisor about popular courses for students exploring majors.

Study abroad. Taking courses in a foreign country can be a great way to experience other cultures as well as taking classes towards your degree. This is generally unpaid, but credit bearing. Visit the International Center at <http://international.missouri.edu/studyabroad>.

Undergraduate research. Many opportunities exist for undergraduates to do research, both paid and unpaid, credit bearing and not. Visit the Office of Undergraduate Research at <http://undergradresearch.missouri.edu> for more information.

Service learning. Service learning connects students with the community in partnerships that provide effective and far-reaching assistance to those in need, as well as creating valuable learning environments. In service learning opportunities, there is a strategic effort to discuss and learn from these experiences, particularly through course-related projects. This unpaid, credit bearing experience can start as part of a course but can extend long after the course ends if desired. For more information, Visit the Office of Service Learning at <http://servicelearning.missouri.edu>

EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES

Part-Time Jobs and Work-Study Jobs

Both are paid, non-credit-bearing employment opportunities available to undergraduate students. They can be related to a student's career path, in which case they will be a much more beneficial experience as well as a source of income. Visit <http://hiremizzoutigers.com> for part-time job listings and career fair information and <http://career.missouri.edu/work-study-employment> for information about work study jobs.

Internships and Cooperative Education

An internship is hands-on experience in your major or field working over a summer or semester in a professional position. Cooperative education experiences (coops) are a unique plan of education that combines in-class experiences with supervised and planned work experiences. Class and work experiences can be at the same time or can alternate. Internships and co-ops can be paid or unpaid, credit bearing or not. Visit the MU Career Center website at <https://career.missouri.edu/jobs-and-internships/> for more information about internships.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Clubs and organizations. At MU, there are many opportunities to get involved in clubs and organizations. Visit <http://mizzoulife.missouri.edu> or <http://getinvolved.missouri.edu>.

Volunteering and community service. There are many chances to volunteer in a community like Columbia. These are unpaid, generally non-credit-bearing activities. Check out <http://muserves.missouri.edu>, <http://leadership.missouri.edu>, or <http://www.vacmo.org>.

next steps:

Talk with a Career Specialist for one-on-one assistance: <https://career.missouri.edu/connect>
Check out more resources at <https://career.missouri.edu> > Resources tab