

Making the Most of Your Major

The UW provides students with hundreds of ways to get involved, meet interesting people, and learn – both inside and outside the classroom. Successful students get the most out of their major by making time to investigate opportunities, selecting the ones that match their strengths and goals, and jumping in with both feet! Here are some recommendations....

Chart Your Educational Path

Strategically mapping out your time at the UW will help ensure you get what you came for and are marketable for an array of interesting post-college options such as careers, volunteer work, and graduate school.

- Meet with an academic adviser
- Be purposeful in selecting courses
- Consider the usefulness and feasibility of a minor or certificate
- Think ahead if you want to study abroad

Earn Good Grades

Earning good grades throughout college is important, especially if you may go to grad school at some point. Don't be afraid to seek extra help. The UW offers many resources to help you learn to your full academic potential.

- Faculty and TA office hours
- Study groups
- Writing centers
- Tutoring with CLUE (Center for Learning & Undergraduate Enrichment)
- Tutoring at the Instructional Center
- Study skills workshops at the Counseling Center

Develop Relationships with Faculty

Knowing faculty, and making sure they know you, can benefit you in numerous ways. Professors can share information about their career path, give advice and encouragement regarding your professional development, introduce you to important contacts, connect you with practical experiences, help you develop research skills, and write letters of recommendation that are crucial when applying to graduate school. Start early!

- Go to office hours
- Conduct informational interviews
- Ask faculty to serve as academic sponsor for an internship
- Join a research team
- Initiate an Independent study

Engage in Research

Conducting research increases your understanding of the concepts you learn in class and enhances your analytical, critical-thinking, teamwork, and organization skills, and potentially your writing and public-speaking skills as well.

- Assist professors
- Do an independent study
- Present at university symposia and colloquia
- Attend and present at regional/national conferences
- Publish your work

Use Departmental Resources

Staff and faculty in your academic department are there to help you maximize your educational experience. Don't be shy about asking what resources are available to assist with your academic and career development.

- Academic advisers/counselors
- Job listservs (email lists), binders, bulletin boards
- Guest speakers, brown bags, colloquia
- Networking events and career fairs
- Alumni lists

Join a Club

Getting involved with organized groups is beneficial on so many levels – you can get to know others with similar interests, meet leaders in your field, develop leadership and business skills, and clarify your professional identity.

- Departmental clubs and honor societies
- Registered student organizations not related to major
- Local and state groups
- National and international associations

Find a Mentor

A mentor is someone you want to model your career after and who provides guidance as you establish your professional identity. Mentors can be faculty, but they certainly don't have to be.

- Alumni from your program or other majors – Husky Career Network
- Colleagues in professional associations
- Students nearing completion of your major
- Business, organization, and agency leaders

Get Real World Experience

Internships, field experiences, and volunteer positions let you apply your book knowledge to real situations, use and develop a variety of skills, explore career paths, meet potential mentors, and make a difference!

- Career Center – HuskyJobs, career fairs, etc
- Center for Experiential Learning – internships, volunteer, research, etc
- Departmental listservs, online jobs boards
- Departmental binders, bulletin boards
- Networking contacts

Take Care of Yourself

As you can see, there are lots of ways to get the most out of your major. Try not to get so caught up in making the most of your educational experience that you forget to take care of yourself – physically and emotionally!

- Get enough sleep and eat a balanced diet
- Exercise moderately and spend time outdoors
- Socialize with friends
- Make an appointment at the Counseling Center if you need some extra support

Reference: Schultheiss, D. E. P. (2008). *Psychology as a major: Is it right for me and what can I do with my degree?* Washington DC: American Psychological Association.