

University of Wisconsin - Madison College of Letters & Science Undergraduate Academic and Career Planning Guide

A Roadmap to Success!



This guide is intended to get you started on your journey to success. It provides suggestions to assist you with attaining both your academic and career goals. Each student is unique so the road you follow is up to you. By developing a plan early, you will be able to balance academic requirements with extracurricular activities. There are many offices on campus that are here to help!

****You will notice that the guide is listed as steps rather than directly related to your class standing (freshman, sophomore, etc).
*Start where it makes sense for you.***

Created by:
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Letters & Science Academic and Career Advising Center
Middleton Building
L&S Academic Advising Services: Suite 155
L&S Career Services: Suite 205
1305 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706-1523

***With additional advisement from L&S departmental academic advisors**

Academic Planning - Step One: Find Your Place

The transition to UW-Madison is both exciting and challenging. There are so many new people to meet and things to learn! Establishing good study habits, staying organized, and pushing yourself to earn strong grades in your first semester at UW-Madison are the keys to long-term academic success.

Make a list of the major(s) and certificate(s) that interest you. Research and define these interests by:

- Visiting [department websites](#)
- Reviewing the [undergraduate catalog](#)
- Attending information sessions hosted by the major/certificate
- Meeting with advisor(s) to discuss your interests
- Attend the fall semester [Majors Fair](#)
- If interested in a limited-enrollment program, identify requirements for application and relevant deadlines

Course Selection:

- In consultation with your academic advisor(s), select courses that allow you to explore your interests, satisfy requirements, and result in a schedule that fits your needs and goals

Monitor your academic performance:

- Familiarize yourself with academic support and tutoring programs, such as [Greater University Tutoring Services \(GUTS\)](#), the [Writing Center](#), [MathLab](#), etc
- If you find yourself performing poorly or in academic or personal distress, contact your academic advisor(s) right away
- Focus on your grades from the beginning; your future employer and/or graduate school will probably ask about your GPA
- At the end of the semester or year, take time to reflect on your performance, goals, and academic interests

Meet with your academic advisor(s):

- Talk about your changing goals and interests with your academic advisor
- Learn how to run and interpret your [DARS report](#), and utilize it whenever making course choices

If interested, learn more about Honors in your major or the [Letters & Science Honors Program](#)

Step One: Additions for Transfer Starts Only

- Review transfer credit evaluation and understand how transfer courses apply toward degree requirements
- Course Selection:
 - Review remaining General Education and Breadth requirements
 - Consider prerequisite courses for major(s)
 - Begin completing foreign language degree requirement, if not met

Step One: Additions for Freshmen Starts Only

- Complete or work towards completing the Communications Part A requirement
- Consider taking qualifying language course(s) to earn retroactive credit
- Verify that all AP, IB, CLEP and transfer credit earned during high school has been applied to your UW-Madison record

- Consider mapping out a 4 year plan with your advisor's assistance.

Note: This is a plan that could change as you develop and hone your goals

- Take advantage of unique first-year opportunities that will help you find community, such as:
 - Attend [Freshman Group Advising Sessions](#), offered during fall and spring semesters
 - [First-Year Interest Groups](#), [Undergraduate Research Scholars](#)

Career Planning - Step One: Who Are You?

While much of the beginning of your collegiate career is occupied with making adjustments and getting accustomed to campus life, it's also a great time for self-assessment and reflection in terms of career planning. The process of selecting a major and career direction begins in this step. Consider the following:

Career Advising Appointments: Exploring the connection between majors and careers?

- Undeclared/Exploring majors visit the [Career Exploration Center](#) and talk to a career advisor
- Decided and declared L&S majors meet with a career advisor at [Letters & Science Career Services](#)

Self assessment will help you to begin to identify your likes and dislikes, personality type, interests, skills and values. Through research (both online and by speaking with professionals in careers of interest), and by taking career “tests” (also called assessments) you can identify potential career goals that fit with your preferences. Remember there are no right answers on career “tests.”

So you might be asking yourself, “Why should I start thinking about careers so early?”

Starting to think about career ideas could help you in deciding your major as well as help you choose classes, pick a focus within your major, and start thinking about how to try out some of your ideas as well as gain skills (internships, study abroad, volunteering, and student organization involvement) and learn both what you like and don't like.



Academic Planning - Step Two: Set a Course

Once you have successfully transitioned to UW-Madison, take time to think critically about what you would like to achieve here. Setting goals and creating a detailed plan to meet those goals will lead to timely graduation and a positive experience.

Course Selection:

- Meet with your academic advisor(s) to verify that you are progressing through major, certificate, and general education requirements in a timely fashion
- Pay particular attention to the rule in L&S which requires 60 credits of course work be completed at the Intermediate or Advanced level. Work with your academic advisor(s) to ensure you are on track to successfully complete this requirement

Major Declaration:

- Identify all entrance requirements, application procedures, and deadlines for any and all majors and certificates that you plan to complete
- If you qualify, declare major(s) and certificate(s)
- Declaring a major has its perks!
 - You will get matched with an academic advisor who specializes in your major
 - Have access to more courses
 - Some academic departments offer career advising and career-related events (panels, networking events, etc)
- If you are exploring multiple majors/certificates, discuss your options and interests with your academic advisor(s). Discuss if multiple majors and/or certificate is necessary for your career goals

Enhance your [Wisconsin Experience](#) – things to do to enrich your collegiate experience:

- Connect with at least one faculty member with whom you share an interest. You can find bios of faculty on both their departments' websites or on the Faculty Expert Guide [website](#)
- If interested, begin to plan study abroad by visiting the [Study Abroad](#) Resource Room and your academic advisor(s). You will need to learn which requirements you can fulfill abroad and which courses you must take on campus
- Reflect on extra-curricular goals and, if applicable, apply for opportunities such as:
 - Research
 - Independent study
- Enhance your computer skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Prezi, etc) by attending a [DoIT training](#)

Extra Tip:

- If the career you are considering requires a graduate or professional degree, work with your academic or faculty advisor to identify required courses and other entrance requirements, and if applicable talk to a pre-professional advisor (e.g. pre-law, pre-health)

Career Planning - Step Two: Explore What's Out There

This is an ideal time to gather more information and continue your self-assessment and reflection. You will base many decisions on what you discover during this step. Continue to review, revise, and/or reaffirm your interests, skills, and values. Include your academic and career advisors, faculty, alumni, and family in the exploration process for different perspectives.

Career Advising Appointments: Continue exploring the connection between majors and careers. Make an appointment for career advising.

- Undeclared/Exploring majors continue or begin working with the [Career Exploration Center](#)
- Decided and declared L&S majors meet with a career advisor at [Letters & Science Career Services](#)

The following is available to all L&S students, whether declared or undeclared:

Resume Preparation

- Create your resume to reflect on your skills and experience and to prepare for entrance into limited enrollment programs or application to a job or internship
 - [Resume samples and guidelines](#) can be found on the L&S Career Services website
 - Come to L&S Career Services [drop-in hours](#) for feedback and assistance
 - Attend a L&S Career Service resume writing [workshop](#)

Brainstorm and research occupations, explore your options, consider the following:

- Check out the [L&S Career Services website](#) to learn about career-related events such as Days in the Field, Job Shadow, Career Fairs, Employer Information Sessions and career information workshops
- Visit online sites such as the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#), [WisCareers](#) and additional [career options web resources](#) to see the variety of things you can do with different majors
- Create your [BuckyNet account](#) through L&S Career Services to view internship and job listings to help you gain a sense of what employers seek, which organizations/companies will be attending career and internship fairs and what types of positions they expect to hire
- Attend a career and internship fair to experience the process first-hand, even if you are not ready to apply for a position. Find out from employers what you can do now to position yourself for future internships/jobs
- Conduct an [informational interview](#) or shadow a professional in a field of interest. Ask questions about their career path and what advice they have for someone just starting out
- Find out if your academic department (or prospective) offers career-related workshops, panels, events and go to them

Enhance your [Wisconsin Experience](#): Gain experience to discover your strengths, likes and dislikes. In addition to course projects, employers like to see involvement outside of the classroom. Consider the following:

- Find a campus job on the [UW Student Job Center website](#)
- Join a student organization; check out the [Center for Leadership and Involvement](#)
- Volunteer in the community through the [Morgridge Center for Public Service](#)
- Get involved in [residence hall activities](#)
- Research and plan for [study abroad](#) opportunities through International Academic Programs.
Note: some deadlines are one year in advance of departure

Plan for your first internship:

- Come to L&S Career Services [drop-in hours](#) to discuss your search & discover new resources
- Find out about the [L&S Internship for Credit Course](#) or see if an internship is required/offered in your major
- Prepare your tailored [resume](#) and cover letter

Create a LinkedIn account:

- Join [LinkedIn](#) groups, and begin checking out and actively participating in group discussions to gain more knowledge about potential career paths, potential employers, etc

Extra Tip:

- If working for the [federal government](#) interests you, start researching various agency internship programs. The deadline for summer internships tends to be early in the fall



UW Student Jobcenter

Home Job Seeker Employer Links Search Jobs About Us

Welcome to the Student Jobcenter Website

f Find us on Facebook!
For campus career events, please [click here](#).

The UW Student Job Center focuses on student employment opportunities. Students seeking work will find part-time openings for both academic year and summer terms posted on our website as well as occasional full-time summer openings. Job opportunities are located at UW-Madison and off-campus in the private and public sectors. Graduates and experienced workers seeking full-time professional career opportunities, should use the Career Services offices and other resources that can be found on our links page.

JOB SEEKERS: DO NOT APPLY FOR OR ACCEPT ANY JOB THAT WANTS TO SEND YOU A CHECK IN ADVANCE OF BEING HIRED OR ACTUALLY WORKING. THIS IS MOST LIKELY A FRAUD. For an example, click [here](#).

The UW Student Job Center will not sponsor or list openings for Employers who unfairly discriminate, practice deception, require an initial investment, violate government employment statutes or University policies and procedures. Our office makes every effort to ensure posted job opportunities are legitimate. However, we strongly encourage job seekers to get objective and upfront information about job opportunities before they sign a contract. Beware of business recruiters who pressure you into making a hasty decision to sign up. If you feel you have been unfairly treated by an employer listing with our office, please let us know.

UW Student Job Center

Recently Added Jobs

Non-University Positions

[Click here to show all Non-UW jobs](#)

Job #	Title	Employer	Pay	#	Date Added
70847	Receptionist-Tax Firm	Celerity Staf..	\$12.00 /hr	1	1/9/2013
70845	Aquatics Supervisor	City of Madison	\$17.55 /hr	2	1/9/2013
70844	Afterschool care 3 to 6pm Mo..	Amitha Domalp..	\$100.00 /wk	1	1/9/2013
70843	Bi-Lingual(Mandarin Chinese)..	Wagner-Henry ..	\$10.00-\$12.00	1	1/8/2013
70842	Window well installation	Andrea Goldst..	\$15.00 /hr	2	1/8/2013

Jobs By Category

Category	#
Non-UW	#
Agriculture/Animals	2
Arts	4
Childcare Assistant	109
Communications	9
Computers	5
Crafts	0
Finance/Banking/In..	1
Graduate Assistan..	0
Health Care/Medical	14
Hotel/Restaurant	17
Household Employm..	13
Instructors/Recre..	31
Library	0
Live In	1
Maintenance	0
Miscellaneous	27
Office	16
Retail/Sales	16
Science	7
Staffing Agency	0
Summer (Out of To..	2
Temporary (< 4..	3
Work Study Required	9
UW	#
Agriculture/Animals	3
Arts	2
Childcare Assistant	0
Communications	1
Computers	14
...	...

Academic Planning - Step Three: Hone Your Plan

This is a good time to ensure the academic plan you set is still feasible and to be looking toward next steps after graduation. Confirm you will be able to satisfy all remaining requirements by your desired graduation term and that you are on track to qualify for your desired post-graduation opportunities.

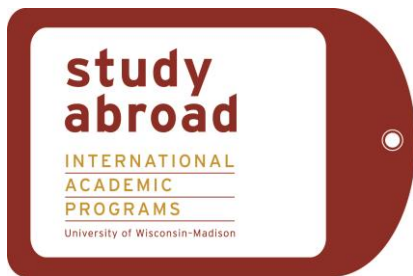
Prepare for graduation:

- Declare remaining major(s) and certificate(s)
- Meet with your academic advisor(s) to review all remaining graduation requirements
- Verify that your graduation timeline and credit load per semester are appropriate and obtainable
- Meet with your academic advisor to discuss the following:
 - Continue to refine your academic plan to meet your requirements and deepen your understanding of your interest areas
 - Begin merging your academic plans with your career goals. Ask yourself: What do I want to get out of my education to help me understand the field in which I am interested? For example, if you are interested in a field that requires good writing skills, consider taking an extra com-B course, a directed study, or plan to write a thesis. Your advisor(s) will have good suggestions for you
 - Develop relationships with professors in your department. Talk with them about what you are learning, discuss your interests, learn about their areas of expertise
 - Choose your courses not only to meet your requirements but to understand all aspects of your interest area

Go abroad!

Considering graduate school?

- If you are considering a career that requires a [graduate or professional degree](#), start doing some research and discuss options with your academic and career advisors
- Talk with faculty in your field(s) of interest about graduate school preparation as well as pros/cons of particular programs
- Determine which faculty members could serve as references. Consider taking small seminar courses and utilize office hours
- Talk to a pre-professional advisor (e.g. pre-law or pre-health)



Career Planning - Step Three: Try Things Out

In this phase, you will want to focus on the career fields that interest you most.

Are you still exploring the connection between majors and careers? Make an appointment for career advising.

- Undeclared/Exploring majors continue or begin working with the [Career Exploration Center](#)
- Decided and declared majors meet with a career advisor at [Letters & Science Career Services](#)

The following is available to all L&S students, whether declared or undeclared:

To learn more about a field of interest, gain experience and determine the background and the skills required to enter your field of interest, consider the following:

- Participate in an internship, take a summer job or volunteer
- Participate in [L&S Career Services Job Shadow Program](#) or the “Days in the Field” program
- Take courses to acquire skills and knowledge needed to enhance your qualifications to enter a specific career field
- Attend L&S Career Services career preparation [workshops](#) on job search strategies, [resume writing](#), networking, and [interviewing](#) and/or access handouts online or stop by our [office](#)
- Seek out leadership opportunities to challenge yourself to develop new skills; you may discover additional talents that could be marketable to future employers or graduate schools
- Attend campus-wide [career and internship fairs](#) and [employer information sessions](#) to target internship/job prospects
- Use both your [LinkedIn](#) account and the [Badger Career Network](#) to research professionals/potential employers, find alumni in your field of interest and be discovered by recruiters
- Utilize [BuckyNet](#) to assist you with your internship and job search, sign up for on-campus interviews, and access resources to continue research on careers of interest
- Discuss your strategy and brainstorm other ideas with a [career advisor](#)
- Think about who would be a good [reference](#) for you
- Reflect on what you have done both in and out of the classroom. Talk with a career advisor on how to articulate that to an employer. Are you finding that you have some gaps in your skillset? Discuss where you could attain those skills

Extra Tip:

- Meet with an [L&S Career Services advisor](#) if you are interested in working for Federal Government agencies, to discuss your options. Begin crafting a [federally formatted resume](#) which is very different than the regular resume format

Academic Planning - Step Four: Celebrate your Achievements

Be sure to follow the necessary logistical steps to graduate in the last phase of your undergraduate career, but also take time to reflect on your experience. Celebrate your growth and everything you have learned about yourself and the world in which you live.

Verify your readiness to graduate:

- Upon enrollment in your final semester of classes, verify that you are on track to graduate by bringing an updated DARS to your academic advisor(s) or to Senior Graduation Check
- If you took courses through another institution, make sure your transcripts from those schools have been sent to UW-Madison Office of Admissions and Recruitment. This includes summer courses and study abroad programs

Apply to graduate:

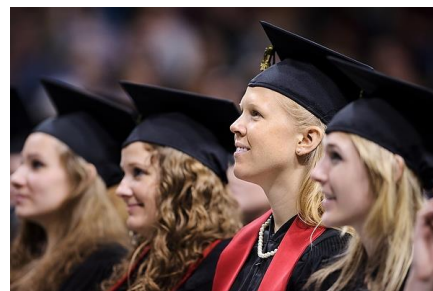
- Declare your intent to graduate through your [Student Center](#)
- Make sure you have declared all major(s) and certificate(s) you intend to complete
- If you declared a major or certificate that you do not intend to complete, you must cancel that major/certificate. Visit the advisor for that program for more information

Celebrate:

- Sign up to participate in Commencement Ceremony and program-specific graduation celebrations

Reflect on your achievements:

- Formulate a few positive statements about what you have accomplished on campus. Why did you pick that/those major(s)? What did you focus on within it/them? What did you do to know everything you could about those areas? Why does this area excite you?



Career Planning - Step Four: Make a Plan

During this step, you will need to implement an action plan and begin moving toward the career or graduate school goals you have established for yourself.

For all L&S majors, L&S Career Services is here to help. Consider the following:

For Job Search:

- Research job opportunities on [BuckyNet](#) and other [online resources](#)
- Continue to craft a standard and/or Federal [resume](#) and learn how to tailor both your cover letter and resume for each position you apply
- Practice your interviewing skills by participating in a [mock interview](#) with a career advisor or attending [Mock Interview Days](#)
- Attend [career workshops](#) and [employer info sessions](#)
- Attend [career and internship fairs](#) both fall and spring semesters
- Continue to meet with a [career advisor](#) to discuss your job search strategy, application materials (resume/cover letter), and interview skills
- Use the [resume and quick question drop-in services](#)
- Start putting your [professional wardrobe](#) together
- Start applying for jobs early: at least 3-6 months before graduation for most jobs, and 6-8 months ahead for Federal Government jobs

For Graduate School:

- Discuss with advisors and/or faculty whether or not [graduate school](#) is a good decision for you at this time, and which programs would be a good match
- Take entrance tests (GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT, etc)
- Talk to a pre-professional advisor (e.g. pre-law, pre-health)
- Consider attending the following to learn more about graduate or professional school options:
 - [Graduate School Fair](#) in the fall semester
 - Open Houses and Information Sessions offered by the schools you plan to apply
 - Complete application essays with the assistance from the [Writing Center](#) and gather all required documents
 - Obtain letters of recommendation

Extra Tips:

- Develop a [budget](#) for one year after graduation, learn about loan repayment & saving money
- Consider applying to a “gap year” or year-of-service programs like [Americorps](#), [Teach for America](#), [Peace Corps](#), [City Year](#), etc in order to increase skills and make professional contacts in the public service/non-profit fields
- Some new grads take advantage of internships and fellowships after they graduate. Make sure to check whether you need to be a continuing student to qualify