

EXPLORATORY STUDIES

University College

Overview

Exploratory Studies (formerly Pre-Major Academic Advising)

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Exploratory Studies (<http://www.wcupa.edu/viceProvost/universitycollege/pmaac/>)

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Exploratory Studies (EXPS) provides the opportunity for undeclared students to explore their academic interests before choosing a major. The mission of Exploratory Studies is to enhance the smooth transition and integration of undeclared students into WCU by fostering an atmosphere of success through collaborative relationships with faculty academic advisors, who guide students through exploration of majors that are consistent with their academic interests, career, and personal goals.

The faculty in Exploratory Studies recognize that choosing a major and career direction is an important step in life, and making this decision is a complex process. In addition, we stress the importance of transferable skills, which are obtainable in every WCU major and which can be applied to almost every career, regardless of major.

At WCU, academic advising is an educational partnership between an advisor and a student whose goal is the student's academic, personal, and professional success. Advisors and advisees collaborate to help students achieve their aims. The advising relationship thus mirrors other teaching relationships at West Chester University. Advisors explain policies, identify resources, and give advice; however, students are ultimately responsible for making the decisions that will keep them on track to successfully graduate in a timely way.

Students accepted into Exploratory Studies might fit one of four broad categories:

1. Students who have applied to other majors but have not yet been accepted into that major.
 - a. These students work with their EXPS advisors to meet the entrance requirements for their desired majors and are able to change their majors to their originally intended major when they have taken the necessary courses and have the minimum required GPAs.
2. Students who have two or three possible major interests and need to narrow down their choices before entering their chosen major.
 - a. These students work with their EXPS advisors, the Career Development Center, and other resources to reflect on their strengths and interests.
 - b. Students also schedule and take courses which might work for several of their major interests to aid in their decision-making process.
 - c. It is possible to create such flexible schedules for up to two semester; after that, students must have determined a major direction.
3. Students who may have no idea what they want to major in, in part because they have limited knowledge about what the options are.
 - a. These students work with their EXPS advisors, the Career Development Center, and other resources to reflect on their strengths and interests.
 - b. These students attend special workshops and programs offered by Exploratory Studies in collaboration with the Career Development Center and various academic departments.
4. Students who have been accepted into other WCU majors but change their minds and transfer to Exploratory Studies to begin the process of deciding upon and earning entrance to their desired new major.
 - c. EXPS advisors remind students that they will not make a mistake in choosing a major since all majors can lead to many careers because of the flexible skills that college degree programs impart.
 - d. Students deliberately schedule courses to engage in major and career exploration.
 - e. It is possible to create such flexible schedules for up to two semester; after that, students must have determined a major direction.

Programs

Resources Related to Exploratory Studies

- Major and Career Exploration (https://www.wcupa.edu/_services/STU.CAR/majorsCareers.aspx)
- Undergraduate Programs Available at WCU (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/programs/#filter=filter_19)
- Undergraduate Minors Available at WCU (http://catalog.wcupa.edu/programs/#filter=filter_24)
- Academic Advising Resources (https://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/advising/default.aspx)
- Student Success (https://www.wcupa.edu/_admin/provost/studentSuccess/default.aspx)

Policies

- See undergraduate admissions information. (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/general-information/admissions-enrollment/undergraduate-admissions/>)
- See academic policies. (<http://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/>)

All undergraduate students are held to the academic policies and procedures outlined in the undergraduate catalog. Students are encouraged to review departmental handbooks for program tips, suggested course sequences, and explanations of procedures. When applicable, additional policies for specific department programs may be listed below.

Exploratory/Undeclared Major Declaration Policy Policy Requirements

First year students who entered West Chester University as exploratory/undeclared/pre-major must declare a major at the completion of 45 West Chester University earned credits. This is most often equivalent to three semesters of full-time study at the University. Transfer students (Internal and External) who are undeclared must declare a major after two semesters of full-time study as an exploratory/undeclared student. Students must be in good academic standing and must meet all admission requirements specified by the program they plan to transfer into. Exception to this policy may be granted to students who are planning to declare a major with highly restrictive admission requirements and may need additional semesters to complete those requirements. Any undeclared student who does not declare a major within the stipulated period of time will be required to develop an action plan addressing their academic area(s) of interest before the advisor hold will be lifted to enable the student schedule for the next semester.

Request to Postpone/Defer Declaring a Major

An exploratory/undeclared/pre-major student may submit a request to defer declaring a major if the student is postponing major declaration because they have yet to complete the prerequisites for the anticipated major. The process of postponing a major declaration requires an

established plan of action by the student, which must be approved by the student's academic advisor, the chairperson of the Department of Educational Development Services (EDS), and the dean/designee of University College.

Faculty

Professor

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Advisor, Exploratory Studies
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Associate Professors

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Director, Exploratory Studies
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Ann Lieberman Colgan (acolgan@wcupa.edu) (2007)
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B.A., West Chester University of Pennsylvania; M.Ed., Rivier College;
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