

Are You Considering a Double Major?

Questions and Answers

What is a double major at MIT?

A double major is an academic plan in which you complete the General Institute Requirements (GIRs) and the degree requirements of two majors.

Why should I consider two majors?

A double major is one of several ways to prepare for the complexity of real-world problems whose solutions draw on multiple disciplines. While you have several vehicles for pursuing a multidisciplinary education, your choices should be based on your interests and goals.

For some students, their multidisciplinary interests will be best served through a double major. For others, a single major with one or two minors will be ideal. And for others, pursuing UROPs, internships, study abroad, or participation in student clubs or teams will give them the opportunity to gain knowledge in another field. The key is that there is no single path for everyone.

How do I decide if a double major is the right choice?

There are many factors to consider such as:

- What are your academic and professional goals?
- Is a double major the best way to gain the knowledge and skills desired?
- What are the alternatives for gaining knowledge in a second field?
- What opportunities or experiences might you have to forgo in order to pursue a double major, such as co-curricular activities or an experience abroad?
- How will you organize your time to accommodate the additional workload?

What are the eligibility requirements?

- 4.0 GPA or higher to apply
- Completed three terms, including one in the department with a declared major
- Graduating in September 2009 or later

[See <http://web.mit.edu/doublemajor> for full details]

Who can help me make a decision about a double major?

- You should discuss your multidisciplinary interests and goals with your **faculty advisor**.
- **Faculty in each field** can provide perspective on how to gain the type of knowledge and skills you desire.
- **Peers** who are pursuing double majors provide realistic input on the workload and experience.
- **Career Development Center counselors** can help you understand how a double major could fit into your career development plan.
- **MIT alumni** in the fields/companies of interest can provide real-world perspective on the knowledge and skills necessary in your areas of interest.

Is a double major the only way to take classes in other areas of study?

No, there are several ways to take classes outside your major:

- You can take classes in other departments to fulfill the 48 units of unrestricted electives that are part of all degree programs.
- You can minor in up to two different fields that are not in the same area as your major. Minor programs consist of five to seven subjects, although most require six.
- Several departments at MIT offer flexible degrees. You gain a core knowledge in a particular area, such as mechanical engineering, and with the help of your advisor, you tailor the degree by taking subjects offered by other departments.

Are there alternatives to gaining subject matter knowledge outside of classes?

There are many ways you can gain subject matter knowledge outside the classroom:

- Internships
- UROPs and other research opportunities
- Participation in students clubs or teams that focus on your area of interest
- Public service that incorporates your area of interest

When should I start thinking about a double major?

You should discuss your multidisciplinary interests with your advisor as soon as you are ready. Some students start thinking and talking about this as they declare a major; other students need more time. Whatever the circumstances, you should allow enough time to plan a program and account for all the requirements.

The deadline for declaring a double major is the Add Date of your penultimate term, so a double major cannot be a last-minute decision.

What is the application process?

1. Develop a double major academic plan with your faculty advisor and complete the double major application form.
2. Ask your faculty advisor to sign the application.
3. Ask an administrator and/or advisor from the second department to review your plan and sign the application. (Note: Departmental signature requirements vary; please confirm what is required.)
4. Submit the application to the Committee on Curricula (Room 5-111) for approval.

When can I apply for a double major?

Once you meet the eligibility requirements, you can complete and submit the application to the Committee on Curricula (CoC) in Room 5-111.

The application deadline is the Add Date of your penultimate term; the CoC will accept applications beginning on Registration Day of Spring 2009.

Can I pursue a minor with a double major?

Whether you pursue a single or double major, you can minor in up to two different fields, as long as the minors are not the same field as your major(s).

Minor programs consist of five to seven subjects, although six are generally required. These subjects may count toward General Institute Requirements (GIRs) and departmental program requirements.

How is financial aid applied to a double major?

Single or double major students are typically supported through eight terms at MIT. However, the application of this policy to double majors is currently under review. Any changes will be communicated to students and families.

Since financial aid is determined on an individual basis, you should consult with Student Financial Services to understand the impact of a double major on your financial aid.

I thought a double major at MIT led to two bachelor's degrees. Has this changed?

Historically, pursuing two majors at MIT required a student to complete 270 units beyond the General Institute Requirements (GIRs) and resulted in two Bachelor of Science (SB) degrees.

In April 2008, the Faculty approved a change which replaced the fixed unit requirement with a true double major: completion of the GIRs and the degree requirements of two majors. The new program requires 180-198 units beyond the GIRs, depending on the requirements of the primary major, and leads to a single SB degree with two majors.

As MIT transitions to double majors, students who entered MIT in 2007-08 or earlier are eligible to pursue either two degrees or a double major. Students who entered MIT in 2008-09 or later are eligible to pursue a double major.

The double major website provides details on why the Faculty approved the change, a comparison of the two programs, and the eligibility requirements and application process for both.

Where can I get more information?

Double Major Website:

<http://web.mit.edu/doublemajor>

Departmental Websites:

<http://web.mit.edu/education>

Registrar's Office

Room 5-111

617-258-6412



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