

GETTING DOWN TO “BUSINESS”

If you are considering a business major (i.e. management or accounting), you will find this guide useful as you make decisions about your future. First, it is important to clarify your motivations for this decision. Do you want a corporate career? Are you concerned about finding a career that pays well? What does “working in business” mean to you? Discussing your thoughts and ideas about these questions with one of the counselors in the Career Development Center (CDC) can help you make decisions that are well thought-out and lead you in the direction of developing the skills necessary for success.

As you review this information, keep in mind that no major guarantees success. You will need to engage in activities beyond the classroom to fully develop the knowledge and skills employers value.

business [bĭznəss]: a company or other organization that buys and sells goods, makes products, or provides services

STEP 1:

If you believe you want to (or should) major in business, it makes sense to spend some time learning about what being a management or accounting major really means. Review the following courses within the School of Management (SOM) curriculum. Circle courses that appeal to you and cross off courses that do not appeal to you. Need more information about course content? Look up course descriptions on BU Brain!

CQS 111 – Computer tools for Management
CQS 112 – Statistics for Management
ECON 160 – Microeconomics
ECON 162 - Macroeconomics
OPM 311 – Operations Management
MIS 311 – Management Information Systems
CQS 211 – Adv. Tools for OPM & MIS

ACCT 211 – Financial Accounting
FIN 311 – Financial Management
MKTG 311 – Introduction to Marketing
MGMT 311 – Organizational Behavior
IBUS 311 – Intro to International Business
MGMT 411 – Global Strategic Management

STOP! Review what you have crossed off. Each of the courses listed above is required of all SOM students, regardless of concentration area. If you have crossed off more than just a couple, you may want to reconsider pursuing the SOM majors and explore alternative majors that will not only provide you with the skills you will need to be successful in a business environment but will also be a better match for your interests and abilities. Don't worry! There are many opportunities!

Still interested in majoring in business? In addition to these core courses, you will need to choose a concentration area. Review the list of business concentrations on the SOM website at <http://www2.binghamton.edu/som/curstudents/undergrad/programs/index.html> and spend time looking at the required coursework for each concentration area to be certain the content is in line with your expectations.

FACT: Careers in “business” can be found in any industry – for profit, not-for-profit, education, healthcare, government ... the list goes on.

STEP 2:

If, after completing the activities above, you've determined that a business major is a good choice:

1. Obtain information for an Intra-University Transfer (IUT) or The Double Degree (DD) Program. The SOM website has extensive information at <http://www2.binghamton.edu/som/prospectivestudents/undergraduate/intranfers.html>.
2. Visit Harpur Academic Advising to make sure your degree planning is on track with your goal of transitioning into SOM.
3. Visit the CDC for assistance in identifying opportunities to develop business-related skills and to begin exploring career options within the field of business. “Finance” and “Marketing” are general fields that may

contain hundreds of different job titles and functions. Learning more about career options will help you choose courses, internships, and other experiences that will enhance your education.

STOP! Be aware, the transfer process into SOM is extremely competitive and few are able to make this transition. However, there are other options! Read on!

FACT: Majoring in business is not a requirement for working in the field of business.

STEP 3:

So, what if you either a.) don't get into SOM or b.) decide, based on the curriculum, that the business major is really not a good match for you? NOT A PROBLEM! A search of the Alumni Association's Professional Network on LinkedIn, accessed from CDC's website at www.cdc.binghamton.edu, *proves* that non-business majors can definitely become successful leaders! Looking through its members, you can see that Binghamton alumni from a variety of non-business academic backgrounds end up in very successful "business" careers; history majors become vice presidents, math majors excel in information services, and English majors reach top-level positions in investment banks.

"How is that possible?" you might ask. What comes as a surprise to many is that **most employers don't put much emphasis on majors. What they care about is whether you have the skills and abilities to be successful** in their organization. And what are these magical skills that are so in demand? According to a 2011 survey of employers conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the most in-demand qualities are: verbal communication skills, strong work ethic, teamwork skills (works well with others), analytical skills, initiative, problem-solving skills, written communication skills, interpersonal skills (relates well to others), computer skills, flexibility/adaptability.

Begin evaluating your own skills - let's pick teamwork skills as a starting point. Name three examples of activities outside of the classroom that would allow you to further develop/enhance your teamwork abilities:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

THIS is what employers will be looking for, so get involved and gain experience in ways that can help you develop these in-demand skills! Need help brainstorming ways to do this? Suggestions: volunteer, find an internship, participate in campus government, join a student organization, work part-time or study abroad. Discussing your many options with a CDC staff member can be very helpful as well!

STEP 4:

Make sure you don't neglect your degree planning in the process of getting involved! Visit your advising office to be sure that not only are you on track to graduate on time, but you have also selected a major and are taking courses that will complement your career goals. Interested in marketing? Did you know that it is possible to take marketing classes through the theatre department? Hoping to go into finance? The economics and math departments both offer classes that you may find interesting and relevant. Courses such as these are sprinkled throughout Harpur, and discussing your options with an academic advisor will help you make the most of these offerings! You might also want to explore the SOM Adjunct option which allows you to take online business courses during winter and summer sessions or the FastTrack MBA. Also investigate internship opportunities through the CDC's academic internship program (CDCI). These internships are open to undergraduate students from all majors, cover a wide variety of industries, and are a great way to gain experience in a field of interest.

STEP 5:

Transforming yourself into an attractive candidate takes work and dedication, but if you make smart decisions and keep your personal interests and values in mind, it can also be fun and rewarding. Visit CDC, where a counselor can help you sort out how the things you find meaningful and fun can also prepare you for life after graduation ... and may even lead to a rewarding career! We've seen countless students go from hopeless to hopeful, just because they took the time to meet with a counselor and gathered all the facts. Let us help you through this process! Stop by during Counselor-on-Call hours!