

Academic Decision Points: The Sophomore Year

Think twice about double majoring

For some students, a double major can provide a valuable opportunity to develop a rich field of knowledge. However, double-majoring is not for everyone, and you should weigh carefully the potential advantages and disadvantages of taking this route through the Dickinson curriculum.



A Typical Dickinson Education with a Single Major

First, remember that you don't necessarily need to major in a particular field to gain exposure to it. You can take courses that address your interests without committing to a full program of specialization. In fact, this approach may offer the advantage of allowing you to *selectively* enhance your expertise in a particular area. Bear in mind also that the Dickinson curriculum only requires 32 credits for graduation. Because your first-year seminar, distribution requirements, and cross-cultural studies may account for 12 credits, you should think carefully about how two majors will limit your flexibility. That flexibility will matter! For example, it may affect your decision about studying abroad. Will you go abroad? For one semester or two?

Finally, here and across the country research indicates that students are pursuing double majors as a way to distinguish themselves with graduate schools or on the job market. A double major will only distinguish you if the decision makes sense because of your particular interests and aspirations! Excellence in a single field will likely prove more of an advantage than adequacy in two. Talk to members of the Dickinson community about whether a double major is the right decision for *you*. Useful resources include your advisor, your Class Dean, staff at the Career Center or the Center for Global Study and Engagement—come talk to us!