University Studies (UST)

undeclared academic advisement

A great place to start!
What Does “Undeclared” Mean?

- A student admitted to college who has not yet declared the major from which they will eventually graduate

- Some colleges and universities call these students...
  - “Undeclared”
  - “Undecided”
  - “Exploratory”

- At the University of Delaware, these students are called: “University Studies” students or “UST” students
Being Undeclared:

MYTHS VERSUS REALITY
**Myth:** Undeclared students “take a bunch of classes that don’t count towards anything.”

**Reality:** Our advisors are professionally trained to ensure that every class a student enrolls in counts towards particular requirements (university, college, major).

- We use a variety of methods to determine the most widely applicable classes students can take; including, running audits and reports to determine how courses can fulfill different requirements.
**Myth:** Students who are undeclared lack direction and are poor decision makers.

**Reality:** Research shows that up to 75% of college students change their major at least once and up to 80% of all first year students have some career uncertainty.

- There is no differentiation between the decision-making patterns of declared vs. undeclared students.
**Myth:** Most majors will not accept undeclared students.

**Reality:** UST students have been accepted into every college on campus.

- Most UD majors are unrestricted.
- Entrance into restricted majors is contingent on successful performance in required classes, e.g. Calculus and Chemistry. These classes are open to all students, including those in UST.
Myth: Undeclared students enter with lower scores and are less academically prepared.

Reality: NOPE! There is no research that links undecided student status to poor academic performance.

➢ Students who entered UD as UST in Fall 2023:
  ✓ 88% had high school GPA’s of 3.0 or higher.
  ✓ 72% had high school GPA’s of 3.5 or higher.
  ✓ Among 99 majors at UD, UST had the 7th highest number of incoming first year Honors students.
WHAT IS UNIVERSITY STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE?
What is University Studies?

Mission
University Studies (UST) is an academic option for admitted UD students who have a variety of interests and have not yet declared a major, or are transitioning between majors. UST ensures that students are supported and given the opportunity to explore UD's majors before choosing an academic path.

Goal
To serve as a temporary academic home and ensure that our students have access to tools and opportunities to explore their interests, and to work closely with them to create an individualized plan to identify and declare a major in a timely manner.
University Studies

a great place to start
Students we advise

Exploring

Examining

Enhancing
UST interest areas

- Arts & Humanities
- Business
- Education
- Environmental Studies
- Life & Health Sciences
- Physical & Applied Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Undeclared

*Interest Areas (identified by students) provide guidance for major exploration and course scheduling.*
Business Interest (example)

Majors: -Accounting -Communication -Economics -Entrepreneurship
Majors

There are over 150 majors available at UD within our 8 colleges and schools.

UD students can choose the type of academic plan that suits them:

- Single major
- Major with a minor(s)
- Interdepartmental major
- Double major
- Double degree

UST students are expected to declare a major by the time they reach 60 credits.
Where UST students declared in 2022-2023

- College of Agriculture and Natural Resources: 3%
- College of Arts and Sciences: 39%
- Alfred Lerner College of Business & Economics: 36%
- Biden School of Public Policy and Administration: 1%
- College of Earth, Ocean and Environment: 2%
- College of Education and Human Development: 6%
- College of Engineering: 4%
- College of Health Sciences: 9%
BENEFITS OF BEING A STUDENT IN UNIVERSITY STUDIES
Academic Planning

UST advisors assist students with:

- selecting appropriate classes for their major(s) and/or minor(s) of interest
- incorporating extracurricular activities and study abroad plans
- determining how various academic programs might be accomplished during their time at UD

UST students participate in programs like World Scholars and UD’s affinity programs. Additionally, UST students may also be in the Honors College.
Workshops, podcast, and seminar

Workshops and podcast
UST workshops and a podcast called, “Choices” offered by our professional advisors give students practical information to help them understand academic policies, UD’s curriculum, and major exploration.

UNIV117: Exploring Your Academic Path (1 credit)
Our spring seminar combines self-exploration, resources, engaging discussions, and activities to help students assess their values and interests. Students also complete PathwayU and conduct informational interviews.
Partnerships across Campus

University Studies is conveniently located in the Center for Academic Success. We also collaborate with other departments on campus including:

- Career Center
- Center for Counseling and Student Development
- Colleges, Faculty, and Advisors
- Center for Health Profession Studies
- Disability Support Services
Individualized Professional Advising

UST has six dedicated advisors with a variety of educational backgrounds and professional experiences. We are knowledgeable about UD’s curriculum and collaborate with the other colleges.

Each student in UST is assigned to a professional academic advisor, who is available to meet with them virtually, in-person, by phone, or to answer questions through e-mail.

Advising appointments focus on student development, academic planning, major exploration, and more.
About our Advisors

- 1 was undeclared
- 4 wish they had been undeclared
- 3 changed their majors multiple times
- None had majors in their current field
- ALL use the skills we learned in our individual major(s) in our current position
- ALL have Master’s degrees in an area we’re passionate about
Peer to peer support

UST Peer Liaisons

Peer Liaisons is a network of current and former UST students with identified majors. They volunteer to share their journey in transitioning to college and finding their major!

PL’s host social and academic programming tailored to helping students explore their interests. They also represent UST at recruitment events.
Helpful tools when thinking about majors

Finding What Fits (activity)
Helps students carefully and critically examine larger themes that may help them discover which interest area might be the best place to begin.

Choosing & Declaring a Major (online quiz)
Helps students identify their interests, values, and skills. Provides links to assessments and provides tips for narrowing down major options.
To learn more about University Studies at UD, feel free to subscribe to our blog or reach out to us via email.

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http://sites.udel.edu/ust-explorer

Feel free to direct interested students to email us at:

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Thank you for your interest in UST!

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