



Campus Life Building • Room 220 • DeKalb, Illinois
60115

Website: www.niu.edu/CareerServices

Phone: (815)753-1641

Alternatives to a Business Major: How to Prepare for a Business Career Without Majoring in Business

- Is your GPA preventing you from majoring in Business at NIU?
- Are you no longer eligible for a Business major because you failed a required class twice?

If you have set your sights on a career in business but cannot major in Business at Northern, consider the following:

1. First, realize that many successfully employed businessmen and women did not major in Business as undergraduates. **Majoring in Business is not the only pathway to the career you want. You do have options.**
2. **Investigate the career you are interested in, and plan the best route for getting there.** Stop by the Career Resource Center at Campus Life Building 235 and/or explore NIU Major WebLinks at www.niu.edu/careerservices/weblinks/index.htm. Discover the best majors for the career you want and consider majoring in those areas.
3. **Consider tutoring and/or getting help with your study skills.** NIU offers many services for helping students who are struggling with their GPA. *Coaching for Academic Success* can help you learn study skills, time management, and test taking strategies. To learn more, call the Counseling & Student Development Center at 815-753-1206.
4. **Consider majoring in a field that has a business component incorporated in it.** Examples include:
 - Economics
 - Communication Studies (especially the Organizational/Corporate Communications emphasis)
 - Computer Science (especially the Applied Computer Science emphasis)
 - Foreign Languages/Literatures (especially the Translation and Business emphases)
 - Hospitality Administration
 - Public Health (especially the Health Administration Emphasis)
 - Textiles, Apparel, and Merchandising
5. **Consider minoring in a field that has a business component incorporated in it,** such as Applied Communications, Communications, or Economics.
6. **Consider taking business-related classes open to non-business majors.** Even if you do not major in Business, you can demonstrate your commitment to business by taking classes in the College of Business that are open to non-Business majors
7. Even if your major does not involve a business component, you still can have a successful business career. **The key is to take a proactive approach to your career development while at NIU by** seeking out experiences that help you develop skills that employers value. These skills include **leadership, public speaking, sales, customer service, interpersonal abilities, relationship-building, appreciation of diversity, computer skills, and teamwork.** It is not enough to tell employers that you have these skills. Instead, you must demonstrate your skills through meaningful experiences that you have derived at NIU. These experiences include:
 - Full-time or (more likely) part-time employment in a field related to the career you seek
 - Working at a career-related internship
 - Participation and assuming leadership positions in student organizations
 - Volunteering for a charity or other non-profit organization in a business function (e.g., publicity and promotions, fund raising, membership drives)
 - Studying abroad and/or learning a foreign language.
 - Gaining experience with as many computer programs as possible (e.g., word processing, databases, spreadsheets)
8. **Meet with a career counselor.** Everyone's situation is different, and sometimes it is a good idea to discuss your career concerns with a professional counselor who can help you sort through your issues. We also offer career testing, which might be helpful. Call **Career Services at 815-753-1641** to make an appointment!

To access all Career Services' handouts, visit: www.niu.edu/careerservices/handouts.html

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