

MINORS:

A Decision of Major Significance

A guide to minors relevant to Accountancy Majors

Communication
Computer Science
 Information Systems, E-Commerce,
 Network Technologies, Security
Economics
English
 Professional Writing
Finance
History
International Business
International Studies
Journalism
Management
Management Information Systems
Marketing
Mathematics
 Statistics
Modern Language
 French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish
 Commercial Languages
 Japanese, Chinese, Russian Studies
Philosophy
Psychology
 Industrial/Organizational Psychology

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Minors: A Decision of Major Significance

A guide to minor fields of study relevant to Accountancy Majors

Considering a Minor

Change in accounting is constant. And right now we are in a period of considerable change, and at an unprecedented rate: technology, competition, international commerce and accounting standards, new political and economic landscapes, and the increasing social (and legal) expectations of accountants. As accounting practice adds new challenges and responsibilities, accountants find themselves requiring additional skills or abilities, often outside the technical. As usual, the wise will anticipate change, prepare for it, and succeed. These changes turn have a profound effect on accounting education. Consequently the School spends significant time and energies to make sure that your curriculum is geared to these new realities. We've got your back.

Another means of preparing for new realities is by taking a minor field of study, one that complements or contributes to your accounting major. A minor, by concentrating elective or required classes into one discipline, adds a new and valuable dimension to your education. Choosing a minor field of study can be a decision of major significance.

Particularly interesting for accountancy majors is the fact that accounting is multi-disciplinary: it includes computer science, finance, law, communications, international business, psychology, politics, marketing, and so on. Accounting does not exist in a vacuum. As students in a major university, you are provided opportunities to develop yourselves as rounded, well educated professionals; your Colleges of Commerce and Liberal Arts and Sciences curricula serve this purpose. If you've been diligent, your curriculum will produce a broadly educated, intellectually capable, curious and skilled graduate . . . a professional. But, for some, more education will be needed or desired, and thus this guide. As you will see, there is a wide choice of minors, any one of which will serve a number of purposes:

Required education: DePaul accountancy majors need 225 quarter hours to sit for the CPA Exam. A minor is a coherent, effective means to this end, and possibly done within four years.

Knowledge: Deepen your knowledge or skills in an area closely related to accounting.

Differentiation: Distinguish yourself in a competitive market for accounting graduates.

Added value: Become a more valuable member to your firm, now and in the future.

Life-long study: Provide a basis for further education or development in the minor field.

Any of these benefits should be sufficient for some serious thought on a minor; in combination, they make a powerful case. Broadening your knowledge base and your capabilities—your “intellectual portfolio”—can be a wise decision.

Minors do not provide specialist level capabilities, no more than a minor in accountancy would prepare one for an entry level position. Minors do, however, provide more than “exposure, since minors require a structured course of study. Minors involve depth, but not as much as the major. The key concept is added value: a minor develops a new dimension to your intellectual and professional capabilities. The minor is recorded on your transcript, so your college record, too, is enhanced.

The Small Print

Minors must be formally applied for and approved by the College of Commerce and the offering department. There is required documentation (available in the college officer and website). If the minor is approved it must be completed in order to fulfill graduation requirements. If a student does not wish to or cannot complete the minor, it must be formally withdrawn. Students should discuss their plans with a College advisor, and faculty in the department offering the minor. ***Departments have significant policies and restrictions governing their minors, so students are again urged to work closely with both Commerce and the offering department. Non-Commerce minors especially may include prerequisites Accounting majors may not have taken. Departmental websites are listed throughout—be sure to check them for changes, applications, updated information, and schedules. The DePaul Undergraduate Course Catalog also includes up-to-date information on minor offerings and requirements for each department: <http://depaul.edu/catalog>.***

Minor policies you should be aware of at the outset include:

- Declaration of Minor form must be filed with the College of Commerce*
- Application of minor coursework will be toward advanced level electives first*
- Overall GPA and minor GPA must meet specified minimums*
- Must receive a “C-“ or better in all minor coursework*
- Departmental prerequisites must be met for a minor as for a major*
- If specific courses are not required, students should consult with an advisor*
- Minor courses may not be taken Pass/Fail*

Personal Considerations

A minor is as much a matter of commitment as of abilities: you may be good at language study, a very capable writer, or familiar with computers. But how are you as an accounting student? The question is will a minor drain time and energy from the major, and will the benefits outweigh this? This is a question only you can answer. There is no question of the added value of a minor, but there is little to be gained with a minor that interferes with your major. To begin, ask yourself these questions:

- How am I doing in my accounting courses?
 - Do I have special aptitude, interest, or experience that I can build on?
 - Can I clearly explain the relevance of the minor to my professional goals?
 - Can my schedule accommodate a minor?
 - Do I have the time? per day? per week? per quarter? per year? And the energy?
 - How will I handle extra tuition?
 - Would it be better to complete the 150-hour requirement in graduate school?

Again, you alone can answer these questions. If you could answer most of these in the affirmative, then yes, by all means consider the added value of a minor field of study.

Minors for Accountancy students

These minors have been compiled with the assistance of practitioners in major accounting firms. For each we describe the discipline and the minor(s) available, and explain its relevance to practice. Please be sure to read the minor requirements and course descriptions on the departmental website, in the Bulletin or Course Catalog, and discuss your plan with the appropriate advisor or departmental representative. And be sure to keep in touch with the Commerce advisors, to be sure all policies and regulations are fully met.

1. College of Communication (<http://communication.depaul.edu>)

The College of Communication offers many minors, but the most relevant for readers will be Communications and Media, Communication Studies, Intercultural Communications, and Relational, Group and Organizational (RGO) Communication. (Journalism is later in this booklet.) Communication is getting the word out effectively and ethically. This entails knowing how communication works: its limits, powers, and dangers; its many channels, and how senders/receivers interact. The College's many programs cover interpersonal, public speaking, advertising, rhetoric, corporate communications, inter-cultural communications and public relations. These programs will change the way you view media, and equip you to make decisions about your own use of the media.

Relevance to Practice: Accounting is a "people" profession; all accounting work except the simplest of tax forms is meant to be communicated to people. And should even that basic 1040EZ pose a problem, it becomes a matter of communication with the preparer, or the IRS. Accounting is communication. Also, consider your entry-level position: you deal with people, relate to (and are evaluated by) managers, question people, participate in group meetings, meet with clients as part of a team, and produce reports. As you rise you lead the meeting, deal with clients directly, and represent the firm. You interview clients on procedures and controls, serve on community groups, conduct conferences. Such demands require above-average communication skills, a heightened sensitivity to language and interpersonal relations, and the development of "multiple perspectives." (And the ability to listen.) Unless we can listen to a client, we just cannot have a meeting of minds. Communication skills can be of significant career benefit. In the early stages of a career, technical skills are really not differentiable across new staff; communication skills are, and readily. Be advised.

2. College of Computing and Digital Media (<http://cdm.depaul.edu>)

DePaul's College of Computing and Digital Media offers many minors, at least six of which are very relevant: Computer Science, Information Systems, E-Commerce, Network Technologies, Database, and Security. These minors can provide students with up-to-the-minute knowledge and skills in computer science, languages, files, data management and operating systems, and the ever-growing issues surrounding network security. The courses concern planning, design and implementation, enhancing, and diagramming information systems, as well as more recent concerns of security.

Relevance to Practice: Computer Science and IS are essential. In accounting the computer is inseparable from practice, and accounting requires computer use beyond the "tools" or "end-user" levels: the CPA must be familiar with computers and systems, understand computer languages and interfaces, and (especially in our post S-Ox world) system weakness and strengths. Indeed, recognizing system weaknesses alone is an invaluable skill. And while systems and software become more user friendly, applications will expand, as will demand for accountants with knowledge of how and why applications run.

3. Economics (<http://economics.depaul.edu>)

Economists are instrumental in all areas of business. The Economics Department allows students to tailor their education to specific fields: law, international trade/commerce, quantitative analysis, labor markets and labor relations, taxation, business economics, environmental and resource use and other public policy issues, and the economics of emerging markets. The variety of courses reflects the versatility with which economic theories of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services are applied. Economists deal with optimization principles as they are related to situations confronting individuals, firms, industries, and entire economies. The economist, through knowledge of

economic history, current theories and principles, and specialized mathematical/econometric skills, brings a sense of order, and sometimes predictability, to economic events. Economists are prominent in industry, government, insurance, finance, banking and investment banking. Economists also play a key role in the formation of public policy, including policies that directly or indirectly affect business.

Relevance to Practice: An Economics minor can provide many benefits. Economic cause-and-effect relationships and analysis of economic agents and their behavior can be similar to accounting in that they rely on statistical models and methods in what both accountants and economists call “managerial economics.” Taxation and economics are also closely related at the policy level. A familiarity with the theory of the firm provides a deeper appreciation of what you are doing as an accountant. For example, business economics provides some expertise in forecasting, financial planning, money market analysis, as well as an understanding of global, national, and local trends, and the impact of decisions on society. In a competitive, global, multi-dimensional business climate, a broad-based knowledge of these topics is essential if you want to play a key role as a decision-maker in your firm or in society.

4. English (<http://depaul.edu/~english>)

DePaul’s English Department offers minors in literature and professional writing, either of which will equip you with solid skills. The literature minor develops familiarity with major authors, movements, genres and critical perspectives. Literary study and criticism can reveal profound insights, link you to thousands of years of diverse global cultures, and provide an enjoyable, satisfying life-long vocation.

The professional writing minor exposes the student to advanced writing: tone, style, audience awareness and the importance (and intricacies) of “rhetorical field,” technical writing, argument, and the fundamentally important skill of clear, precise, and effective prose. And we are told endlessly by practitioners: few skills better equip a student for practice than professional-caliber writing.

Relevance to Practice: Since Pacioli’s *Summa*, 1494, accountants have communicated in prose as much as in number—indeed, the numbers alone often have little meaning; they must be explained. Thus the enormous amount of material written and produced by accounting firms. It is precisely this “explanatory function” at which accountants must excel; we are called upon to “demystify” practices, principles and procedures, and to non-accounting audiences. Bluntly, the numbers alone are important at the lower levels; communicating the meaning and implications of numbers defines the higher level. Writing and accounting are inseparable, and the clarity, force, and effectiveness of your writing will be seen as a measure of your firm...and possibly you. And as our colleagues in practice also endlessly mention, solid capabilities in writing and communications show, and show *very early*.

5. Finance (<http://finance.depaul.edu>)

The Department of Finance introduction in the Bulletin summarizes well: “The Department of Finance provides a curriculum which enables all students in the College of Commerce to acquire a basic understanding of the public and private financial processes which affect all aspects of business, government and personal investments. It provides a strong foundation for students with career goals related to corporate financial management, investment management, options and futures, real estate, banking and other financial institution administration.” A Finance minor includes the knowledge and methodology requisite for financial management: money and banking, capital markets and their operations, investments and investment instruments, and capital formation. A Finance minor can also develop a good background in many areas of finance—options and futures, risk management, valuation, and international finance—dimensions with which you will need to be familiar.

Relevance to Practice: Much of what you'll learn is right off today's headlines. Accounting and Finance are, in many respects, inseparable. We may be in an "information age," but rest assured that information concerns money in all its various forms. Where there is Capitalism there is finance, and where there is finance there is some form of accounting. Of particular relevance is familiarity with the areas of securities and commodities. Understanding off-balance sheet financing, hedging, securitization, options, and other techniques will be clearly valuable, especially as the audit risk and business emphasis increases dramatically. Such skills and knowledge could be invaluable in your own assignments, client relations, and the roster of client services accounting firms offer.

6. History (<http://depaul.edu/~history>)

The History Department offers a very flexible minor. Increasingly you will be expected to be familiar with historical concepts: that "nations" can be socio-political-economic entities united or divided by nationalism or tribalism; that technology has its own developmental patterns, that history itself exerts tremendous force; that nations have histories to be reckoned with. As the Bulletin says, "The student's immersion in the past...will help to provide the judgment, awareness, intellectual curiosity, and, above all, clarification of values so necessary for life." A history minor can also introduce you to historical methods, which are in many respects similar to some in accounting: information gathering, close study of documents, analysis and interpretation, shaping conclusions, presenting and documenting results—and a deep concern with intellectual and scholarly honesty. Such skills are valuable.

Relevance to Practice: The imperatives are globalism and current events. As history shows, "commerce" is usually in the forefront, from Ur and Phoenicia to Columbus and the European Community. Your career will have international, global dimensions, your firm will deal with nations and cultures everywhere. Consequently, historical background, knowing something of those with whom you trade, is as important today as it was with Marco Polo. Understanding historical principles and methods, familiarity with a nation, an area, or a culture enables one to relate and communicate more effectively. Finally, Americans have historically been viewed as hopelessly provincial, an endearing and charming trait while we were the Colossus of the World. We are no longer that Colossus, and provincialism is an embarrassment. And dangerous in today's conditions.

7. International Business (Please check with your Commerce advisor)

There is really little we need to say here about the International Business (IB) minor. It is a perfect compliment to any business degree: it is interdisciplinary, including language, economics, business and politics; it is hands-on, in that international business seminars (travel and study abroad) can be parts of the program; it is flexible, in that students majoring in any Commerce field have multiple options. The minor is currently offered through the Interdisciplinary Commerce Studies (ICS) department.

Relevance to Practice: If you need an explanation of how an IB minor is relevant to contemporary accounting, you'd better familiarize yourself a bit more with contemporary accounting.

8. International Studies (<http://depaul.edu/~intstuds>)

A discipline rarely keeps within departmental barriers. Ultimately, every major is interdisciplinary, or at least multi-disciplinary. One area in which interdisciplinary study is formally recognized in a curriculum is International Studies. The field combines language, history, economics, politics, anthropology, sociology, the arts, and familiarity with writing and communications. Its goal is to

provide an intellectual framework for an appreciation of a given part of the globe. Few “ambassadors” of a nation or culture have greater potential to encourage and foster international harmony than those in business. International Studies permits concentrations in one of six areas: Europe, Latin America, International Political Economy, African Studies, Asian Studies, and War and Peace Studies

Relevance to Practice: As the world continues to grow ever smaller, knowledge of it becomes increasingly important. This is particularly true as we acclimate to a newly-competitive environment. An International Perspectives/Area Studies minor will increase your familiarity with one of the areas—its history, literature, the social/political systems, and with the reality of the whole. Students interested in international commerce, positions in multinationals, or global finance would certainly benefit from the minor.

9. Journalism (<http://communication.depaul.edu>)

Read all about it: For Commerce students, this means someone actually really does write the articles in *The Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week*: someone with a background in journalism (and business) investigates, interviews, researches, and writes on business and financial matters--while maintaining as much objectivity and integrity as any CPA signing off on an audit. Think of *Crane's*, for example, or the *Tribune*, or the *WSJ*—you depend on this reportage; decisions are made on this reportage; prices can rise or fall on business and financial reportage. And in an “information economy,” reportage, analysis, and explanation of economic events become vital components in the nation’s business life.

Relevance to Practice: A journalism minor could be useful two ways. First, you’ll get the knowledge, skills and abilities of journalism, which could serve you very well: you can do the accounting and financial work, and if need be, report on it to the public as well. Firms are always communicating, and through many channels, primarily print. An accountant who is as nifty with an article as with a spreadsheet could get some interesting assignments, and become a valuable asset. Second might be termed “defensive journalism.” Face it—we are in a world of flak and spin: what would an IPO be without good press? With a little journalistic background, you maybe just a bit better equipped to deal with media: you could become one of those people who ask “What’s your source on that?”

10. Management (management.depaul.edu)

“Management” is a broad term, and includes the effective and humane use of resources — financial, intellectual, and human. Management involves the growth and development of organizations, organizational behavior, communication, the challenges of leadership and control in large diversified organizations, policy formulation, and operations, or “how things get done.” Management at DePaul also includes industrial psychology, international and multi-national management, and special-expertise areas, such as entrepreneurship, governmental regulation, and service organization management. Management offers three basic areas: Operations, Human Resources, and Entrepreneurship. Students may parallel these areas, or construct their own specialist minor.

Relevance to Practice: CPA firms are themselves organizations, and subject to the principles (and pitfalls) of any organization: someone has got to run the shop, coordinate the activities, and keep things on track. Indeed, MAP (management of an accounting practice) is a major consideration in the profession. Outside the firm, management knowledge, either generally or with a concentration in an area, equips the accountant with the knowledge to deal effectively with clients, on both the clients’

terms and in their environment, and to understand and ideally solve the client's problems. Accounting is the language of business, but management is the environment in which it is spoken.

11. Management Information Systems (MIS) (<http://accountancy.depaul.edu>)

The Management Information Systems (MIS) minor is an indication of the centrality of information systems to business, or e-commerce. A joint program offered by the School of Accountancy and MIS, the College of Commerce's Business Technology Center and the College of Computing and Digital Media, the MIS minor is designed to educate management-oriented, technically proficient information systems professionals, with a specific focus on requirements engineering, systems analysis and systems development and life cycles.

The MIS minor complements a thorough understanding of business operations covered in your undergraduate Commerce and accounting curricula. This combination of competencies is particularly important for business-based systems analysts: an MIS minor will enable you to function as a liaison representing your business or functional area in IS projects. The minor is designed according to current technological trends, and is highly flexible and responsive to rapidly changing and continually evolving information technologies.

Relevance to Practice: Accounting will soon be difficult without some IS capabilities.

12. Marketing (<http://marketing.depaul.edu>)

Marketing organizes, systematizes and coordinates the efforts of an enterprise to meet the needs and wants of its clients and customers. Any element or condition between the producer and customer is an area of concern. As such, Marketing studies human and group behavior, media and communication, distribution channels and their management, product or service management, and advertising and other facts of producer /consumer relationships. There are three minors available: a standard Marketing minor, and those in Multicultural Marketing and Sales Leadership.

Relevance to Practice: One of the characteristics of contemporary accounting is its market-orientation: competition. Where there is competition there is a need for marketing expertise, both personal and institutional. A marketing minor provides you with the background to apply and interpret marketing information to your accounting knowledge base, allowing you to identify client needs, create, plan and implement proposals and campaigns to market your own firm's services; investigate new markets and services and organize the proper approach for successful entry. The accounting executive's primary function is marketing the firm's many services to current and prospective clients; with a minor in marketing you are equipped to do so. "Product differentiation" is a key concept in marketing. It is also something you can do with a minor.

13. Mathematics (<http://depaul.edu/~math>)

The Department of Mathematical Sciences offers Mathematics and Statistics minors. After the calculus core required for both, the mathematics minor includes abstract mathematical reasoning and proof, and either the discrete mathematics sequence or a purely mathematical course. The discrete mathematics option includes foundational material for and applications to computer science. The statistics minor includes probability and statistics, and many topics with which you are familiar: sampling and models, hypothesis testing, data analysis, inferences, and statistical packages. (The department also offers a

Financial Mathematics concentration attached to the Finance minor.)

Relevance to Practice: A good grasp of mathematical concepts is helpful in accounting, economics and finance courses, especially in advanced classes. Learning more mathematics and statistics will provide you with a broader range of tools for carrying out projects, especially when operations more complex than debit/credit, add/subtract are required—that is, when you need to function at a higher level. Auditors increasingly rely on the precise topics covered in the statistics minor; and much advanced work in managerial accounting, economics and finance is almost indistinguishable from research in applied mathematics, involving calculus, regression analysis, and logarithmic functions.

14. Modern Languages (<http://depaul.edu/~mol>)

The Department of Modern Languages offers varying levels of instruction in twelve languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Greek, Hebrew and Latin. Minors are offered in five languages: Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, and German. A further division of these minors makes available a commercial language program in French and Spanish. In this option, the emphasis is on, understandably, business language. Language study at DePaul proceeds on the advanced level, that is, introductory and intermediate courses do not directly count towards a minor or major.

The minor develops the ability to speak, understand, read and write, not just order from a menu. Graduates are functionally bilingual, and business minor candidates are encouraged to take the business language certification exams given by the French and Spanish governments. And language courses taken during DePaul's Foreign Study programs to France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Spain and Japan may be used to fulfill requirements for the major and minor.

Relevance to Practice: Globalization again looms large, and being fluent in a foreign language is a valuable skill. As American business competes throughout the world, it must deal effectively with non-English speakers, i.e., the world's majority. To some extent, English is a globally common language. But although business can be conducted in English, competing for that business will often require knowledge of the local language. And what will that be? English, yes. But also Spanish. And French. And Italian. And Chinese. And German. International business, accounting, and finance are developing so that, in the words of one practitioner, bilingual proficiency will be the norm within 10 years.

15. Japanese, Chinese and Russian Studies (<http://depaul.edu/~mol>)

In addition to minors in language, Modern Languages also offers minors in Japanese, Chinese, or Russian Studies. These programs provide accounting students with the opportunity to become familiar (to a limited extent, of course) with the language and culture of a nation: its language, geography, history, customs, and the people themselves. You won't be a State Department expert, but your familiarity with the nation will certainly be above average, which can be very helpful in the sort international business settings you see every day in the news. Yes, that will be you in a few years.

Relevance to Practice: 127 million Japanese, 300 million Russian, and 1,300,000,000 Chinese potential trading partners, competitors, clients and customers, associates, colleagues and friends..

16. Philosophy (<http://depaul.edu/~phildept/>)

The Philosophy minor is an introduction to the history of philosophy, its major thinkers and problems,

and a solid grounding in critical thinking and reasoning. Philosophy has always asked basic questions: what does it mean to know something? How do we know that? What is good and right action? Beyond this, philosophers try to apply such basic questions to contemporary life: How ought we to live, both as individuals and members of society? How do we talk about faith, God, and our religious commitments in a rational way? Students learn to distinguish between deductive and inductive reasoning, how to recognize and analyze arguments, what counts as evidence, and what it means to pose good questions—all topics and techniques valuable to attorneys, accountants and corporate officers. Note that many of the department's courses focus on current issues affecting every accounting student: Business, Ethics, and Society; Philosophy and the Question of Race; Philosophy and the Environment; Philosophy and the City; Critical Thinking; Philosophy of Law; Ethics and Public Policy.

Relevance to Practice: As with history, a philosophy minor can add value both in the knowledge gained and skills developed. Few would disagree that disciplined, methodical mental habits are an asset, particularly in accounting. The ability (and habit) to seek underlying assumptions and test them, to deal with issues systematically and on an abstract level, is invaluable. Study in developing rational arguments, refutations, and detecting fallacies are potent mental skills. And DePaul's Philosophy Department is particularly strong in the study of ethics, especially business ethics. These and similar issues will exert a profound influence on your personal life and professional career. Come to grips with them now, because inevitably they will, sooner or later, come to grips with you.

17. Psychology (<http://depaul.edu/~psych>)

Psychology is the study of mind, mental processes, behavior, and consciousness. DePaul's Psychology department provides education in many areas of this broad field: growth and development, social psychology, personality and behavior, industrial and organizational, as well as clinical/experimental coursework and statistics and research methodology. The department offers minors in Industrial/Organizational psychology and Applied psychology. As the science of human behaviors, there is little that this discipline does not study: thinking, memory, emotions, perceptions, motivation, language, the psychology of organizations and the workplace, business or otherwise, child and adolescent psychology, even engineering psychology--the list is virtually endless. The discipline also entails scientific rigor in the design and conduct of controlled experiments, surveys and statistics, interviews and test development, psychometrics, cognition and cognitive processes, and a wide array of applied research methods.

Relevance to Practice: How the human mind works is endlessly fascinating in and of itself. A familiarity with psychology provides some valuable tools in human, organizational, and business relations: it allows insights, and an understanding of dynamics, both personal and group. How and why people behave as they do is powerful knowledge. As said repeatedly, accounting is a "people" business, and psychology is the study of people. Things can get more technical in the industrial and organizational psychology concentration, and are as easily applied to practice. A knowledge of psychology and human dynamics will not necessarily provide answers, but it can provide insights, approaches and an understanding of forces involved in any human action.

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