PROFESSIONAL DISTINCTIONS
As a double major–double minor, some of my areas of study may seem unrelated to each other, but in fact they all serve specific purposes. My goal is to work as a photojournalist in Latin America. . . . I minor in Latin American studies to provide myself with a deeper understanding of the history and culture in which I would like to work.

The Professional Distinctions program [PDP] has been a great way for me to follow my interests while earning credit. I've been able to learn about topics that interest me and create my own plan of action for my college degree.

Soon I will be leaving for a photojournalism internship in Costa Rica with the newspaper the Tico Times. For four months I get to live in another country while finally putting my skills to use. The PDP helped me land this internship because my employers were really impressed by the fact that I took the initiative to create my own educational program. Hopefully, while I’m in Costa Rica, I’ll make contacts for future employment.”
The Professional Distinctions program was created to give you an additional professional edge as you complete your undergraduate degree. In this program, you’ll enhance your undergraduate program with professional skills and knowledge that complement your major.

**RISE ABOVE THE COMPETITION IN THE UO’S PROFESSIONAL DISTINCTIONS PROGRAM**

**In the Professional Distinctions program you can:**

- Gain a competitive advantage in the job market.
- Complement a liberal-arts degree with a specific set of professional perspectives and skills.
- Complement a professional degree with knowledge of a relevant language, culture, and history.
- Strengthen your résumé.
- Make connections with professionals in your field.
- Learn what professionals look for in potential employees.
- Impress employers with your ability to articulate your skills and accomplishments.
HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

The Professional Distinctions program includes four components. You can approach the requirements creatively in a way that best suits your unique career goals.

**Area of Concentration.** The first step is to devise a secondary plan of study to complement your major. You’ll fulfill this requirement by completing a minimum of sixteen upper-division credits designed around a specific set of academic skills; by completing the requirements for a second major; or by completing a minor. For instance, you might complement a major in history with a professional distinction in computer information technology. Your business major might be strengthened with a concentration in the language, culture, and history of a particular region of the world. Full descriptions of the areas of concentration are available at https://uodistinctions.uoregon.edu/home/pd.stm/.

“I am very excited by the opportunity to lead the Professional Distinctions program in the coming years because it plays such an important role in helping our students connect their studies to future professional lives. The strength of the program is the flexibility given students to develop a professional distinction that is unique to them. The program will continue to be a dynamic one that evolves with the needs of our students.”

**BRUCE BLONIGEN  PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS  
2005–7 PROFESSIONAL DISTINCTIONS PROGRAM DIRECTOR**
Internship or Participatory Learning Experience (PLE). PLEs are very similar to traditional internships, but PLEs can also include independent research projects closely supervised by a faculty member. Whether you decide to intern for a senator or conduct research in a laboratory, you will earn academic credit while gaining real-world experience.

Professional Training Workshops. In the Professional Distinctions program, you’ll attend four workshops that focus on the skills prospective employers are looking for in new hires. These workshops, Career Success Seminars, are designed to provide insights about effective performance in the workplace.

Professional Résumé. The number one expectation of prospective employers is the ability to clearly articulate your strengths and special characteristics. The final component of the Professional Distinctions program is the creation, under the guidance of a Career Center counselor, of a professional résumé that identifies your abilities and skills.

SAMPLE AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Choose one of these:
- Analytical Reasoning
- Arts Management
- Cross-cultural Literacy
- Data Analysis
- Geographic Information Science and Technology
- Information Ethics
- Information Research and Management
- International Communication and Culture
- Leadership Management
- Professional Research and Presentation
- Written Communication

Or use:
- Your minor
- Your second major
History and anthropology majors
Completed a professional distinction in anthropology

“I conducted research in anthropology, working with Sarah McClure, a faculty member whose work is in Neolithic and Mesolithic ceramics in Spain. I would help her with data collection, photo organization, and taking photos of pottery shards.

“Dr. McClure taught me how to analyze the paste in the ceramics, how discoloration indicates different techniques of firing and the makeup of the clay matrix. Spring term was my hands-on opportunity to apply everything I'd been reading about and learning.”

Steven found the Career Success Seminars to be a highly valuable aspect of the program. “Each one provided me with a sense of the professional world, what kinds of things I can expect. We covered business etiquette, networking, how to conduct yourself at professional events, and internship options.

“My internship in archeology and the course work in the Professional Distinctions program made me focus on life after college—all the skills I'd need and all the resources at the university that are there to help me succeed. Through Professional Distinctions, I forged connections between my college course work and my long term goals.”
APPLICATION AND COMPLETION PROCEDURES

In order to qualify for this program, a student must have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.00 and have completed 60 credits.

A student wishing to enter the program must submit a proposal describing a plan to complete a particular professional distinction. The Professional Distinctions Committee must approve this proposal. Students will be notified by e-mail of the committee’s decision within two weeks of proposal submission.

Upon completion of all requirements, the student will receive a professional distinctions certificate, signed by the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Apply online

https://uodistinctions.uoregon.edu/home/pd.stm/

Create a user account and follow the instructions to create a proposal. Assistance with the application can be provided by e-mailing uodistinctions@cas.uoregon.edu. For more information, call (541) 346-3902.

“Making the transition from college to a professional career can be daunting to the best of students. The Professional Distinctions program was developed to meet that challenge, showing students the inherent value of their academic knowledge and encouraging them to apply it in a hands-on professional setting. By enhancing their education with a professional distinction, students acquire the skills and confidence to succeed in their lives after college.”

LOWELL BOWDITCH  ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CLASSICS
2002–5 PROFESSIONAL DISTINCTIONS PROGRAM DIRECTOR
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