

TWO MAJORS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

If you're like me, and you're studying in a private university, then you are well and truly worried about graduation, and what's going to happen to you and your singular degree. But one great thing about our universities is that there are a lot of ways to broaden your scope and field, whether by taking out-of-department courses or better yet, through pursuing a double major.

A double major is when you major in two fields of study as opposed to one. A lot of universities in Bangladesh offer great options for undergraduates who are looking to increase their knowledge and capability in the job market. Faculties even advise students to major in finance alongside marketing, or persuade economics undergraduates to take mathematics courses. Business studies, social studies and economics are three degrees which are complemented very well by another major. With that being said, here are four double major schemes that are worth pursuing for yourself and your future wallet.

MARKETING AND FINANCE

Considered the two sides of the same coin, a double major in marketing and finance is a great path for anyone looking to get the most out of their business studies. A major in finance trains students to analyse and interpret specific types of financial issues, while marketing graduates are equipped to identify product demand and bridge consumer desire for maximum gains for the company. Bridge the two gaps and you have someone who is a valuable company asset. At the very least, it sets up graduates for a whole host of job opportunities from both ends of the spectrum. Combine the two majors and you have someone who has the tools in their arsenal to be the figurehead of



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their own business or enterprise.

ECONOMICS AND MATHEMATICS

Typically the first scare most economics students get is with the mathematics that pertains to their discipline. However, the importance of mathematics in economics is plentiful and that is why teachers urge students to at least take two to three math courses during their time as an undergraduate. It makes graduate school less challenging and it sets you up with a nice range of expertise. Having a double major in these two fields also allows you to be a top pick for companies looking for a data analyst or an actuary. For anyone planning to do academic research in the future, a double major in economics and mathematics will help to provide sound statistical and data analysis to their research. It can also open up prospects for graduates to join academic line of work.

MICROBIOLOGY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

If you're majoring in either biotechnology or microbiology, it's almost a no brainer to also major in the other discipline. According to BRAC University's course outline, you have to complete just 15 more credits (5 extra courses) while studying either discipline to get a major in the other. This applies for both microbiology and biotechnology undergraduates. The number of courses that diverge between both degrees is staggering and it opens up a lot of job prospects for those who want a future in medicine. Biotechnology is a great field of studies for those who want to do academic research in the future while microbiology is great for those who want to equip themselves with deep knowledge of cell biology and the clinical aspects of microorganisms.

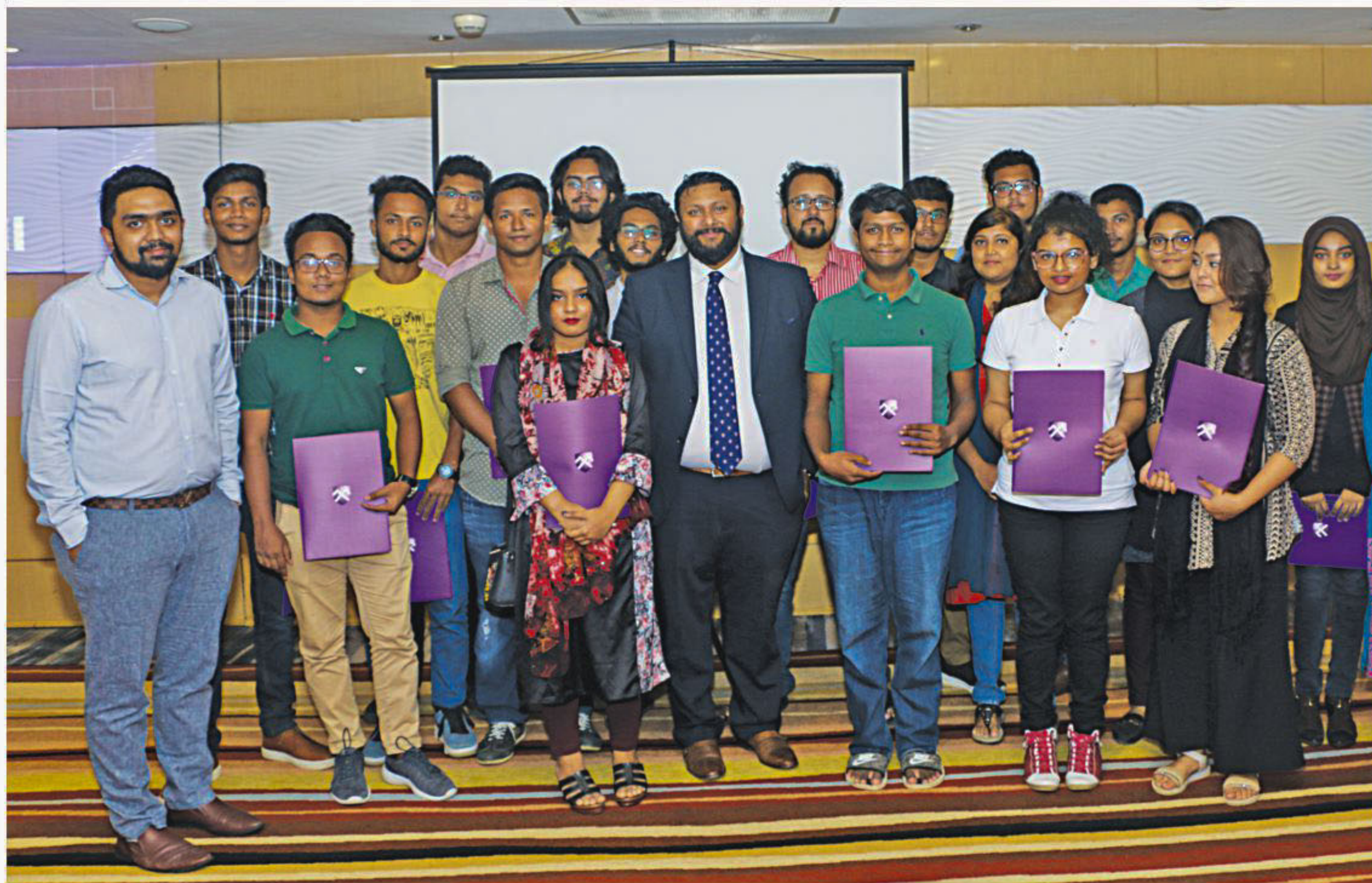
COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS

Similar to obtaining a double major in economics and mathematics, combining computer science and economics studies for a double major can prepare students to bridge fields and work with computer technology in tandem with economics. A major in economics helps students learn theories related to domestic and global economics while a computer science major learns to write programming code, protect computer data, and design computer systems and software. Gathering and analysing data is important in both fields of study, and dual expertise could result in specialised professional opportunities. If your focus is analytical economics, econometrics and data science, then this is exactly the double major you need to pursue. And for anyone who wants to move into financial economics after graduation, having a degree in computer science will be invaluable for the future.

While the aforementioned pairings are great and worth pursuing, it is important to remember that a double major which doesn't complement your future interests, is of no use to you. Use your time, money and knowledge efficiently and you will get more benefits from majoring in one subject as opposed to obtaining a double major but with no clear goal in mind. But if you are sure of your interests and want to work in a specialised field, then perhaps a double major is what you are looking for.

ASIF AYON

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Land of the rising sun

Where Global Education And Successful Careers Meet

Japan, the Land of the Rising Sun is not only a popular travel destination, it is increasingly becoming an educational hub for Bangladeshi students who want to pursue tertiary-level study abroad. This article delves into the lives, experiences, and successes of six Bangladeshi student alumni who completed undergraduate degrees at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) in Japan.

Imagine waking up at 7 AM on a crisp, spring morning in Beppu City (on the island of Kyushu). The sea awaits in front of your apartment, while jutting, rocky hills align the back. Soon you are waiting for the designated bus that will take you to a university on a hilltop, APU. Early morning classes that include learning Japanese language (which greatly increases your chances of attaining a good job in one of Japan's eminent companies), then going to your part-time job either at the university or nearby natural hot springs, is the order of the day for most international students such as, Jawad Mubashwir, Shihabun Sakib, Rubaiyat Islam, Tahmidur Islam, Rubaiyat Rafi and Muhammad Fatemee.

Jawad Mubashwir graduated in March 2017 from APU's College of International Management, majoring in Strategic Management and Organisation. He currently works as a business development executive for Marubishi, a Japanese food manufacturing/trading company. Around 400 Japanese and multinational companies visit APU annually to interview/recruit students in their 4th year. Jawad says that he applied for 8 jobs before this one and chose Marubishi because he wanted to start a Japan-Bangladesh bilateral business almost immediately, which his CEO recognised and eventually let him do. This was unlike other Japanese companies who said to him, 'We want you to come in with a blank head', meaning he would have to agree to be retrained according to company requirements, regardless of what he had learnt previously.

As for his decision to study at APU with an 80% scholarship and then later going on an exchange program to Stanford University in the US (funded by Japan Ministry of Education), Jawad believes he received a high return on his minimal investment by studying at APU (which has AACSB accreditation i.e., internationally recognised, specialised accreditation in accounting and business programs at tertiary level).

Shihabun Sakib, another APU alumni who graduated last year, currently works for Japan Petroleum Exploration Co. Ltd. (JAPEX) as a business analyst, working to expand his company in Thailand and Indonesia. Prior to graduation, Sakib applied to nine companies and received three job offers. He chose JAPEX because his undergraduate thesis was based on Finance and Energy, and thought this company would be a perfect match.

The first year of residency for international undergraduates must be spent at AP House, APU's on-campus dormitory. Sakib, like other student alumni, made life-long friendships there, with a diverse group of people. On his first day at APU, Sakib remembers the Residential Assistants (RAs) who help newcomers settle into university life. He was also the winner of the

prestigious Ando Momofuku Award, awarded by Nissin Foods. For this, Sakib had to write ten essays about his life and experiences at APU. Sakib now feels that after his experience at APU and living in Japan, he does not think only about his own country but as a "global citizen". Thus, he changed from being an introvert to someone who became a leader in different activities like Bangladesh Week which showcases Bangladeshi culture at APU.

Lastly, Sakib says that, "if you want to challenge yourself and learn new things, APU is the best place". In light of employment, Japanese companies cannot fire employees on spot, on the rare occasions they do, the employer must pay high compensation. Therefore, there is lifetime job security in Japan. This fact has been backed up by all of the alumni mentioned.

A female member of the Bangladeshi alumni at APU, Rubaiyat Islam, is an Economics major who graduated earlier this year. She now works for Fujisoft Inc., a Japanese IT company, as a System Engineer for its Global Division. Rubaiyat is from Viqarunnisa Noon School & College who won a 100% scholarship to APU. She entered her current job because she has a dual interest in programming and economics and took courses accordingly at APU.

Rubaiyat says that the APU experience and living in Japan has transformed her into an independent, punctual, and less materialistic person. She says she really enjoyed outdoor sports as a student such as; long-distance cycling, camping, hiking on mountains, and taking part in Japanese festivals like the Summer, Pikachu, and Taketa Taketoto Chikuraku Light festivals.

Tahmidur Islam also received an 80% scholarship from APU and won numerous others. A student of Notre Dame College, Dhaka, Tahmid graduated from APU in 2016, majoring in Strategic Management and Organisation. However, he started working for one of Japan's leading Integrated Human Resources Service companies a year earlier and is now in a managerial position. Tahmid was an RA at AP House for 3 years, worked as a TA and taught English to schoolchildren. In his third year at APU, Tahmid organised the Business Case Competition on a national level which later became international. He says that even though he is an introvert, he is perfectly okay with this. Taking part in class discussions on different topics allowed him to think critically. APU taught him skills in leadership, communication, and adapting to different cultures.

Rubaiyat Rafi chose to work for an MNC, Deimler Trucks Asia as an HR Business Partner. This is the only multinational he applied to and gave a total of 6 interviews while job hunting. He has 6 months till graduation. Working in this company, Rafi says that he gets global exposure with a high salary. For six months Rafi went on an

exchange program to Copenhagen Business School in Denmark and later became an advisor for exchange students.

Muhammad Fatemee is the current Chairman of APU Alumni Bangladesh Chapter. He graduated in 2013 in International Management and Marketing and is currently pursuing a PhD at University of Tokyo.

Similar to all cultures around the world, Japanese culture has its positive and negative aspects. For example, empathy is something that Japanese people follow in all spheres of their lives. Jawad says that "A Japanese person will put that extra effort to make someone else's experience better, even if they never meet that person again." Empathy, he believes, especially in business, is something needed in order to be successful. Sakib believes that the Japanese are "extremely precise," i.e., if one yen goes missing, they will spend the whole workday figuring out how that happened. Even if you make a mistake, they are extremely patient, Sakib mentions. Tokyo, where Tahmid now lives is very convenient and has an excellent train service. In addition, it is extremely clean, where the Japanese believe in *Katasuke* or leaving a place cleaner than you found it.

As far as negatives go, Jawad says, "As developed and mature as they are, Japanese are still very conservative, which is surprising," a view shared by the other alumni. Also, they are often indifferent to world events and there is a sense of mistrust of the West. Furthermore, Japanese people are very role-based, not only at work but also at home. In addition, Rubaiyat Islam and others feel that Japanese men can be very sexist. However, Rubaiyat says that they are not this way toward foreigners. If you can show you are qualified and capable at your job, women working in Japan should have no problems. Tahmid adds that, while the Japanese are extremely driven and ambitious, they can be stubborn. Fatemee says that the Japanese are not good at expressing their feelings which often creates confusion. Also, they think a lot before taking a decision and consult several people.

To sum up, all the student alumni (except Muhammad Fatemee) started their study abroad journeys through MACES, one of Bangladesh's leading education consulting firms established in 2007. It represents over 160 universities in the UK, USA, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, and Australia. In the words of Rouham Manzoor, Managing Partner, MACES is "the one stop for your foreign education ambitions" and, this is why over 3000 students consider it to be the best education consultancy in Bangladesh.

TAHREEN AHMED

You can read the full version of this article on thedailystar.net/next-step.