

Steps for Choosing a Major

Experience General Education: General education is a great way to experience various disciplines and get to know different professors and students. It is not just a requirement to “get out of the way.” View your general education classes as a great way to learn about various majors as well as helping you to be an education person. Audit courses that interest you.

Self-Assessment: Spend time assessing your interests, values, strengths, dislikes, abilities, personal qualities, and skills. Career Services offers various personality and interest assessment inventories, workshops, and courses in career/life planning.

Cast a Broad Net: Don't think in terms of choosing a major or department. Think of an area of study that interests you. There are many jobs out there that you haven't even thought of and some jobs that haven't even been created. Don't limit yourself. You may end up creating your own major from an interdisciplinary approach. Search the world wide web.

Talk with Others: Talk with your advisor, professors, professionals in various fields, family, friends, and career counselors about majors and how they match your interests and skills. Talk with department chairs and faculty in departments you want to explore. Talk with people in careers you want to explore.

Network: It is never too soon to start building a networking system. Get to know your professors and academic advisor. Build relationships with students in your classes. Join clubs and activities on campus. Join a professional organization (student often receive discounts) in an area you find interesting. Work with the alumni office on campus to hook up with alumni in areas that interest you.

Set Goals: Look at what you want. Do you want to work with people, in a small town, in a warm climate, in a small organization? Try to imagine the setting that enhances who you are. Focus on your main goal: graduating from college. Your indecision about a major should not deter you from moving toward completing your college degree. Set monthly and weekly goals, go to all your classes, and treat your college education as you would treat your career.

Explore Options: Go to the Career Resource Room to gather information on all the various careers that you think you might be interested in exploring. Go to a Career Fair (watch for announcements). Visit academic departments and ask about careers in majors that interest you. Explore the Liberal Studies major.

Gain Experience: Working in an area you are interested in is a great way of testing whether a job or major is right for you. You may think you want to be a nurse because like helping people only to find out that you cannot stand the stress, fast pace, and paperwork. Working helps you discover your strengths, interests, and skills. Career Services has a job board and information on various paid and unpaid internships. Don't overlook the value of volunteering your time.

Make a Choice: It is fine to stay undecided for the first year or so of college. At one point, however, you need to make a decision and work to make it successful. Indecisiveness can create a lack of motivation and be a self-destructive cycle. When you are indecisive, you don't take action, when you don't take action, you can become depressed and this can lead to missing classes, which results in more depression and inaction.

Evaluate and Modify: Get over the fear of making decisions by reminding yourself that few things in life are reversible. Evaluate your decision as you go along. You can always change majors again. Bringing closure to your undergraduate degree in any major is better than going to school for years and living in fear of choosing the wrong major. You can always go back for graduate work in another area of study. By focusing on one area now, however, you can direct your energies.