

choosing a college major

What is a college major?

- A major is a group of classes that focus on the particular subject you're most interested in.
- Choosing a major is not the same as preparing for a career, as most majors do not lead to particular jobs (exceptions include health care fields that require specialized programs).
- Once you choose a major, you'll need to take — and earn passing grades in — specific courses relating to that major.
- Your major is not an indicator of future success.
- Even though you may select a major on your college application, you may change your major at any time. Many students select “undecided” on their college application and then take some time making their formal choices.

When do I choose a major?

- You don't need to choose a major before being accepted to and/or enrolled in college.
- At four-year colleges, students usually “declare” a major by the end of the second year.
- If you change majors, you must fulfill the requirements of your new major, which may require additional time in school.

How do I choose my major?

- Think about your skills, interests, and abilities; things you most enjoy learning; the kind of job you want; and the type of lifestyle you want.
- Check out worksheets and databases at <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major> and http://www.udel.edu/CSC/students/major_resource_kits.html for:
 - 1) links to careers
 - 2) information on different jobs that graduates find with particular degrees and majors
 - 3) strategies for navigating your way into particular careers
 - 4) links to the Web sites of professional organizations related to those careers
- Visit www.bls.gov/ooh/a-z-index.htm to research educational requirements for jobs you might want. Talk to teachers and school counselors to find out what kinds of majors are likely to provide a solid foundation for those jobs.
- Visit school Web sites, which list all academic departments and majors.
- Regardless of the major you choose, you can still take classes in areas of interest outside your major.
- If you're interested in more than one major, look into the college's policy on double majors and “interdisciplinary” majors. For example, an interdisciplinary major in Asian studies might include classes from the religion, history, and sociology departments.

General clusters of majors

Humanities

These majors help you develop critical thinking, logical reasoning, problem solving, and the skilled use of language. Areas of study include comparative literature, English literature, elementary education, radio and television, foreign languages, English, philosophy, communications, religion, classics, speech pathology and audiology, journalism, cinematography, special education, secondary education, family and consumer sciences, physical education, and history.

Social sciences

This is the study of societies, the behavior of the people within those societies, and ways that society and individuals function. Areas of study include educational and/or developmental psychology, behavioral sciences, political science, sociology, pre-law, geography, anthropology, psychology, counseling, criminology, economics, social work, and American/African/American Indian studies.

Art

Art teaches the appreciation for and skill development of any number of artistic endeavors. Areas of study include dance, choreography, composition, art history, drama, art education, music, interior design, fine arts, fashion merchandising, graphic arts, and industrial design.

Business

This is a more specialized field of knowledge. Areas of study include accounting, advertising, real estate, insurance, marketing, banking and finance, economics, hotel/restaurant management, business administration/management, health care/hospital administration, small business management, and international business.

Math and science

These majors utilize logic, problem-solving, and analytical skills. Generally, science require a math, but math subjects do not require much science. Areas of study include forestry, geology, zoology, physiology, environmental science, biomedical engineering, chemistry, biology, statistics, animal sciences, botany, ecology, computer science, genetics, earth science, marine biology, landscape architecture, architecture, physics, and nuclear medicine.

Engineering

This major combines both math and science to design and construct things (roads, buildings, bridges, etc.). Areas of study include mechanical engineering, aerospace studies, industrial engineering, industrial arts, chemical engineering, civil engineering, mining, electrical engineering, and environmental engineering.

Health care

Math and science are important to health care careers, but the depth of study required in those fields will vary depending on the area of study you choose. Areas of study include health education, holistic health, medical technology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, pharmacology, dentistry, naturopathy, nursing, public health, radiography.

Vocational

Specific schools offer vocational skills and programs that generally take less time than college. Areas of study include automotive mechanics, automotive body repair, cosmetology, dairy management, construction management, heavy equipment operation, landscaping, engineering technologies (electrical, mechanical, chemical), and veterinary technology.