How to Choose a Major

Did you know that 65% of UT undergraduate students change their major at least once?

The process of choosing a major is different for every student. If you’re not sure where to begin, consider the following:

**Career-Specific majors** will prepare you for a certain career and may provide on-the-job training. Some examples of career-specific majors are nursing, accounting, engineering, and majors that provide teacher certification.

**Industry-Specific majors** can prepare you for a variety of careers within a certain industry. These are distinguished from a career-specific major because the industry typically takes students from a multitude of majors. Examples of industry-specific majors are advertising, marketing, environmental science, and radio-television-film.

**Field-of-Study majors** will give you broad, transferrable skills that can be used in many careers. Experiences chosen to complement your major, such as internships or graduate school, will help prepare you for a specific industry or career. Examples of field of study majors are art history, human development & family science, and American studies.

Check off these action steps as you go!

**REFLECT**

- **Identify your interests and skills.** What classes have you enjoyed? How do you like spending your free time? Do certain subjects just come naturally to you? Our interests and skills can sometimes give us clues as to which majors and career paths we might enjoy. If identifying your interests and skills seems difficult, consider scheduling an appointment with a career counselor or take a career assessment.

- **Determine your personality attributes and work values.** Are you more of an extrovert or introvert? Do you want to help others? Do you like a challenge? How do you feel about job security? These aspects of self can influence your choice of major, along with your interests and skills.

- **Use the process of elimination.** Sometimes knowing what you don’t want to study can help you narrow down your choices! Come to the SLCC to do a Major Card Sort activity or look at our list of *Undergraduate Degrees at UT*. For an interactive way to explore UT majors, visit Wayfinder at [http://utexas.edu/ugs/wayfinder](http://utexas.edu/ugs/wayfinder).
EXPLORE

☐ Look at degree plans, department websites and course descriptions. Does the coursework sound exciting or dull? Would you want to share what you learned in these classes with a friend?

☐ Explore career possibilities. While some majors lead directly to specific career paths, like engineering or nursing, many majors typically lead to a variety of career possibilities. To learn more, browse our Career Ideas booklets and handouts, read some of the books in our career resource library, and visit the Learn About Careers link on our website.

EXPERIENCE

☐ Enroll in an interesting course. While courses in a department will vary a lot, one way to explore a major is to take a course to see if you like it. Don’t have the time or credits to spare? Consider sitting in on a class you’re curious about. If the class size is small, contact the professor for permission first.

☐ Talk to professors and students. Talking to professors is a great way to get information from experts in the field. Want the student perspective? Find a student currently enrolled in the major and ask to look at his or her coursework materials. Ask how they decided on their path.

ACT

☐ Speak with an academic advisor. S/he can help you with important details about the major such as degree requirements, course selection, and whether there is an application process.

☐ Get involved. Make yourself more marketable by getting experience that will prepare you for the world of work. Join a student organization, volunteer, or get an internship related to your major. Visit your college’s Career Service Office to learn about internships, jobs, and more!

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