



Choosing a Major

AUBURN UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER

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WHAT IS A MAJOR?

According to dictionary.com, a major is “a subject or field of study chosen by a student to represent his or her principal interest and upon which a large share of his or her efforts are concentrated.” It is part of the academic process that leads to earning a degree.

Most majors, however, are **not** designed with a career in mind. Unlike engineering, education and nursing, most majors do not have a direct correlation with your career path. So, many students find it advantageous to identify a career of interest first and then determine the major that best helps them reach that goal.

WHAT STEPS DO I TAKE TO CHOOSE A MAJOR?

This process takes time. There will be books to read; professors, supervisors and advisors to question; internships to try and internet sites to explore.

1. Assess Yourself: Ask yourself the following questions:

- What do I enjoy? *Think about the classes you enjoy most, what they involve and why you enjoy them.*
- What am I good at? *This is no time to be humble. Identify your skills. Are they technical? Adventurous? Intellectual?*
- What is most important to me? *Your choice should match your values. Do you want to work behind the scenes or do you seek prestige? Do you need flexibility or security?*
- What is the coolest job I can imagine? *Describe it specifically and seek people in this area to ask how they got there.*
- Do I need to take a career assessment to better assess my skills, interests and values as they relate to the world of work? *(Go to auburn.edu/career to view available assessments.)*

2. Gather Information and Explore Options

- Examine majors available to you (see back) and eliminate those that do not interest you.
- Review the Bulletin and review the courses that interest you most in majors you like. Do the courses match your interests, skills and values?
- Review additional information about the majors on your short list: review Career Center resources, visit department web pages and talk with academic advisors, students already in these areas and faculty members.
- Research and make sure that major areas of interest are a fit for preparation for career areas of interest.

3. Evaluate and Make Your Major Decision

- Put the information you have gathered together, and consider what you have learned.
- Weigh the pros and cons of each option and narrow your list down to two or three majors.
- Consider the feasibility of pursuing more than one major and/or adding a minor.
- If you are still having difficulties making decisions, talk with an advisor, professor you respect or a career counselor and ask for additional resources and for guidance through the decision-making process.

4. Take Action

- Sample courses in the majors you are considering.
- Choose activities, internships, volunteer work and/or part-time jobs to develop skills in these areas.
- Talk to people already in these career fields.
- Declare a major!!

FACTORS THAT BLOCK MAJOR/CAREER CHOICES

Here are some of the most common factors that get in the way of making a career or major choice:

External Factors

- You don't know what to do with a particular major but you like the idea of studying the topic.
- You lack information and aren't comfortable making an uneducated decision.
- You're overwhelmed by all the options.

Internal Factors

- You lack self-confidence in making critical decisions.
- You feel fear/anxiety.
- Your values are in conflict (e.g. you want a high salary but want to work for a non-profit organization).
- Others are causing internal conflict (e.g. parents have ideas about your career choice that conflict with yours).
- You have many interests and abilities and feel it is impossible to narrow your options.

RESOURCES - auburn.edu/career

- What Can I Do With a Major In...?: Go to Student Tab, then *Choosing a Major/Career*
- Assessments and Interest Inventories: Type Focus, Strong Interest Inventory, FOCUS and CareerBeam Go to *Student Tab*, then *Assessments*
- Resource Library: 303 Martin Hall
- Career Counselors: Available in 303 Martin Hall and across campus.

CREATE YOUR SHORT LIST OF MAJORS

Using the list below, determine your level of interest in each major to create your short list of majors that interests you.

1=Definitely possible

2=Worth considering

3=What is this?

4=No way!

College of Agriculture

- ☐ Agricultural Business & Economics (Agribusiness Mgmt & Marketing, Community & Economic Development, Farm Mgmt, Natural Resources Mgmt)
- ☐ Agricultural Communications
- ☐ Agronomy & Soils (Tracks: Business, Production, Science, Turfgrass Mgmt)
- ☐ Animal Sciences (Options: Muscle Foods, Production, Pre-Vet, Equine Science)
- ☐ Fisheries & Allied Aquaculture (Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources Mgmt, Fisheries Mgmt)
- ☐ Horticulture (Emph: Fruit & Vegetable Production, Landscape, Nursery & Greenhouse)
- ☐ Poultry Science (Options: Poultry Production, Poultry Processing & Products, Pre-Vet)

College of Architecture, Design & Construction

- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Building Science
- ☐ Graphic Design (CADC)
- ☐ Interior Architecture/ Architecture

College of Business

- ☐ Accountancy
- ☐ Aviation & Supply Chain Mgmt (Aviation Mgmt, Professional Flight Education, Supply Chain Mgmt)
- ☐ Business Administration
- ☐ Business Economics
- ☐ Entrepreneurship & Family Business
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Human Resources Mgmt
- ☐ International Business
- ☐ Mgmt (Wireless Software Engineering Option)
- ☐ Marketing

College of Education

- ☐ Exercise Science
- ☐ Health Promotion
- ☐ Health Services Administration
- ☐ Rehabilitation Services
- ☐ Teacher Education (subjects vary)

Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

- ☐ Aerospace Engineering
- ☐ Biosystems Engineering/ Forest Engineering Option
- ☐ Biosystems Engineering
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Computer Science
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Electrical Engineering/ Computer Engineering
- ☐ Environmental Science*
- ☐ Industrial Design
- ☐ Industrial & Systems Engineering
- ☐ Information Systems Mgmt
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Polymer & Fiber Engineering (Options: Fiber, Polymer)
- ☐ Software Engineering
- ☐ Wireless Engineering (Software Engineering, Wireless Electrical Engineering)

School of Forestry & Wildlife

- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Wildlife Sciences
- ☐ Wildlife Ecology & Mgmt
- ☐ Wildlife Sciences (Pre-Vet)

College of Human Sciences

- ☐ Apparel Merchandising, Design & Production Mgmt (Options: Apparel Merchandising, Product Design & Production Mgmt)
- ☐ Hotel & Restaurant Mgmt
- ☐ Human Development & Family Studies (Concentrations: Infancy/ Pre-School, Child Life, Middle Childhood/ Adolescence, Adult Services, Gerontology, Legislative/ Public Policy, Family Programming/ Research, Early Childhood Education)
- ☐ Interior Design
- ☐ Nutrition & Food Science (Options: Dietetics, Food Science, Pre-Health Prof)

College of Liberal Arts

- ☐ Anthropology
- ☐ Art (Studio Art Option, Art History Option, Pre-Graphic Design)
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Communication Disorders

- ☐ Economics
- ☐ English
- ☐ French (International Trade)
- ☐ German (International Trade)
- ☐ History
- ☐ Journalism
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Philosophy (Religious Studies)
- ☐ Political Science
- ☐ Psychology
- ☐ Public Administration
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Radio-Television-Film
- ☐ Social work
- ☐ Sociology
- ☐ Spanish (International Trade)
- ☐ Theatre (Design/ Technology, Performance, Mgmt Emph)

School of Nursing

- ☐ Nursing

College of Sciences & Mathematics

- ☐ Applied Mathematics (Actuarial Option, Discrete Option)
- ☐ Biochemistry
- ☐ Biomedical Sciences
- ☐ Botany
- ☐ Chemistry (BA/BS)
- ☐ Geography
- ☐ Geology
- ☐ Laboratory Technology
- ☐ Marine Biology
- ☐ Mathematics (Options: Applied Mathematics, Applied Discrete Mathematics)
- ☐ Medical Technology
- ☐ Microbial, Cellular & Molecular Biology (Options: Microbiology, Pre-Prof, Pre-Vet)
- ☐ Physics (Pre-Prof)
- ☐ Pre-Prof Curricula (Emph: Dentistry, Nursing, Optometry, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Veterinary Medicine)
- ☐ Zoology (Pre-Prof, Pre-Vet Med)

* Interdisciplinary Studies

More info: auburn.edu/majors