



## 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](http://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](http://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 (CAD/C)
- 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](http://auburn.edu/majors)