



CHOOSING A MAJOR

At a liberal arts institution, choosing a major does not equal choosing a career.

While some majors are more compatible with certain occupations than others, being prepared for a career depends on much more than your major. So, choose a major you will enjoy... that stimulates your thinking and motivates you to engage in other activities such as internships, study abroad, leadership, civic engagement, and undergraduate research. You will perform best in an area for which you have enthusiasm.

Tips for Making an Informed Decision

1) Visit the Career Center. Simply talking through your options with a Career Counselor will be of great benefit. Browse the Career Resource Library. Be sure to consult resources that provide an overview of many majors, such as *College Majors Handbook*, *A Quick Guide to College Majors and Careers*, and *College Career Bible*. Set up an appointment by calling the Career Center at 828-251-6515.

2) Know yourself. Career assessments, including the ***Strong Interest Inventory*** and ***Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*** personality inventory (available at the Career Center), help many undecided students choose their major. As well as ideas of careers that might interest you, you'll gain a better understanding of your interests, values, and personality, and how they influence your career and learning preferences – all pertinent information to making a good decision. You may also visit FOCUS at <http://www.unca.edu/career/focus.html>. Contact the Career Center for the current keycode. Other online self-assessment tools are also available at www.unca.edu/career/websites.html.

3) Research, research, research. Read descriptions of academic departments, majors, and courses at <http://www.unca.edu/catalog/>. Take courses from several different departments (this will help with general education requirements, too). Which do you find most appealing? Which utilize your strengths? Be sure to utilize the advising checklists found under the quick links at: <http://www.unca.edu/advising/>. Check out ***What can I do with this major?*** resources at <http://www.unca.edu/career/majors.html>.

4) Interview students, faculty, and professionals in your field of interest. Nothing is more informed than the voice of experience. Talk to individuals who have pursued paths you are considering and then discuss what you learned with a Career Counselor.

Some questions to consider:

- How did you decide on this major? What class, professor, etc. convinced you?
- How will you use the knowledge and skills you are gaining in this major?
- What careers have some of your former students pursued with their major?
- What are the opportunities for internships, service-learning, undergraduate research, etc. with this major?
- What was your college major and what classes did you take in college that are most valuable to your profession?
- What advice do you have for a student who is considering a career in your field?

5) Reflection.

Take time to enjoy the process and compile what you have learned through the self assessment and exploration process. Remember to get involved with experiential learning such as internships, undergraduate research and study abroad. Campus/community activities and work experience are also important aspects of your college experience that will contribute greatly to your preparation for a successful career.