

Creating your transfer path



Choosing a Major

What is a major?

- A program of study which leads to a degree.
- Major can also be defined as the subject area in which a student chooses to focus their education to gain the greatest depth of knowledge.
- The major area of study usually equals approximately 32 class hours in a specific subject area like music, English, or engineering.





Considerations

When choosing a major you should consider your:

- **Interests**

- If you will be studying a subject in depth, you should be interested in it.

- **Abilities**

- Set yourself up for success.

- **Values**

- Financial security, desire to help others, community of classmates vs independent work, prestige, recognition, etc. are all values to take into consideration when choosing a major; especially if that major leads to a specific career.

- **Motivations**

- What truly motivates you to choose the major? Others' expectations? To earn money? Consider your motivations carefully.

- **Options**

- You have more options available than you can imagine. Start by picking a broad area of interest, then see if you are interested in more specific subjects within that area. Use the resources in the Transfer and Career Center to learn of the plethora of options available to you.

- **And the realities**

- Do you have interest **and** ability in your chosen field? Where can you study the major? If you have been in school a while, how many extra classes might you need to take to pursue that major? Will you be able to meet pre-major requirements?

What are my options?

- Resources to help you discover major and career choices:
 - Kuder career exploration program
 - COM Career Exploration classes – COUN 130 and COUN 133
 - Book of Majors and career exploration materials in the Transfer and Career Center
 - Assist.org – “Explore Majors” function
 - Career Exploration links found on the [Transfer and Career Center website](#)
- You really can major in almost anything. In fact, you may have more trouble with being indecisive than with not knowing your options.
 - Understand that there may not be one major that fits you perfectly. The goal is to make the best, most well-informed decision you can, and to enjoy the exploration process.



I think I'm interested in... So now what?

Learn more about the major! Here are some suggestions on how to do so:

- Take a class in it!
- Talk to professors during their office hours
 - Ask them why they chose the major and why they like it.
 - Ask them what type of person would be successful in that major.
- Conduct informational interviews with people you know who studied that major or who work in a closely related field
- Check out local university events such as Cal Day wherein nearly all academic departments showcase their work
- Request appointments with major departments at local universities to learn more about what it is like to study that major
 - Review the list of suggested questions prior to your appointment
- Read the major descriptions in university catalogs including courses required
- If a career track major, research more about that career: OOH profile, relate professional organizations, and more



The final decision

- Tips on how to make your final choice:
 - Investigate several ideas before making your decision
 - Be independent in your thinking and don't b easily swayed by others
 - Have a clear idea of goals and how your decisions affect them
 - Weigh the pros and cons
 - Talk with a counselor to get help in clarifying your goals and making sure your expectations are realistic
- Check and recheck information to be sure it is accurate
 - Conduct informational interviews with experts - talk to people who have studied that major, like your professors at COM
 - Be aware of some common misconceptions

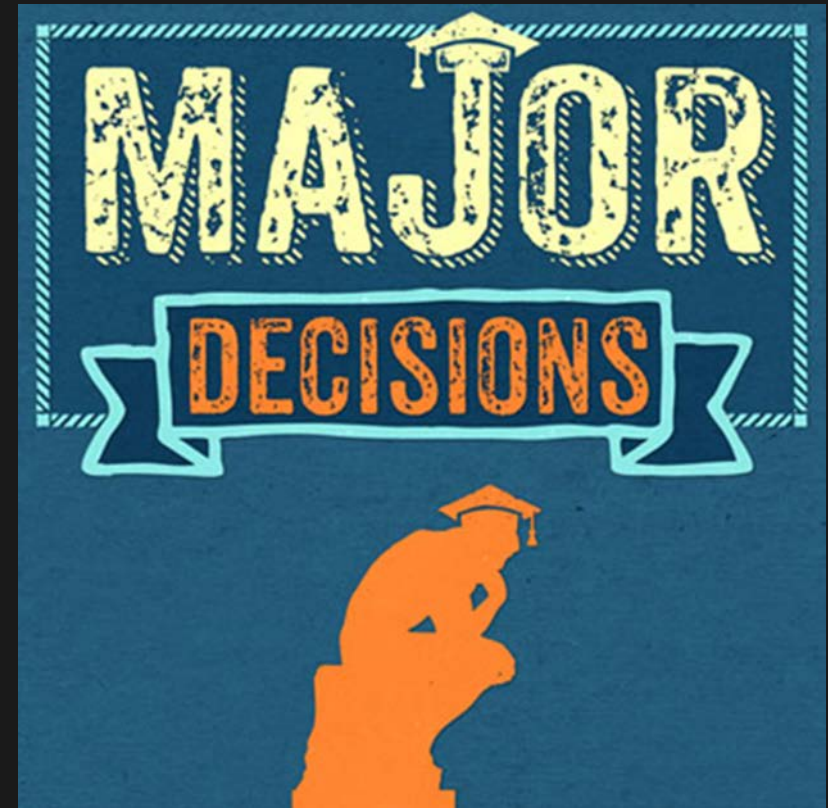
Common Misconceptions

- I really like English, but I don't want to be a teacher. I should choose a different major.
 - Picking a major and picking a career are NOT the same thing and the major you pick now may have little to do with your future career (that's not a bad thing).
 - Marketable skills learned from liberal arts majors are extremely important and desired by employers.
 - Communication skills
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Critical thinking
 - Leadership
 - Research and investigation
 - Design and planning skills



Common Misconceptions

- I have many different interests, and feel that if I pick a major then I'm giving up all my other interests
 - There are always ways to pursue your interests
 - Consider a minor or double major
 - Look into interdisciplinary majors (also called multidisciplinary or self-designed majors)
 - Get involved in clubs, activities, or work (volunteer, internships, or paid) to continue with your other interests
- Understand that you may not find a "perfect" major that fulfills all of your needs. The best you can do is make your decision based on as much relevant and accurate information as you can obtain.



Common Misconceptions

- It's too stressful a decision, I'll wait until after I transfer to decide. Right now, I'll just take general education classes.
 - All UCs and CSUs require students apply to not only the university, but also to a specific major. And it can be extremely difficult to change your major after you transfer.
 - Some Private and Out of State school may allow you to transfer as undeclared, but you will have very little time after transferring to decide.
 - A student's general education path may be different depending on their major. (For example: following IGETC as an engineering major is NOT recommended.)
 - Also, major preparation coursework is usually more important to complete than general education.

College of Marin will support you!

- Utilize all resources available to you
- Make counseling appointments to get help throughout this process
 - Once you have made your final decision, make sure your educational plan is up to date and appropriately reflects your choice
- Come by the Transfer and Career Center to take advantage of workshops, representative visits, campus tours, and more.
- Counseling: 415-485-9430
- Transfer and Career Center: 415-485-9671 transfercenter@marin.edu