

CHOOSING A MAJOR

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, you may find it advantageous to identify a career of interest first and then determine the major that best helps you reach that goal.

This process takes time. There will be books to read; professors, supervisors and advisors to question; internships to try and internet sites to explore. The Office of Career Planning & Development is here to help!

Factors that Block Major/Career Choices

External Factors

- You like the idea of studying the content but don’t know what to do with the particular major.
- You lack information and aren’t comfortable making an uneducated decision.
- You’re overwhelmed by 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 high salary but are drawn to low-paying jobs).
- 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.

Available Assessments

- My Next Move (interests assessment)
- 16Personalities (personality assessment)
- My Majors (aligns interests/skills to major)

Schedule an appointment with a Career Planning and Development staff member to discuss your results and next steps.

Research Resources

- What Can I Do With a Major In...?: whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: bls.gov/ooh/
- O*Net: onetonline.org
- Buzzfile: www.buzzfile.com/Major/TN
- Learn How to Become: LearnHowtoBecome.org
- Talk to CPAD staff, faculty and advisors

What steps do I take to choose a major?

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?

2. Gather Information and Explore Options

- Examine available majors and eliminate those that do not interest you.
- Review the Catalog (<http://www.utm.edu/catalog.php>) 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 CPAD resources, visit department web pages
- Talk with academic advisors, students and faculty members in your major area of interest
- Interview or job shadow people who work in field of interest.
- 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.
- Talk with an advisor or professor you respect or a career counselor and ask for additional resources and for guidance through the decision-making process.

4. Take Action

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



Create Your Short List of Majors

Here are the majors offered at UT Martin. Determine your level of interest in each major to create your short list of majors that interests you. Rank them: 1=Definitely possible; 2=Worth considering; 3=What is this?; 4=No way!

Accounting, BS in Business Administration
Agriculture, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:
Agricultural Business
Agricultural Engineering Technology
Agricultural Science
Animal Science
Plant and Soil Science

Biology, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:
Cell and Molecular Biology
Ecology & Environmental Biology
Organismal Biology

Chemistry, BS

Communications, BA, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:
Broadcasting
Media Design
News Editorial
Public Relations

Computer Science, BS

Criminal Justice, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:
Corrections
Courts and Law
Forensics
Generalist
Law Enforcement

Economics, BS in Business Administration

Concentrations/Options available in:
Economics
General Business
International Business

Engineering, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:
Civil
Electrical
Industrial
Mechanical

English, BA

Concentrations/Options available in:
Literature
Secondary English Education
Writing

Family and Consumer Sciences, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:
Child and Family Studies
Dietetics

Family and Consumer Science Education

Fashion Merchandising

Food & Nutrition

Gerontology

Hospitality & Food Service Management

Finance, BS in Business Administration

Fine and Performing Arts, BFA

Concentrations/Options available in:
Studio/Visual Art, Graphic Design,
Theatre

Teaching/Art Education & Dance

Education

Geoscience, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:

Geography

Geology

Meteorology

Health and Human Performance, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:

Exercise Science & Wellness

Generalist

Human Performance

Public Health

History, BA, BS

Information Systems, BS in Business

Administration

Concentrations/Options available in:

Business Communication

Management Information Systems

Integrated Studies, BS in Education

Concentrations/Options available in:

Pre K-3 Licensure

K-6 Licensure

4-8 Licensure

Interdisciplinary Studies, BIS

Concentrations/Options available in:

Individualized

International Studies, BA

Concentrations/Options available in:

Business and Economic Development

Strategic Studies

Management, BS in Business

Administration

Concentrations/Options available in:

Management

Sport Management

Marketing, BS in Business Administration

Mathematics, BA, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:

General Mathematics & Statistics

Mathematics

Secondary Mathematics

Statistics

Music, BA

Music, BM

Concentrations/Options available in:

Music Education

Performance

Natural Resources Management, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:

Environmental Management

Park Administration

Soil & Water Conservation

Wildlife & Fisheries Biology

Nursing, BS

Philosophy, BA

Political Science, BA, BS

Concentrations/Options available in:

General

International Security Studies

Public Administration

Psychology, BA, BS

Secondary Education, BS in Education

Concentrations/Options available in:

Secondary Biology

Secondary Business

Secondary Chemistry

Secondary Earth and Space Science

Secondary Economics

Secondary English

Secondary French

Secondary Geography

Secondary Government

Secondary History

Secondary Mathematics

Secondary Spanish

Social Work, BS

Sociology, BA, BS

Spanish, BA

Special Education, BS in Education

Pre-Professional

Biosystems Engineering

Chiropractic

Cytotechnology

Dentistry

Dental Hygiene

Health Informatics and Information

Management

Law

Medicine

Medical Laboratory Science

Occupational Therapy

Optometry

Pharmacy

Physical Therapy

Physician Assistant

Theological

Veterinary Medicine

View updates:

www.utm.edu/degreeprograms.php