



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.

There will be information to explore, mentors and experts to question and internships to try. CPAD staff are 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.

TAKE TYPEFOCUS

TypeFocus allows you to explore how your personality, interests, skills and values align with careers and majors. Access the assessment on our website, take the assessments and schedule an appointment with a CPAD staff member to discuss your results and next steps.

RESEARCH RESOURCES

- What Can I Do With a Major In...?: access on CPAD page
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: [bls.gov/ooh/](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/)
- O*Net: [onetonline.org](https://www.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 (<https://catalog.utm.edu>) 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!!



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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	Finance, BS in Business Administration	Natural Resources Management, BS
Agriculture, BS	Fine and Performing Arts, BFA	Concentrations/Options available in:
Concentrations/Options available in:	Concentrations/Options available in:	Environmental Management
Agricultural Business	Studio/Visual Art, Graphic Design,	Park Administration
Agricultural Engineering Technology	Theatre	Soil & Water Conservation
Agricultural Science	Teaching/Art Education & Dance	Wildlife & Fisheries Biology
Animal Science	Education	Nursing, BS
Plant and Soil Science	Geoscience, BS	Philosophy, BA
Biology, BS	Concentrations/Options available in:	Political Science, BA, BS
Concentrations/Options available in:	Geography	Concentrations/Options available in:
Cell and Molecular Biology	Geology	General
Ecology & Environmental Biology	Meteorology	International Security Studies
Organismal Biology	Health and Human Performance, BS	Public Administration
Chemistry, BS	Concentrations/Options available in:	Psychology, BA, BS
Communications, BA, BS	Exercise Science & Wellness	Secondary Education, BS in Education
Concentrations/Options available in:	Generalist	Concentrations/Options available in:
Broadcasting	Human Performance	Secondary Biology
Media Design	Public Health	Secondary Business
News Editorial	History, BA, BS	Secondary Chemistry
Public Relations	Information Systems, BS in Business	Secondary Earth and Space Science
Computer Science, BS	Administration	Secondary Economics
Criminal Justice, BS	Concentrations/Options available in:	Secondary English
Concentrations/Options available in:	Business Communication	Secondary French
Corrections	Management Information Systems	Secondary Geography
Courts and Law	Integrated Studies, BS in Education	Secondary Government
Forensics	Concentrations/Options available in:	Secondary History
Generalist	Pre K-3 Licensure	Secondary Mathematics
Law Enforcement	K-6 Licensure	Secondary Spanish
Economics, BS in Business Administration	4-8 Licensure	Social Work, BS
Concentrations/Options available in:	Interdisciplinary Studies, BIS	Sociology, BA, BS
Economics	Concentrations/Options available in:	Spanish, BA
General Business	Individualized	Special Education, BS in Education
International Business	International Studies, BA	Pre-Professional
Engineering, BS	Concentrations/Options available in:	Biosystems Engineering
Concentrations/Options available in:	Business and Economic Development	Chiropractic
Civil	Strategic Studies	Cytotechnology
Electrical	Management, BS in Business	Dentistry
Industrial	Administration	Dental Hygiene
Mechanical	Concentrations/Options available in:	Health Informatics and Information
English, BA	Management	Management
Concentrations/Options available in:	Sport Management	Law
Literature	Marketing, BS in Business Administration	Medicine
Secondary English Education	Mathematics, BA, BS	Medical Laboratory Science
Writing	Concentrations/Options available in:	Occupational Therapy
Family and Consumer Sciences, BS	General Mathematics & Statistics	Optometry
Concentrations/Options available in:	Mathematics	Pharmacy
Child and Family Studies	Secondary Mathematics	Physical Therapy
Dietetics	Statistics	Physician Assistant
Family and Consumer Science Education	Music, BA	Theological
Fashion Merchandising	Music, BM	Veterinary Medicine
Food & Nutrition	Concentrations/Options available in:	
Gerontology	Music Education	
Hospitality & Food Service Management	Performance	

View updates:

utm.edu/academics/majors-and-programs/