

# 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. Career Services is here to help!

## FACTORS THAT BLOCK MAJOR/CAREER CHOICES

**External Factors:** You don't know what to do with particular major but like the idea of studying the topic. 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

[murraystate.edu/career/major](http://murraystate.edu/career/major)

- FOCUS (*Access Code: racers*): This is a self-paced, career and education planning tool that enables you to self-assess your career relevant personal qualities and explore career fields and major areas of study that are most compatible with your assessment results.
- My Next Move (interests assessment)
- 16Personalities (personality assessment)
- My Majors (aligns interests/skills to major)

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

## RESEARCH RESOURCES

- What Can I Do With a Major In...?: [whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors](http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: [bls.gov/ooh/](http://bls.gov/ooh/)
- O\*Net: [onetonline.org](http://onetonline.org)
- Buzzfile: [www.buzzfile.com/Major/KY](http://www.buzzfile.com/Major/KY)
- Learn How to Become: [LearnHowtoBecome.org](http://LearnHowtoBecome.org)
- Talk to Career Services 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 majors available to you (see back) and eliminate those that do not interest you.
- Review the Bulletin ([murraystate.edu/registrar.aspx](http://murraystate.edu/registrar.aspx)) 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.
- 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

- 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!!

## CREATE YOUR SHORT LIST OF MAJORS

On the back you will find a list of the majors offered at Murray State. 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!)



**MURRAY STATE**  
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## CAREER SERVICES

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[MURRAYSTATE.EDU/CAREER](http://MURRAYSTATE.EDU/CAREER)



- \* Minor also
- † Minor Only
- 1 Also available as 2-yr degree
- 2 Also available w/Teacher Cert

- Academic Options 2014-2015
- Accounting\*
- Accounting/Finance
- Accounting/Financial Planning
- Accounting/Information Systems
- Adventure Leadership†
- Advertising\*
- Agr Sci/Agribusiness
- Agr Sci/Agricultural Systems Tech
- Agr Sci/AgriSci Tech
- Agr Sci/Agronomy
- Agr Sci/Horticulture
- Agr Sci & Tech (2-yr degree)
- Agricultural Science2
- Agriculture†
- Animal Tech/Veterinary Tech
- Animal Tech/Veterinary Tech/Pre-Vet
- Animal Tech/Animal Equine Science
- Applied Physics
- Applied Physics/Pre-MBA
- Archaeology†
- Art (minor or Teaching Certification only)
- Art History†
- Art/Studio Art
- Art/Studio Art-Enhanced Art History
- Astronomy†
- Athletic Coaching †
- Athletic Training
- Biology\*2
- Biology/Biomedical Sciences
- Biology/Fisheries/Aquatic Biology
- Biology/Molecular Biology
- Biology/Pre-Med/Pre-Dental
- Biology/Pre-Optometry
- Biology/Pre-Pharmacy
- Biology/Pre-Physical Therapy
- Biology/Pre-Physician Asst
- Business Administration\* 1
- Business Economics†
- Business Geographic Information System (cert)
- Career & Tech Ed/Business & Marketing
- Career & Tech Ed/Engineering & Tech
- Career & Tech Ed/Family & Consumer Sci
- Career & Tech Ed/Industrial Edu

- Career & Technical Edu (2-yr degree)
- Chemistry\*2
- Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Chemistry/Forensics
- Chemistry/Pre-MBA
- Chemistry/Pre-Med/Pre-Dental
- Chemistry/Pre-Pharmacy
- Chemistry/Polymer & Materials
- Civil Engineering Technology 1
- Civil Engr Tech/Architectural Engineering
- Civil Engr Tech/Construction Engineering
- Civil Engr Tech/Environmental Engineering
- Communication Disorders
- Community Health
- Community Recreation †
- Computer Information Systems\*
- Computer Sci\*
- Creative Writing\*
- Criminal Justice\*
- Data Analytics †
- Earth Sci †
- Economics\*2
- Electromechanical Engineering Technology
- Elementary Edu
- Engineering Graphics & Design
- Engineering Physics 2
- Engineering Physics/Pre-Engineering
- Engineering Sci †
- English (minor or Teaching Certification only)
- English Edu †
- English Ed/Teaching Eng to Speakers of Other Lang 2
- English/Creative Writing
- English/Literature
- Entrepreneurship †
- Environmental Geology †
- Environmental Technology †
- Equine Sci †
- Exercise Sci/Pre-Health Professional
- Exercise Sci/Wellness
- Family & Consumer Studies †
- Film Studies †
- Finance\*
- Finance/Financial Planning
- French\*2
- Gender & Diversity Studies †
- General Studies (2-yr degree)
- Geographic Information Sci †
- Geoscience/Earth Sci 2
- Geoscience/Environmental Geology

- Geoscience/Geoarchaeology
- Geoscience/Geographic Info Sci
- German\*2
- Gerontology †
- Golf Course Mgmt †
- Graphic Comm Media
- Graphic Comm Tech †
- Health Information Admin
- Health & Physical Edu\*
- History\*2
- Industrial & Engineering Tech †
- Industrial Tech (2-yr degree)
- Information Studies †
- Interdisc Early Childhood Edu
- Interior Design
- International Studies\*
- International Business
- International Economics †
- Japanese\*2
- Journalism\*
- Learning & Behavior Disorders/Elementary
- Learning & Behavior Disorders/Middle
- Legal Studies †
- Liberal Arts
- Literature & Philosophy †
- Logistics & Supply Chain Mgmt
- Management\*
- Mgmt/Entrepreneurship
- Mgmt/Human Resources
- Manufacturing Technology
- Marketing\*
- Marketing/Business Geographic Info Sys
- Marketing/Entrepreneurship
- Mass Comm†
- Mathematics\*2
- Mathematics/Applied Math
- Mathematics/Pre-MBA
- Middle School Edu (1 or 2 tracks)
- Military Sci †
- Music\*
- Music Business
- Music Edu/Instrumental
- Music Edu/Voice
- Music/Composition
- Music/Keyboard Studies
- Music/Music Business
- Music/Performance
- Nonprofit Leadership Studies\*
- Nursing
- Nutrition, Dietetics & Food Mgt/Dietetics
- Nutrition, Dietetics & Food Mgt/Food Mgt
- Nutrition, Dietetics & Food Mgt/Nutr & Food
- Occupational Safety & Health †

- Organizational Comm\*
- OSH/Environmental Health & Safety
- OSH/Safety
- Philosophy †
- Philosophy/Aesthetics & Media Writing
- Philosophy/History & Contemporary Thought
- Philosophy/Political Thought
- Philosophy/Religious Thought
- Photography †
- Physics\*2
- Political Sci\*2
- Pre-Engineering (see Engineering Physics)
- Pre-Health Professional (see Exercise Sci)
- Pre-Law (must also choose major)
- Pre-MBA (see Applied Physics, Chemistry, or Math)
- Pre-Med/Dental (see Biology or Chemistry)
- Pre-Optometry (see Biology)
- Pre-Pharmacy (see Biology or Chemistry)
- Pre-Physical Therapy (see Biology)
- Pre-Physician Asst (see Bio)
- Pre-Vet (see Animal Tech)
- Professional Writing †
- Psychology\*
- Public Administration
- Public Relations
- Real Estate †
- Rec & Leisure Service/Adventure Leadership
- Rec & Leisure Service/Community
- Recreation & Leisure Services †
- Religious Studies †
- Rhetoric †
- Social Sci †
- Social Welfare †
- Social Work
- Sociology\*
- Spanish\*2
- Special Edu, General †
- Sports Comm †
- Sustainability Studies †
- Telecom Systems Mgmt\*
- Television Production
- Theatre\*
- Theatre Design/Technical †
- Heater Performance †
- Wildlife & Conservation Biology