

# Job Search – Deciding a Major

If you're unsure about what major to pursue, you are not alone. Many students entering college are undecided about their majors and others start with a declared major and end up changing it. The time a student spends in college is a period of exploration and consideration of the many possibilities available. Any major can equip students with knowledge and skills that can apply to a wide range of jobs in many diverse fields. Statistics say that adults will experience on the average a career change every seven years. A college major should be a base for such a change. Today critical thinking, interpersonal communication, creative problem solving, and techno-savvy are all examples of what career and personnel professionals call transferable skills. All majors dedicate a significant portion of time to the development of these skills.

## Important Tips

- We recommend that you meet with a Career Consultant when trying to decide a major
- Read related material
- Talk to professors and professionals who are doing what you desire to do after you graduate
- Seek out your classmates, especially upperclassmen, your college alumni, and family and friends.

The following questions were developed when conducting Informational Interviews. Informational interviews are not job interviews. This type of interview is network building and information gathering about a possible career occupation and major.

### Questions to Ask Yourself

- What activities do I participate in during my spare time?
- Where do I excel?
- What have I done in the past that makes me especially proud?
- What skills would I like to improve?
- What classes am I currently taking or have taken that I most enjoy?
- What do I value?
- How do my values affect my academic and career interests?
- What are my life circumstances and how might these affect my decision?
- What are my career goals?
- How do these goals fit with my values, interests and abilities?

### Questions to Ask Professors

- What can you do with \_\_\_\_\_ major?
- What jobs are recent graduates getting?
- Can you give me a name and phone number of an upperclassman, who is a good student, whom I may contact?
- To what professional organizations or student groups should I belong?

- Can you recommend any books or journals I should read?
- What skills are needed in this field?
- Can you tell me the specifics about courses needed?
- Tell me about the background of the staff?
- How did you get into this field? What is your background (education and experience)?
- Is there personal advice you would give a person entering this field?
- Do you think there is a need in this area for this major? Why?
- Can you provide me with names of other people who might provide additional information?  
May I use your name?
- What do you think is the best educational preparation for a career in \_\_\_\_\_?
- How well do you think I would fit in \_\_\_\_\_ department with my background?
- Do you foresee developments in \_\_\_\_\_ (major, department structure, career paths) that will affect any future career opportunities?

### **Questions to Ask People in the Profession**

- How did you get into this field?
- What do you enjoy about your work?
- Can you tell me the positive and negative aspects of the profession?
- To what professional associations or organizations do you belong?
- What training or education is required for this type of work?
- What skills are most important in your work?
- Is there potential for advancement in this position?
- How mobile and flexible can you be?
- Where, in your opinion, is the best place to look for a position in this field?
- What part of the position is the most challenging for you?
- What personal attributes do you think are essential for success?
- What qualifications does the company look for?
- How did you get your job?
- On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
- What is the salary range in this position? Benefits?
- Are there night and weekend commitments?
- Does the company offer professional development or support your participation in state or national conferences?
- Do you foresee development in \_\_\_\_\_ which will affect future opportunities?
- Are there other job titles that I should be looking for that are comparable to \_\_\_\_\_?
- Is there personal advice you would give a person entering this field?
- How secure are jobs in this field?
- Are you doing what you thought you would be doing when you started?
- Who do you know that I may contact next? May I use your name?

### **Career Center Resources**

**Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance**, by William E.Hopke, 2003

**How to Choose a College Major**, by Linda Andrews , 2006

**O\*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles**, 2007

**Occupational Outlook Handbook**, 2002

### **Website Repository**

For even more information, please search through our hand-picked list of websites on [The Career Center's Website Repository](#).