Undecided About a Major?

These Simple Steps Will Help!

Being “undecided” can be a great way to start your undergraduate education, you have the opportunity to explore majors and discover a field you love to study.

☐ Your goal: Find a major you’ll love to study. What topics do you like to learn about, debate, research, think about, analyze?

☐ Go to guide.berkeley.edu and select “Degree Programs” from the “Undergraduate” tab. Read the description of many majors, not just ones that you have heard of.

☐ If a major intrigues you, read the course descriptions of the classes from that department. Make a note of every class that interests you. When you’re done, look at your list. What majors do those courses apply to? Those are majors that are offering classes that interest you; they may be majors you will love to study.

☐ Make a list of these possible majors and their required lower division courses. For your first semester, you might enroll in two of these prerequisite courses. Frequently, majors have similar or overlapping prerequisite courses.
  ➢ Whenever possible, enroll in prerequisite courses that overlap in two or more majors. That way you are experimenting and testing in an organized and thoughtful manner.

☐ If your courses of interest are all spread throughout several majors and minors, you might want to consider one of our interdisciplinary majors: American Studies, Asian Studies, Cognitive Science, Development Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, Latin American Studies, Legal Studies, Media Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Peace & Conflict Studies, Political Economy, Religious Studies.

☐ Use resources outside of the classroom to help you make your decision.
  ▪ Visit the upper division classes in the majors that interest you
  ▪ Talk to students, advisers, and professors in these departments
  ▪ Look at the upper division books in the bookstore
  ▪ Visit the Career Counseling Library at the Tang Center

☐ Enroll in L&S 1: Exploring the Liberal Arts in your first semester.
  This course provides an introduction to the intellectual landscape of the College of Letters and Science, revealing the underlying assumptions, goals, and structure of a liberal arts education. Topics include the difference between the College of Letters and Science and the professional schools, the rationale behind the breadth requirement, the approaches and methodologies of each of the divisions in the College, and the benefits of engaging in research as an undergraduate. The ultimate goal of the course is to transform the students into informed participants in their own educational experiences, so that they can make the most of their years at Berkeley.

☐ Know that you don’t have to decide now! Students are expected to declare a major around the end of their fourth semester at UC Berkeley.
Choosing A Major

7 Questions to Ask Yourself

While clicking through the descriptions of majors on the Berkeley Academic Guide, it's important to distinguish between those that sound mildly interesting and those that really seem right for you. Here are questions to consider as you read.

1. Are you willing to work hard for the knowledge you'll gain in this major?

2. How much will you enjoy the daily activities of students in this major? Do classes emphasize discussion? Lecture? Problem-solving?

3. Do the typical course titles sound interesting?

4. How important to the major are skills in math? In reading? In writing? In research?

5. How specialized is the major? Will you learn a lot about a little or a little about a lot?

6. Is the major interdisciplinary? Will you use a wide range of academic disciplines to study a particular topic?

7. Is this a career-oriented major? Will it prepare you for one or more specific careers or will it give you a chance to build general skills that you can use in any number of careers?