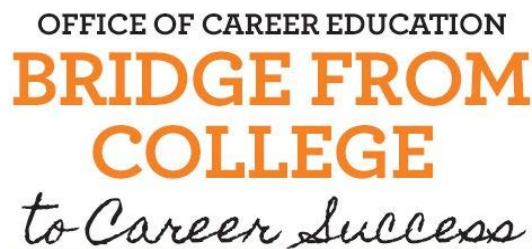


Choosing a Major

Choosing a college major can be overwhelming. Arcadia offers many choices and it may be a challenge to pick one when it feels like the rest of your adult life is riding on that choice. Many graduates pursue careers that aren't directly related to their college majors, or change careers after several years.



What is a Major?

A major is a specific subject area that students specialize in. Typically, between one-third and one-half of the courses you'll take in college will be in your major or related to it. The other courses you will take will fulfill your general education requirements like English, math and science. To learn more about requirements for all majors at Arcadia visit: <https://www.arcadia.edu/academics/programs#/search>

How Important is My College Major?

The major you choose will neither predict nor guarantee your future. Many graduates find jobs that have nothing to do with what they studied in college. The vast majority of employers are interested in the skills you have developed during your college experience (such as communication, teamwork, research, and writing) rather than your particular major. Have no fear that choosing a college major will lock you into a specific career for the rest of your life. If you are interested in an applied field such as engineering, accounting, chemistry for example, your choice of major will be more important as you will need that academic background to enter the field. If you intend to earn a professional degree (like an MD or PT) after college, you will need certain science courses under your belt, but many future doctors major in non-science related fields. If you are considering law school in your future, all majors are possible for entry into law school. Pre-law, pre-PT, pre-PA, pre-OT and pre-med are not majors, but concentrations of courses that will fulfill the requirements for entry into those professional schools; you will still need a major!

When Do I Declare My Major?

If you are interested in a major that requires a lot of classes, or classes that are limited to students in that major, then it is better to declare early. Some majors demand a strictly regimented order of courses, and if you fall behind, you may have to extend your college stay for a semester (or two or four). For those majoring in fine art, acting and elementary education your first semester is the ideal time to declare. Students interested in other majors generally have until October of sophomore year to declare.

Can I Change My Mind?

Definitely! One of the most exciting aspects of college life is that it introduces you to new subjects and passions. You might enter undergrad enjoying physics, then discover a passion for political science. However, keep this mind: Every major has requisite coursework. Some require you to take introductory courses before you move into the more advanced classes. Also, some classes are offered in the fall but not in the spring, or vice-versa. If you change your major late in the game, it may take more than the traditional four years to earn a degree.

Minors and Double Majors

If one field of study doesn't satisfy your intellectual appetite, consider a minor. A minor is similar to a major in that it's an area of academic concentration. The only difference is that a minor does not require as many classes. Some undergrads with a love of learning choose two majors, often in totally different subjects. A double major provides you with an understanding of two academic fields. It allows you to become familiar with two sets of values, views and vocabularies. That said, it also requires you to fulfill two sets of requirements and take twice as many required





classes. You won't have as many opportunities to experiment or take classes outside those two fields. Most students find that one major is more than enough.

Practical Tips for Figuring Out Your Major

Think about your skills in certain subjects. It is important to make sure that you have the aptitude for your major to ensure your success. Another idea is to gain some practical experiences through summer jobs and internships which may help you get a sense of what courses relate to certain careers. It can be very helpful to review the many majors offered at Arcadia and read through course descriptions. A searchable course description database is available through Arcadia's Self Service portal at: <https://selfservice.arcadia.edu/SelfService/Search/CatalogSearch.aspx>. If you find your interest peaked after reading course descriptions for a certain major, consider taking an introductory course to see if you really like the subject matter. You can always talk with faculty and students in majors of interest to learn more. Multiple career assessments such as personality, interests, values and skills will help you understand yourself better. Based on your assessment results you will discover which majors and careers suit you best and develop a starting plan to get there. A great assessment site to start with is TypeFocus. Set-up your account at www.arcadia.edu/typefocus using access code "Arcadia OCE".

How Career Education Can Help

You are not alone! Individual career counseling including career exploration and major selection support is offered. We are located in Knight Hall, Suite 100. Schedule an appointment through the Office of Career Education's (OCE) online career management system called Handshake (<https://arcadia.joinhandshake.com>).

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 <p>TypeFocus™ Success Through Self Awareness</p>	<p>Multiple career assessments such as personality, interests, values and skills will help you understand yourself better. Based on your assessment results you will discover which occupations suit you best and develop a plan to get there. www.arcadia.edu/typefocus Access code = Arcadia OCE</p>
	<p>Learn about career areas and the types of employers that hire people within each major, as well as strategies to make you a marketable candidate. www.arcadia.edu/majorstocareers</p>
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