



MAJOR EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

The activities in these pages can help you to increase knowledge/awareness about yourself. These are activities that you can use, as you see fit, to assist you with your exploration of majors and careers. You do not have to complete all of these activities because not all activities work for every student. It is recommended that you complete the activities that you feel are relevant to you and discuss your results with your adviser.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN THE PROCESS OF FINDING YOUR MAJOR, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING:

You are not choosing what you have to do for the rest of your life!!!!

Generally, there isn't a 1-1 relationship between major and career. Many graduates have jobs that are NOT directly related to their major, which means you can major in just about anything, and in most cases, go into just about any career as a result. You can enhance your employability by getting career-related experience while in school.

There is no "perfect" or "right" major...just some that you'll be more satisfied with than others.

Which also means that there is no "wrong" major either. Realize that there are likely five or six possible majors, from the numerous options available at PSU, with which you would be very satisfied. The aim is to find and choose one of those possible majors.

There is no magical test that will tell you what you should choose.

Yes, there are career tests you can take, and yes, they can be helpful in determining possible career options, but they won't provide all of the answers for you.

Choosing a major is a COLLABORATIVE process and it takes time. You and your adviser will be involved in helping each other to make this process enjoyable, fun and educational for you.

Your adviser looks forward to having a conversation with you. Please call 503 725 4005 to set up a meeting.

Happy Exploration!

Why am I undecided?

Before you can choose a major, it is important to know the reasons you are undecided and just how undecided you are about a major, or even a career. Below are a few examples. Be honest about YOUR reasons for being undecided. List the reasons in the space provided.

Here are just a few examples why some students claim to be undecided:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to make the "wrong" choice. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have too many interests and can't narrow down your options. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know what information or options are out there | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not ready to commit to a choice. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have an interest in any area of study. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a career chosen, but do not know which majors are best for that career. |

What are your reasons?

What am I interested in?

This activity is very simple and will assist you with putting some thoughts down on paper. Place a "✓" next to each of the items below that you feel best describe your preferences and interests.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be doing physical activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to have a set, planned out schedule. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to build things. | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to do things my own way. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to work on/with mechanical things. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to have defined, structured tasks. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to work with my hands. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like to be a follower, rather than a leader. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to do clerical/office tasks. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like to take risks. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to work with detailed things. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like change. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to see how things work. | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be doing many different things. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to create and make things. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be in a competitive working environment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to come up with ideas. | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to work closely with people. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to use my creativity. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want freedom and few rules. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to work with animals. | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be independent. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to work with children. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to work in a very cooperative environment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to investigate. | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer leadership positions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to do research. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be in charge, or in control. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like being able to help others. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like working in groups. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would prefer to travel. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be outdoors. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be in an office. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to have a neat and orderly workplace. | |

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer working with just a small group of people. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like to procrastinate. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would rather work by myself than with a group. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like it when things get finished. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to work closely with others. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like to prepare things ahead of time. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to start projects by myself. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am a perfectionist. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy explaining things to others. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like communicating. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am genuinely concerned for others. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like writing. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like to come up with solutions to problems. | <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy debating issues. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like the challenge of making money. | <input type="checkbox"/> I like the medical sciences. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I like math. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> I like science. |

Look at the items you have marked. Do you see some common themes in the items you've marked? What are those? If your preferences are not on the list above, add them here.

Why do you believe these are of interest to you? Can you give any examples of experiences you've had that have influenced why you marked these items?

Take a look at the items you have not marked. Can you think of the reasons why these are not of interest to you?

Do the items you've marked disagree with each other? What are those items?

What subjects do I enjoy?

Take a moment to reflect upon those subjects that you have completed both in high school and in college up to this point. List the subjects/courses you really enjoyed taking in the left column. What was it about those courses that you enjoyed or liked?

Subjects/Courses you enjoyed or found an interest in:	Ability (1-10)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Rate your abilities in those subjects from 1-10 (10 being the highest) in the right column above. Do you need to improve your skills and abilities to be successful in these courses?

List below those subjects/courses in which you were bored, frustrated, confused, and/or did not like.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What majors are on my list?

Cross out those majors on the following list that you know you would never consider. Or, circle the ones in which you feel you have some level of interest. Or, do both. The point is to make the potential list of majors manageable.

Are the majors you've circled related/ different to one another?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

College of Urban & Public Affairs

Applied Health & Fitness
Civic Leadership (Minor)
Community Development*
Criminology and Criminal Justice* (Certificate)
Health Studies
Aging Services*
Community Health Education*
Health Sciences
Physical Activity/Exercise
School Health
Law and Legal Studies (Minor)
Political Science*
Real Estate Development (Minor)
Sustainable Urban Development (Minor)

The College of Arts

Architecture*
Art History*
Art Practices
Creative Industries Studies (Minor)
Drawing/Painting/Printmaking
Graphic Design*
Sculpture (Minor)
Dance (Minor)
Design Management (Minor)
Film
Jazz Studies (Minor)
Music*
Music: Composition*
Music: Education*
Music: History (Minor)
Music: Jazz*
Music: Voice*
Music Performance
Theater Arts*

School of Social Work

Child and Family Studies
Social Work

Maseeh College of Engineering & Computer Science

Biomedical Informatics
Civil Engineering
Computer Engineering
Computer Science*
Electrical Engineering*

Environmental Engineering*
Mechanical Engineering

School of Business Administration

Business Administration
Accounting
Accounting (Post-Bac Certificate)
Advertising Management*
Business Administration (Minor)
Finance
Food Industry Management (Certificate)
Human Resources Management
International Business Studies (Certificate)
Management and Leadership
Marketing
Real Estate Finance
Supply and Logistics Management

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Anthropology*
Applied Linguistics*
Arts & Letters
Biology*
Biology: Botany
Biology: Micro/Molecular
Biology: Organismal
Black Studies* (Certificate)
Chemistry*
Chemistry: Biochemistry
Chicano/Latino Studies (Certificate)
Classical Studies (Minor)
Communication Studies*
Conflict Resolution
Creative Writing
Earth Science
Economics*
Elementary Education (Minor)
English*
Environmental Geology (Minor)
Environmental Sciences
Environmental Studies*
Film Studies (Minor)
Advanced Proficiency in Russian (Certificate)
Arabic*
Chinese*
French*
German*
Italian (Minor)

Japanese*
Russian*
Spanish*
Turkish (Minor)
Geography*
Graphical Information Systems (Minor)
Geology*
History*
History and Philosophy of Science (Minor)
International Economics (Minor)
International Studies*
African Studies
Canadian Studies (Certificate)
East Asian Studies
European Studies
European Studies (Certificate)
International Development
Latin American Studies (Certificate)
Middle Eastern Studies (Certificate)
Judaic Studies*
Liberal Studies
Mathematics*
Native American Studies (Minor)
Philosophy*
Photography (Minor)
Physics*
Physics: Biomedical
Physics: Environmental
Political Economy (Minor)
Psychology*
Quantitative Economics
Religious Studies (Minor)
Revitalizing Endangered Indigenous Languages (Certificate)
Science
Secondary Education (Minor)
Sexuality, Gender and Queer Studies (Minor)
Social Science
Sociology*
Space and Planetary Science (Minor)
Special Education (Minor)
Speech and Hearing Science
Sustainability (Minor)
Teaching English as a Second Language (Certificate)
Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language (Certificate)
Women's Studies* (Certificate)
Writing (Minor)

What skills do I have?

Mark skills you are good at and rate your skill level on a scale of 1-5 (5 being highest) for each of the following abilities listed below.

- | 5 – Highly Skilled | 2 – Low Skill |
|---|---|
| 4 – Skilled | 1 – No Skill |
| 3 – Intermediate | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inspiring trust and confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> being understanding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> motivating others | <input type="checkbox"/> speaking effectively in front of groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> guiding the activities of others | <input type="checkbox"/> creating policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working effectively with individuals and groups | <input type="checkbox"/> advocating for others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> planning and organizing | <input type="checkbox"/> operating machinery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> understanding emotional and educational needs of others | <input type="checkbox"/> investigating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> communicating verbally | <input type="checkbox"/> using space effectively |
| <input type="checkbox"/> maintaining order, resolving differences, anticipating and preventing problems | <input type="checkbox"/> making well-informed decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gathering information | <input type="checkbox"/> being self-disciplined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> presenting information in a manner that holds attention | <input type="checkbox"/> working under stressful conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adapting and presenting information to different learning styles | <input type="checkbox"/> serving others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> accurately assessing progress of individuals or programs | <input type="checkbox"/> interacting with people from different backgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> communicating effectively in writing | <input type="checkbox"/> building, making things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> managing multiple tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> leading others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working alone | <input type="checkbox"/> being reliable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> solving problems | <input type="checkbox"/> using diplomacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> identifying important issues | <input type="checkbox"/> taking responsibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> integrating a variety of concepts | <input type="checkbox"/> understanding physical needs of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being organized | <input type="checkbox"/> assisting others in their growth/development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> understanding how political and social contexts affect behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> helping others through stressful times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> attention to details | <input type="checkbox"/> using time effectively |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-motivated | <input type="checkbox"/> effectively listening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> analyzing information and situations | <input type="checkbox"/> working with numbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> thinking critically | <input type="checkbox"/> using technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> designing | <input type="checkbox"/> persuading others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> taking initiative | <input type="checkbox"/> being inventive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being patient | <input type="checkbox"/> persevering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> being versatile and able to adapt |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> dealing with conflict |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> confronting others |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> facilitating discussion |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> creating or composing |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> performing |

- debating with others
- selling ideas, goods, or services
- being flexible to change
- understanding all sides of an issue

If you have skills that you feel you are good at and are not on the list above, be sure to list them and rate your ability.

Review the list, what are your highest rated skills?

Why do you feel these are highest?

Which skills do you wish you could improve upon or learn?
Why do you feel you should improve on these particular skills?

What do I value?

Using the scale below, rank the following statements:

5 – Very High Importance

2 – Very Low Importance

4 – High Importance

1 – No Importance

3 – Some Importance

Values that relate to your work environment

- Risk/Adventure: Your responsibilities at work often include taking chances
- Creativity: You have the chance to create or come up with new ideas
- Challenges: You will be faced with challenges, situations to resolve, and/or problems to solve
- High Paced: Your environment is highly active
- Autonomy: You have much independence in your position

- Change: Being in an environment where change occurs often, or where you have to adapt to new circumstances
- Variety: Your responsibilities are varied, allowing for many different experiences
- Authority: Your job gives you the opportunity to be the person who makes decisions
- Competitive: You compete with others in your work environment
- Physical: Your responsibilities include tasks that require physical action
- Money-Making: You have the opportunity to make increasingly large amounts of money
- Leadership: Your responsibilities include supervising others in your environment
- Secure: There is a low likelihood of you losing your job
- Pressure: Your work environment includes many situations in which you are under pressure to perform job responsibilities well or on time
- Predictable: Your responsibilities are predictable and are not likely to change often
- Flexible: You control your schedule and work nonstandard hours according to your needs

Values that relate to your personal interests

- Specialized: In your environment, you are considered an expert in your area
- Recognition/Value: You are appreciated, recognized and valued for your work
- Knowledge Seeking: Your job promotes or encourages the pursuit of knowledge and understanding
- Location: Your job is located in an environment that is comfortable
- Morality: Your work involves tasks that encourage moral standards important to you
- Community: Your job is located where you feel you can get connected and/or involved in the community
- Professional Growth: Your position has good opportunities to move up the career ladder

Values that relate to the people in your environment

- Friendships/Relationships: In your environment, having strong friendships with your co-workers is important
- Helping: Your responsibilities include helping others
- Connection: You feel connected to the organization for which you work
- Control/Power: Your job gives you the chance to control others or their activities

- Contact: Your environment encourages a lot of interaction with others
- Isolation: Your environment allows you to spend most of your time working alone
- Societal Importance: Your job impacts society in positive ways

Next, take a moment to review your ratings, and list below those that are of most importance to you.

Are there other values that were not included on this list? Write those down and rate them as well.

It is important to consider values that are of great importance to you when choosing a major or a career.

Action plan

You've reviewed interests, skills and values to consider when making a decision. Now, it's time to make an action plan. Be sure to work together with your adviser on this plan.

Major(s) you wish to explore:

Next steps

Deadlines

Other tasks to consider:

Notes:

I have a follow-up appointment with my adviser on:

OTHER STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU CHOOSE A MAJOR

Meet often with your adviser: ACS Advisers are available to meet with you as often as you like to help you choose a major or career. We are open for drop-in every day. You can call 503-725-4005 or walk-in to schedule an appointment.

Take an exploratory course for the majors you are considering: PSU has exploratory courses for many programs. [Here](#) is the list of these courses.

Investigate the majors that interest you: Look at the courses that are required for the program. Are you excited about them? Do you think they will help you in your life and in your career?

Take a career exploration class: UNST 195 Career Exploration is a 1 credit hour course designed to help students choose majors and careers. You will be spending time anyway trying to make these decisions—why not receive college credit for it too?

Choose your University Studies courses carefully: Your ACS Adviser can help you select courses that will help you learn about majors and also fill core requirements.

Explore ACS online resources: Helpful information about [What Can You Do With a Degree in.....](#) is available to all PSU students.

Keep your options open: If you are trying to decide between two majors, select courses that are required for both.

Turn one of your options into a minor: When trying to choose between majors, take courses that will fill major and minor requirements for both. Then when you decide which of the two you want to be your major, your other choice can easily be turned into a minor.

Find out requirements for majors that are selective and have additional applications and deadlines: Some majors have limited enrollment and only accept a certain number of students each year. Find out what these requirements are for the majors that interest you. Take the prerequisite courses and do well in them, so if you decide to apply, you will be prepared.

Have a back-up plan: When applying to programs that have additional application requirements to get in, prepare a back-up plan. There are often many ways to achieve your goals. ACS staff can help you.

Work with a plan—literally! : Part-time work, summer employment, internships, and volunteer work should all be done with a plan. Use these opportunities to investigate areas of interest and to make contacts that will help further your career goals.

Visit the Advising and Career Services (ACS): ACS has a lot of books on careers. Want to learn how to be an FBI agent? ACS has information to help you! We offer numerous [workshops](#) throughout the year.

Attend a career decision-making workshop: ACS has workshops to help you choose majors and careers. There is a small fee. After you complete the assessment, your results will be explained to you by ACS staff.

Job shadow: Thinking about a career but don't know if you would like it? Try job shadowing. Find someone who has the kind of job you want, and then ask if you can follow them around for a day or longer. Put yourself in his or her place. Do you like what you see?

Informational interviewing: Find someone who is already working in the profession you are considering and ask them for an interview. [Here](#) you can find a few questions to ask during an informational interview.

Pre-professional advising: Interested in pre-med, pre-dental, or health profession? Visit with an adviser in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Call 503-725-3822. For pre-law advising, email Tim Garrison at brtg@pdx.edu

Adopted from Brigham Young University, Majors consideration and strategies