



Take time and reflect in choosing your major. After all, this is the subject matter you will spend nearly 4 years reading, writing, discussing, and presenting. Select a major that is stimulating and in line with your strengths!

# Choosing a Major Guide

## Research Majors

Research majors by viewing the description of the major and courses in the General Catalog (reg.ucsc.edu under "Fields of Study"). Look into course prerequisites, minimum GPA to enter the major, units required to graduate, and the flexibility of course work. Review the major in more detail:

- Visit the department's website to learn about faculty, research, and opportunities in the major.
- Meet with a career adviser to explore career options after graduation.
- If you haven't chosen a major yet, create a list of 3-5 majors to explore and meet with a career adviser to help you in the decision-making process.

## Signs you may want to consider a new major

- You get bored in your current major's classes.
- You are doing poorly in your current major's classes.
- You chose your major without much thought.
- You are very curious about other majors and consistently entertain the idea of switching majors.

## Next steps...

- Check out our events calendar at careers.ucsc.edu
- Attend *workshops* on resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, networking, and more
- Schedule an appointment to meet with a career adviser

### More Guides from the Career Center:

- [Resume Guide](#)
- [Cover Letter Guide](#)
- [Internship Guide](#)
- [Work-Study & Part-time Guide](#)

## Self-Assessment

### Questions to ask yourself

- What are my strongest skills? What am I interested in?
- What learning and testing style am I most comfortable with? Many majors have certain styles for learning and evaluation.
- Do I prefer reading over problem solving; grappling with theoretical ideas over concrete concepts; writing essays over multiple-choice exams?
- What are you looking for in a career? Some things to consider: Working with people or alone? Opportunities for creative expression? Having a set schedule? Work environment? Job security? Salary level?
- Take in-depth self-assessments guided by a career adviser to identify your skills and interests! You can complete the free online Focus2 assessment program, or take a more in-depth assessment (Strong Interest Inventory or Myers Briggs Type Indicator) and meet with an adviser to review your results.
- Check out more information under the "Assessments" section of the Career Center "Students" page. Make an appointment with a career adviser to get started.

## Research Careers

- Utilize both your own networks and the UCSC Alumni group on LinkedIn to find UCSC alumni and community members in fields that interest you. Conduct informational interviews with them.
- Ask what they majored in, what major is preferred to enter that field, and suggestions to begin gaining experience for your career path.



Your **major** is the field of study you take courses in during your undergraduate career to earn a B.A./B.S. Choose your major based on subjects and topics you enjoy learning about.

Your **career** is your professional trajectory and an accumulation of job experiences in your life. Choose your career based on fulfilling causes that engage you.

Remember that selecting a major is part of the career development process. While there may be some correlation between what you study and your career, most majors at UCSC allow access to multiple types of careers.

## Factors to consider while browsing career paths

### 1 Geography

- Where do you want to live and work?  
-Urban vs suburban areas, location in the state or country
- What type of environment do you want to be in?

### 2 Types of information

- What is the information and/or data that you want to work with based on what interests you?

### 3 People

- Do you want to work with people directly (one-on-one, direct interaction) or indirectly (writing research, "behind the scenes" work)

### 4 Ideas/Concepts

- Is innovation important to you?  
Would you rather use creativity in generating ideas or work with preexisting concepts?

### 5 Things

- What kind of tools, equipment, instruments, etc. do you want to use in your work in an ideal environment? (E.g., databases, lab equipment, cameras)

## Step 1: Career Advising Appointment

- Get guidance from a career adviser on creating an action plan.
- To get started, check out the Career Planning Checklist on the website.

## Step 2: Self assessment

- The Focus2 program, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and Strong Interest Inventory (available at the Career Center) can help you identify how your personality, interests, skills, and values fall in line with various career paths.

## Step 3: Research Careers

- Use career research databases such as O\*Net (onetonline.org) or the Occupational Outlook Handbook (BLS.gov/ooh).  
Conduct informational interviews with professionals to find careers that match your interests and bigger-picture goals.

## Step 4: Get Involved and Explore Opportunities

- Participate in on-campus activities, join student orgs, and find volunteer work to gain experience and insight in fields you're interested in. Look at SlugQuest to see available opportunities in those fields.
- Look to see if your major offers research, field work or internship opportunities.

## Step 5: Get Ready to Work!

- Attend workshops on resumes and cover letters, internships, job search, and more (visit the Career Center events calendar for listings).
- Meet with a career adviser to prepare for job search, interviews, and much more.