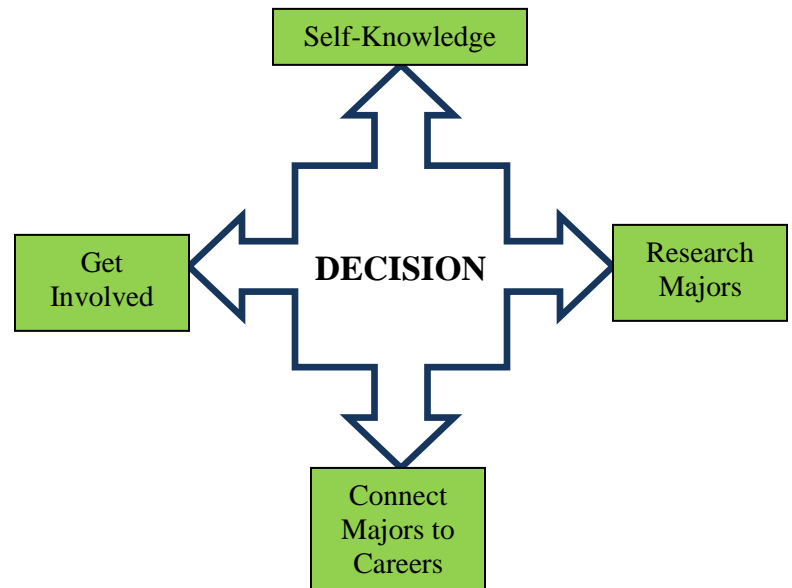




# HOW DO I CHOOSE A MAJOR?

Some people may have a major or career in mind when they enter college and a few may actually stick with these original goals. However, the majority of entering college students are either undecided or change their minds about majors several times throughout their academic career. In fact, the average student who enters college with a declared major changes it three to five times. Although changing majors or being undecided is a common norm in college, declaring a major is also a requirement for an AA degree and/or transfer. Therefore, it's never too early to start thinking about choosing a major.

Choosing a major can often be an overwhelming decision-making process. Thinking about ways in which you have made decisions in the past, can help you make decisions for the future. What information did you need to gather? Did talking to your friends and family help? Did you have to dig deeper and think about what was most important and meaningful for you in order to make a decision? Deciding on a major is a similar process that requires pieces of all the above: self-knowledge, involvement, gathering information, and making connections.



## Self - Knowledge

Taking time to look within yourself and discovering, perhaps for the first time, *what really is important to you* can be a tremendous help as you consider your major options.

Identify your:

- Interests (likes/dislikes)
- Values
- Strengths
- Skills
- Occupations of interest



**What if I am interested in many things? What if I simply can not make up my mind?** It's okay to feel a bit overwhelmed, but it's also important to know that there are assessments or tests that can help you connect personal attributes (interests, values, skill, etc.) to majors and occupations.

Ask your counselors about assessments such as the:

- Strong Interest Inventory (SII)
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Ask yourself:

What is it that holds my attention for hours at a time and motivates or inspires me?

What type of things do I find myself daydreaming about?

What are my natural talents and strengths? What am I good at?

What would I not want to study or do?

What are some occupations that I am interested in and why?

What life factors do I need to consider? (family, financial obligations & cultural expectations)

# Gather Information, Get Involved, and Make Connections

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Thinking about what is most important to you is an excellent blueprint or guide as you research majors and career paths. As you conduct your research and gather information it is important to see if your interests, values, and strengths align with your chosen majors. It is also important to keep the big picture in mind. Consider ways in which your major connects to various occupations and the kind of lifestyle you have envisioned for yourself.

Here are some tips to consider when conducting your research:

- Begin with the end in mind
  - Starting with a vision will guide your major decision-making
- **Connect majors to related occupations**
  - 1 major = many occupations
- **Conduct informational interviews**
  - Interview people who have the job that you want
  - Ask them about their educational backgrounds
  - What was their major? Where did they study?
  - Gain an inside perspective
- Talk to faculty who teach subjects you are interested in
- **Make an appointment with a career counselor**
  - Can help you connect personal attributes to majors and careers
  - Can help you with the decision-making process
- Attend on-campus events
- Join major-related clubs and organizations



## When researching for majors pay attention to:

- Program Descriptions
- Admission Requirements
- Typical Course Work
- Related Majors
- Related Occupations
- Colleges/Universities offering that major

## Resources

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### PIERCE COLLEGE CAREER CENTER WEBSITE

[http://www.piercecollege.edu/offices/career\\_center/](http://www.piercecollege.edu/offices/career_center/)

Explore major and career options, access major and career related resources, and more. Make an appointment with a career counselor.

### EUREKA

[www.eureka.org](http://www.eureka.org)

Conduct self-assessments to identify your personality, interests, skills, and ideal work environments. Explore and research more than 2,000 occupations, educational programs and universities state and world-wide. **Use this code to create an account: TSGEYKW**

### AMERICA'S CAREER INFONET

[www.careerinfonet.org](http://www.careerinfonet.org)

Explore occupation profiles and gather information on employment trends, wages, and required knowledge, skills, and education. Connect occupations to educational programs and universities state and nation-wide.

### CALIFORNIA CAREER ZONE

[www.cacareerzone.org](http://www.cacareerzone.org)

Identify occupations and educational programs based on your interests and what you feel is important to you in a job and/or work setting.

### O\*NET ONLINE

[www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)

Database of occupational information, which includes information on skills, abilities, work activities, and interests associated with occupations and educational programs.

