

# HOW TO CHOOSE A MAJOR: NAVIGATING YOUR WAY

Some students enter college having decided on a major and others need help narrowing down their options. Some students change their major 1-3 times. Choosing a major is not the same as choosing a career.

Studying any of the majors offered at Goucher will help prepare you for a variety of career possibilities and help you develop skills that you can use in a variety of occupational settings. Your major does not dictate your future, nor does it trap you in one career field for the rest of your life. Many people end up doing things outside of their majors or decide to change careers.

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN CHOOSING A MAJOR:

- Careers very rarely require specific undergraduate majors, so study something you will enjoy.
- It is OK to change your major, but be mindful of completing requirements for graduation,
- Employers consider more than just your major, so it is important to gain experience in your industry of interest.

## HOW CAN THE CEO HELP?

The CEO offers several services and resources that can help you navigate your way through the process of choosing a major. Make an appointment with a career advisor to help you during any step of the process. We can:

- Show you online resources to learn more about career fields
- Encourage you to consider your interests and skills and explore how you can use those in different careers
- Engage in conversations about internships, having career conversations and job shadowing

## WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE?

### 1. LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF

You need to understand yourself before you can choose a major that fits you. Think about these questions to get started.

- What courses do you enjoy?
- What activities are you involved in on campus or in your communities?
- What kinds of things do you do well?
- What is important to you? (Money? Prestige? Creativity?)
- What type of work environment interests you? (Physical **and** social environment)
- What is your dream job?

The CEO encourages you to review [O\\*Net Interest Profiler](#), an interactive tool to identify careers that align with your interests.

### 2. RESEARCH CAREER OPTIONS

Begin exploring what broad career fields match up well with the things you have learned about yourself. Research salaries, working conditions, training & qualifications, and daily responsibilities. Here are a [few helpful resources](#):

- Review these sites:
  - [O\\*net Online](#) - find occupations using keywords or a list of skills. Review the list of tasks and related occupations. The interactive tool, [O\\*Net Interest Profiler](#), can help identify careers that align with your interests.
  - [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) is another resource to learn about various aspects of career fields, including required education, potential earnings and job prospects, and job search tips
- Read job descriptions for advertised openings. Handshake, Indeed, and LinkedIn have listings for a variety of fields.
- Check out "What Can I Do With This Major?", which offers information about possible careers for different majors. (Note: the majors are not Goucher-specific, so look for those similar to ours.) As a paid resource, access through [Goucher's page](#)

### 2. GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF POSSIBLE MAJORS

Next, review the majors Goucher offers. Try eliminating ones that do not interest you and start researching your favorites.

- Talk to other students who are in these majors.
- Talk to faculty members in these areas.
- Review the courses required by that major and, if you can, try taking an introductory course in an area of interest.
- Visit the [Goucher Undergraduate Program Finder](#) to learn detailed information on each major Goucher offers.

#### 4. SPEAK TO PEOPLE

One of the best ways to learn more about a major (or career) is to speak with those who are in positions and industries that appeal to you. These brief exchanges are called information interviews or career conversations, and they are vital to every step of the career exploration process. See the CEO's [informational interview resources](#) to learn more.

The CEO can help you prepare for an informational interview with someone in a particular job, company, and industry, give you an overview of how to find potential contacts, and help guide you through [setting up a LinkedIn profile](#).

#### 5. GAIN FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE

Another way to explore majors and careers is try getting more experience in that field. Completing internships or volunteer activities related to the major you are considering can help you get a better idea of your passions and interests. Internships:

- Help students explore career paths, enhance skills, and provide opportunities to experience the world of work.
- Are a valuable way to explore careers and industries, while gaining experience and meeting professionals in those fields.
- Can be paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, for academic credit or not, for a specific time period.

The Career Education Office is here to offer support as you consider majors and explore career paths. [Schedule an appointment](#) to meet individually with a member of the CEO team.

**For other tips & questions contact the CEO at [career@goucher.edu](mailto:career@goucher.edu) or visit the CEO website at [www.goucher.edu/CEO](http://www.goucher.edu/CEO)**

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