



Choosing a Major

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Exploring Majors

Adapted from "Choosing Your Major" by Mary Lou-Taylor, www.jobweb.com

Choosing a college major can be a daunting process. There are often a number of options, but which one will fit best with your **interests, skills, values, and career goals**? If you are uncertain of these answers, you are not alone. The majority of college students will change their major at least once, and many will change their major more than once. It is okay to be undecided.

Step 1: Assess yourself. Know your values, interests, strengths and abilities

Step 2: Gather occupational information and explore career options for your degree

Step 3: Evaluate your options, make your major decision and set goals

Step 4: Take action by gaining experience and connecting with employers

"Many factors can get in the way of you being able to make a major or career choice. Some of the most common are listed below. It is helpful to know the factors that may be affecting your major decision."

External factors are not personal and are easier to manage than internal factors.

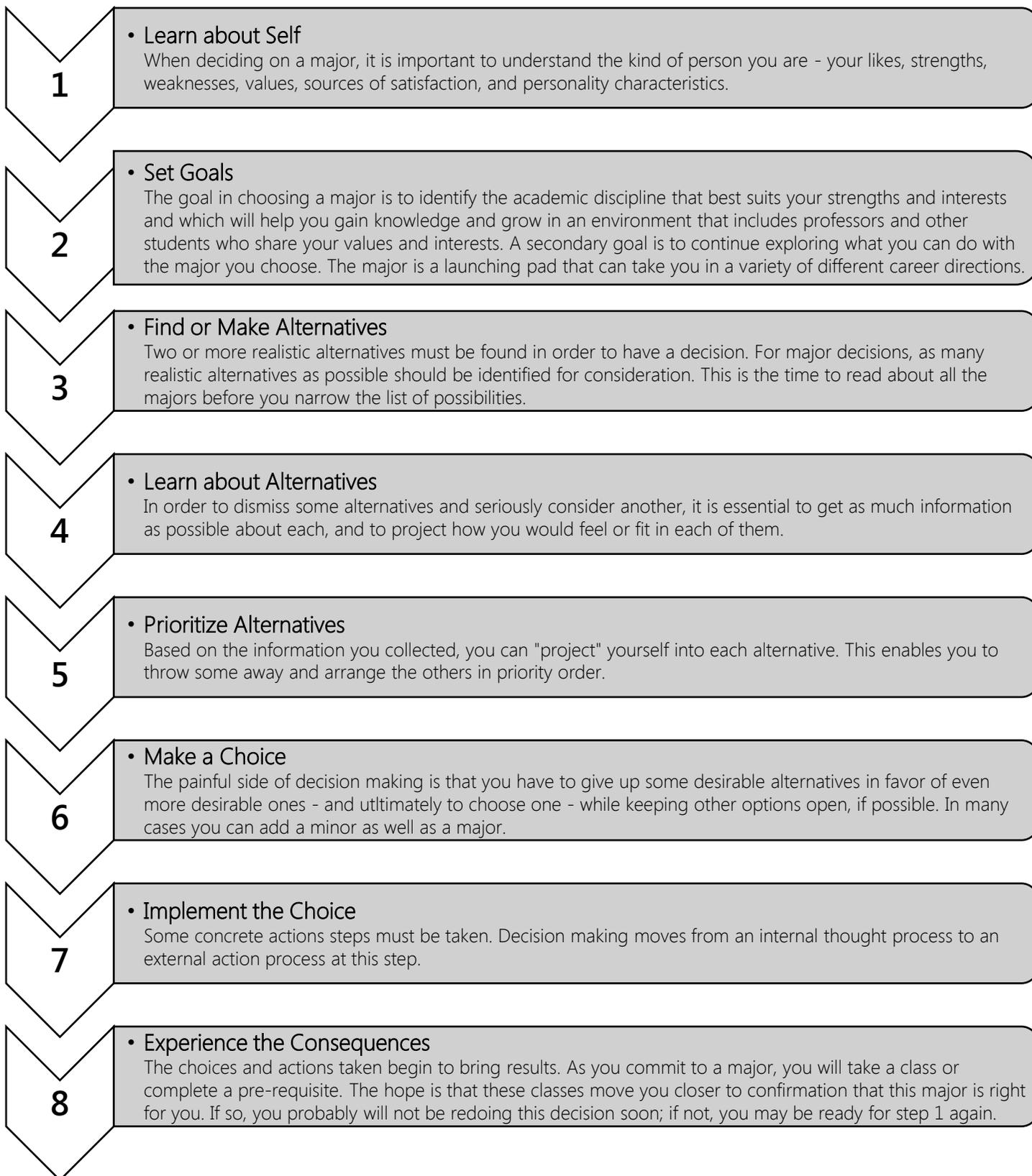
- **Un-relatedness of majors and careers:** Understanding that majors and careers have developed independently of each other will help you avoid becoming stuck wondering what you can do with a particular major.
- **Lack of information:** Often you just don't have enough information to be comfortable making a decision. You have had very little opportunity up to this point to learn about different majors and careers. Career Service (MSR 210) is an excellent place to begin. If you're more independent-minded, begin researching on your own.
- **Too much information:** This is particularly true since the advent of the World Wide Web. A huge amount of information is available, and it's easy to become overwhelmed. Don't give up: You can learn how to quickly and efficiently find good, accurate information on the web, and your career center can help.

Internal factors are more personal. Sometimes, these concerns must be addressed before the decision-making process can be completed.

- **Lack of self-confidence:** If your choice of a major or career seems especially critical, you may not feel confident in your ability to make a good decision. Often, obtaining additional information can solve this problem. Other times, more counseling may be needed.
- **Fear/anxiety:** While a little anxiety is positive and can help you stay on your toes, too much can wear you down. Fearing that you will make "bad" decisions can paralyze you. A career counselor can help you separate your rational from irrational fears.
- **Conflicting values:** You may be considering paths that are not compatible with each other. Perhaps you want to earn a good salary but also want to work in the not-for-profit sector. Or perhaps you would love to work as a performer, but also need job security. Doing some values clarification work may help you here.
- **Conflict with others:** Parents, spouses, and significant others often have definite ideas about your career choice. Desiring to please others and the need for continued financial support are two ways significant others can put undue pressure on you.
- **Multi-potentiality:** If you have many interests and many abilities, your problem may be one of narrowing down options rather than creating them."

Model for Decision Making

The purpose of this model is to teach a planning process and to apply it to deciding on your major.



Action Steps to Selecting a Major

A major should be interest-motivated. Choose a major you will enjoy. You will perform best in the area you have some motivation for. Here are some steps to consider:

1. Focus 2

With Focus 2 you can assess your interests and search for compatible occupations. Occupations can be viewed by major areas of study and work areas that appeal to you.

Occupations can also be researched for duties, educational requirements, skills demand, work values, job outlook, and salary.

2. College Catalog

Don't overlook the obvious. The college catalog can provide you with a great deal of important information about the numerous degrees and majors offered at Stanislaus State. The catalog provides information on departments, degrees offered, related career opportunities, and course offerings and descriptions.

3. Enroll in Introductory Courses

When possible fulfill general education requirements by taking introductory courses that help you gather more information about a subject that interests you. Be careful of taking extra intro courses from the same General Education category. Seek advising if you're unsure.

4. Meet with Faculty

Schedule meetings with faculty from departments and programs of interest to obtain additional information. You may want to ask the following questions:

How did you get into this field?

What are recent graduates doing with their major after graduation? What are the most challenging courses?

What skills or interests are common among students pursuing this major?

Would you connect me with current students who are enthusiastic about the major and might be willing to answer some questions for me?

5. Meet with Students

Speak with students who are currently majoring in the fields you are interested in. Use the list of students you received from faculty. Ask them to explain some of the courses and requirements as well as unique challenges and opportunities presented by their department/program of study.

6. Network

Ask faculty and staff members for referrals to alumni or other professionals currently employed in the fields that interest you. Schedule informational interviews to discuss topics, including what a typical work day is like, major responsibilities, qualifications needed to enter the field, and strategies for success.

Pick one of the steps described, and set a date you will complete it by to make sure you follow through. Make an appointment with a career/faculty advisor to discuss your progress.

World of Work Map



Taken from the ACT website: <http://forms.act.org/www/student.html>

Please see the following page for more information.

World of Work Map Descriptions

ADMINISTRATION & SALES

- A. **Employment-Related Services** - Employee Benefits Manager; Employment Interviewer; Human Resources Manager; Labor Relations Specialist; Training/Education Manager
- B. **Marketing & Sales** - Advertising Manager; Buyer; Insurance Agent; Real Estate Agent; Sales/Marketing Manager; Travel Agent
- C. **Management** - Financial Manager; Foreign Service Officer; General Manager/Executive; Hotel/Motel Manager; Property/Real Estate Manager
- D. **Regulation & Protection** - Customs Inspector; Detective (Police); FBI Agent; Food & Drug Inspector; Park Ranger; Police Officer

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- E. **Communications & Records** - Abstractor; Court Reporter; Hotel Clerk; Medical Record Technician; Title Examiner/Searcher
- F. **Financial Transactions** - Accountant/Auditor; Bank Teller; Budget/Credit Analyst; Insurance Underwriter; Real Estate Appraiser; Tax Accountant
- G. **Distribution & Dispatching** - Air Traffic Controller; Flight Dispatcher; Mail Carrier; Shipping/Receiving Clerk; Warehouse Supervisor

TECHNICAL

- H. **Transport Operation & Related** - Aircraft Pilot; Astronaut; Bus Driver; Locomotive Engineer; Ship Captain; Truck Driver
- I. **Agriculture, Forestry & Related** - Aquaculturist; Farm Manager; Forester; Nursery/Greenhouse Manager; Tree Surgeon/Arborist
- J. **Computer & Information Specialties** - Actuary; Archivist/Curator; Computer Programmer; Computer Systems Analyst; Website Developer
- K. **Construction & Maintenance** - Carpenter; Electrician; Firefighter; Plumber; Security System Installer
- L. **Crafts & Related** - Cabinetmaker; Chef/Cook; Jeweler; Tailor/Dressmaker; Winemaker
- M. **Manufacturing & Processing** - Printing Press Operator; Sheet Metal Worker; Tool & Die Maker; Water Plant Operator; Welder
- N. **Mechanical & Electrical Specialties** - Locksmith; Millwright; Technicians in various fields (for example, Automotive, Avionics, Broadcast, Sound)

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- O. **Engineering & Technologies** - Architect, Engineers (for example, Civil, Mechanical) & Technicians (for example, Energy, Quality Control) in various fields; Production Planner; Surveyor
- P. **Natural Science & Technologies** - Biologist; Food Technologist; Geologist; Meteorologist; Physicist
- Q. **Medical Technologies** - Dietician/Nutritionist; Optician; Pharmacist; Radiographer Technologists in various fields (for example, Medical, Surgical)
- R. **Medical Diagnosis & Treatment** - Anesthesiologist; Dentist; Nurse Practitioner; Physical Therapist; Physician; Veterinarian
- S. **Social Science** - Anthropologist; Criminologist; Political Scientist; Experimental Psychologist; Sociologist

ARTS

- T. **Applied Arts (Visual)** - Animator; Fashion Designer; Graphic Artist, Software; Photographer; Set Designer
- U. **Creative & Performing Arts** - Actor; Composer (Music); Dancer/Choreographer; Fashion Model; Musician; Writer/Author
- V. **Applied Arts (Written & Spoken)** - Advertising Copywriter; Columnist; Editor; Interpreter; Librarian; Reporter/Journalist

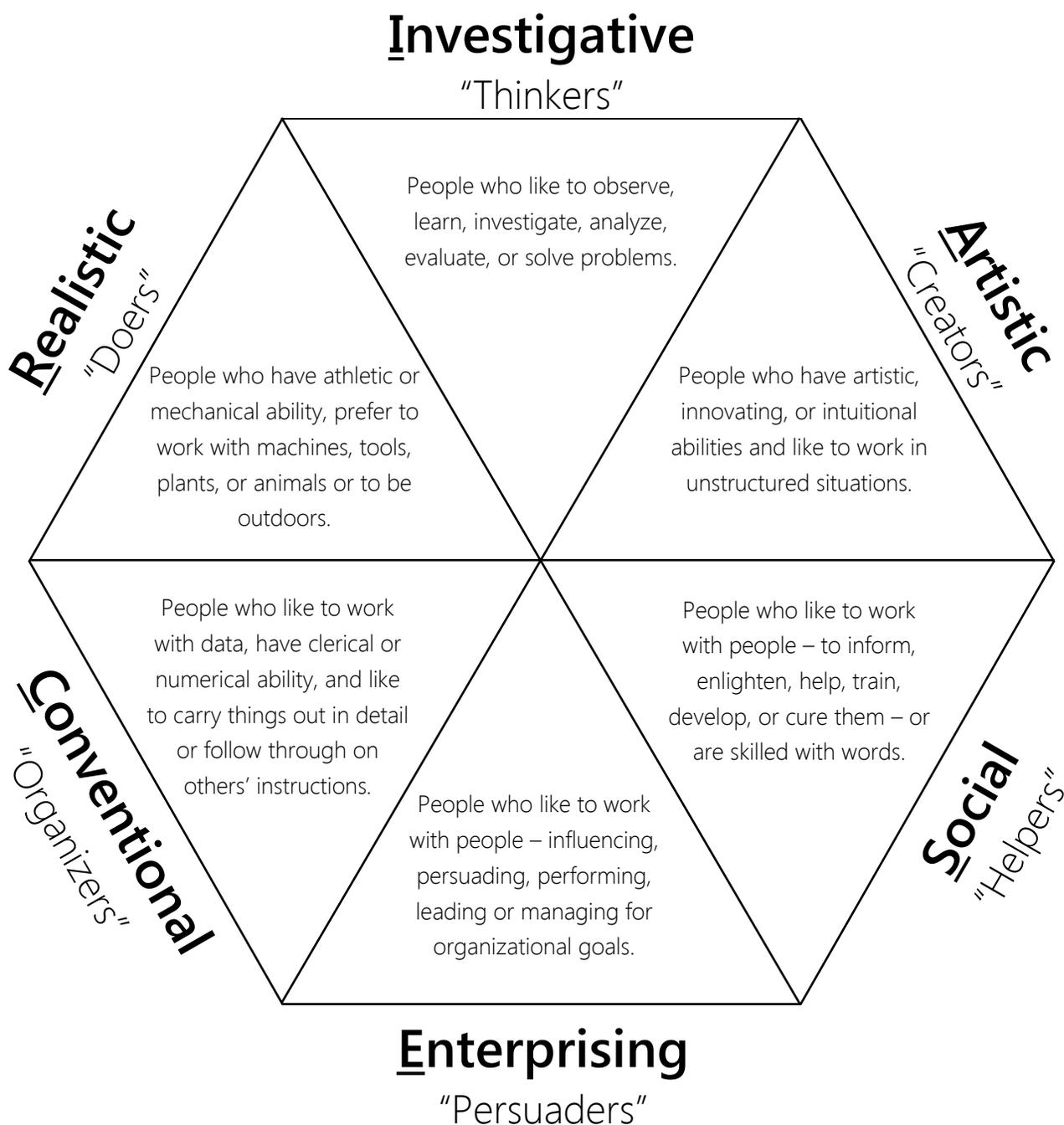
SOCIAL SERVICE

- W. **Health Care** - Athletic Trainer; Dental Hygienist; Health Services; Administrator; Psychiatric Technician; Recreational Therapist
- X. **Education** - Athletic Coach; College/University Faculty; Educational Administrator; Teachers in various specialties (for example, Art, Foreign Language, Music)
- Y. **Community Services** - Counselors in various specialties (for example, Mental Health, Rehabilitation); Lawyer; Social Service Director; Social Worker
- Z. **Personal Services** - Flight Attendant; Gaming Occupations Worker; Hairstylist/Barber

What is your Holland Code?

Dr. John Holland theorized that people work best in environments that match their personality preferences. According to his research, people and work environments can be loosely classified into six different groups.

While you may have some interests in and similarities to several of the six groups, you may be attracted primarily to two or three of the areas. These two or three letters are your "Holland Code." For example, with a code of "RES" you would most resemble the Realistic type, somewhat less resemble the Enterprising type, and resemble the Social type even less. Research shows that people are most satisfied if there is some degree of fit between their personality and their work environment.



What is your Holland Code? (continued)

Realistic	Investigative	Artistic	Social	Enterprising	Conventional
<p>Are you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical Straightforward Mechanically Inclined Stable Concrete Reserved Self-controlled Independent Ambitious Systematic <p>Like to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tinker with machines Work outdoors Be physically active Use your hands Build things Tend/Train animals Work on electronic equipment <p>Can you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fix electrical things Solve electrical problems Pitch a tent Play a sport Read a blueprint Plant a garden Operate tools and machine 	<p>Are you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquisitive Analytical Scientific Observant/Precise Scholarly Cautious Intellectually self-confident Independent Logical Complex Curious <p>Like to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore a variety of ideas Work independently Perform lab experiments Deal with abstractions Do research Be challenged <p>Can you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think abstractly Solve math problems Understand scientific theories Do complex calculations Use a microscope or computer Interpret formulas 	<p>Are you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative Imaginative Innovative Unconventional Emotional Independent Expressive Original Introspective Impulsive Sensitive Courageous Complicated Idealistic Nonconforming <p>Like to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend concerts, theatre, art exhibits Read fiction, plays, and poetry Work on crafts Take photography Express yourself creatively Deal with ambiguous ideas <p>Can you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sketch, draw, paint Play a musical instrument Write stories, poetry, music Sing, act, dance Design fashions or interiors 	<p>Are you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friendly Helpful Idealistic Insightful Outgoing Understanding Cooperative Generous Responsible Forgiving Patient Kind <p>Like to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in groups Help people with problems Do volunteer work Work with young people Serve others <p>Can you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach/Train others Express yourself clearly Lead a group discussion Mediate disputes Plan and supervise an activity 	<p>Are you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-confident Assertive Persuasive Energetic Adventurous Popular Ambitious Talkative Extroverted Spontaneous Optimistic <p>Like to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make decisions Be elected to office Start your own business Campaign politically Meet important people Have power or status <p>Can you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate projects Convince people to do things your way Sell things Give talks or speeches Organize activities Lead a group 	<p>Are you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-organized Accurate Numerically inclined Methodical Conscientious Efficient Conforming Practical Thrifty Systematic Polite Ambitious Obedient Persistent <p>Like to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow clearly defined procedures Use data processing equipment Work with numbers Be responsible for details Collect or organize things <p>Can you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work well within a system Do a lot of paperwork in a short time Keep accurate records Use a computer Write effective business letters

Stanislaus State Majors and Concentrations

- **AGRICULTURAL STUDIES B.A.**
 - Agricultural Biology
 - Agricultural Economics
 - Sustainable Agriculture
 - Special Concentration
- **ANTHROPOLOGY B.A.**
 - Forensic Anthropology
 - Medical Anthropology
- **APPLIED LEADERSHIP B.A.**
- **ART B.A. or B.F.A.**
 - Graphic Arts
 - Mixed Emphasis
 - Painting
 - Sculpture
 - Video and Time-Based Media
- **BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES B.A. or B.S.**
 - Biology Education
 - Ecology
 - General Biology
 - Molecular & Microbial
 - Organismal Biology
 - Environmental Sciences
- **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION B.S.**
 - Accounting
 - Computer Information Systems
 - Finance
 - General Business
 - Management
 - Human Resources
 - International Business
 - Strategy/Entrepreneurship
 - Marketing
 - Operations Management
- **CHEMISTRY B.A. or B.S.**
 - Environmental Sciences
- **CHILD DEVELOPMENT B.A.**
 - Early Childhood
 - Middle Childhood
 - Child Development Services
- **COGNITIVE STUDIES B.A.**
- **COMMUNICATION STUDIES B.A.**
 - Relational & Organization Communication
 - Public Communication & Media
- **COMPUTER SCIENCE B.S.**
- **CRIMINAL JUSTICE B.A.**
 - Law Enforcement
 - Corrections
 - Forensic Science
 - Juvenile Justice
 - Criminal Legal Studies
- **ECONOMICS B.A.**
 - Banking, Investment, & Managerial Economics
 - International Trade & Alternative Economic Systems
 - Economics & Public Sector
 - Labor Economics
 - Economic History
- **ENGLISH B.A.**
- **ETHNIC STUDIES B.A.**
 - Socio-cultural Emphasis in Ethnic Minority Families
 - Socio-political Focus on Ethnic Experiences
- **GENDER STUDIES B.A.**
 - History, Society, & Inequality
 - Culture, Ideology, & Representation
 - Ethnicity, Nationality, & Sexuality
- **GEOGRAPHY B.A.**
 - Cultural/Social Geography
 - Physical Geography & Environmental Studies
 - Geospatial Technology
 - California Studies
- **GEOLOGY B.S.**
 - Applied Geology
- **HEALTH SCIENCE B.S.**
 - Health Leadership & Administration
- **HISTORY B.A.**
- **KINESIOLOGY B.A.**
 - Exercise Science
 - Health Promotion
- **LIBERAL STUDIES B.A.**
- **MATHEMATICS B.A. or B.S.**
- **MUSIC B.A.**
 - General Music
 - Music Technology
- **MUSIC B.M.**
 - Piano Performance
 - Instrumental Performance
 - Visual Performance
 - Music Education – Instrumental
 - Music Education – Choral
 - Composition
 - Jazz Performance
- **NURSING B.S.**
 - Pre-Licensure BSN Track
 - RN to BSN
 - ASBSN
- **PHILOSOPHY B.A.**
- **PHYSICAL SCIENCES B.A.**
 - Applied Physics
 - Earth & Space Sciences
 - Environmental Sciences
- **PHYSICS B.A. or B.S.**
- **POLITICAL SCIENCE B.A.**
- **PSYCHOLOGY B.A.**
 - Developmental Psychology
 - Experimental Psychology
- **SOCIAL SCIENCES B.A.**
 - International Studies
 - Urban & Community Studies
- **SOCIOLOGY B.A.**
 - General Sociology
 - Human Services
 - Drug and Alcohol Studies
 - Social Deviance & Criminology
 - Social Inequality
 - Body, Culture, & Society
- **SPANISH B.A.**
- **THEATRE ARTS B.A.**

Stanislaus State Minors

- African American Studies
- Agricultural Studies
- Anthropology
- Art History
- Art
- Biological Sciences
- Business Administration
- Chemistry
- Chicano Studies
- Child Development
- Cognitive Studies
- Computer Information Systems
- Computer Science
- Criminal Justice
- Economics
- English
- Environmental & Resource Studies
- Ethics
- Ethnic Studies
- Exceptional Children & Youth
- Forensic Science
- French
- Gender Studies
- Geography
- Geology
- Gerontology
- History
- Journalism
- Kinesiology
- Latin American Studies
- Mathematics
- Microelectronics
- Music
- Permaculture
- Philosophy
- Physical Sciences
- Physics
- Political Science
- Portuguese
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Speech Communication
- Theatre Arts
- World History

Major and Career Exploration Worksheet

Major Choice 1	Major Choice 2
Major:	Major:
Concentration (if applicable):	Concentration (if applicable):
ACADEMIC PREPARATION	ACADEMIC PREPARATION
<input type="checkbox"/> Read the University Catalog description for the major <input type="checkbox"/> Read the major department website to learn about their program and faculty <input type="checkbox"/> List GPA or other requirements to be accepted into this major: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Review the required courses for the major <input type="checkbox"/> Review the course descriptions and pre-requisites in the University Catalog. <input type="checkbox"/> List the pre-requisites for required courses: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Read the University Catalog description for the major <input type="checkbox"/> Read the major department website to learn about their program and faculty <input type="checkbox"/> List GPA or other requirements to be accepted into this major: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Review the required courses for the major <input type="checkbox"/> Review the course descriptions and pre-requisites in the University Catalog. <input type="checkbox"/> List the pre-requisites for required courses: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Online resources:

- University catalog <http://catalog.csustan.edu/>
- A – Z directory (department websites) <https://www.csustan.edu/directories>
- My Next Move Interest Profiler <https://www.mynextmove.org/>
- What Can I Do With This Major <https://www.csustan.edu/career/new-focus-2/explore-options>
- O*Net <https://www.onetonline.org/>
- Career One Stop <https://www.careeronestop.org/>
- Princeton Review <https://www.princetonreview.com/career-search>

Major and Career Exploration Worksheet

Major Choice 1	Major Choice 2
Major:	Major:
Concentration (if applicable):	Concentration (if applicable):
CAREER PREPARATION	CAREER PREPARATION
Does the major department provide any opportunity for internships or other experiential learning? What are they?	Does the major department provide any opportunity for internships or other experiential learning? What are they?
Are there any student organizations associated with this major? What are they?	Are there any student organizations associated with this major? What are they?
Related careers:	Related careers:
Required knowledge, skills and abilities:	Required knowledge, skills and abilities:
Work duties/responsibilities:	Work duties/responsibilities:
Required education and training:	Required education and training:
Salary range:	Salary range:
Resources used to gather information:	Resources used to gather information:
Steps you are taking or plan to take to prepare for your career:	Steps you are taking or plan to take to prepare for your career: