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**What is my next step?** Many resources are available to help you choose a major.

**Career Planning Classes** - Edmonds Community College offers several career planning classes each quarter (listed under the **College, Career and Life Success** department). These classes guide you through the exploration steps in a structured, sequential way and include career interest and personality inventories. See the College website <http://www.edcc.edu> or the class schedule for more information.

**Career Counselors – MLT room 145**

Make an appointment at the Counseling and Resource Center to meet with a counselor. Your counselor can help you sort through all of the questions you may have about making a decision and choosing a major and might also recommend a CCLS class or career and personality assessments that can help you in choosing your major.

**Career Resource Room – MLT 137**

The CRR has an excellent Career and Job research library, phones, fax, and computers available to explore majors or careers.

**Academic Advisors – Lynnwood Hall**

Your academic advisor is an important resource for you. Advisors can give you information about college policies, procedures and requirements, and up-to-date academic information about majors.

**Departmental Advisors/Faculty** – Talking with instructors who teach in the specific major you are considering will help you get further details about the major.

**Family/Friends** – One of our most valuable resources is our family and friends. Ask them questions such as these:

- How and why did they choose their career?
- What was their major in college, and how did they choose it?
- How do they use what they learned at college in their work place?
- What other careers could they have chosen to pursue, using their college major?

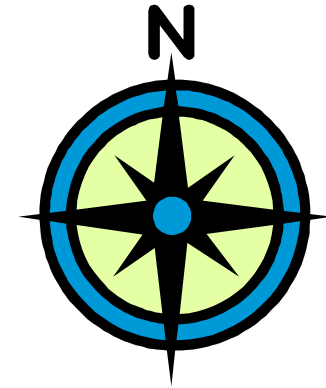
Asking these questions will not only give you valuable information, but might also help clarify your own values.

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**Websites** – Many websites are available that can help you research careers and majors. You may access them from your own computer or from the Career Resource Room in Mountlake Terrace Hall, room 137:

- University of Washington Center for Career Services includes a web page that connects majors with careers. <http://depts.washington.edu/careers/employmentguide/guide>
- WOIS the Career Information System contains information on more than 1100 careers and offers 4 career assessment tools. <http://www.wois.org>
- Search Vocational Biographies Online by career title, keyword or Holland Code. <http://www.vocbiosonline.com>
- Rutgers University NB has another site to match college majors to careers. <http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/CareerHandouts.html>

Choosing a Major



# CHOOSING A MAJOR

Prepared by

**The Counseling & Resource Center**

MLT 145

425 640-1358



<http://counseling.edcc.edu>

Edmonds Community College upholds all state and federal non-discrimination and equal opportunity laws.

## Are you uncertain about your major?

You are not alone. Many students are undecided about their majors when they enter college - and many who think they have decided will change their minds more than once before they graduate. Even though you may feel pressured to declare a major, you should not make a hasty decision. There are many factors you need to think about as you are considering potential majors.

Most students begin exploring majors with some preconceived ideas about how to choose a major. However, many of these ideas are misconceptions. Here are some common misconceptions:

**Misconception #1: Get all your General University Requirements out of the way first.** This strategy might not work. Not all majors have courses that “double count” and apply toward the General University Requirement. Some majors may allow a student to select *any* GUR courses, while others may have more *specific* requirements; you could complete all the GUR requirements for one major and then find that they won't count in other majors.

**Misconception #2: Choosing a major is the same as choosing a career.** Although these two choices are related, choosing one doesn't automatically mean you have chosen the other. For example, many art, humanities, or social sciences majors can lead to jobs in business, human resources, teaching, and a variety of other occupations. Students graduating from one major could be employed in many different jobs; likewise,

people employed in the same job might have completed different majors. Choosing a major doesn't limit you to just one career; choosing a career doesn't limit you to just one major.

**Misconception #3: Choosing one major means giving up all others.** Actually, there are ways to combine interests in more than one major: double majors, sequential majors, or having minors along with majors. Check with your advisor regarding specific options available at your college.

**Misconception #4: My major will be my career.** Studies have shown that within ten years of graduation, most people are working in careers that aren't directly related to their undergraduate majors. In fact, people will change careers approximately 5-7 times in their lifetime. The current emphasis in career planning is on the development of general, transferable skills, e.g., writing, speaking, computer literacy, problem solving, team building, that employers want and that graduates will need in order to adjust to rapidly changing careers.

**Misconception #5: The best way to find out about a major is to take a course in it.** This is certainly one way, but it might not be the best way to decide. Introductory courses don't always give you a full idea of what the major is like, and sometimes students aren't able to schedule courses in a major until after they are actually enrolled in that major. Even if you decide not to pursue the major, based on a class you took, you'll have only *eliminated* one major; you won't have *chosen* one.



## Six important factors to consider when choosing a major:

1. Interests - *I like to learn about...*
2. Abilities - *I'm good at....*
3. Values - *...is important to me*
4. Personality - *My friends say I'm...*
5. Motivations - *...makes me want to act now*
6. Realities - *I have the time and money to...*

To find the best “fit” of major (or career) for you, it is important to examine the above six factors for yourself. One way to do this is by asking these questions: What kind of things do you enjoy in your leisure time? Do you seem to have a natural talent for certain things? What principles guide your life? What motivates you? What situations in your life might have strong and overriding influence on your choice of major?

You can also take career and personality assessments through CCLS classes or the Counseling and Resource Center, located in MLT 145. Talking to people (e.g., parents, relatives, friends, etc.) whose careers interest you and finding out about their career and educational journey can also be very valuable.

Also consider doing an internship, job shadowing, summer job and/or informational interviews.

For further exploration and/or information, make an appointment to see a Counselor at the Counseling Center in MLT 145.