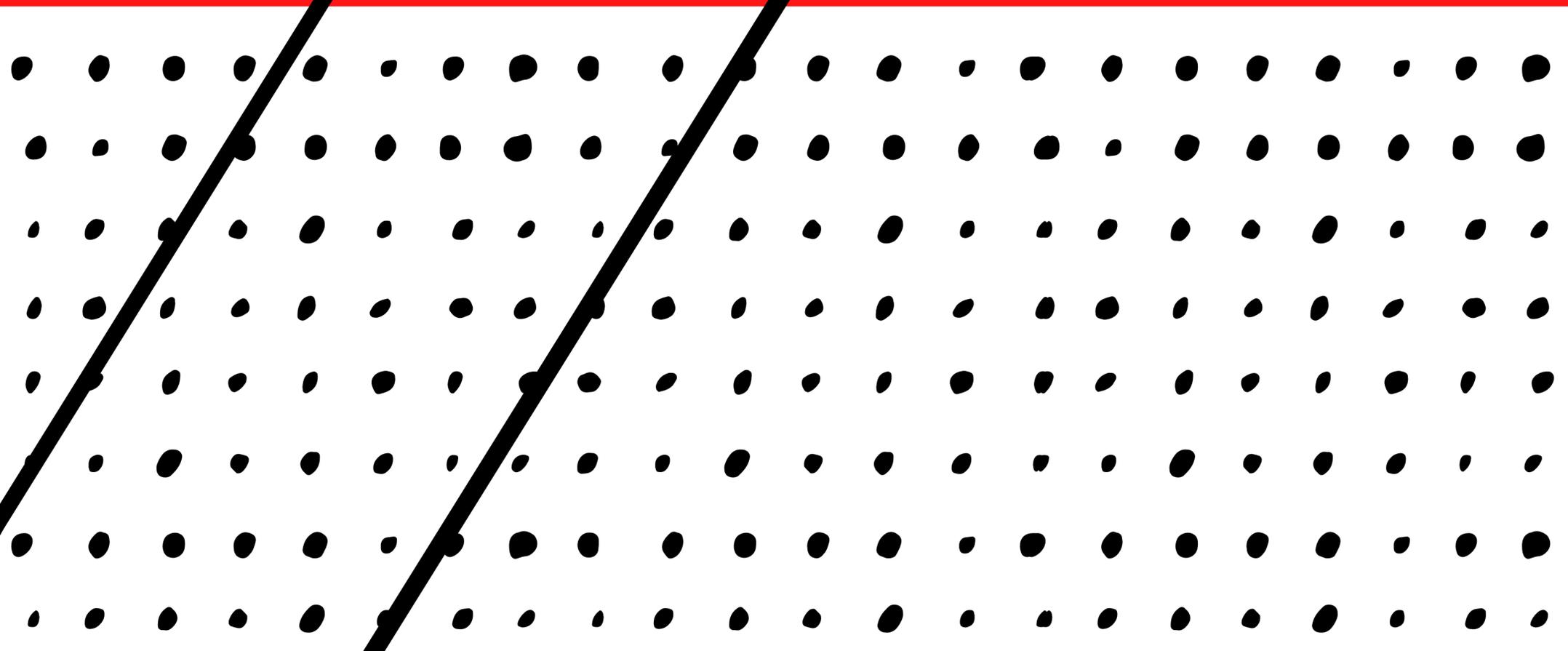


The Center for Calling
and Career
Presents:

EXPLORING YOUR MAJOR



Exploring Your Major

Choosing a college major is an important decision to make, and oftentimes there's anxiety about making the "right" decision. Understanding the relationship between major and career options is critical. In some cases, career fields demand a specific academic path. For example, teachers are expected to have an education degree, nurses, a nursing degree, accountants, an accounting degree, and so on. In most cases, however, the relationship is not so clear-cut. A major opens the doorway to many career possibilities, but it's up to you to make the most of your experience both in and out of the classroom. Ultimately, your academic major is just one factor in determining your future career path and job prospects. Other factors include: your academic transcript, choice of coursework, out-of-classroom activities, skills acquired through related experience, and personal fit.

Finding a Fit

The following pointers will help you to find a major that's a good fit for you:

1) Know Yourself

The most foundational step in choosing a major is a thorough assessment of your strengths, interests, abilities, and values. Make an appointment in the Career Center to complete several assessments to help determine your interests and abilities. Meet with a Career Counselor to discuss your results and other relevant information that impacts your career choices.

Try making a list considering what you have enjoyed from past experiences – school subjects, hobbies, activities, and so on. Then, go one step further and ask yourself what it was about those activities that were energizing for you? Try and get as specific as you can. Did they allow you to interact with people, use creativity, or work with your hands? Often, this is a more difficult task than anticipated!

2) Know Your Options

There are many options as far as majors go, so it's important to do your research before choosing one. Above all else, choose a major that is most congruent with your interests, strengths, and abilities.

Suggestions for gathering more information:

- A) LBC College Catalog – Carefully read through the list of majors. Circle those majors which are of interest to you or that you might like to know more about. Cross out the majors you would definitely not want to pursue. Notice any themes or patterns? Now, take time to read through the course requirements for those majors you circled. How do they measure against one another based on what you know about yourself? <https://lbc.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2021-2022/Undergraduate-Catalog>
- B) LBC Career Explorer – Go to the student portal, on the left sidebar, click "My LBC". Click "Career Explorer" for more helpful information about your area of interest.
- C) “What Can I Do with a Major in...?” – View typical career paths and options associated with majors of interest. This is intended to be a starting point for further exploration! Excellent resources are myplan.com and pacareerzone.com.
- D) Academic Departments/Faculty Members – First, check out the website(s) of departments that house the majors you're considering. Make an appointment to talk with a faculty member who teaches in the department you're considering. What suggestions do they have? What do they see as the strengths of the major? What does it take to be successful? What have alumni gone on to do after graduation?
- E) Upper-class Students – Get an insider's perspective by consulting a junior or senior in the major. Why did they choose the major? What do they like/dislike about it? What do they hope to do after graduation? If you aren't sure whom to ask, get a referral from faculty members in that academic department.
- F) Information Interviews and Job Shadowing – One of the best ways to explore a career field of interest is to speak with/observe someone currently working in that field. Find out what majors, if any, are strongly preferred in a given field, as well as any other qualifications. If you have questions or need assistance, talk with a career counselor in the Career Center.
- G) Exploratory Courses – Even after you've done all the suggested research, sometimes it's helpful to sit in on a class or take an introductory-level class within a major you're considering to see if it's really something you would enjoy. Talk with your advisor or a career coach about how to do this.

3) Keep Perspective

Remember that your major is one piece of the package. What you do with your time as a college student is up to you. However, we encourage you to make the most of the complete experience by applying knowledge gained from the classroom in practical, relevant settings – student clubs and organizations, service-learning and volunteer work, athletics, study abroad, internships, and more. What you do with your time will speak volumes to employers and graduate schools, so choose your activities strategically!

Here are some other things to keep in mind:

A) Value of a College Education – not so excited about taking general education requirements? Believe it or not, there is lifelong value in any type of college education. Not only does it prepare you to be a well-rounded and global citizen, but it also provides an opportunity to develop perspectives, skills, and abilities that are highly sought by employers.

B) Transferable Skills – Virtually all employers want to hire someone with certain skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, organization, etc. There are many ways – and majors – to help you develop skills in these areas. Most always, a college major is not enough in and of itself to get you hired. Job candidates must be prepared to articulate and demonstrate the skills and experiences they have to offer. Talk with a career counselor about setting goals to gain marketable experience.

Career Planning Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help you identify your current place within the career development cycle. This is a key step toward planning for your future goals. This exercise will also allow you to see gaps that you can be intentional about filling throughout your undergraduate experience. Keep in mind that this is a process that you should reevaluate as you move through the stages in the Career Development Plan.

Directions: For each section below, provide an honest assessment of yourself by checking any box that you have completed, and taking note of what you have not.

Once you are finished answering the questions, go back and review the unchecked boxes. Consider these goals to work toward as you move progressively through the career development process. You are encouraged to work with a career coach in the Career Center to map out a manageable timeline for accomplishing these steps.

ASSESS

- I am able to articulate 3-5 personal strengths that relate to my major/potential career paths.
- I am confident about my choice of major.
- I have completed at least one self-assessment inventory (personality, skills, values), which has informed my choice of major.
- I can name at least two specific experiences from my past (classes, hobbies, etc.) that have influenced my choice of major/tentative career goals.
- I am aware of the services provided by the center for Career & Calling as well as where it's located.

EXPLORE

- I have identified at least one out-of-class experience in which I plan to become involved (e.g., student clubs & organizations, volunteer work, work-study, athletics, campus productions or performance groups, etc...).

- I have identified two intensive experiential opportunities to complete before graduation which will be marketable to employers/grad schools (e.g., service learning, study abroad, internship/practical, student leadership, research, etc...).

- I have conducted at least one job shadowing or informational interview experience with a professional in a field I am seriously considering for my future.

- I have personally researched at least one career field I am considering (e.g., typical job duties, skills/experiences/training required, job outlook, average salary, etc.)

- I have identified at least one person on campus (e.g., faculty member, advisor, career coach, resident director, mentor, etc.) with whom I can have ongoing conversations about my vocational path.

- I have participated in or scheduled a career coaching appointment through the center for Career & Calling to lay out a career development plan.

EXPERIENCE

- I have created a professional profile on LinkedIn.
- I have completed my two intensive experiential opportunities (e.g., service learning, study abroad, internship/practical, student leadership, research, etc.
- I have had my resume reviewed to ensure my experiences are well articulated toward career/further education goals.
- I have established my professional image to represent my accomplishments and goals (e.g., audit/clean-up of social media profiles, networking card, professional wardrobe, portfolio, etc.).
- I have personally connected/networked with at least five professionals in my field.

TRANSITION

- I have mapped out my personal job search or graduate school strategy which includes specific action steps and timelines.
- I have participated in a mock interview with a career counselor to practice articulating the transferability of my skills and experiences to my career/educational goal.
- I have contacted at least three individuals to serve as my professional/educational references.
- I have engaged with at least three employers or graduate schools.
- I have logged into and explored the LBC job search database: lbcjobs.com.
- I have reflected on and can articulate the transferability of my diverse experiences (e.g., college major, classroom learning, co-curricular involvement, experiential learning) to my career/educational goals.

Exploring a Major Exercise

Use the following exercise to answer questions about each major you are considering. Discuss your answers with your academic advisor and/or a career counselor.

Major Option #1: _____

Department: _____

1. How many courses/credits are required to complete this major?
2. How much freedom is there for elective courses and flexibility in the order of when classes are taken?
3. Is there a minimum GPA needed to maintain this major? GPA: ____
4. Are there any pre-requisite classes for entering the major?
5. Is it possible to minor in this area? Yes___ No___
6. What about the major is not appealing to you? Do you have any doubts or reservations?
7. What interests and abilities are critical for students in this major?
8. Does this major require any time off campus for activities such as internships, study abroad, etc.?
9. What are sample internships that students in this major have completed?
10. What have graduates from this major gone on to do after graduation (employment and/or graduate schools)?
11. Who is the department Chairperson/Advisor for this major?
12. What steps need to be taken to learn more about this major?
13. What other majors might be similar to this one?

Transitioning From College to Career Assessment

Name		Anticipated Graduation Date			
Current Major					
Previous Majors					
Confidence in area of study	Unsure	Somewhat Confident	Not Sure	Fairly Confident	Very Confident
Plans after graduation	Work Full-Time	Work Part-Time	Sem/Grad School full-Time	Work Full-Time & Sem/Grad School	Work Part-Time & Sem/Grad School
Top 3 job possibilities after graduation					
Confidence in ability to find a job in field	Unsure	Somewhat Confident	Could go either way	Fairly Confident	Very Confident
Experience directly in the field	None	Internship	Summer Job	Other:	
Confidence that I have skills to offer employers	Unsure	Somewhat Confident	Could go either way	Fairly Confident	Very Confident
LBC has prepared me to transition to a career after college	Unsure	Somewhat Confident	Could go either way	Fairly Confident	Very Confident
Myers Briggs					
Holland Code					
DISC					

Job Searching?

Whether you are looking for full-time employment, an internship opportunity, or a part-time job during school Handshake is a great resource! Set up your account and begin to explore opportunities in Lancaster and around the World!

**Log in with
your LBC
email here!**



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