How Do I Know What Degree is Right For Me?

Some people know what they want to be from a very young age. They go to college, earn the right degree and enter the job market doing exactly what they’ve always believed they would do. The majority of people, however, don’t follow this pattern. Life gets in the way, people’s interests and passions change, and careers that seem interesting when you’re young lose their appeal as you get older. If you’re contemplating college, you may not be sure what degree to major in. Alternately, if you’re currently enrolled, you may be questioning whether your current choice is the best one. Ultimately, there are no right or wrong answers when it comes to choosing the appropriate degree path. The important thing is to find a degree that lines up with your interests and ambitions. If you’re taking classes in a certain subject that you don’t like just because you believe that you should, you’re missing out on some of the best opportunities college provides. On the other hand, the classes that interest you most may not line up with your career plans or ambitions. It’s important to do some soul-searching before enrolling in college to ensure you do what you’re really interested in.

A few things to consider when determining whether an area of study is right for you are:

– What are you interested in?

Studying something related to your inherent passions is a good place to start. Even if you can’t find an immediate job corollary, it may be worth pursuing the degree anyway as it can open up surprising doors. For example, Philosophy majors often go on to attend law school, and English majors might become writers, journalists or editors.

– What are your career plans?

If you have something in mind that you want to do with your life, it’s easy to find the right courses to pursue it. Sometimes this is easier than others. For example, if you want to be an engineer, it stands to reason that you’d major in engineering. Other jobs have multiple paths. Be sure to discuss your options with your class advisor to get suggestions for how to develop yourself academically.

– Remember that you don’t need to declare a major right away!

It’s completely acceptable to take several classes in different subjects and complete your general education requirements before you declare a major. You can also change your major at any time; your graduation date may be slightly delayed, but you’ll be able to reuse many of the same credits toward your new major, so it’s not going to be a huge concern.

– Take a few general-interest classes

No matter what your major, some courses are always a good choice. For example, you should be sure to take at least one economics class and an English or communications class; these will help make you more knowledgeable about the world at large and methods of expression. It might also be a good idea to take a few business classes, especially if you have any entrepreneurial plans. Taking courses outside of your major can help you decide if you might be interested in changing the focus of your studies as well.

– Don’t overlook other opportunities

Coursework isn’t the only benefit of going to college. Depending on your chosen career field, the other activities you engage in while at college may make an even greater impact on both your enjoyment of school and your future. For example, you might want to work on the school paper to develop journalistic or editorial skills. You could volunteer or join one of the
multiple organizations or causes that interests you. You can also make connections with people in various clubs or student committees; these connections could develop into career opportunities or lasting friendships.

Once you’re determined what you want to get out of school and what you want to do with your career, it should be easier to decide which major to pursue. Ultimately, you’ll know that you’re majoring in the right subject when you’re passionate and excited about your studies and the work you complete. If you’re not happy with your current major and don’t know how to proceed, try asking your advisor or a trusted professor for help.

You might also want to enroll in a few classes from different subjects to test the waters before going through an entire change of majors. That will save you from some hassles if you realize that your new chosen major isn’t quite what you were expecting. If you do decide to change your major, you may even already have a few credits in the new department to give you a head start.

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