

MYTHS ABOUT MAJORS

Myth #1:

Selecting a major and selecting a career is always the same.

Some career choices dictate that you choose a specific undergraduate major. If you want to be a nurse, you must major in nursing. Engineers major in engineering. Architects major in Architecture. There's no other way to be certified as a nurse, engineer or architect. However, most career fields don't require a specific major, and people with specific majors don't have to use them in ways most commonly expected. For example, if you want to major in nursing, history, engineering, English, or many other majors, you might nevertheless choose to become a bank manager, production manager, or number of other professions. Eighty percent of jobs require a bachelor's degree in an unspecified area, meaning that a major does not necessarily decide or equate to a particular career. Students may choose to pursue graduate studies after earning a bachelor's degree, and work in the field in which they earned their graduate degree.

Myth #2:

Social Science, Humanities and Arts majors are unemployable.

As noted in myth #1, while some majors relate to specific careers, most do not. In fact, the majority of majors will actually help prepare you for many career possibilities. The top qualities that employers seek are oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and analytical ability, and working on teams and positive work ethic. Graduates with a liberal arts education develop these sought out skills that are applicable to a wide variety of professional jobs.

Myth #3:

You must pursue a specific undergraduate major in order to gain admission to post-graduate professional schools such as medicine or law.

Some graduate and professional schools require or recommend the completion of certain academic prerequisites, but usually no specific major is required to go into medical, law or other professional/graduate schools. You can major in anything, including art and be admitted into medical or law school. In fact, some medical schools prefer students to have a diverse education. Also, you may want to major in the area that you want to study law, for example, if you want to practice patent law, a bachelor's degree in biological science is recommended. It is crucial that you meet with a counselor, and/or visit the Career or Transfer Centers to find specific information on prospective schools, and to determine graduate school requirements related to your ultimate field of study.

Myth #4:

GPA and major are the only factors that contribute towards a career.

There are a wide variety of opportunities and experiences available to you throughout your academic career, which you should take advantage of. Many of them such as internships, independent study, study abroad, part-time jobs, volunteer activities and leadership experiences, will give you that competitive edge you will need when you graduate and are seeking employment. You can also minor in a subject that will make you more "marketable" such as foreign language, business or communication.