

# Picking a Major

## What is a major?

A major is essentially a college guide; a combination of classes and experiences designed to provide a student with both in-depth and broad-based skills and knowledge. Majors usually fall into one of two categories; **Liberal Arts (LA)**, such as Women's Studies, which teach a broad range of skills; and **professional majors**, such as Nursing, which tend to lead directly into one specific career or career field. St. Catherine University offers a mix of both LA majors and professional majors at the baccalaureate level.

To find a list of majors, visit the St. Kate's Academics page and scroll down to click on a complete link to all the programs offered.

## What is important when picking a major?

**First** of all, think about what you like to study and what you would like to do in college.

**Second**, consider your interests—make sure that you consider both educational and life interests when choosing a major. In short, major in what you love and find interesting. Students who choose a major that they really love and enjoy are more likely to graduate, and are also more likely to have better grades throughout college.

**Finally**, make sure you stay away from “*shoulds*.” I *should* take this class because my parents want me to; I *should* know what my major is already; I *should* major in (insert major here) because that's what I always thought I would go into. Try to put the “*shoulds*” aside when choosing your major.

## How to explore majors and careers

The Career Development Office offers a number of ways for you to learn more about your interests and how to match them to a career you would enjoy.

Learn more through:

- Career videos and resources on our website ([stkate.edu/careers](http://stkate.edu/careers))
- Assessments, such as the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) and work with a Career Counselor to sift through the information to make a decision that feels right.
- Exploring majors and careers firsthand is the surest way to get a real feel for what you like to do, and what you don't. This can be done by:
  - Shadowing a person at a job that you are considering

- Participating in an internship
- Volunteering for events and organizations
- Engaging in campus affiliated clubs and organization

Other ways to explore include:

- Looking through the St. Kate's Academic Catalog
- Talking to faculty about specific majors
- Talking to students in majors that interest you
- Taking classes that spark your interest

## Plan to supplement...

To help strengthen your readiness for the job market or graduate school students should:

- **Get experience** through research, internships, volunteering, and exploring career and leadership roles in campus/community activities or jobs. Also, expand your cultural competence by engaging with different cultures, groups of people, and environments through a multitude of experiences.
- **Maintaining strong grades and a good GPA** is important to many employers and in many fields as well as significant assignments, research and engagement in a field of study.
- **Network with professionals** in academic, professional and social settings. Making connections with individuals in diverse settings can be invaluable in learning about a profession, graduate education or work environment. A professional network can be very helpful to you when you look for jobs and internships.

## Liberal Arts majors provide the top 10 transferable skills employers seek

All majors at Saint Catherine University will provide a student with the skills that employers look for in potential employees. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, these skills are:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| ● Communication skills (written and verbal) | ● Motivation/initiative |
| ● Honesty/integrity                         | ● Computer skills       |
| ● Teamwork skills                           | ● Detail-orientation    |
| ● Strong work ethic                         | ● Organizational skills |
| ● Analytical skills                         | ● Leadership skills     |
| ● Flexibility/adaptability                  | ● Interpersonal skills  |
|   | ● Self-confidence       |

When considering a field of study, know that students will develop these skills when majoring in any of the baccalaureate programs at St. Kate's.

## **Remember...Most majors don't limit students to a specific job**

A common misconception is that once you pick a major, you're stuck with whichever job it leads to. However, except for majors that require a license or certificate, most majors don't lead directly to any specific job.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor estimates that the average person changes career fields *two* or *three* times in their lifetime, and many individuals will have multiple jobs over their 40+ years of work. In fact, the University of Illinois surveyed and found that approximately 80% of workers in the United States are in a career field that is not directly related to their college major.

Picking a major can be one of the most challenging decisions a college student has to make, and **many** students change their majors at *least* once. This guide outlines important information to take into consideration, as well as strategies that are helpful in picking a major.



**ST. CATHERINE  
UNIVERSITY**

Career Development Center

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