

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)
- 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

www.stkate.edu/career

651-690-8890

St. Paul Campus

Coeur de Catherine 210

© 2019