

How to choose your major

Center for Individual Academic Development

Once upon a time...

Imagine the perfect major at your university,

- that has best future career and pay opportunities,
- you love all classes, assignments are fun and rewarding, and
- your future life partner sitting beside you.

That scenario doesn't exist.

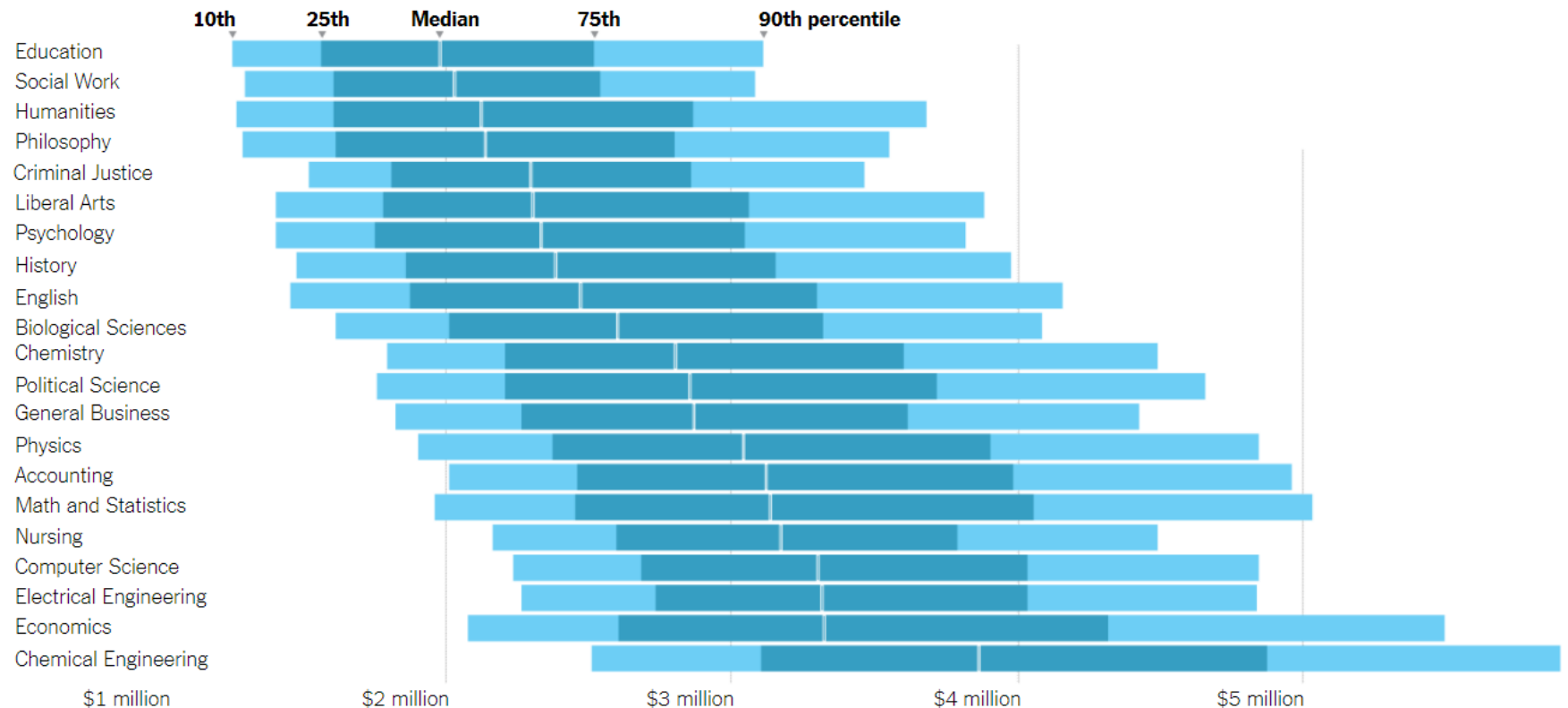
Yes, every major that you choose will ultimately have some downsides and disadvantages.

The only thing you can do is to be aware of them and to make sure that you can handle when they decide to pop up.

For the big Money, STEM always delivers!

(New York Times, Nov. 3, 2017)

Projected career earnings for college graduates in ...



Based on research by
Douglas A. Webber (2019)
[http://www.doug-
webber.com/expected bac
helors.pdf](http://www.doug-webber.com/expected_bachelors.pdf)

For the big Money, STEM always delivers!

It's not about **what**, but rather about **how**!

According to a Forbes article, the top 10 most in-demand skills for the next 10 years:

Digital Literacy	Collaboration	Critical Thinking
Data Literacy	Emotional Intelligence	Creativity
Flexibility	Leadership Skills	Curiosity and Continuous Learning
	Time Management	

How **NOT** to choose your Major

- **Losing Self-awareness:** Do you want what **YOU** actually want, or do you want what **OTHERS** want you to want?
- **Rushing into a decision:** Sometimes you feel that you are running late, and you will miss a lot.
- **Fixed mindset:** Feeling obliged to follow the initial path you've chosen.

How to choose your Major, then? Self-reflection!

- **What are your interests?**

What subject could you talk on and on about? What fills you with excitement?

- **What are your strengths?**

Understanding your strengths is key to determining your major.

Be honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses, and

take into consideration the opinion of your close friends, teachers and others who know you well.

How to choose your Major, then?

Self-reflection!

- **What are your future goals?**

Envision where you want to be in five to 10 years.

Where do you want to live? What position do you want to hold?

Do you want to manage people or dive into research?

How much do you want to earn?

To choose a major, you can work backward from these questions about your future goals.

How to choose your Major, then?

Self-reflection!

- **What kind of coursework are you interested in?**

Does reading about the human mind thrill or bore you?

Do you find organic chemistry as mesmerizing as it is difficult?

Your major will require certain core courses. Ask yourself if you would be interested in each course on the list.

You don't need to feel passionate about all of the courses, but determining your interest will help you understand whether you're choosing a major for the right reasons.

It's important to choose a major early.

- Of students who said they felt committed to their major when they arrived on campus, 20% had selected a new major by the end of their first year, according to a national survey by the University of California, Los Angeles.
- At Sabancı University, one third of our students choose a major that was not their first intention when they entered the University.
- Around 13% choose a major that was not in their first three intentions.

Fairly certain of what you want to major in?
Feeling like you don't need to explore other fields?

Now is the time to test your hypothesis.

or Completely unsure about what you might want to major in?

- Use (the first semester of) sophomore year to take courses and explore major areas.
- Try taking different Faculty Courses that has been designed by the programs to provide good exposure to their major.
- If you want to get a taste of the department's approach to research or careers, try a project-based class (Proj 201!)

Choosing one major means giving up all the others.

That is not true!

- There are many ways of combining your interests and desires. You can choose your elective courses from any disciplines that are of interest to you.
- You can choose to do a double major or select minor programs in various fields.
- After graduation, you can continue your studies with a postgraduate degree in a different field.

Switching disciplines?

- Many students switch their majors and change their minds throughout their university studies (around 6% at SU).

While it's not a disadvantage, it may take more time to achieve the degree, if not planned and executed properly.

- If likely to switch, how rigid are the prerequisites?

Sometimes they could be. You have to plan your courses in advance to avoid setbacks.

Yet, the SU system allows you to use required courses you have taken earlier, could be substituted for electives in your new major.

Get Help!!

If you are nearing that the end of your third semester and are still undecided as to what you'd like to major in, don't worry.

You're not the first, and you surely won't be the last.

There are many people here on campus to help you.

Get Help!!

- [Major Fest website](#)
- [CIAD Counselors](#) (BADAs)
- [Diploma Area Advisors](#)
- [Career Office](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

MAJOR FEST EVALUATION FORM

