



# How to Choose a Major

EXPLORATION THROUGH SELF-REFLECTION, INFORMATION  
GATHERING, EVALUATION AND DECISION MAKING

WORKBOOK

EXPLORATORY ADVISING, CHANCELLOR CUTHBERTSON STUDENT SUCCESS  
CENTRE

## Contents

Instructions & Expectations .....	2
Learning Outcomes .....	2
Exploration Process Model .....	3
Exploration Process Thinking Questions.....	4
Reflect & Connect.....	5
Motivators.....	5
Personality Mosaic .....	7
Interests .....	10
Academic Successes & Challenges .....	12
Mind-Map .....	14
Majors / Programs By Personality Traits .....	16
Reduce Major / Program Options .....	18
Gather Information and Develop Options .....	20
Types of Information Brainstorm .....	20
Main Exploration Resources .....	21
Additional Exploration Resources .....	22
Major / Program Options.....	23
Evaluate & Decide .....	24
Evaluate Program Options .....	24
Decision-Making Matrix.....	26
Other Methods to Evaluate Options .....	27
Characteristics of Decision-Making Styles .....	27
Decide .....	28
Take Action .....	29

## Instructions & Expectations

This workbook is a comprehensive guide to the exploration process that can help you choose a major!

How to use the workbook:

- Go at your own pace – this is for you, so put in as much as you hope to get out!
- The activities connect to each other to build on your understanding as you go – it will be helpful to refer back to previous activities as you complete new ones.
- Blank Spaces: while many activities are structured, some require more brainstorming – follow the prompts for guidance and fill-in as much as is relevant for your situation.
- Reflect & Connect: this section helps you understand the connections between your motivators, personality traits, interests, academic success, and your major options.
- Information & Options: this section provides you with key resources to help you gather information about potential majors so that you can explore options.
- Evaluate & Decide: this section helps you put it all together and narrow your choices to make an informed decision.
- Take Action: this section highlights next steps to help you move forward toward your goals.

Remember that majors exploration is a process! This workbook aims to help you thoughtfully and constructively choose a major using the best resource for the job – you!

## Learning Outcomes

- Apply the steps of the exploration process.
- Develop skills in self-reflection, information gathering, evaluation, and decision-making.
- Develop confidence in applying these skills to your exploration process.
- Engage in the exploration process as a foundation for choosing a major.

Some technical things to consider before getting started....

**Faculty** – division or school within the University that offers degree; like a student’s “house”

**Degree** – type of credential awarded; dependent on the major field of study

**Major** – specialized area of study; key focus of degree program; required to graduate

**Minor** – secondary area of study that is different from major; not required to graduate

### Degree Structure

- all undergraduate degrees are 120units, which is 40 courses
- the major field of study is the “majority” of the courses in a degree
- some majors have more courses than others; most are roughly 60units (20 courses)
- all undergraduate degree programs have space for option courses
- degrees: majors 42-90units (14-30 courses) and options 30-78units (10-26 courses)
- minors are 30-36units (10-12 courses) and can organize option courses within a degree

## Exploration Process Model

This is the model followed throughout the workbook to guide your decision making.

The model graphic below outlines the stages of exploring degree programs with the goal of coming to a final decision. The process is iterative, meaning you may move back and forth through the stages based on your own decision-making style and judgment. The graphic is a semi-circular design because the exploration process is not always linear.



## Exploration Process Thinking Questions

The Exploration Process is designed to guide you in selecting a degree program that aligns with your motivators, personality traits, interests, academics, and goals. Using the Exploration Process will help you gain clarity on what matters most to you in your education and career, explore various degree program options, and make a well-informed decision. Exploration encourages deep reflection and critical thinking to ensure you choose a program that fosters your future success.

Before beginning the Exploration Process, consider your exploration goals and how you would like to engage in the process.

Who can support your exploration process?

How can you make your exploration process meaningful?

What activities or information can support your exploration?

How can you make your decision-making process intentional?

## Reflect & Connect

### Motivators

#### What made you choose to attend university?

Reflect on this question as you answer the statements below by highlighting the corresponding number for “Strongly Agree” (5) to “Strongly Disagree” (1).

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I decided on my own to attend university.	1	2	3	4	5
My family encouraged me to attend university.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel societal pressure to attend university or to study a certain subject.	1	2	3	4	5
I am attending university because I really want to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
I am attending university to achieve a well-paying job after I graduate.	1	2	3	4	5
I have always been interested in several academic subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
I have only ever been interested in one or two academic subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
I have always been involved in activities outside of academics.	1	2	3	4	5
I have talked to people about potential career options.	1	2	3	4	5
I want my major to give me the feel of prestige/I want to be a high-status individual.	1	2	3	4	5
There is more to my university experience than academics.	1	2	3	4	5

## Reflect & Connect

Consider your answers from the previous page to answer the following questions:

Based on your answers do you believe: (highlight “yes” or “no”)

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| a) It is up to you to decide what to major in                                   | yes | no |
| b) Your family, friends or societal expectations will dictate your major choice | yes | no |

In deciding on a major, which of the following is most important to you?

Rank order these motivators, where 1 is most important and 4 is the least important.

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| • Getting a high-paying, prestigious job         | _____ |
| • Studying something I’m very interested in      | _____ |
| • Getting the most from my university experience | _____ |
| • Gaining new skills                             | _____ |

What is your top motivator for choosing a major?

How will this influence your major exploration process? (highlight the applicable statement)

- a. I will start by looking at career options
- b. I will register in courses I’m interested in to explore my options
- c. I will find extracurricular opportunities to enhance my academics
- d. I will determine which skills I’d like to develop and look for academic and/or extracurricular activities to acquire them
- e. Other (please note below any other considerations)

How will you know when you’ve found the right program? (highlight the applicable statement)

- a. I will have a clear path to a desired occupation/career
- b. I will be very excited about the majority of classes required for my major
- c. The extracurriculars I’m engaged in will provide meaning to my academics
- d. I will gain confidence in using the skills I’m developing
- e. Other (please note below any other indicators that you’ve found a good fit)

What excites you most about university?

### Personality Mosaic

**DIRECTIONS:** Circle or highlight the numbers of statements that clearly feel like something you might say or do or think – something that feels like you! – Takes 2-3 minutes

1. It's important for me to have a strong, agile body.
2. I need to understand things thoroughly.
3. Music, color, beauty of any kind can really affect my moods.
4. People enrich my life and give it meaning.
5. I have confidence in myself that I can make things happen.
6. I appreciate clear directions so that I know exactly what to do.
7. I can usually carry/build/fix things myself.
8. I can get absorbed for hours thinking something out.
9. I appreciate beautiful surroundings; color and design mean a lot to me.
10. I love company.
11. I enjoy competing.
12. I need to get my surroundings in order before I start a project.
13. I enjoy making things with my hands.
14. It's satisfying to explore new ideas.
15. I always seem to be looking for new ways to express my creativity.
16. I value being able to share personal concerns with people.
17. Being a key person in a group is very satisfying to me.
18. I take pride in being very careful about all the details of my work.
19. I don't mind getting my hands dirty.
20. I see education as a lifelong process of developing and sharpening my mind.
21. I love to dress in unusual ways, to try new colors and styles.
22. I can often sense when a person needs to talk to someone.
23. I enjoy getting people organized and on the move.
24. A good routine helps me get the job done.
25. I like to buy sensible things I can make or work on myself.
26. Sometimes I can sit for long periods of time and work on puzzles or read or just think about life.
27. I have a great imagination.
28. It makes me feel good to take care of people.
29. I like to have people rely on me to get the job done.
30. I'm satisfied knowing that I've done an assignment carefully and completely.
31. I'd rather be on my own doing practical, hands-on activities.
32. I'm eager to read about any subject that arouses my curiosity.
33. I love to try creative new ideas.
34. If I have a problem with someone, I prefer to talk it out and resolve it.
35. To be successful, it's important to aim high.
36. I prefer being in a position where I don't have to take responsibility for decisions.
37. I don't enjoy spending a lot of time discussing things. What's right is right.
38. I need to analyze a problem pretty thoroughly before I act on it.
39. I like to rearrange my surroundings to make them unique and different.
40. When I feel down, I find a friend to talk to.
41. After I suggest a plan, I prefer to let others take care of the details.
42. I'm usually content where I am.
43. It's invigorating to do things outdoors.
44. I keep asking "why".
45. I like my work to be an expression of my moods and feelings.



46. I like to find ways to help people care more for each other.
47. It's exciting to take part in important decisions.
48. I'm always glad to have someone else take charge.
49. I like my surroundings to be plain and practical.
50. I need to stay with a problem until I figure out an answer.
51. The beauty of nature touches something deep inside me.
52. Close relationships are important to me.
53. Promotions and advancement are important to me.
54. Efficiency, for me, means doing a set amount carefully each day.
55. A strong system of law and order is important to prevent chaos.
56. Thought-provoking books always broaden my perspective.
57. I look forward to seeing art shows, plays and good films.
58. I haven't seen you for so long; I'd love to know how you're doing.
59. It's exciting to influence people.
60. When I say I'll do it, I follow through on every detail.
61. Good, hard physical work never hurt anyone.
62. I'd like to learn all there is to know about subjects that interest me.
63. I don't want to be like everyone else; I like to do things differently.
64. Tell me how I can help you.
65. I'm willing to take some risks to get ahead.
66. I like exact directions and clear rules when I start something new.
67. The first thing I look for in a car is a well-built engine.
68. Those people are intellectually stimulating.
69. When I'm creating, I tend to let everything else go.
70. I feel concerned that so many people in our society need help.
71. It's fun to get ideas across to people.
72. I hate it when they keep changing the system just when I get it all down.
73. I usually know how to take care of things in an emergency.
74. Just reading about those new discoveries is exciting.
75. I like to create happenings.
76. I often go out of my way to pay attention to people who seem lonely and friendless.
77. I love to bargain.
78. I don't like to do things unless I'm sure they're approved.
79. Sports are important in building strong bodies.
80. I've always been curious about the way nature works.
81. It's fun to be in a mood to try or do something unusual.
82. I believe that people are basically good.
83. If I don't make it the first time, I usually bounce back with energy and enthusiasm.
84. I appreciate knowing exactly what people expect of me.
85. I like to take things apart to see if I can fix them.
86. Don't get excited. We can think it out and plan the right move logically.
87. It would be hard to imagine my life without beauty around me.
88. People often seem to tell me their problems.
89. I can usually connect with people who get me in touch with a network of resources.
90. I don't need much to be happy.

## Reflect & Connect

### Personality Mosaic Scoring

To score, circle or highlight the same numbers that you selected on the previous pages.

R	I	A	S	E	C
1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54
55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66
67	68	69	70	71	72
73	74	75	76	77	78
79	80	81	82	83	84
85	86	87	88	89	90

Now add up the numbers of circles in each column:

R\_\_\_\_ I\_\_\_\_ A\_\_\_\_ S\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_

What are your highest scores?

1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from: Michelozzi, B.N. (1998) *Coming alive from nine to five: The career search handbook* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company

<p><b>Realistic (R)</b></p> <p>Characteristics of Realistic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically skilled</li> <li>• Mechanical ability</li> <li>• Work with objects/things rather than ideas/people</li> <li>• Like tools, plants, animals</li> <li>• Enjoy being outdoors</li> <li>• Concrete problem solvers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Investigative (I)</b></p> <p>Characteristics of Investigative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observers, learners</li> <li>• Enjoy investigation, problem solving, analysis</li> <li>• Drawn to science/math</li> <li>• Work with ideas rather than people</li> <li>• Prefer less structure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Artistic (A)</b></p> <p>Characteristics of Artistic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative, imaginative</li> <li>• Enjoy innovative ideas and artistic methods</li> <li>• Solves problems with unconventional thinking</li> <li>• Work with ideas, self-expression, artistic tools</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conventional (C)</b></p> <p>Characteristics of Conventional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detail Oriented</li> <li>• Work with data/numbers rather than ideas/people</li> <li>• Clerical ability</li> <li>• Organization and planning</li> <li>• Follow instructions</li> <li>• Prefer structure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enterprising (E)</b></p> <p>Characteristics of Enterprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task and goal oriented</li> <li>• "People" person</li> <li>• Enjoys opportunities to influence, persuade and manage others</li> <li>• Leadership, management</li> <li>• Works for economic gain</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social (S)</b></p> <p>Characteristics of Social:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "People" person</li> <li>• Enjoys opportunities to inform, help, train</li> <li>• Self-improvement or improvement of others</li> <li>• Solves problems through discussion with others</li> </ul>

Reference: Sharf, R.S. (2010). *Applying career development theory to counselling* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning

Reflect & Connect

Interests

Use the chart below to brainstorm your Personal (P), Academic (A) and Occupational (O) interests. Write down anything that comes to mind, there are no wrong answers!

**Interest** – topics/activities you enjoy; when you’re engaged in an interest you tend to lose track of time

(P) listening to music, (A) developmental psychology, (O) working independently on self-determined tasks

	Personal	Academic	Occupational
Interests			

## Reflect & Connect

From the previous chart, indicate below the key interests that you see as most useful in choosing your major.

- 
- 
- 
- 

How do these interests connect to the top motivator you identified on page 5?

What draws you to each of these interests? What do you find interesting about these topics?

- 
- 
- 
- 

What would you like to learn about each of these interests?

- 
- 
- 
- 

Consider your top interests and what you'd like to learn about each of them, what themes/similarities/trends can you identify?

Can your desired major allow you to explore these themes/similarities/trends?

If you're not able to explore these themes/similarities/trends within a major, where else might you be able to pursue them (electives/options, clubs, volunteering, paid work, etc.)?

**NOTE:** Themes/trends in your interests can influence which classes you select and which major you pursue based on program content. Highlight the last three questions and return to them when you begin gathering information.

## Academic Successes & Challenges

Reflecting on your academic experience is helpful in considering what in your education works and what does not. This is important to connect back to when determining your program or major options.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS	
In which subject areas do you excel?	
In which courses have you achieved the highest grades?	
What kind of assignments have you enjoyed?	
What academic tasks are you most motivated to complete?	
What makes school engaging?	

---

ACADEMIC CHALLENGES	
Which subject areas do you find challenging?	
In which courses have you achieved the lowest grades?	
What kind of assignments have been a struggle?	
What academic tasks motivate you the least?	
When do you procrastinate most?	

## Reflect & Connect

What does success mean to you/how do you know you've been successful?

List the grades achieved for your most recent 10 university level courses and your GPA on these 10 courses: (tip – use My Grades function in MyUCalgary portal)

1. \_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_

GPA on last 30units (10 courses): \_\_\_\_

## Reflect & Connect

### Mind-Map

Use the following example as a guideline to complete the exercise on page 15.

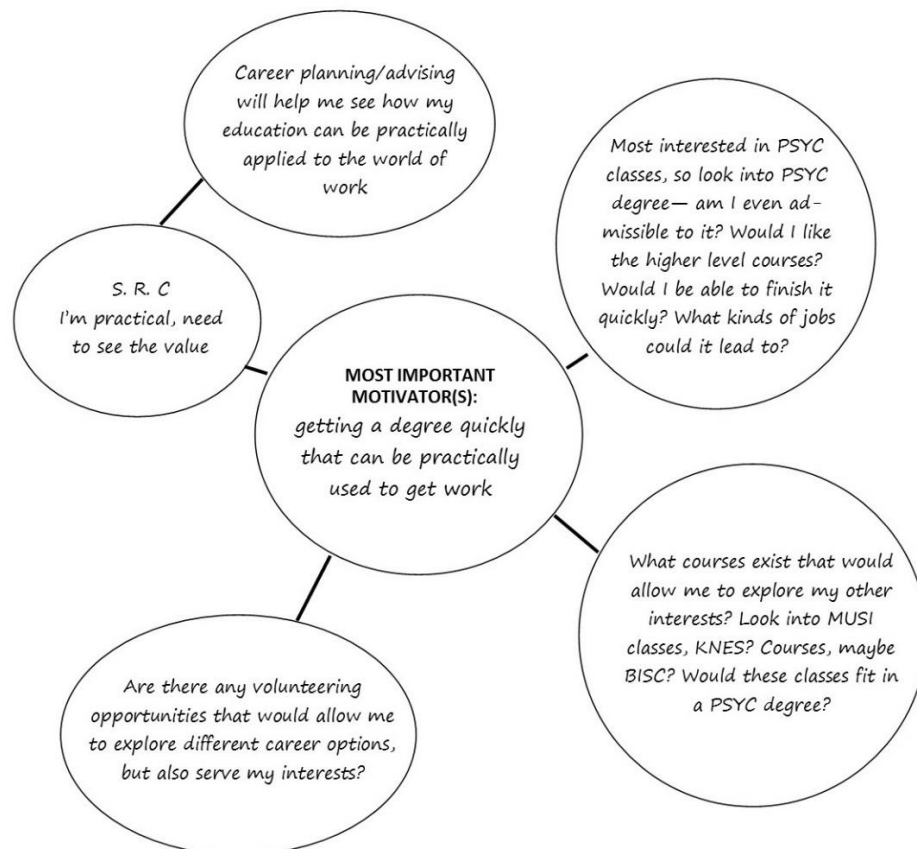
Now that you've explored your motivation, personality, interests, and academic successes, it is time to draw connections that will help move you forward in the decision-making process.

#### Think Critically:

How do these characteristics connect?

Can you identify ways they may intersect to influence your major exploration or decision-making process?

MOTIVATORS	PERSONALITY TRAITS	ACADEMIC SUCCESSES	INTERESTS
<i>Get a degree quickly</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>PSYC 200/201</i>	<i>Helping</i>
<i>Interest</i>	<i>Conventional</i>	<i>Multiple choice tests</i>	<i>Music</i>
	<i>Realistic</i>		<i>Career options</i>
			<i>Health/human body</i>



List any actions you can take based on this information:

- *Seek program advising and career development advising*
- *Look into course outlines to explore course content*
- *Contact LSE regarding volunteer/student engagement opportunities*

Reflect & Connect

Your turn!

- 1. Indicate your top motivator from page 6
  - 2. Indicate your three letter personality code from page 9
  - 3. Indicate key interest themes/trends from page 11
  - 4. Identify key components from your Academics Chart from page 12
  - 5. Brainstorm how all of these characteristics connect to move you forward!
- NOTE: You are welcome to complete this activity on a blank page. The aim is free-flowing mind-mapping.

MOTIVATORS	PERSONALITY TRAITS	INTERESTS	ACADEMICS



List any actions you can take based on this info:

- 
- 
-



## Majors / Programs By Personality Traits

Review Majors by Faculty charts below to connect your top three personality traits (page 9) to the majors offered at UCalgary. Highlight the majors that most connect with your top three personality traits.

**Realistic (R)**  
**Social (S)**

**Investigative (I)**  
**Enterprising (E)**

**Artistic (A)**  
**Conventional (C)**

<b>Arts</b>			
Anthropology	R, I, S, E, C	International Indigenous Studies	I, S, E
Archaeology	R, I, E	International Relations	I, E, C
Art History	I, A, S	Language and Culture	I, A, S, C
Communication & Media Studies	R, A, S, E	Law and Society	S, E, C
Dance	R, I, A, E	Linguistics	I, A, S, C
Drama	A, S, E	Linguistics and Language	I, A, S, C
Economics	I, E, C	Multidisciplinary Studies	R, I, A, S, E, C
English	I, A, S, C	Music	I, A, S, C
Film Studies	R, A, E, C	Philosophy	I, S, C
French	I, A, C	Political Science	I, E, C
Gender & Sexuality Studies	A, S, E	Psychology	I, A, S
Geography	R, I, S, C	Sociology	I, S, E
Global Development Studies	S, E, C	Urban Studies	I, S, C
History	I, S, C	Visual Studies	R, I, A

<b>Cumming School of Medicine</b>	
Community Rehabilitation	R, S, E
Bioinformatics	R, I, C
Biomedical Sciences	I, S, C
Health and Society	I, S, E

<b>Haskayne School of Business</b>	
Commerce	S, E, C

<b>Nursing</b>	
Nursing	R, S, C

<b>Social Work</b>	
Social Work	S, E, C

<b>Kinesiology</b>	
Biomechanics	R, I, S, E
Exercise and Health Physiology	R, I, S, E
Kinesiology	R, S, E
Leadership and Coaching	R, A, S, E
Motor & Psychosocial Aspects of Movement	R, I, A, S, E

<b>Werklund School of Education</b>	
4yr Education (elem/second/K-12)	S + Teachable
5yr Concurrent (elementary)	S + Teachable
5yr Concurrent (secondary)	S + Teachable
2yr After Degree (elementary)	S + Teachable
2yr After Degree (secondary)	S + Teachable

Science			
Actuarial Science	I, E, C	Geology	R, I, C
Astrophysics	R, I, C	Geophysics	R, I, C
Biochemistry	I, S, C	Mathematics	I, A, C
Biological Sciences	I, S, C	Natural Science	R, I, S, C
Cellular & Molecular Biology	I, S, C	Neuroscience	I, S, C
Chemistry	R, I, C	Physics	R, I, C
Computer Science	R, I, C	Plant Biology	I, S, C
Data Science	I, E, C	Statistics	I, A, C
Energy Science	I, E, C	Zoology	R, I, S
Environmental Science	R, I, E, C		

Schulich School of Engineering	
Biomedical Engineering	R, I, E, C
Chemical Engineering	R, I, E, C
Civil Engineering	R, I, E, C
Electrical Engineering	R, I, E, C
Energy Engineering	R, I, E, C
Engineering Physics	R, I, E, C
Geomatics Engineering	R, I, E, C
Mechanical Engineering	R, I, E, C
Oil and Gas Engineering	R, I, E, C
Software Engineering	R, I, E, C
Sustainable Systems Engineering	R, I, E, C

School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape	
Design in City Innovation	R, I, A, E, S

List the majors that connect most with your top three personality traits:

## Reduce Major / Program Options

Use the charts below to cross-off majors that you know are not options. Identify why these majors are not options by highlighting the reason that best represents why you will not consider it. Use the following legend:

- AC** – too academically challenging  
**I** – not interested in the content  
**P** – not aligned with my personality  
**JO** – limited/unclear/don't like the job options

<b>Arts</b>			
Anthropology	AC I P JO	International Indigenous Studies	AC I P JO
Archaeology	AC I P JO	International Relations	AC I P JO
Art History	AC I P JO	Language and Culture	AC I P JO
Communication & Media Studies	AC I P JO	Law and Society	AC I P JO
Dance	AC I P JO	Linguistics	AC I P JO
Drama	AC I P JO	Linguistics and Language	AC I P JO
Economics	AC I P JO	Multidisciplinary Studies	AC I P JO
English	AC I P JO	Music	AC I P JO
Film Studies	AC I P JO	Philosophy	AC I P JO
French	AC I P JO	Political Science	AC I P JO
Gender & Sexuality Studies	AC I P JO	Psychology	AC I P JO
Geography	AC I P JO	Sociology	AC I P JO
Global Development Studies	AC I P JO	Urban Studies	AC I P JO
History	AC I P JO	Visual Studies	AC I P JO

<b>Cumming School of Medicine</b>	
Community Rehabilitation	AC I P JO
Bioinformatics	AC I P JO
Biomedical Sciences	AC I P JO
Health and Society	AC I P JO

<b>Haskayne School of Business</b>	
Commerce	AC I P JO

<b>Nursing</b>	
Nursing	AC I P JO

<b>Social Work</b>	
Social Work	AC I P JO

<b>Kinesiology</b>	
Biomechanics	AC I P JO
Exercise and Health Physiology	AC I P JO
Kinesiology	AC I P JO
Leadership and Coaching	AC I P JO
Motor & Psychosocial Aspects of Movement	AC I P JO

<b>Werklund School of Education</b>	
4yr Education (elem/second/K-12)	AC I P JO
5yr Concurrent (elementary)	AC I P JO
5yr Concurrent (secondary)	AC I P JO
2yr After Degree (elementary)	AC I P JO
2yr After Degree (secondary)	AC I P JO

Science			
Actuarial Science	AC I P JO	Geology	AC I P JO
Astrophysics	AC I P JO	Geophysics	AC I P JO
Biochemistry	AC I P JO	Mathematics	AC I P JO
Biological Sciences	AC I P JO	Natural Science	AC I P JO
Cellular & Molecular Biology	AC I P JO	Neuroscience	AC I P JO
Chemistry	AC I P JO	Physics	AC I P JO
Computer Science	AC I P JO	Plant Biology	AC I P JO
Data Science	AC I P JO	Statistics	AC I P JO
Energy Science	AC I P JO	Zoology	AC I P JO
Environmental Science	AC I P JO		

Schulich School of Engineering	
Biomedical Engineering	AC I P JO
Chemical Engineering	AC I P JO
Civil Engineering	AC I P JO
Electrical Engineering	AC I P JO
Energy Engineering	AC I P JO
Engineering Physics	AC I P JO
Geomatics Engineering	AC I P JO
Mechanical Engineering	AC I P JO
Oil and Gas Engineering	AC I P JO
Software Engineering	AC I P JO
Sustainable Systems Engineering	AC I P JO

School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape	
Design in City Innovation	AC I P JO

List the majors you have remaining (try to limit yourself to 5-8, but it's ok if you have more):

Do the majors you have left reflect your motivators, personality, interests, and academics?

In critically considering your motivators, personality, interests, and academics, can you eliminate any additional majors, or do you need more information?

## Gather Information and Develop Options

### Types of Information Brainstorm

Before beginning to gather information on degree programs, think about the types of information that you want to know. This will ensure you gather information more effectively by guiding the direction of your search and informing the resources that you use.

NOTE: the purpose of this activity is to brainstorm types, criteria, or categories of information rather than specific facts about specific degree programs.

Use the space below to brainstorm ideas in a mind map, list, or chart. Use the prompt questions below to help generate ideas.

Prompt Questions:

- What types of information do I already know about degree programs?
- What types of information do I need or want to know about degree programs?
- What types of resources would help me learn more about degree programs?

## Main Exploration Resources

Use the three resources below to help you complete the chart on page 23. The resources will help you learn more about potential programs and careers, and the chart will help you to collect information to compare options. Add any other criteria or categories of information that is important to you. You can use an excel spreadsheet, or any other tool, to track your info-gathering. Check out the Additional Resources on the next page (22) to can give you more information about your options.

### Explore Programs

Use the Undergraduate Explore Programs website to examine UCalgary degree programs that most appeal to you. Click on specific program tiles or use the “Undergraduate Faculties” dropdown menu to filter programs by faculty. Connect your top three personality traits to degrees offered at UCalgary (see pages 16-17).

*Complete the chart on the next page by rank ordering your top four selected majors/programs.*

### Program Content and Structure

Use the Academic Calendar to investigate your top four majors in more detail. All degree programs are 120units and most majors are roughly half of an entire degree program.

Click on the “Explore Programs” button, then type the program name into the search bar. Select the degree program from the searched list, then click on “Program Details” tab to find degree course requirements.

The Academic Calendar also provides Admission requirements and processes information. Click on the “Admissions” link at the top of the Calendar, then click on the “Undergraduate Admissions” link.

*Complete the chart on the next page by noting the course-related, degree completion and admission information for your top four selected majors/programs.*

### Occupational Considerations

Use Centre for Career & Personal Development Degree Profiles to explore potential jobs and industries related to each degree program. Select your top four majors/programs from the Faculty or School drop-down menus to review career options.

*Complete the chart on the next page by listing any interesting jobs and/or industries related to your top four selected majors/programs.*

## Additional Exploration Resources

### Degree Program Resources

[Faculty Program Advising Contacts](#) – learn more about degree program requirements

Department Websites – learn more about major/program content and opportunities; review course outlines for courses offered within specific departments (if available)

Department Coordinators and Professors – learn more about degree programs and courses offered, field study and research opportunities, and experiential learning within specific departments or subjects

Upper Year Students – learn more about degree program and course experiences

### Career Planning Resources

[Centre for Career & Personal Development](#) – programming to enhance university experience and leadership, Life Design, career advising, career skills development, micro-placements

[Alberta Learning Information Service, Occupational Profiles](#) – research potential jobs and careers

[Mentor Link](#) – connect with alumni to learn about degrees programs and careers

[Micro-Placements for Students](#) – try out potential careers and/or gain more work experience

### Student Experience Resources

[Global Learning](#) – learn about ways to internationalize degree programs

[Student Union ClubHub](#) – join a student-led club related to programs, careers or hobbies

## Information & Options

### Major / Program Options

<b>Majors / Programs</b>	<b>Completed Courses Used</b>	<b>Remaining Courses</b>	<b>Estimated Time for Completion</b>	<b>Admission Requirements</b>	<b>Interesting Jobs or Industries</b>
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					



## Evaluate & Decide

### Evaluate Program Options

Evaluating options requires you to think critically about what you have learned from self-reflection and the information you gathered about degree programs. When thinking critically about your degree program options, you will want to notice if there are positive trends or potential problems.

Some questions to consider about your degree program options are:

What draws you to these program options? What would you enjoy most in studying these programs?

Which program options are the most academically interesting?

Which program options are the most academically realistic?

Are there potential barriers to being successful in any of the program options?

Which program options have the best student experience and career opportunities?

What are the positives and negatives of each program option?

How do the program options compare?

What is the estimated timeline:

How long will it take you to be admitted to the program options?

How long will it take you to graduate from the program options?

How comfortable are you with these timelines?

## Evaluate & Decide

*Use the questions above to guide completion of the chart below.*

For each category you have 5 points to allocate among your top majors. Distribute these points based on how well each major fits with what you have discovered about yourself. Use the Total column to tally the number of points for each major. This will help you rank your top majors based on your values. If you added extra criteria or information categories in your chart on page 23, add them here as part of your evaluation.

Top Majors	Motivators	Personality Traits	Interests	Academic Fit	Time to Completion	Admission Reqs	Career Options	Total
	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(5)	

What are you seeing in the above chart? How does this ranking resonate with you?

Is there a difference between what you want and what is realistic for you to achieve?

If so, how will you reconcile this difference?

Should you consider potential major/minor/degree combinations that are available to you as a realistic alternative?

**NOTE:** Remember the exploration process is circular. You may need to return to a previous stage or seek advising at this point to move forward with your decision-making.

A decision-making matrix is a method of visualizing data about degree programs to gain insight into a decision.

**STEP 1: Fill in degree program options**

**STEP 2: Fill in objectives you want to achieve from each degree program option**

**STEP 3: Use visual indicator to fill in how fully each option meets objective:**



= fully meets objective



= partially meets objective



= does not meet objective

**STEP 4: Think critically about the visual data**

Is one option the clear winner or loser?

Are there any objectives ranked the same across all or most program options? Can you omit any objectives based on this?

Does this reveal any missing objectives, or make you think differently about any objectives? Does it make you think differently about any program options?

OBJECTIVES:	OPTION 1:	OPTION 2:	OPTION 3:

### Other Methods to Evaluate Options

Evaluation is ultimately a process of comparing options to make a decision. Consider using any of the methods described below to evaluate and compare your program options.

**SWOT Analysis:** Assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of potential programs by creating four-quadrant charts for each program option and listing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to choosing each program option.

**Scenario Planning:** Visualize the potential outcomes and future possibilities of each program option. Imagine your life if you chose each program option. What does each program option feel like?

**Pros and Cons List:** Clearly define the advantages and disadvantages of each program. Write down the positive aspects and negative aspects of each program to compare overall benefits and drawbacks.

**Peer and Mentor Consultation:** Talk to classmates, advisors, professors, alumni, and professionals who have experience with each program option to learn about their experiences and decision-making. Ask for feedback on your decision-making.

**Reflection Journaling:** Write daily or weekly journal reflections about what excites and challenges you about how each program option aligns with your motivators, personality, interests, academics, and career goals.

**Vision Board:** Visually represent your future academic and career aspirations. Create a vision board for each program option using images, symbols, words, or other materials to represent your goals.

### Characteristics of Decision-Making Styles

Identify the decision-making styles that best describe your approach by circling or highlighting them below:

- a. **Weigh alternatives against each other** – typical comparison of options, often pros and cons; options seemingly abstract and detached from us
- b. **Use intuition or gut-feeling** – an inner voice points us in a particular direction; often the voice assures us toward or warns us against certain options
- c. **Analyze options and their outcomes** – examine every aspect of each option and logically rationalize what could happen if choosing each option
- d. **Imagine living out options and their outcomes** – visualize aspects of each option to emotionally connect with what could happen if choosing each option
- e. **Decide slowly and cautiously** – taking time to mull over options; feeling concern about choosing correctly; procrastinating the decision
- f. **Decide quickly and impulsively** – moving from options to decision rapidly; often followed by rationalizing decision after the fact
- g. **Talk through ideas with someone** – verbalize options, outcomes, thoughts, concerns, and interests to consider how they sound; process information by discussing and explaining; seek advice or validation of decision
- h. **Think through ideas independently** – internalize options, outcomes, thoughts, concerns, and interests; rely on inner voice or self-logic to validate decision

## Evaluate & Decide

### Decide

#### Decision Time!

Consider all the work that has gone into your exploration process. What degree program is the best fit for you?

My chosen degree program is \_\_\_\_\_!!

My back-up degree program is \_\_\_\_\_!

How does the idea of studying these degree programs make you feel?

Extracurricular Activities I'd like to pursue are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer/work opportunities I'd like to explore are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Offices I'd like to connect with include \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Action

### Take Action

To make this decision happen, what are your next steps? Check or highlight all that apply.

- ☐ High School upgrading
- ☐ Complete university level pre-requisites
  
- ☐ Register in courses strategically to boost GPA
- ☐ Register in courses to work toward degree requirements
- ☐ Complete additional admission requirements (program specific)
  
- ☐ Register in courses to continue exploring interests
- ☐ Meet with Faculty Program Advisor
- ☐ Meet with Exploratory Advisor
- ☐ Investigate extracurricular opportunities (on or off campus)
  
- ☐ Meet with Career Development Specialist
- ☐ Conduct information interview(s)
- ☐ Research occupational options
  
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- ☐ Submit Change of Program application (between October 1 - February 1)

In what order will you complete these steps?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Best of luck with your degree/career exploration process!

[Exploratory Advising, Student Success Centre](#) – more information and to book an appointment