

Major/Career Myths

* courtesy of [Rob Clem, Counselor, De Anza College](#)

Six Common Myths about College Majors & Careers

Myth # 1: There is a quick and easy method for choosing a major or career. False!

There is no quick answer and there is no ultimate "test" that will tell you what you should do. Choosing a major or career takes time, energy and research. A good decision takes into consideration your personality traits, interests, values, skills, family & cultural values and other important factors. Career planning courses such as CLP 70 can help you assess your strengths in these areas.

Myth # 2: Choosing a major is the same thing as choosing a career. False!

Most majors at the Bachelor's Degree level do not have a direct link to just one single career, but are designed to provide you with many flexible career options. This is true, because most majors help you develop what employers and educators refer to as "transferable skills". These include: good verbal and written communication, ability to work on teams, critical thinking and problem solving skills, basic computer knowledge, multicultural skills, etc. A college education (no matter what your major) helps to develop these skills. Employers seek people with these valuable skills.

Note: There are some career fields that require a great deal of technical expertise. If you plan on pursuing a career in one of these fields, you should definitely choose a major related to that career. Registered Nursing, Computer Science, and Electrical Engineering are good examples.

Myth # 3: Market demand should determine your major and career choice. False!

Market demand moves in cycles. Careers can be in high demand one day, and then low in demand the next. Job outlook "predictions" can and do sometimes fail to come true. Your individual values and interests should be the motivating force behind your choice of major or career. Do something you would enjoy! Meaningful work (work that you truly care about) begins with self-knowledge - not labor market statistics.

Myth # 4: Your first career will probably be your one and only career. False!

You not only can, you probably will change your career path several times. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the average person will change careers five to six times in their lifetime. This is now the norm.

Myth # 5: Coursework in your major is the main factor in career success. False!

Succeeding in your course work is indeed very important; but you should know that summer jobs, internships, volunteer placements, athletics, student politics and civic activities are significant factors in employer selection of job seekers.

Myth # 6: Graduate Schools require specific undergraduate majors. False!

Many graduate/professional schools require certain prerequisites (courses), but specific majors are not always required. Each school will have their own unique requirements for admission. Medical School applicants must complete science and math course requirements (pre-med path) and generally choose a standard science major such as: biology, chemistry, etc.

