Consider these points when selecting a major:

1. **Why do I want this major?** Did you choose this major because you have an interest in it? Did a family member suggest this major/career field for you? Choose something based upon your interests, skills and abilities. Sometimes the family member is correct. Sometimes the family member is incorrect. Someone’s wishes should not dictate what you choose for a major.

2. **Do I know enough about this major?** It is important to understand what’s involved in the discipline. Select a few upper level courses in the discipline. This is one way to understand the level of difficulty involved. Talk with professors of those disciplines. Ask questions.

3. **What are the requirements for this major?** Familiarize yourself with the required program. Ask questions about specific courses. If the courses don’t pique your interest, reconsider your choice of the major.

4. **Is my college strong in this major?** Investigate how many faculty members in the area. Ask how many courses are offered in the field. Ask how many faculty have advanced degrees in the discipline. You may need to select a specific college or university for your desired major.

5. **What are the career opportunities for this major?** Check the Department of Labor for statistics regarding the career field, particularly at the time you will graduate. Plan for a career that will be alive and active when you graduate.

6. **Is this the right—and only—major for my career path?** Be sure the major you select is the right track to your career of choice. Speak with an advisor or professor or a professional in the career field. **NOTE:** Many different majors can lead to a career path. For example, you can have your own business without having majored in business. Many business people majored in liberal arts. You do not have to major in criminal justice to become a lawyer.

7. **Have I talked to someone in this major?** Speak with a professional. Arrange an appointment with a person working in a position in which you are interested. Ask another student already pursuing the major. Speak with professors. Find out what is in store. You need to know what is good and bad about the major.

8. **Am I good at this major?** Select your major according to your abilities, skills, and interests. You may want to become an engineer, but if you stumble over mathematics, you need to investigate another career/major. **Rule of thumb.** “Getting lots of A’s in a field = good choice of major. Some A’s and some B’s = not a bad choice. All B’s = there might be a better choice. Lots of C’s = look elsewhere.”

9. **Do I need to pick a traditional major at all?** USC Columbia Palmetto College provides an Interdisciplinary major through the Liberal Studies degree. You construct your courses within a framework. Palmetto College provides a business type of degree in which you select your major courses from a list. These alternate paths can provide a quality background for your chosen career path.

10. **When is the right time to declare a major?** The right time to declare a major is when you know what you want to do for a career or when you’ve sampled courses in a discipline and found them to your liking. There is no hurry to declare a major.

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1. 2009 Professors' Guide LLC.