

Switching Your Major As a Researcher: Things to Consider Before Making the Decision

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Are you thinking of switching your major? If you answered yes, you are not alone. It is common for higher education students, especially those undertaking majors in the STEM field to change majors once, twice, or even more. Choosing a major isn't always easy, which is why getting it right the first time is quite rare. Besides, interests might change after making your major selection during the first year, leading you to consider seriously about changing it. However, before taking the final decision, it is important to make sure that you are not making a mistake. If you make the decision without the right preparation, you might end up having doubts about the option you chose or even regret it altogether. To make this process smoother for you, here are 5 things you need to consider before switching to another major.

Factors to Consider While Switching Your Major in University

Your Major Must Lead to Your Goals

Your goals are always important for guiding you along the journey towards anything that you want to achieve. When you start thinking of switching your major, you should first think of your goals and how they might have changed down the line. Think of the reasons why you chose your current major in the first place. What changed along the way? What are the factors making you want to make a change? What interests you in the major that you want to change to?

It is common for STEM students to choose a path out of pressure from parents, society, or even peer pressure to pursue specific courses that may or may not be of interest to the student. You could also have joined the course with the hopes of getting a high salaried job. However, one's interest may fade away if they aren't passionate about the subject they are working on.

Most importantly, be sure to answer these questions truthfully. You could be wrong about your current major and you are probably trying to run away from hard classes. But you should always keep in mind that choosing a career is not a one-time thing, it will impact your whole career journey. That's why always keep in mind your ultimate goal and where you want to see yourself after a few decades.

A Lot of Research is Always Helpful

Before making such a major decision, it is good to think carefully in the depth about what you are leaving behind and what you are getting into. There are several things that you can do to get an understanding of the major that you are interested in taking.

- Find resources about the major you are changing to so that you have a clear picture of what to expect. For instance, if you are switching to medicine, the [online resource by Osmosis](#) can be helpful in finding your way around. Going through Osmosis Questions & Answers can unlock valuable insights on the major.
- Seek different perspectives from different people who are knowledgeable in the major that you are interested in. You can talk to students undertaking the major to learn about their experiences in activities such as classes and research projects. Faculty advisors can be helpful with advice that can guide you in making a well-rounded decision.
- Take elective or intro classes in the major that you are interested in for you to have a glimpse of what the course looks like before delving further.
- Find work or offer volunteer services to learn more on what career opportunities your new major can offer you.

Think About The Right Time

When deciding on switching your major, timing should be top of mind. If you are already in the third year of your current major, making a switch might not be a viable idea especially if you have to start from scratch. You need to think of the vast changes that might occur in your academic planning and decide whether the timing works for you. You might be lucky to find that some of your current classes can transfer to the new major with exception of a few, especially if you are switching to a major within the STEM

field. For instance, if you are switching from data science to IT major, it is likely that some of your credits can convert to elective credits, so you might be required to take an extra year before you are eligible to graduate. Ensure that you enquire about what classes can transfer and which ones you will be required to substitute. However, if you must make the change regardless of the timing, talk to your academic advisor to find ways that you can make your switch viable.

You Should Prepare Financially

Switching majors can potentially pose a huge financial burden for you. You might think that since some classes can be transferred to your new major, you have nothing to worry about. However, any extra credits can cost you additional costs. In addition, making a switch can potentially increase the per-credit rate, forcing you to cough up some more money. It is important that you understand what is in it for you in matters of finances. Consider sitting down with your career advisors to help you understand the hard facts about the financial burden that you are likely to face. Before making the decision, compare the benefits that lie ahead for you with the negatives such as the additional costs to see if the switch is worth it. However, keep in mind that you can find other ways to finance the switch. [Look around for scholarships](#) that might be available for you and fill in the applications.

Career Progression Opportunities

The work that goes into attaining a degree is too much to end up in a career that you despise at the end. Hence, it is important to understand the post-college opportunities that are likely available for you once you enter the job market. Start with analyzing the opportunities that your current major presents. It is possible that you are just concerned about your job prospects, and that is why you want to make the change. To rule this out, identify all the career paths that the [skills and knowledge](#) you have gained in your current major might apply. Then, determine whether there is a choice that interests you. Likewise, do the same analysis for the major that you are interested in to see if it has potential to open doors to the career that you want.

Conclusion

Your ultimate goal is to find a career that is going to interest you in the long run. So, if it becomes necessary that you change majors in college in your endeavor to end up in a path of your choice, don't hesitate to do so. However, before making the decision of switching your major, pose and consider a few things. Keep in mind your goals, the timing, career opportunities available for you and finances. Additionally, be sure to explore your major of interest further to understand what is in it for you.

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