
Major mayhem: Everyone wants my major, what do I do?

Agenda

We will cover:

- What are selective majors
- Review process for selective majors
- How to prepare to apply to a selective major
- Alternate majors
- Majors with auditions or supplemental materials
- The undeclared major option
- Alternative pathways to selective majors
- Beyond the major

What is a selective major?

Majors that are selective receive more qualified applicants than spaces available.

A selective major may strongly recommend additional criteria and preparation including:

- specific courses
- supplemental applications
- general interest in the subject area

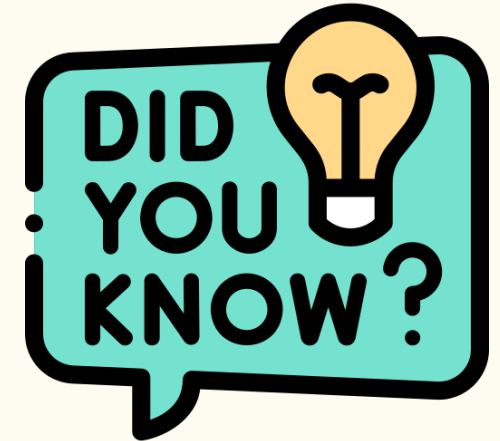
The more students prepare for the major, the more competitive they will be.



Definition of selective major

UC campuses may use the following terms to indicate that a major is selective:

- Capped
- High-demand
- Screening
- Selective



Campuses that use the term "Selective"	Campuses that use the term "Screening"	Campuses that use the term "High-demand"	Campuses that use the term "Capped"
UC Davis UC Irvine UCLA UC Merced UC Riverside UC Santa Barbara	UC Santa Cruz	UC Berkeley	UC San Diego

Review process for selective majors

Does the major choice affect admission decisions?

IT DEPENDS!

Can depend on...

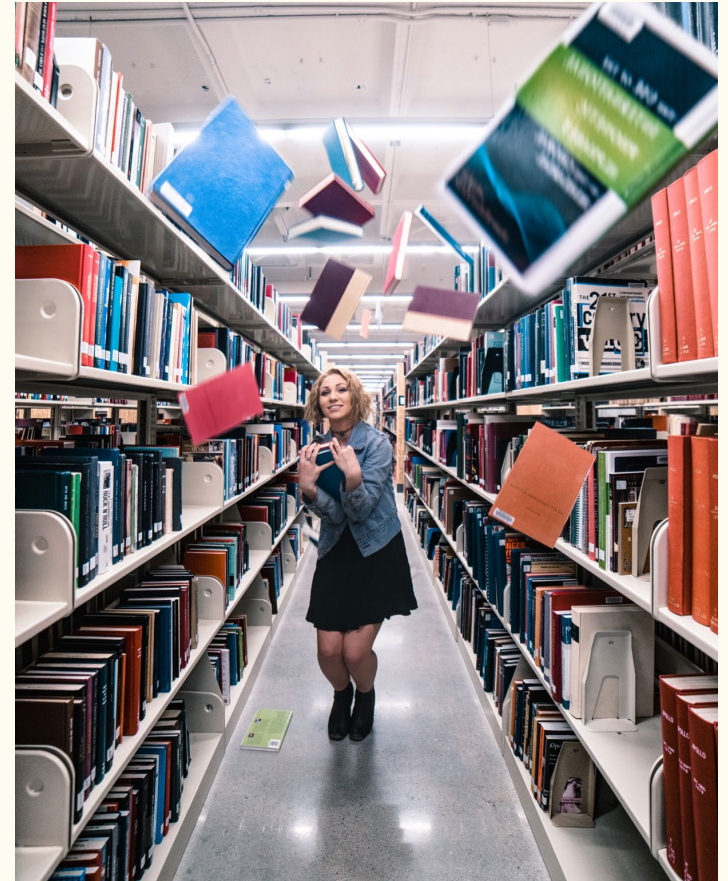
The campus student applies to and,

The major and academic school applied to

How are selective majors considered in the comprehensive review process?

Some factors campuses may consider...

- Activities, rigor of coursework, course selection, grades or discussion of subject matter that demonstrate an interest in the subject area of major
- Supplemental application materials if requested by the campus



Frequently asked question

**Are freshman applicants
admitted directly to their
major?**

Are freshman applicants admitted directly to their major?

It depends...some campuses will admit freshman applicants directly to their major while others will admit students to the college/school.

Frequently asked question

Are all majors open to Freshman applicants?

Are all majors open to freshman applicants?

Short answer is no...some majors may not be open to freshman applicants as there may be specific requirements students need to complete at the UC campus before they can declare a major.

Unavailable majors

There are majors and degree paths that UCs offer that are not available to first-year applicants, but are available after they enroll.

For these students we recommend...

- Exploring majors in the same academic college/school
- Researching if their desired school has a recommended path to their planned major

Which UCs review alternate majors on the application?

- Students can select an alternate major at all UC campuses
- Not all UC campuses will guarantee a review of the alternate major
- Alternate majors are not a pipe dream!
- Students should consider whether or not the alternate major they are choosing is selective
- Alternate majors do not have to be related (and sometimes *should not* be related) to the first choice major

Preparing for a selective major

How to prepare for a selective major

Explore major **interest**

- Is there opportunity for additional coursework in this area of study?
- What activities, hobbies, or awards do they have or want to have that are related to this major?
- Where does their interest in this area come from?
- How does their future career path relate to this major?



How to become a competitive applicant for a selective major

- Details, details, details
- Know what is required (and meet those requirements)
- Keep track of important deadlines
- If given the option, select an alternate major

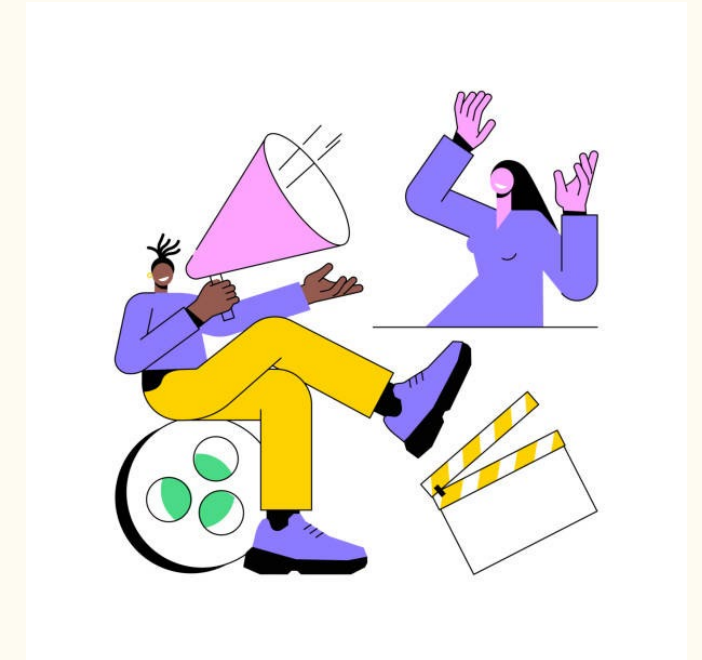


Majors with auditions or supplemental materials

Auditions and supplemental applications

Students applying to majors requiring auditions or supplementals may be asked to submit more information following the submission of the UC application.

- **Deadlines may vary**
- **Students should continue to check their email after submitting!**



Supplemental applications

Not all highly selective majors require supplemental information and not all majors that request supplemental information are highly selective.

Supplemental applications

May include...

- Portfolio submission
- Auditions/interviews
- Additional written statements
- Work samples/resume
- Letters of recommendation
- Other information relevant to their chosen major

Auditions for performing arts

- Attending an **in-person** audition following the submission of the supplemental application may be required.
- Not all music, dance, and theater programs require auditions, but many do. Students should check the requirements for their intended programs prior to applying.

The image features two young women in a vibrant, abstract background of diagonal stripes in shades of yellow, orange, and pink. The woman on the left has long brown hair, wears glasses, and a dark jacket over a t-shirt that says 'Semana de la Mujer'. The woman on the right has pink hair, a nose ring, and a denim jacket. A white text box is overlaid on the bottom left.

The undeclared major option

What is the undeclared major option?

The undeclared major option allows students to apply to a UC campus without choosing a specific major if a student is unsure about the area of study they want to pursue.

Benefits:

- Students have flexibility to explore different areas of study before declaring a major.
- Applying undeclared does not affect or hurt prospects of admission.



Case study: Advising clusters

Advising clusters are groups of majors to help exploratory students identify potential majors at UC Santa Cruz. New freshman may, on their application for admission, identify an advising cluster to a ‘proposed’ major by the end of their first year, and must be formally qualified for and declared in a major by the end of the sophomore year.

Frequently asked question

**Will applying as
“undeclared” negatively
affect the review of my
application?**

Will applying “undeclared” negatively affect an applicant?

No, because campuses understand that freshman applicants may not:

- **know what area of study they are the most interested in**
- **have decided what career they want to pursue**
- **have had opportunities to be exposed to the vast majority of majors that are available at UC.**

Another FAQ about undeclared majors

Will it be easier for me to get admitted if I apply as “undeclared” and once I am at UC, I can then switch into the major I am really interested in?

Is it easier to be admitted “undeclared” and then switch to another major after enrolling at UC?

Not necessarily.

- Applying “undeclared” is not a back-door into a selective major
- Some majors require students apply directly to them when applying for admission
- Some specific majors may require an additional application process for students once they are at UC.

Pro tip: When not to select undeclared



Majors that require a supplemental application

- In these instances, the declared major does make a difference and will play a role in the selection process.
- There are particular majors that require students submit applications, such as performance-based majors like Dance or Theater.
- Letters of recommendation, essays, etc., may be required.

Selective majors

- Restrictions are likely to be in place that make it challenging for undeclared students to later change their major into selective majors (check with the campus on these restrictions before applying undeclared).

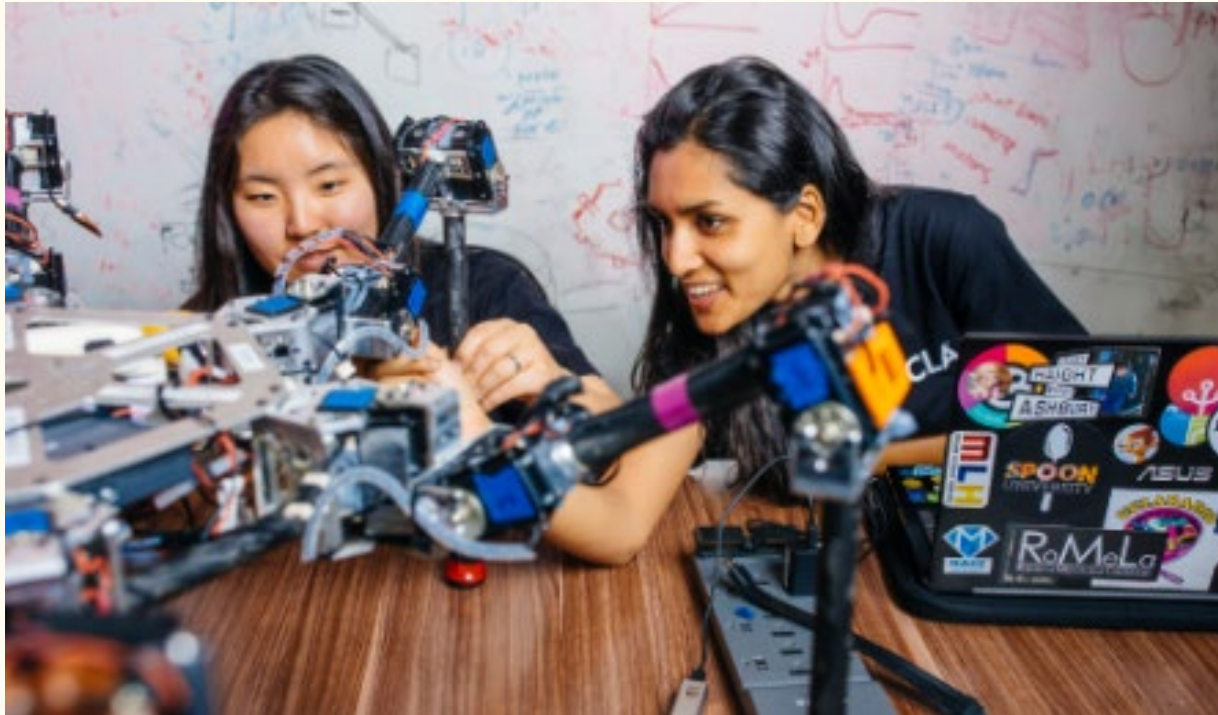
Three popular majors/fields and alternate pathways

Everyone wants the health fields or biology



- Psychology
- Public Health
- Physical Sciences
- Natural Resources

Computer Science seems to be popular too



- Data Science
- Statistics
- Mathematics
- Information Systems

...and of course everyone wants to go into **Business!**



- Global Studies
- Legal Studies
- Political Science
- Economics
- Political Economy

Friendly reminder #1

- **Students should not apply to a major they have no interest in.**
- Rather, try to help them understand which majors besides their first choice could lead to similar career goals.



Friendly reminder #2

- **Students may not be able to switch into a highly selective/competitive major after being admitted.**
- Students should select a major on UC Application that they are interested in or an Undeclared option.
- Less selective majors are NOT backdoors to selective majors.



Friendly reminder #3

- **Students do not have to apply to the same major at all UCs.**
- Different campuses often have different levels of selectivity, even for similar majors.





Beyond the major

Top priority for students

- Have an honest conversation with your students about their top priority.
- Campus, Major or Career?



Don't forget about minor programs

Minors can help students:

- Achieve their educational and career goals by supplementing their majors
- Broaden their education in another field that connects with their major
- Stand out when applying for jobs or graduate/professional school

Examples:

- **Education minor** for teaching career
- **Statistics minor** for data analyst career
- **Hydrology minor** for water/geology career



Undergraduate research opportunities

Research
opportunities
available for all
majors

Hands on
experience that
applies classroom
lessons to real world
scenarios

Preparation for
professional career
tracks that includes
resume and network
building

Other opportunities on and off campus

- Study abroad programs
- Pre-professional programs
 - Pre-Health
 - Pre-Law
- Student organized clubs
- Jobs
- Internships



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Thank you!