

# Major mayhem:

Everyone wants my major, what do I do?

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# Agenda

- How campuses define “selective”
- Review process for selective majors
- Alternative pathways for your students

## What is a selective major?

Majors that are selective receive more qualified applicants than spaces available. Therefore, the more prepared students are for the major, the more competitive they will be.

A selective major may strongly recommend/require additional criteria and preparation. This may include courses, specific letter grades in courses, and GPA requirements.



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“Selective” majors may require certain college courses with a certain GPA before they will consider the student for that major.

Campuses may not be able to take all transfer students that are meeting the minimum requirements, it is recommended that students go beyond the minimums by taking “recommended” courses.

## Terms used by each UC campus

Campuses that use the term "selective"	Campuses that use the term "screening"	Campuses that use the term "capped"
UC Berkeley UC Davis UC Irvine UCLA UC Merced UC Riverside UC Santa Barbara	UC Santa Cruz	UC San Diego

# UC transfers by major tool

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## Transfers by major

By major name | By federal CIP category | By community college

Fall term transfer applications by major

Search for major name

Campus: UCB Term: Fall term 2022

Compare selected broad discipline across campuses (Ignores college/school)

Broad discipline: All

Campus	Applicants	Admits	Enrolls	Admit GPA range	Enroll GPA range	Admit rate	Yield rate
UCB	19,371	4,573	2,670	3.62 - 3.96	3.58 - 3.95	24%	58%
UCD	15,533	9,045	2,614	3.44 - 3.89	3.32 - 3.80	58%	29%
UCI	22,815	9,142	2,579	3.60 - 3.93	3.53 - 3.89	40%	26%
UCLA	24,943	5,961	3,645	3.74 - 4.00	3.73 - 4.00	24%	61%
UCM	4,226	2,668	213	3.16 - 3.76	2.85 - 3.64	64%	8%
UCR	12,937	7,877	1,461	3.17 - 3.80	2.96 - 3.64	61%	19%
UCSD	18,734	11,430	3,969	3.45 - 3.91	3.33 - 3.84	56%	27%
UCSB	17,636	10,245	2,999	3.48 - 3.92	3.33 - 3.81	58%	20%
UCSC	11,719	7,059	1,212	3.20 - 3.82	3.02 - 3.70	61%	17%

Broad discipline	College/School	Major name	Applicants	Admits	Enrolls	Admit GPA range	Enroll GPA range	Admit rate	Yield rate
Agriculture & Natural Resources	College Of Letters & science	Environmental earth science	29	9	6	3.38 - 3.70	3.39 - 3.66	31%	67%
		Environmental economics & policy	102	34	31	3.57 - 4.00	3.58 - 4.00	33%	91%
		Geography	40	26	19	3.61 - 3.94	3.56 - 3.93	65%	73%
		Conservation & resource studies	40	22	15	3.44 - 3.90	3.46 - 3.89	55%	68%
College Of Natural resources		Ecosystem management and forestry - forestry	12	5	4	3.59 - 3.94	masked	42%	80%
		Ecosystem management and forestry - natura...	21	5	4	3.36 - 3.58	masked	24%	80%
		Environmental economics & policy	52	39	24	3.55 - 3.92	3.69 - 3.92	58%	80%
		Environmental science	145	34	11	3.46 - 3.83	3.40 - 3.74	23%	32%
		Society and environment	77	17	15	3.50 - 3.94	3.48 - 3.93	22%	88%
Architecture & Envir...	College Of Environmental desi...	Architecture	247	49	40	3.75 - 3.94	3.73 - 3.91	20%	82%

Source: <http://universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/transfers-major>

Visit the tool here:



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- The UC Transfers by Major Tool ([universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/transfers-major](http://universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/transfers-major)) is a helpful resource to view data on approximately how many transfer students applied, were admitted, and ultimately enrolled at each UC campus in a given year. While the data is roughly broken down by major, this information is meant to provide insights into transfer trends, rather than be predictive of an individual applicant's chances of admission.

# Transfer review process for selective majors

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# Does major selection affect admissions decisions?

YES

The major will determine:

- Specific major preparation requirements
- Specific GPA requirements
- IGETC recommendations
- Any supplemental applications

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Most UC campuses admit transfer students by major, particularly when it comes to highly selective majors, and will require specific major preparation courses and GPA requirements to be met in order to be admitted.

Major prep courses are courses that students will be asked to complete in addition to their basic 7- course pattern of transfer course requirements. While the specific requirements will vary from campus to campus and major to major, all campuses look at major prep to some degree in the selection process.

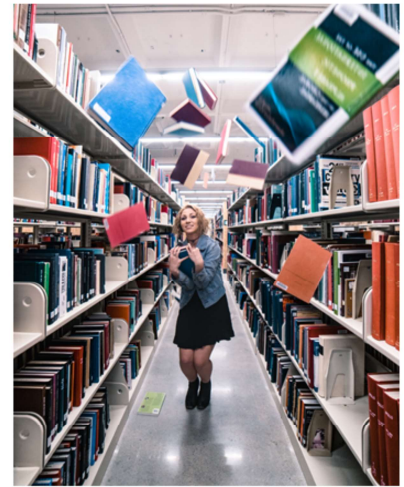
In addition, major will often determine additional GPA requirements beyond the cumulative GPA minimum requirements. For example, a transfer student may be required to have a minimum GPA of a 2.4 generally but a minimum GPA of a 3.0 for their major.

Many students choose to utilize the IGETC to complete lower-division courses, major choice may impact whether this is a recommended path and whether IGETC will be accepted.

It is also important to note that if students are planning on pursuing a specific transfer pathway such as TAG some major choices may be unavailable.

# How are selective majors considered in the transfer review process?

- Completion of major preparation courses
- GPA
- 9 comprehensive review factors
  - Going above and beyond required major prep!



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When it comes to how a major choice will impact a transfer student the biggest factor is, have they completed any major preparation requirements?

For some selective majors it is recommended that students complete the required prep courses by fall/winter.

Beyond that campuses will utilize the 9 comprehensive review factors to evaluate if the student is overall a competitive applicant, having exceeded the minimum requirements.

For some selective majors, the most competitive applicants have completed the recommended Major Prep courses in addition to the required Major Prep courses.



# Major preparation coursework

## Major prep is extremely important

- Utilize Assist.org
- Check campus catalogues
- Encourage students to do well in the subject!

Additional courses beyond the general transfer courses are extremely important for students to not only have a smooth transition but to demonstrate their achievement and interest in their chosen subject area. Major Preparation is a **requirement** for admission to a specific major; if a campus is asking students to complete major prep courses they must be completed by the specified timeline.

Students should review their requirements carefully and utilize Assist.org to ensure they are meeting all requirements to be admitted to their major. As well as checking their desired campuses catalogue to ensure that they aren't missing any requirements or that they know all guidelines and recommendations to apply. Also, if a student has taken a course outside of a Community College, they can check their campus catalogues to see if a similar course is available at the UC to determine transferability.

Students should also use these courses to make sure they actually enjoy the subject material of their chosen major. Transfer students are often not able to change their major after transferring or it is extremely difficult. Students should feel confident that they are completing the major prep for the major they are genuinely interested in.

# The importance of major preparation

## Transfer students are college students.

- Major preparation is essential to transfer and ultimately, for graduation
- Timely progress in major preparation allows students to go into upper-division coursework after transfer
  - Pre-requisites and sequences

Additional courses beyond the general transfer courses are extremely important for students to not only have a smooth transition but to demonstrate their achievement and interest in their chosen subject area. Major Preparation is a **requirement** for admission to a specific major, if a campus is asking students to complete major prep courses they must be completed by the specified timeline. This ultimately helps students after transfer as they continue to work towards graduation requirements. Preparation in the major can promote timely graduation. The lower-division courses are often pre-requisites for upper-division courses and completion of those pre-requisites allows for a seamless transition as we consider sequencing and scheduling at the UC campuses.

Students should review their requirements carefully and utilize Assist.org to ensure they are meeting all requirements to be admitted to their major. As well as checking their desired campuses catalogue to ensure that they aren't missing any requirements or that they know all guidelines and recommendations to apply. Also, if a student has taken a course outside of a Community College, they can check their campus catalogues to see if a similar course is available at the UC to determine transferability.

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## Resources to support students

- ASSIST.org – Essential articulation information
- Connect with an admissions officer from the student's UC of interest
- UC campus-based tools such as guides or video tutorials
- Attend UC support events

ASSIST.org – Essential articulation information. All UC campuses utilize assist.org and in the articulation agreements you often find important and helpful information on required and recommended major prep.

UC campus-based tools such as guides or video tutorials. Campuses have a lot of support programs in place to help transfers. Along with the other two mentioned, you and your students can benefit from those resources.

## Auditions & supplementals

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 the application!

Supplemental application pieces will be requested following the application submission period. Students should **carefully** review instructions for submitting additional materials or signing up for auditions.

Students should also note that they often **cannot make changes** to their supplemental materials submission so they should review all parts of their supplemental materials prior to submitting.

If the student selects a major that requires supplemental information, it will be noted in the summary of campuses when the student is submitting the application.

## Supplemental applications

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

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Supplemental application pieces are very important to the selection process of majors that request these extra materials.

Not all majors that are considered highly selective will ask for a supplemental application. This means students will not have additional materials being reviewed and should be aware that the campus they are applying to may be looking for major interest or other factors relevant to major selection in their application itself.

Not all majors that request supplementals are considered highly selective or will show up on “most popular” lists for the campuses. However, supplementals often play a noteworthy role in the review of applicants to any majors asking for additional materials whether it be additional statements or an audition. Supplementals are usually **not** optional for these majors and students must be aware that if they wish to apply for these majors, they must complete the supplemental application piece as instructed.

# Supplemental applications

May include...

- Portfolio submission
- Auditions
- Additional written statements
- Work samples/resumes
- Other information relevant to their chosen major

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Supplemental applications will vary from major to major and from campus to campus. Often even if two campuses are offering the same major and asking for a supplemental the actual supplementals may be different. It is important that students read the instructions for supplementals carefully so as not to miss any parts of the application or any deadlines.

## Auditions for performing arts

- May require students to attend **in-person** auditions following the submission of their application.
- Not all music, dance, and theater programs require auditions, but many do. Students should check the requirements for their programs prior to applying.

Auditions are typically for performing arts students and may require students to attend **in-person** auditions following the submission of their application. (Some programs may allow for videos/recordings to be uploaded)

- Students will typically receive sign up instructions with audition dates and times after the application submission period has ended.
- Students should check their email regularly following the submission of their application

Not all Music, Dance, and Theater programs require auditions, but many do. Students should check the requirements for their programs prior to applying.

- Students should note that many **BFA** programs may have specific guidelines for declaring their intentions to ultimately pursue a BFA track and students should carefully review the audition and supplemental material instructions.

## Which UCs allow alternate majors on the application?

- All UCs with the exception of UC Berkeley, consider an alternate major
- Students should consider whether or not the alternate major they are choosing is selective
- If selective, usually has to complete major prep requirements
- Alternate majors do not have to be related (and sometimes *should not* be related) to the first choice major

- Most UC campuses will allow students to select an alternate major on the UC application. If a student is not selective for their first choice major (i.e., if they meet the UC transfer eligibility requirements but do not meet major preparation requirements), then they MAY be considered for admission to their alternate major. In most cases, if a student is admitted to their alternate major, they cannot switch back into their first choice major.
- UCSC allows students, both freshmen and transfers, to list an alternate major on their applications.
- UCLA will only consider alternate majors for students in their TAP program: <https://admission.ucla.edu/apply/transfer/ucla-transfer-alliance-program>
- Students should only select an alternate major that they are actually interested in pursuing, and for which they meet the major preparation requirements. They can be, but do not have to be, related to the first choice major.
- Moral of the story: if the student has an option to select an alternate major on the UC application, advise them to do it! It's never guaranteed but it's still worth a shot!
- Detailed information by campus can be found in the [Quick Reference Guide](#) on page 48-49



# Alternative pathways to the same major or career

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## Top priority for students

- Have an honest conversation with your students about their top priority
- Campus, major or career?



# Three popular majors/fields

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# Everyone wants the health fields

- Psychology
- Public Health
- Physical Sciences
- Natural Resources



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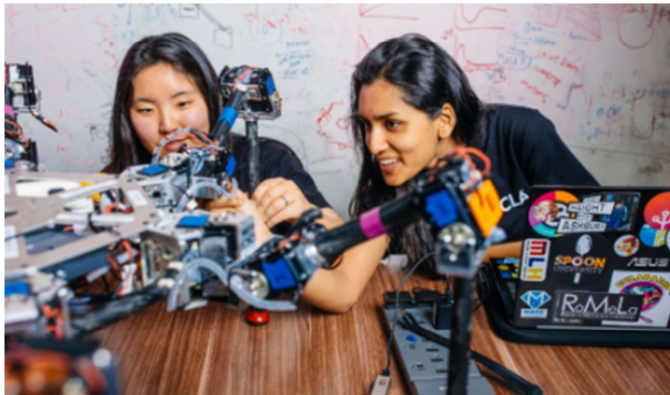
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Many majors can lead to the same place in life

If a student wants to be Pre-Med, they do not necessarily need to major in one of the Biological Sciences.

# 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
- International development studies

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UCLA International Development Studies major offers students the opportunity to engage with the study of social, political and economic forces that throughout history have shaped global inequalities.

If students want to go to Business School, they can major in any major and apply after they have obtained professional work experience and in some cases, having taken the GMAT/GRE.

...And of course everyone wants to go into business!

## Advice for major selection



- Realize that major preparation requirements often **overlap**
- Encourage students to **research** each major
- Strategically utilize **alternate majors** on the UC application

- Of course, students should never apply to a major that they are not interested in pursuing. But as counselors, we can help them research different major options and consider how various majors can often lead to similar career paths.
- Remember that the courses students will take after transfer may not always align with the title of major in an obvious way. What exactly will students study in a major like Global Studies or Earth Science?
- Another thing to keep in mind is that the major preparation coursework, and often the upper division coursework, for different majors can often overlap quite a bit. Even if a student's first choice major is Biology, they may fulfill most or all of the major preparation coursework for something like Environmental Studies and then select that as an alternate major on the UC application.

## 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 majors on the UC application that they are interested in
- Less selective majors are NOT backdoors to selective majors



## Friendly reminder 3

- **Students can apply to different majors at different UC campuses**
- Different campuses often have different levels of selectivity, even for similar majors
- Major preparation requirements may be similar or different across campuses/majors. Students should do their research!



# Beyond the major

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# 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

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- Students can Major in Music and minor in Computer Science (if available) for example and still go into the Computer Programming career field
- Although not all UC campuses have a minor for each of their major programs, many do.
- UCSC has a minor in Computer Science and Economics for example.
- UCLA has a minor in Film, Television and Digital Media
- Students do not need to list their intended Minor on the UC Application, but they should be applying with the idea of which UC's have minors in the field the student is interested in.
- Minors are not required but can be a great way to supplement a student's education.

# Undergraduate research opportunities

Research  
opportunities  
available for all  
students

Hands on  
experience that  
applies classroom  
lessons to real world  
scenarios

Preparation for  
professional career  
tracks that includes  
resume and network  
building

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Conducting research is not only a way to make the most of the UC experience but can make students stand out in a graduate school application or on a resume. Research opportunities can be related – or not! – to a student’s major.

Regardless of major, students can participate in research in any field and be exposed to faculty and research that they are interested in. Research does not always look the way we expect it to - not just labs and white coats or just for Stem majors! Research can look a variety of different ways according to a student’s interest and can be interdisciplinary. Someone majoring in Philosophy and taking a Biology course can do research in the life sciences and be pre-med.

Transfer students should be encouraged to get involved right away. They only have 2 or so years. They can still do research.

## Other opportunities on & off campus

- Study abroad programs
- Pre-professional programs
  - Pre-health/Pre-med
  - Pre-law
- Student organized clubs
- Jobs
- Internships
- Transfer Student Centers



# Thank you!

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