

School of Arts and Sciences

UNDECIDED

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So you're ready to go to college, but you don't have any idea what major to choose. Big problem? Not at all. Many students who attend the University of Pittsburgh School of Arts and Sciences spend a portion of their first two years of college without a declared major. This isn't unusual; it's just part of the ongoing process of learning about yourself and discovering what interests you. While others may urge you to select a major, realize that you have a unique opportunity at this point in your life to explore a truly wide range of topics. Take advantage of it—get acquainted with topics you know nothing about, try new activities, explore what really excites you, learn your strengths and weaknesses, and basically enjoy yourself!

Wherever your interests lie, the University of Pittsburgh offers top-quality academic programs and a vibrant atmosphere for learning and experiencing life. Some Pitt departments and schools that are very highly ranked in the country include the College of Business Administration; the Departments of Chemistry, Economics, English, History and Philosophy of Science, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, and Psychology; and the Latin American studies program.

Pitt's School of Arts and Sciences offers more than 50 majors, including:

Arts and Sciences/Business Dual Major	Environmental Studies	Neuroscience
Actuarial Mathematics	Film Studies	Philosophy
Africana Studies	French	Physics
Africana Studies–English Writing	Geology	Physics and Astronomy
Anthropology	German	Political Science
Applied Mathematics	History	Politics–Philosophy
Architectural Studies	History and Philosophy of Science	Psychology
Bioinformatics	History of Art and Architecture	Religious Studies
Biological Sciences	Italian Languages and Literature	Russian
Chemistry	Italian Studies	Scientific Computing
Chinese	Japanese	Slavic Studies
Classics	Linguistics	Sociology
Communication	Mathematics	Spanish
Computer Science	Mathematics–Economics	Statistics
Ecology and Evolution	Mathematics–Philosophy	Studio Arts
Economics	Microbiology	Theatre Arts
English Literature	Molecular Biology	Urban Studies
English Writing	Music	

But you don't have to choose just one major. You can do a **double major** combining any two Arts and Sciences majors or a **joint major**, interconnecting two disciplines in a more coherent manner. Whatever direction you choose to take, Arts and Sciences academic advisors can help you explore the many opportunities available to you.



Arts and Sciences Degree Requirements

Every major in Arts and Sciences is structured to give you a comprehensive liberal arts education that helps you understand and appreciate a wide range of subjects, such as political and social history, literature, philosophy, art, foreign culture, the natural sciences, and contemporary public policy. Many courses also serve to strengthen your verbal and written communication skills and sharpen your analytical skills. Perhaps most importantly, a liberal arts education at Pitt helps you cultivate an intellectual curiosity that leads you to respect and contribute creatively to the world around you.

Most students take courses that fulfill the skills and general education requirements during their freshman year. This allows you to explore many different subjects and determine those you prefer. The majority of Arts and Sciences degrees can be completed in four years if you begin taking the required courses for your major during your sophomore year or at the start of your junior year. Exceptions are the highly structured Arts and Sciences majors, such as the sciences, where you begin taking courses that are required for your major in your freshman year in order to finish in four years.

Every Arts and Sciences degree candidate must complete the following requirements:

Skills requirements are courses chosen to develop your abilities to communicate clearly in written and verbal forms, think critically, handle quantitative problems, and gain competence in a foreign language.

General education requirements give you a diversified foundation in literature, philosophy, art or music, foreign culture, the natural sciences, and social sciences such as social and political history and anthropology. You generally have many choices of classes to fulfill these requirements, exposing you to many possible majors. General education requirements are designed to help you communicate clearly in all formats, think critically, handle quantitative problems, integrate information from a variety of fields, understand human behavior in its many forms, and become familiar with cultures other than your own. The skills you develop in these courses allow you to function and thrive in a dynamic world.

Requirements for Your Major

Although the requirements for each academic major obviously vary, fulfilling most majors takes up about a quarter of the credits you need to graduate. Some Arts and Sciences majors, especially in the sciences, have additional requirements in other departments, called co-requisites, and therefore take up more than a quarter of your credits. Many majors also require that courses be taken in a certain order. If you are trying to choose between several majors, it is best to start in the one that is the most structured and sequential. If you change your mind (not an uncommon occurrence), it is easier to transfer out of, rather than into, a major that has more requirements and structure. Most, if not all, of the credits you will have already taken can be used to fulfill the general education requirements of your second major.

Related Area, Certificate Program, or Official Minor

As part of any Arts and Sciences major, you must complete at least 12 credits in a “related area,” a subject usually connected in some way to your major. All certificate programs and official minors at the University fulfill the requirements of a related area.

Elective courses let you throw away serious considerations like your major or career and just take a course in something you like or think you might like. How about a class in acting, geology, jazz music, or popular fiction, just for the fun of it? Most majors allow you to fit in at least a few electives to broaden your interests and experiences. Electives can come from any department and be as related or unrelated to your major as you’d like.

More Options

Besides Arts and Sciences, you can pursue an undergraduate program starting as a freshman in the following Pitt schools:

College of Business Administration—programs in accounting, finance, general management, global studies, and marketing

School of Engineering—programs in bioengineering, chemical engineering, civil engineering, computer engineering, electrical engineering, engineering physics, industrial engineering, materials science engineering, and mechanical engineering

School of Nursing—four-year professional program leading to a Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN), which makes you eligible to take the state licensing exam to become a registered nurse (RN)

Upper-Level Division Schools

Some upper-level division schools at Pitt offer admission to undergraduate students for specific programs. In most cases, students are admitted to these schools at the junior level after spending two years taking preparatory classes and electives in Arts and Sciences. The following upper-level division schools offer programs for undergraduates:

School of Education—programs in applied developmental psychology, and health and physical activity with a specialization in exercise science and wellness. *Note: This is not a teacher certification program; teacher certification programs can only be pursued at the fifth-year, postbaccalaureate, or master's level.*

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences—programs in clinical dietetics and nutrition, communication science, emergency medicine, health information management, and rehabilitation science (with a specialization available in athletic training)

School of Information Sciences—program in information sciences

School of Pharmacy—six-year professional program leading to a Doctor of Pharmacy degree

School of Social Work—program in social work

You also can pursue **dual degree programs** between the School of Arts and Sciences (Arts and Sciences) and the following Pitt schools:

College of Business Administration
School of Engineering
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
School of Information Sciences
School of Nursing
School of Social Work

Preparation for Graduate and/or Professional Schools

Although you may be undecided as to your undergraduate degree, maybe you have already decided to pursue a graduate or professional degree in a particular discipline such as business, dental medicine, education, law, medicine, physical therapy, public health, or social work. Several graduate and professional programs require or recommend that you take certain courses as an undergraduate to adequately prepare you for entering the program. It is also wise to explore the field through extracurricular activities such as volunteering, internships, and student organizations. Pitt's academic advisors can assist you in fulfilling the requirements for applying to the graduate or professional program of your choice.

University Honors College

The University Honors (UHC) College offers many resources for talented, active students—unique courses, special degrees, opportunities to perform independent research or teach, supplemental advising, and a social and academic community of similarly motivated students. UHC courses typically offer a more in-depth treatment of the material covered in a nonhonors course; students read more, write more, work more problems, and discuss topics in greater depth. While UHC does not have a formal membership and is open to students throughout the campus, you must usually meet academic qualifications for each course. An average of 40 UHC courses is offered each semester in a variety of departments, such as Literature and Psychoanalysis, Buddhist Civilization, Modern Physical Measurements, History of Sports, and Functional Neuroanatomy.

You also may qualify to pursue a Bachelor of Philosophy degree, also known as the honors degree, in the discipline of your choice. As part of their degree requirements, students take on in-depth, original research in their chosen field of study, then write a thesis paper and defend it before a faculty committee. Topics of recent BPhil research projects include "The Literary Treatment of Biculturalism by Southeast Asian Women Writers" and "Paying Off the Mortgage: Medicare Reform for the Baby Boom."

Certificate Programs

Certificate programs allow students to complete a concentrated area of study in addition to their major. They consist of 18–24 credits of course work and in many cases can be used to fulfill the "related area" requirement of the Arts and Sciences degree. Certificate programs in Asian studies, Latin American studies, Russian and East European studies, and West European studies are offered through the University Center for International Studies (UCIS) and are designated by the U.S. Department of Education as among the best of their kind for research, teaching, and public service. Other UCIS certificate programs include African Studies, European Union Studies, and Global Studies. Certificate programs are also available in American Sign Language, Children's Literature, Conceptual Foundations of Medicine, Geographic Information Systems, German Language, Historic Preservation, Jewish Studies, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Public and Professional Writing, Civil Engineering for Architectural Studies Majors, Photonics, and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies.

For more information about programs at the University of Pittsburgh, contact:

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Special Programs

Internships

Having an internship can be one of the most enlightening and productive aspects of your undergraduate education. It not only gives you a closer look at working in a particular field but can help you gain a competitive edge, make contacts in the marketplace, and earn credits toward your degree. Pittsburgh is an exciting place for internship opportunities: internationally known as a renowned center for health care and groundbreaking medical research; home to many corporate headquarters, including H.J. Heinz, Fisher Scientific, PPG Industries, Westinghouse Electric, and Mellon Financial Corporation; and a city with a wealth of cultural and entertainment activities, including three professional sports teams and the Carnegie system of museums. Internships are not limited to Pittsburgh, however. Every year, students complete internships in cities such as Philadelphia, Pa.; Washington, D.C.; New York, N.Y.; and their own hometowns. Some students even complete an internship as part of their study abroad experience.

Undergraduate Research

Research is done in every academic discipline at the University of Pittsburgh. As an undergraduate, there are many opportunities available for you to help professors with their research or conduct your own independent project for credit. Some of your choices include participating in projects in the Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, or Neuroscience; working on archaeological sites in the United States; and assisting in research at Thomas Detre Hall of the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic.

Study Abroad

Studying abroad is an exciting way to add an international perspective to your undergraduate education and strengthen your credentials as a graduate. The University of Pittsburgh encourages you to take advantage of this opportunity (almost 5 percent of Pitt students study abroad compared with 1.3 percent, nationally). Study abroad will not only distinguish you when you enter the job market or pursue graduate study, but also help broaden your experience of the world beyond your own country's borders, giving you an appreciation of other cultures and peoples while allowing you to earn credits toward your degree. Scholarships are available, and financial aid is applicable.

Pitt has developed programs at a variety of universities across the globe where courses are taught by a member of the Pitt faculty as well as faculty from the university abroad. Lessons extend beyond the classroom to the towns, sites, and people of the country you are visiting. Possibilities include studying Spanish in Argentina, Italian literature in Rome, engineering in China, architecture in the Czech Republic, and the culture of India in Hyderabad, an Indian city with four official languages and a history dating back to the 14th century. Hundreds of other study abroad programs are offered in almost every corner of the world.