

Welcome to Part Two of the How to Choose a Major video series, Reflect & Connect! My name is Deirdre Mooney and I'm an academic advisor for exploratory students in the Student Success Centre. My role is to support all undergraduate students who are exploring their undergraduate degree options.

In this video, I will discuss the Reflect & Connect stage of the Major Exploration Process and show the activities provided in the How to Choose a Major workbook.

I'll provide some extra tips to help you get the most out of each activity. The How to Choose a Major workbook can be downloaded from the Exploratory Advising Workshops website.

The first main stage of the Major Exploration Process is Reflect & Connect.

This is an opportunity for you to look inwards by reflecting on how your motivators, personality traits, interests, and academics connect to the degree program choices you have available at UCalgary.

This stage is so important because it will help you find a program that fits your abilities and goals.

Remember to take your time as you move through these activities. It is also helpful to discuss the activities and your reflections with others to gain more insight. And, it is okay, even encouraged, to take breaks from this work. Before we begin, consider your response to the following question: What is your main motivation for getting a university degree? Degree-career relatability, or specific skills. Gaining transferrable life skills, or holistic skills.

Learning to broaden your knowledge, or interest.

Studying something you can excel in, or academic strength.

Having an engaging university experience, or involvement.

Now, let's look at these specific activities in the workbook.

The Reflect & Connect activities are on pages 4-18 of the How to Choose a Major workbook.

This section is set up with an activity, followed by some critical thinking questions. The activities start out more structured as a way to guide you into reflection and then become more open. The first activity, Motivation, explores your main motivator for getting a degree.

Reflecting on what motivates you to complete a university degree is an important consideration as it can impact the options you are willing to explore and can underpin your choice.

Understanding your top motivator for choosing/completing a degree helps ground your decision-making to ensure that your choice meets your goal.

The activity prompts you to respond to each statement indicating your level of agreement, and then to consider the follow up questions.

If your main motivator is not listed here, just add it in. On pages 6 and 7, you can complete the Personality Mosaic.

Read each statement and circle only the ones you most identify with. Try not to overthink it, just use your gut instinct. Does the statement sound like you or not?

There are no right or wrong answers. On page 8, you'll circle the same numbers that you did on pages 6 and 7.

This is categorizing the responses into a letter code. Once you've done that, add up your totals for each letter and determine which letters have the highest scores. When we reflect on who we are, we want to consider our personality traits.

We each have the six personality traits listed here, but we may identify with some more than others. When the traits we identify with the most are reflected in the degree program we choose, we'll likely be more satisfied with our decision.

This is based on a career development theory that says these six traits are the most common across people and across careers.

Generally, this is because people with certain personality traits are attracted to certain types of careers. Now, take a look at the chart explaining the characteristics of each personality trait. Again, it is okay to identify with some more than others. It is important to note here that this is a simplistic tool to give you a bit more insight into yourself. It is not a prescription or a full picture of who you are. The next activity helps you explore your interests. The things we are most interested in are often what we think and talk about the most, what we read, watch and listen to, and the things we do the most. It's important to consider, though, whether our interests are personal, academic, or occupational.

Often, we aim to do something we're passionate about, but there is a big difference between our hobbies and the things we do in our spare time, versus what we might want to learn about academically, or the skills and tasks we want to engage in occupationally.

Categorizing interests by personal, academic, and occupational helps us determine what we like that could remain a hobby. This is a very open activity, which can be daunting, so you may want to start by listing interests and then categorize them later, and you're encouraged to chat with others to help you articulate your interests.

After brainstorming, page 10 includes some critical thinking questions challenging you to look for themes and trends that might be emerging within your interests, or between your motivator, personality traits, and interests. Critically considering our academic successes and challenges could give us some insight into what we may want to study or learn about in university.

Keeping in mind that while we may be successful in something, or that some things come more naturally to us, we may not actually want to pursue them - much like our interests.

Also remember that some challenges can be overcome - a program shouldn't necessarily be written off entirely because it is challenging.

Again, consider what it is you want to get out of your education.

Pages 11 and 12 of the How to Choose a Major workbook provide space for you to think more deeply about your academic successes and challenges. While these questions on the surface are easy to answer, the challenge is to be more critical about your responses. For your successes, consider what it is about the subject area, courses, or assignment type that allows you to be successful and motivates you to excel.

Likewise for your challenges, really consider what is a challenge that could be overcome with extra support versus what is an all-out barrier that would prevent

you from being successful.

Now that you've reflected on four key components of yourself that may help you find a degree program, it's worth taking time to do some mind mapping or brainstorming to think about how those components connect.

Here again, look for key themes and trends. This activity is based on principles of design-thinking where we allow our minds to wander in order to freely express our thoughts.

The goal is to map out everything we've just learned about ourselves, in no particular order or structure, to see if there are any connections that can be made.

This is called synectics - making connections between seemingly unrelated things. On page 13 of the How to Choose a Major workbook is a very basic example.

Then page 14 is in blank for you to complete.

You can do this activity in whatever way best supports your learning. If it's easier, grab a blank piece of paper, or maybe start by making a list, or by drawing and using symbols. Challenge yourself to be free-flowing with your ideas - all ideas are good, so try not to self-censor. This activity may seem silly or overwhelming or unstructured, but there is a lot of research that supports free-flowing wandering/mind mapping as a way to find our deepest insights.

Pages 15 and 16 include a list of all UCalgary degree programs categorized by personality traits.

This is here rather than immediately following the Personality Mosaic activity so that you can reflect on yourself first and not be influenced by this list.

But, now that you've completed the main reflection activities, it's a good time to introduce degree programs into the process.

You can review the list for your top two or three traits and see whether certain programs overlap or come up consistently, or see if the programs you're already interested in connect.

It is okay to pick a degree program that does not align with your personality traits. Sometimes one of the best ways to determine what we do want is to eliminate what we don't want.

Pages 17 and 18 of the How to Choose a Major workbook give you the opportunity to cross things off a list to narrow down your choices. All the degree programs UCalgary offers are listed, so you can go through and cross off the ones you already know you don't want to pursue to start to narrow from all the degree programs offered to programs of greater interest that fit your academic strengths.

Now, try not to cross programs off the list without any thought. The codes next to each program challenge you to be more critical about why you're crossing it off the list. And if you find a program that you don't actually know anything about, put a question mark next to it so that you can keep it on the list until you know more. Highlight the programs that do jump out and seem appealing.

Which programs remain? This is the Reflect & Connect section of the workbook.

As mentioned in Part One of the How to Choose a Major video series, you are encouraged to take your time, take breaks between activities, and to discuss your

reflections with others. Thanks for watching Part Two, Reflect & Connect! Check out the Exploratory Advising Workshops website to watch the other videos in this series and download the How to Choose a Major workbook.

Check out the Exploratory Advising Workshops website to watch the other videos in this series and download the How to Choose a Major workbook. Good luck with your exploration!