

Choosing your undergraduate major concentration: Things to consider

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A concentration is a subsection of a major that focuses on a particular topic of study, though not all majors have one. This depends on the curriculum of that specific university for your particular major. As we all know, choosing the concentration of your major is crucial in determining your way forward for both further studies and a future career. However, there is no objective right or wrong choice for choosing a concentration. Instead, many relevant factors should be considered to make the best possible choice for students given their specific requirements.

What interests you more?

Students should choose the concentration of their most interest. Choosing otherwise may lead to mental dissatisfaction that impacts their studies and future job life. A mental projection of whether they would like to continue working in an industry related to their concentration is also helpful.

"Ask yourself where do you want to see yourself in five years or ten years? Then, you may choose the concentration that fits most with your answer," says Dr Shanawez Hossain,

Assistant Professor at a country leading university.

What is your strength?

Each concentration requires a unique set of strengths as a priority. This can be quantitative skills, analytical skills, creative writing or anything else. Most students may generally have a strength of their own, and the concentration that aligns with their skills is usually the better choice. "Choosing a concentration where the required skills are something you are good at is highly recommended," says Dr Shanawez.

What are the future employability options?

In most instances, a concentration helps to specialise your skills in a specific industry. Therefore, it is essential to consider whether there is ample job opportunity in that industry for you upon completing your studies. It is also important to note that employability is not strictly limited to your chosen concentration.

Instead, it is a factor that increases your possibility of receiving a job

letter, given that you have enhanced specialisation in the industry of your concentration. "It is important to research the industry specifics of the concentrations you are considering to make a properly informed decision," says Refat Ara Jerin, faculty at a leading university.

What does your advisor recommend?

You should consult with your university assigned advisor before making a final decision. They can offer you expert insights, valuable recommendations and a critical second opinion of your plans ahead. You can also consult with a faculty you prefer more and take into account their advice.

You can start planning early and speak with them at the start of your freshman year (equivalent to the first year). It is recommended that you remain open and honest

with them about your vision and preferences so that they may give you advice accordingly.

Is it okay to change your concentration?

Most universities allow you to change your concentration, especially where the open credit system is in practice. However, this decision should be taken carefully, given this means that whatever progress you have made in your previous concentration will become obsolete towards your total credit count. As such, your graduation will be delayed, and there may be financial issues.

So, if you just started on a concentration and have completed only one or two concentration courses, it is okay to make the change since there is less trade-off. However, if you are nearly at the end of a given concentration, and there may be a

couple of courses remaining to complete your concentration courses, it may not be recommended to make the change. "If you have completed more than eighty per cent of your concentration, it is usually not recommended to change it," says Ms Refat.

