



Major Decisions

Choosing a major is about making a connection between knowledge about yourself and information about career opportunities.



Knowledge about yourself

1. Interests:

- What subjects do you like? _____
- What do you do in your spare time? _____
- What activities do you like? _____
- What keeps your curiosity? _____
- What books or magazines do you read? _____
- What do you like to work with? (People, data, things, concepts? Or a combination of these?) _____

2. Abilities:

- What are your strengths? _____
- What areas do you have challenges in? _____

3. Values: Circle the values that mean the most to you.

Creativity / Independence / Family / Wealth / Challenge / Learning / Advancement / Variety
Prestige / Helping others / Leisure / Teamwork / Stability / Authority / Travel / Adventure

4. Experiences:

- What jobs or volunteer experiences have you had? _____
- What work-related skills have you gained from your experiences? _____
- What did you like/dislike about your experiences? _____

Name three career paths or jobs that relate to your interests, abilities, values and experiences:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

What majors are related to these career paths

Develop an action plan

Action plans are an ongoing process to give you structure in helping you decide a major and career.

Set smaller goals that will help you gather information.

For example, list three things you can do this semester to help you decide on a major:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Seek out opportunities to build your skills, explore your interests, and learn about new fields!

Develop Your Skills

Finally, think about supplementing your coursework with some out-of-classroom experience.

What can you do to build your skills and build your resume!

I want to develop some skills. Three things I want to join / participate in / or just look into are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Resources and Support

- Career Services, Van Hoesen Hall, B5, 607-753-4715 - cortland.edu/career
- Advisement and Transition, Memorial Library, AIII, 607-753-4726 - cortland.edu/advisement
- Study Abroad opportunities cortland.edu/studyabroad
- The College Catalog—Look up different majors, requirements, and minors
- Academic Departments—look at department web pages, newsletters, etc.
- Faculty in different departments can talk to you about careers
- Academic Advisors
- Degree Works Audits (including “What-If” audits)
- Students in the majors you are exploring
- Check out clubs or organizations—meet people and get involved
- Shadow a professional
- Use resources on the internet
- Talk to family and friends about careers
- Reach out for help and be open to receiving feedback

Questions to help with Career and Major Exploration

Self-Exploration:

- What academic subjects do you enjoy? Are there subjects where you receive the best grades?
- Are your strengths in the math/science areas or in the social sciences? Both?
- What extra-curricular activities do you enjoy? What do you learn about yourself from participating in the activities?
- What personal qualities do you see as your strengths? Limitations?
- In what kind of work environment do you picture yourself?
- If you have spare time, what do you do?
- Why are you in college?
- What does a college degree mean to you?

Academic Major/Occupational Information:

- What academic areas are you considering? What do you like about these areas?
- What do you want to learn more about?
- What occupations are you considering? What attracts you to these occupations?
- How do your abilities and skills fit the tasks needed to succeed in those areas?
- Will those occupations provide the rewards and satisfactions you want? Why?
- What are the differences between the majors/occupations you are considering? The similarities?
- Who has influenced your ideas about these alternatives?

Decision Making:

- Do you ever have trouble making decisions? How do you generally go about making a decision? Describe the process.
- What specific strategies do you use?
- Do you make decisions by yourself or do you need other people's opinions first?
- Are you feeling anxious about deciding about a major? Pressured?
- Have you set a deadline for making your choice of a major?

The questions are adapted from Virginia Gordon's Academic Adviser's Pre-Service Training Manual.

Choosing a Major – Web Resources

- **SUNY Cortland College Catalog**
The best source of information on all available majors
Cortland.edu Choose “Academics” then choose “College Catalogs”. Choose current year. The “Academic Programs” link will list all available majors as well as minors.
- **SUNY Cortland Career Services:** cortland.edu/career (HINT: Click on “Career Planning”)
There are several resources available online and in the office. Career Services is located in Van Hoesen Hall, Room B -5.
- **The Career Interest Game:** career.missouri.edu (HINT: Click the Career Services Tab/ then click Career Interest Game.)

The Career Interest Game is an interactive, online tool that matches your interest with different careers. The staff in the Career Center at the University of Missouri adapted the work of Dr. John L. Holland to create this tool for students. (HINT: Once the learn more link appears, click it for additional information about career possibilities.)

- **The Occupational Outlook Handbook:** bls.gov (choose Publications, then Occupational Outlook Handbook)
For hundreds of different types of jobs—such as teacher, lawyer, and nurse—the Occupational Outlook Handbook tells you the training and education needed, earnings, expected job prospects, what workers do on the job, and working conditions. In addition, the Handbook gives you job search tips, links to information about the job market in each State, and more. You can also view frequently asked questions about the Handbook. Written by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, this is a must-have resource.
- **O*NET:** online.onetonline.org/
The “Occupational NETwork” is a nationally recognized source of career information (what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects) for an almost unlimited range of occupations.
- **Career InfoNet:** acinet.org/acinet/ (HINT: click on Explore Careers, the first tab)
America’s “Career Information Net” is one of the most comprehensive sites for career advancement. Many topics are covered in this site. (HINT: look for self assessments)
- **Career Zone:** careerzone.ny.gov
Career Zone is a tool designed to provide occupational information specific to New York State - especially useful for individuals who are planning to settle in New York State.
- **What Can I Do With This Major?:** <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/majors/>
Find information on what types of jobs and employers you could work in for over 90 majors. Information and strategies are also included.

Career Planning Checklist

FIRST YEAR

- ◇ Discover your interests, skills, and values with FOCUS[®] in the Career Resource Library.
- ◇ Explore part-time job opportunities with Student Employment Services (SES).
- ◇ Plan for internships and overseas programs in your academic scheduling.
- ◇ Improve your writing skills (what employers want most) by writing in class or for the Dragon Chronicle.
- ◇ Prepare your first resume.
- ◇ Participate in a team, club, or group: take responsibility for an activity in that organization.
- ◇ Gain self-awareness by volunteering in an activity of your interest or with the Student Volunteer Programs.
- ◇ Explore Summer job opportunities in the Career Resource Library and at the Summer Job Fair.
- ◇ Talk to three faculty about careers.
- ◇ Familiarize yourself with cortland.edu/career.



SECOND YEAR

- ◇ Explore careers in the Career Resource Library and/or website. Learn choices and requirements.
- ◇ Plan NOW for your internship or study abroad experience.
- ◇ Seek a part-time job or volunteer opportunity in an area related to your interests; register with Student Employment Services.
- ◇ Take opportunities to test the effectiveness of your communication skills.
- ◇ Update your resume.
- ◇ Interview three persons working in fields of your interest; you may ask faculty/staff for names.
- ◇ Obtain a summer job and test a career interest.

THIRD YEAR

- ◇ Ensure that your academic schedule meets course requirements in the major and includes flexibility for added courses such as computer applications, languages, or technical writing.
- ◇ Utilize resources including cortland.edu/career to gain career information.
- ◇ Gather support letters from employers, faculty, and volunteer coordinators for your Credential File.
- ◇ Participate in another career related volunteer or part-time job to expand employment skills.
- ◇ Revise resume and learn interviewing skills in Career Services' workshops.
- ◇ Prepare for internships, summer jobs, scholarships, and overseas programs.
- ◇ Schedule NYSTCE tests for teacher certification.
- ◇ Research graduate schools and financial assistance; prepare for GRE, GMAT, LSAT, and MCAT.



FOURTH YEAR

- ◇ Participate in Career Services special events like Grad School Day; Alumni Speaker Series; Interviewing/Dining Etiquette; Teacher Recruitment Day.
- ◇ Practice your interviewing in mock video interviews.
- ◇ Gather letters of support for employment and/or graduate school for your Credential File.
- ◇ Explore financial assistance, fellowships, and scholarships for graduate school in fall semester.
- ◇ Take graduate admissions tests (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT). Take tests for certification to teach.
- ◇ Research employers and job vacancies using SUNY Cortland's DragonConnect and other job posting services.
- ◇ Polish your resume; develop interviewing skills; know full information on each organization or graduate school to which you apply.
- ◇ Stay in touch with Career Services... we are here to help, even after you graduate.

WORK AND LIFESTYLE VALUES

LIFESTYLE VALUES

Lifestyle Values	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Live in a rural setting				
Live close to work				
Be able to walk to work				
Own your own home				
Live in a moderate climate				
Be active in your community				
Live in a suburban setting				
Live in an apartment				
Live close to cultural and entertainment opportunities				
Live in a city				
Travel frequently				
Live in a warm climate				
Live where children can walk to school				
Live where your spouse can have a good job				
Go out to eat often				
Live near relatives				
Live where the weather changes from season to season				
Live in a constant climate				
Have time to pursue your interests				
Have friends near-by				
Have a garden				
Have a house and yard to work on				
Live near a college				
Have a second home				
Live near the water				
Live close to stores				
Live in a wooded setting				
Be involved with sports of your choice				
Participate in family-oriented activities				
Live where you don't have to spend time with neighbors				
Have time to yourself				
Spend time with your neighbors				
Work on projects around your house				
Do volunteer work				
Be active in church work				
Do things often with friends				
Go to movies, plays, and concerts often				
Do things alone or with others				
Have a big house				
Spend time with arts or crafts				
Go places on weekends				
Stay at home on weekends				
Be very involved in social activities				

WORK VALUES

WORK TASKS	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Produce a product I can see at the end of the day				
Work on a project that takes a long time to complete				
Complete tasks by the end of the day				
Perform different tasks every day				
Perform similar tasks routinely				
Engage in adventuresome/risky tasks				
Work with hands or hand tools				
Work with numbers				
Help people who have needs				
Influence the opinions or decisions of others				
Engage in physical tasks				
Engage in intellectually stimulating tasks				
Engage in creative tasks				
Engage in research				

WORK SETTING	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Indoors, in my own office				
Indoors, in a large office with many colleagues				
Indoors, other than an office				
Outdoors				
Combination of indoors & outdoors				
Work in an urban/suburban setting				
Work in a rural setting				
Home-based work setting				

WORK HOURS	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Regular shift of 8 hours per day with no overtime or work to take home				
Irregular length day, sometimes working overtime or taking work home				

PRESSURE	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Little or no pressure				
Fast-paced environment				
Competitive environment				
Pressure due to responsibility for physical/emotional well-being of others				

TRAVEL	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Little or no travel required				
Significant local travel required				
Significant long-distance travel required				

INTERPERSONAL ASPECTS	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Work independently with no supervision (own boss)				
Work independently with some supervision				
Work with one or more colleagues as a team				
Plan work for and supervise others				
Be supervised by a good supervisor/boss				
Work with supportive co-workers				
Meet new people regularly				
Do not have to meet new people often				

PAY, BENEFITS, REWARDS	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Good benefits package				
Work for a high base salary				
Work on a commission basis				
Job security				
Starting salary upon graduation over \$35,000				
Opportunity to obtain large salary increases				
Receive immediate public attention for accomplishments				
Social prestige/respect/recognition				

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Opportunity to advance within the same organization				
Opportunity to advance by changing organizations				
Opportunity to participate in professional organizations				

EDUCATION	Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Degree(s) can be obtained at SUNY Cortland				
No more than bachelors degree required				
Graduate study required				

YOUR PRIORITIZED VALUES

Select 5 to 10 work and lifestyle values that are essential and write them below:

Work Values
(In priority order)

Lifestyle Values
(In priority order)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Keep these values in mind when researching different majors/careers. See if you can make a connection between your work and lifestyle values and a potential major.

Majors at SUNY Cortland



What's right for you?

Major	Not for me	Considering	Interested in
Adolescence Education: Biology (7-12) [ABI]			
Adolescence Education: Chemistry (7-12) [ACM]			
Adolescence Education: Earth Science (7-12) [AES]			
Adolescence Education: English (7-12) [AEN]			
Adolescence Education: French (7-12) [AFR]			
Adolescence Education: French and Spanish (7-12) [AFS]			
Adolescence Education: Mathematics (7-12) [AEM]			
Adolescence Education: Physics (7-12) [APH]			
Adolescence Education: Physics and Mathematics (7-12) [APM]			
Adolescence Education: Spanish (7-12) [ASP]			
African American Studies: Concentration in African American Sociological, Political, and Community Development [AAS/AASC] Concentration in African and African American History [AAS/AASH]			
Anthropology [ANT] Concentration in Americas Archaeology [ANT/AARC] or World Archaeology [ANT/WARC] Concentration in Applied Anthropology [ANT/APPL] Concentration in Ethnic Studies [ANT/ETHS]			
Archaeology: Concentration in Americas Archaeology [ARC_AARC] or World Archaeology [ARC_WARC]			
Art Studio: Bachelor of Fine Arts [BFA_BFAS]			
Art: Concentration in Art History [ART_ARTH] Concentration in Studio Art [ART_ARTS]			
Athletic Training [ATR]			
Biochemistry [BCH]			
Biology [BIO] Concentration in Environmental Science [BIO/ENVS]			
Biomedical Sciences [BMS]			
Business Economics [BUSE] Concentration in Environmental Management [BUSE/ENMG] Concentration in Financial Management [BUSE/FMGT] Concentration in Human Resource Management [BUSE/HRM] Concentration in International Business and Economics [BUSE/IBE]			
Chemistry [CHM] Concentration in Environmental Science [CHM/ENVS]			
Chemistry leading to the 3 + 2 Engineering Program [CEN]			

This list can also be found in the online College Catalog:

<http://catalog.cortland.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=1906>

Major	Not for me	Considering	Interested in
Coaching [CCH]			
Communication Studies [COM] Concentration in Journalism [JOUR] Concentration in Media Production [MEPD] Concentration in Public Relations and Advertising [PRAD]			
Community Health [CHEA] Concentration in Allied Health [CHEA_ALLH] Concentration in College Health Promotion and Prevention Services [CHEA_CHPP] Concentration in Environmental Health [CHEA_ENVH] Concentration in Health Care Administration and Planning [CHEA_ADMN] Concentration in Health Communication [CHEA_HCOM] Concentration in International Health [CHEA_INTH] Concentration in Wellness Health Promotion [CHEA_WELL]			
Conservation Biology [CON]			
Criminology [CRIM]			
Dual Major in Adolescence Education: Social Studies and African American Studies (7-12) [SST and AAS] Anthropology (7-12) [SST and ANT] Economics (7-12) [SST and ECO] Geography (7-12) [SST and GRY] History (7-12) [SST and HIS] International Studies (7-12) [SST and IST] Political Science (7-12) [SST and POL] Sociology (7-12) [SST and SOC]			
Early Childhood and Childhood Education (Birth-6) [ECD]*			
Economics [ECO] Concentration in International Political Economy and Public Policy [ECO/IPEP]			
English [ENG]			
Exercise Science [EXSC]			
Fitness Development [FIT]			
French [FRE]			
Geographic Information Systems [GIS]			
Geography [GRY] Concentration in Tourism Development [GRY/TOUR]			
Geology [GLY] Concentration in Environmental Science [GLY/ENVS]			
Graphic Design and Digital Media [GDM]			
Health Education [HEC] Concentration in College Health Promotion and Prevention Services [HEC/CHPP] Concentration in Health Communication [HEC/HCOM] Concentration in International Health [HEC/INTH] Concentration in Wellness Health Promotion [HEC/WELL]			
History [HIS]			
Human Service Studies [HUS] (transfer program)			
Inclusive Childhood Education (1-6) [IEC]*			
Individualized Degree Program [IDP]			

*These majors also require students to select a concentration. See catalog for details.

Major	Not for me	Considering	Interested in
International Studies: Area concentration in Africa [IST/AFRI] Area concentration in Asia and Pacific Basin [IST/ASIA] Area concentration in Europe [IST/EURO] Area concentration in Latin America [IST/LAT] Concentration in Geography [IST/GRY] Disciplinary concentration in Culture and Global Development [IST/CGLO] Disciplinary concentration in Global Economic Systems [IST/GES] Disciplinary concentration in Global Political Systems [IST/GPS] Disciplinary concentration in Historical Development [IST/HDEV] Disciplinary concentration in International Health [IST/IHLH]			
Mathematics [MAT]			
Musical Theatre [MUTH]			
New Communication Media [NCM]			
Outdoor Recreation [OREC] Concentration in Environmental and Cultural Interpretation [OREC_ENV] Concentration in Natural Resources Recreation Management [OREC_NRRM] Concentration in Outdoor Leadership [OREC_LEAD]			
Physical Education [PEM] Concentration in Adapted Physical Education [PEM_ADPE] Concentration in Outdoor Adventure Education [PEM_OAE]			
Physics [PHY] Concentration in Environmental Science [PHY/ENVS] Concentration in Geophysics [PHY/GEOP]			
Physics leading to the 3+2 Engineering Program [PEN]			
Political Science [POL] Concentration in Law and Justice [POL/LAJU]			
Professional Writing [PWRT]			
Psychology [PSY]			
Public Administration and Public Policy [PADP]			
Recreation [REC] Concentration in Camp Management [REC/CAMP] Concentration in Leisure/Recreation Program Delivery [REC/LRPD]			
Recreation Management [RMGT]			
Social Philosophy [SPHI]			
Sociology [SOC] Concentration in Criminology [SOC/CRIM] Concentration in Social Gerontology [SOC/SGRT]			
Spanish [SPA]			
Speech and Hearing Science [SHS]			
Sport Management [SPMG]			
Sport Studies [SPST]			
Teaching English as a Second Language – Non-Certification [ESL_NCRT] (K-12) Certification [ESL_CERT]			
Therapeutic Recreation [TR]			

Minors offered at SUNY Cortland – Complement your major with a minor...

• African American Studies Minor [AAS]	• American Musical Theatre Minor [AMTH]
• Anthropology Minor [ANT]	• Archaeology Minor [ARC]
• Art: Minor with a Specialization in Art History [ART]	• Art: Minor with a Specialization in Studio Art [ART]
• Asian/Middle Eastern Studies Minor [AMES]	• Biology Minor [BIO]
• Chemistry Minor [CHE]	• Cinema Study Minor [CIN]
• Communication Studies Minor [COM]	• Computer Applications Minor [CAP]
• Economics Minor [ECO]	• English: Minor with an Emphasis in Language and Literature [ENLL]
• English: Minor with an Emphasis in Literature and Writing [ENLW]	• English: Minor with an Emphasis in Literature [ENL]
• Environmental and Outdoor Education Minor [EOE]	• Exercise Science Minor [EXSC]
• French Minor [FRE]	• Geographic Information Systems Minor [GIS]
• Geography Minor [GRY]	• Geography: Minor with an Emphasis in Tourism Development [TOUR]
• Geology Minor [GLY]	• History Minor [HIS]
• International Studies Minor [IST]	• Jewish Studies Minor [JST]
• Latino and Latin American Studies Minor [LLAS]	• Law and Justice Minor [LAJU]
• Management Minor [MGT]	• Mathematics Minor [MAT]
• Music Minor [MUS]	• Native American Studies Minor [NAMS]
• Peace and Conflict Studies Minor [PCS]	• Physics Minor [PHY]
• Political Economy and Public Policy Minor [PEPP]	• Political Science Minor [POL]
• Political Science: Minor with an Emphasis in Comparative Politics and International Relations [POL/CPIR]	• Political Science: Minor with an Emphasis in Public Administration and Public Policy [POL/PADM]
• Professional Writing Minor [PWRT]	• Psychology Minor [PSY]
• Psychology of Children with Exceptionalities Minor [PSYX]	• Social Gerontology Minor [SGRT]
• Social Philosophy Minor [SPHI]	• Sociology Minor [SOC]
• Spanish Minor [SPA]	• Speech and Hearing Science Minor [SHS]
• Sport Management Minor [SPMG]	• Sport Studies Minor [SPST]
• Teaching English as a Second Language Minor [ESL]	• Theatre Minor [THT]
• Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Minor [WGSS]	