

# NEW HIGH DEMAND MAJORS POLICY FROM THE COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE

## FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS ADMITTED FALL 2023 & AFTER

For first-year students applying to Berkeley Letters & Science (L&S) for fall 2023 and after, there will be two pathways to declare a high-demand major. **This policy will not impact current or continuing students.**

**1. Admission into L&S:** Those who already know as high school students that they want a high-demand major **should select that major on their UC Berkeley admissions application.** If admitted to Berkeley L&S, they will be guaranteed a spot in the major they selected, subject to completing the prerequisites, maintaining good academic standing in L&S, and filing a declaration form.

**2. Changing to a high-demand major after arriving at L&S:** For students who did not select a high-demand major on their UC Berkeley admissions application, the process for declaring a high-demand major will be through a review, rather than a minimum GPA requirement only. Students will have **one** opportunity to apply for a high-demand major, and will be required to have an alternate plan to declare a non-high-demand major as a back-up.

## WHAT ARE THE L&S HIGH-DEMAND MAJORS?

Berkeley Letters and Science has 12 high-demand (a.k.a “capped” or “impacted”) majors, where student demand exceeds teaching or facilities capacity. Admission to the following high-demand majors is limited:

Art Practice	Economics	Operations Research & Management Science	Public Health
Computer Science	Global Studies	Political Economy	Social Welfare
Data Science	Media Studies	Psychology	Statistics

## WHY IS L&S MAKING THIS CHANGE?

This policy change is designed to improve the student experience. In L&S, most of our 80+ majors are “open”—to declare that major, you have only to take the prerequisite courses, maintain good academic standing in the College, and file a declaration form. However, there is a small subset of high-demand majors (12) that have additional requirements, to better match teaching capacity to student demand. Traditionally, to declare a high-demand major in L&S, students are required to have a minimum GPA in a specific set of courses (also referred to as major prerequisites). Those students who did not meet the minimum GPA requirements must redirect focus to an alternative major midway through their career, often leading students to experience great stress and anxiety.

This new process provides peace-of-mind to students by ensuring that their application will be subject to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions [holistic review](#) process. If they select the high-demand major when

they apply, they will be guaranteed a spot in the major they selected (subject to completing the prerequisites, maintaining good academic standing in the College, and filing a declaration form).

For students who don’t know that they want a high-demand major when they apply as first-years, they will be subject to a review after a student enrolls at Berkeley. This review includes quantitative and qualitative criteria such as academic and personal accomplishments by the student along with consideration of the context of those accomplishments and opportunities afforded to the student. Admission to high-demand majors based on these criteria is overall a more fair and equitable process instead of the current criterion of the student’s major prerequisite GPA.

*See FAQs on the next page for more information.*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Q: What is a “high-demand” major?

Berkeley Letters & Science has 12 high-demand majors, where student demand exceeds teaching or facilities capacity. These are the 12 L&S majors:

- ▶ Art Practice
- ▶ Computer science
- ▶ Data Science
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Global Studies
- ▶ Media Studies
- ▶ Operations Research and Management Science
- ▶ Political Economy
- ▶ Psychology
- ▶ Public Health
- ▶ Social Welfare
- ▶ Statistics

## Q: Does this change mean that students enrolled in a high-demand major will come into college declared?

No. Beginning fall 2023, first-year students who select a high-demand major on their Berkeley Letters & Science application and are admitted to the College will be guaranteed a spot in that major, subject to completing the prerequisites, maintaining good academic standing in the College, and filing a declaration form.

## Q. What about students who decide later that they want a high-demand major?

For students who don't already know that they want a high-demand major when they apply as first-years, the process for declaring a high-demand major will be through a comprehensive review conducted in your sophomore year. Students will have one opportunity to apply for a high-demand major during their sophomore year, and are required to have a back-up plan to declare a non-high-demand major. L&S students must declare a major no later than the beginning of their junior year.

## Q. Is this change only taking place in the College of Letters & Science?

Yes, this change affects only high-demand majors in the College of Letters & Science.

## Q. How is this change beneficial to the student and campus community?

We are striving to improve the undergraduate student experience, make access to our high-demand majors more equitable, and help ensure that student enrollment grows sustainably.

## Q. How will this impact students who wish to double major?

Any student who adds or switches to a high-demand major will go through comprehensive review for that major. Even if you are guaranteed a spot in one high-demand major, adding a second one (or switching to a different one) requires comprehensive review.

## Q: Will this impact students admitted to UC Berkeley prior to fall 2023?

No one currently on campus, including incoming fall 2022 or spring 2023 first-year students, will be affected by these changes.

## Q: How will these changes impact Science Po or HKU Dual Degree applicants?

If applying to the Science Po or HKU Dual Degree programs, please contact [dualdegree@berkeley.edu](mailto:dualdegree@berkeley.edu)

## Q: Where can students find information about fall 2023 admission changes to Berkeley Letters & Science?

**The Admissions website:** An online PDF resource will be added to the [Academic Programs and Majors page](#) under the College of Letters & Science section.

**The L&S application:** For high-demand majors participating in the pilot (Art Practice, Computer Science, Data Science, and Social Welfare), a notation was added to the L&S application to encourage students to select the major on the application if they intend to declare the major in L&S. There is also a link that will direct the student to the [Academic Programs and Majors page](#) on the Admissions website for more information on why it is important to select that major at the time that they apply to L&S.

## HELPFUL LINKS

**Freshmen Requirements page:**

[admissions.berkeley.edu/freshmen-requirements/](https://admissions.berkeley.edu/freshmen-requirements/)

**Academic Programs and Majors page:**

[admissions.berkeley.edu/academic-programs-majors/](https://admissions.berkeley.edu/academic-programs-majors/)