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Blog Post: How Do I Know Engineering is For Me?

University of Maine Pulp & Paper Foundation

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How Do I Know Engineering is For Me?

Academics, Campus Life, Student Life

Engineering has a reputation for being a difficult career choice. We disagree! At its most basic, engineering is applying science and mathematics principles in order to solve problems. We need engineers to improve systems, innovate new products and address the challenges that our world faces. Intrigued? We knew you would be.

Here at the University of Maine Pulp + Paper Foundation, students can choose a path from five different engineering branches: chemical, civil, computer, electrical and mechanical. As you might imagine, job opportunities are endless. Engineers enter fields such as sales, marketing, management, government/military, teaching, research and development, and industry—such as pulp and paper!

You Might Be a Future Engineer If…

Think you might have a future studying engineering? Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do you like puzzles and brain teaser games?
2. Do you like to solve problems?
3. Are you curious about how things work?
4. Do you like to create new ways of doing things?
5. Do you take things apart and put them back together (maybe better than it was?)
6. Do you like to be challenged?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it doesn't automatically mean that you should be an engineer, although it's a terrific start. So, let's take it one step further and ask

yourself: Do you want to help people? Do you want to solve complex problems that will improve lives? Do you want to make a difference in the world?

Do engineers need to be super smart?

Well, yes! Every one of us is smart in our own unique ways. We're all influenced by our upbringing, environment, and our natural talents and tendencies. Engineering relies heavily on understanding science (biology, physics, chemistry), mathematic principles (algebra, calculus, geometry), and effective writing skills (to interpret and simplify complex scientific terms and data).

Students who choose to study engineering know that the coursework will be demanding particularly in mathematics and science. However, even if those topics don't come naturally to you, you can still study to become a great engineer. The following are also important traits in an engineering student:

- Perseverance
- Ambition
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication skills
- Curiosity
- Ingenuity
- Perceptiveness
- Team player
- Open-minded

Is there a way to "test out" engineering?

Yes, you've come to the right place! We create and host a well-attended, highly sought-after summer camp for high school juniors called Consider Engineering. During each four-day session of Consider Engineering camp, participants stay in dorms on the University of Maine campus, meet current engineering students and faculty members, participate in activities showcasing what engineering is and so much more. It's incredibly fun and many students go on to become respected UMaine alumni and successful engineers.

You may also try:

- Go online: read engineering related blogs and websites; ask questions on online forums that discuss engineering and being an engineering student

- Shadow STEM students: find students in your school that participate in groups such as Destination Imagination, Odyssey of the Mind, Robotics club, 3D printing, computer programming or anything STEM related. Ask to shadow one of their meet-ups and bring lots of questions to ask them!
- Talk with teachers/guidance counselors: your teachers and guidance counselors have access to many resources that are designed to help students discover their interests and talents. (That's how many students find UMPPF!)
- Come to campus: you can visit the UMaine campus to meet engineering students, distinguished professors, the engineering department, and us—we love meeting new students!

If you need a little bit more encouragement before deciding if engineering is right for you, read what other UMPPF students have to say:

"I knew I'd like the program when I went to Considering Engineering and participated in all the hands-on activities. I've always been a problem solver and enjoyed finding new and innovative solutions, and that is exactly what engineering is." **– Jordon Gregory**

"I saw a lot of myself in many of the students who were involved in the program." **– Andrew Arsenault**

"There is a lot of opportunity for experience that UMPPF provides, and I knew it would help with my goals." **– Adam Rush**

An education in engineering is dynamic and challenging. You won't regret it!

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