

the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q Which majors drink the most?

A. Although this is a topic people have strong opinions on, you may be surprised to find that there isn't much research on which majors drink the most. Take note: if you're looking for a research project on alcohol, this one is ripe for the picking.

One of the reasons there isn't much published on this might be due to the fact that freshmen, the college students frequently studied, often don't have their major selected yet. Even so, there is some evidence to suggest that there is a connection between what students study and how much they drink.

In a large scale project that included over 17,000 college students across 140 campuses back in the early 1990s, Harvard researchers found that students who were business majors were 28% more likely to binge drink compared to non-business majors. In the study, binge drinking was defined as 5 or more drinks for men or 4 or more drinks for women on one occasion over the past two weeks.

A more recent study that revisited the same Harvard dataset went further, stating "Some majors... may be more conducive to a pattern of heavy drinking in college." These findings suggested that students who chose either a business or a social science major were more likely to be heavier drinkers. Conversely, some majors were associated with decreased alcohol use: students who majored in education, engineering, or the natural sciences tended to drink less.

So, why the relationship between major and alcohol use? This could include cultural factors specific to certain majors, their academic workload, where students live, or the connection between major and other associations, such as membership in a social fraternity or sorority.

While these findings are interesting, the more compelling research for students is the link between alcohol use and academic success – whatever your major. It's common sense but bears repeating: limiting when and how much you drink can help you get the GPA and graduation date you want.



wildfact

Since no wine-quality grapes could be grown in the original 13 U.S. colonies, much of their alcohol came from the Portuguese islands of Madeira, which produced a fortified wine that bears its name.



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



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