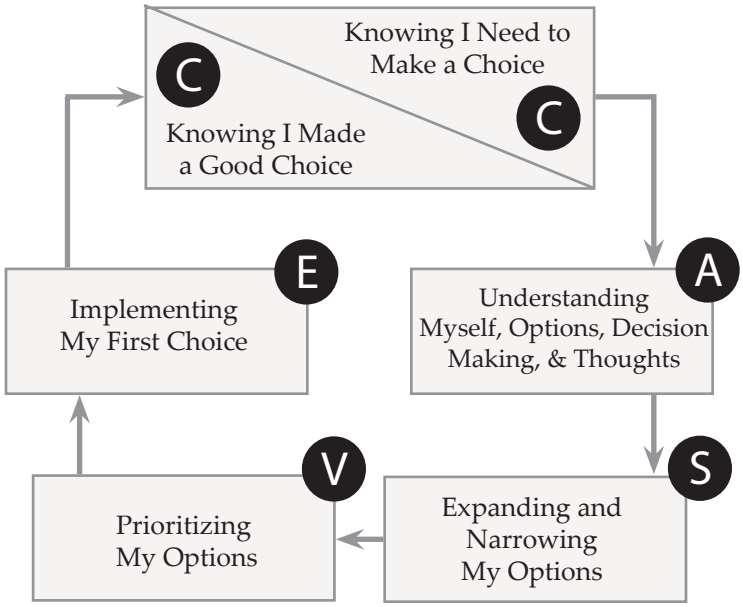
Choosing a Major or Occupation

This guide was developed for students who are ready to actively engage in the major selection and career decision-making process. It is a great resource for both Exploratory majors and other students who have declared a major but may be experiencing doubt about their initial decision. Please use this guide in consultation with an academic or career advisor.

STEP 1: Learn About the Process

Decision making involves both ***knowing*** and ***doing***. In this guide, you will be introduced to ***knowing*** and led through ***doing*** in order to make a more informed decision. Review the figures below.



The CASVE Cycle

Communication, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, Execution

"Knowing": What's Involved in a Career Choice

Before making a career choice, evaluate what you know about yourself, your options, how you make decisions, and how you think about your decision making.

Knowing About Myself means knowing my values, interests, and skills.

Knowing About My Options means knowing my possible majors, occupations, and jobs.

"Doing": How to Make a Better Decision

Once you know about yourself and your options, the next step is to make your major/occupation decision. To make your decision, use a decision-making method that works for you. The action-oriented model shown above can help you engage in the decision-making process and choose a major or occupation. The steps include:

Knowing I Need to Make a Choice

Understanding Myself, Options, Decision Making, and Thoughts

Expanding and Narrowing My List of Options

Choosing a Major, Job, or Occupation

Implementing My Choice

Knowing I Made a Good Choice

Thinking About My Decision Making

Be aware of your approach to decision making and listen to your self-talk for words like *always*, *never*, and *should*. Using these absolute terms can make it hard to move forward. An example of negative self-talk can include: "I'll never be able to choose a major that I like."

Circle each section of the pyramid where you believe you need further assistance.

Circle the step you believe you are currently at on the decision-making process model.

STEP 2: Consider My Decision

What's Impacting My Decision?

Before you can make a decision about your major or career, consider what things are influencing that decision and how important these factors are to you. List any thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people, or events that are impacting your decision or telling you that a decision is needed. List as few or as many as you would like.

-
-
-
-
-
-

Now, within the large circle below, draw and label smaller circles to represent each item on your list. Use the size of each circle you draw to represent the relative importance of each item to your decision-making process.

STEP 3: Understand Myself

Understand My Values, Interests, and Skills

Self-knowledge includes a clear understanding of your values, interests, and skills.

Values: Guiding principles that reflect what is most important to you in life.

Interests: Topics you enjoy reading about and activities that leave you energized.

Skills: Developed talents or abilities.

Review and write your answers to the following questions below.

Values

- What did I like most and least about the past experiences that I have had? (jobs, community service, school involvement, etc.)
- What is important to me?
- What makes my life and work meaningful?

Interests

- What do I enjoy doing?
- What kind of clubs/organizations am I interested in joining?
- When reading, surfing the Internet, or watching television, which issues/topics am I drawn to?

Skills

- What subjects/classes have I performed well in?
- Where have I had successful experiences?
- What do people I am close to say I do well?

STEP 4: Rank My Values, Interests, and Skills

In the columns below, circle the values important to you, areas of interests, and skills you possess. Put a line through the ones that don't apply to you.

Values	Interests	Skills
Adventure	Community Service	Analytical/Problem Solving
Being Outdoors	Creative/Performing Arts	Communication
Creativity	Cultures/Languages	Counseling
Independence	Environment/Animals	Creativity/Artistic/Design
Job Security	Fashion	Instructional/Mentoring
Leadership	Healthy Living/Medical	Interpersonal
Learning & Education	Interpersonal Relationships	Languages
Low Stress	Investing/Finance/Business	Leadership/Managerial
Money	Literature/Reading/Writing	Mathematical
People Interaction	Music	Mechanical
Personal/Professional Balance	Organizing/Planning	Organizational
Prestige	Politics/Law	Persuasion
Service to Others	Science	Research
Set Routines	Sports	Scientific
Traveling	Teaching	Technological
Variety of Tasks	Technology/Computers	Writing
Other _____	Other _____	Other _____
Other _____	Other _____	Other _____

Referring back to Steps 3 and 4, list your top three in each area.

Values	Interests	Skills
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____

STEP 5: Envision My Future

What do you Envision in your Future?

Please draw or write any thoughts, feelings, or ideas you hold for your future in the space below. Let the following questions guide your vision of the future.

When I think about a happy life, what does that include?

What inspires me?

What am I passionate about?

Who do I aspire to be?

What do I want to accomplish in the future?

What is my dream career?

As you look at your future goals, write a one-sentence statement that expresses the vision that you have for your future and how you currently see yourself accomplishing it.

I will... _____

_____

by doing... _____

_____

_____

STEP 6: Find My Ideal Work Environment

The Holland Party Game

There are many ways to identify enjoyable majors and occupations. To complete this simple exercise:

1. Read about each of the six groups of people inside the hexagon below. Which three groups or types of people would you enjoy spending time with at a party?
2. Write the underlined letter of the group you would most like to spend time with in the first block below, the letter of the group you would spend time with next in the second block, and the letter of the third group in the last block. These three letters are called your Holland Code.
3. Continue to the next page to match your three letters to Florida State majors.

Realistic

People with mechanical and athletic abilities; like working outdoors with tools and objects; prefer dealing with things rather than people.

Investigative

People with math and science abilities; like working alone and solving complex problems; like dealing with ideas rather than people or things.

Conventional

People with clerical and math ability; prefer working indoors and organizing things; like dealing with words and numbers rather than people or ideas.

Artistic

People with artistic ability and imagination; enjoy creating original work; like dealing with ideas rather than things.

Enterprising

People with leadership and speaking abilities; like to be influential; interested in politics and economics; like dealing with people and ideas rather than things.

Social

People with social skills; interested in social relationships and helping others solve problems; like dealing with people rather than things.

TM

STEP 7: Choose My Potential FSU Major Options

Understanding options is critical to making a decision. Patterns emerge as you gain a better understanding of yourself and your options. Each step brings your academic and career choices into sharper focus.

FSU Majors by Holland Code

Using your Holland Code as a starting point, place a check next to majors which interest you. To learn more about a major, visit www.academic-guide.fsu.edu.

Realistic

- ☐ Art, Studio (B.A. and B.F.A.**)
- ☐ Engineering, Computer*
- ☐ Engineering, Civil*
- ☐ Environmental Science
- ☐ Geology

Investigative

- ☐ Actuarial Science
- ☐ Anthropology
- ☐ Biochemistry
- ☐ Biological Science
- ☐ Biomathematics
- ☐ Business: Management Information Systems
- ☐ Chemical Science
- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Communication Science & Disorders
- ☐ Computational Biology
- ☐ Computational Science
- ☐ Computer Criminology
- ☐ Computer Science (B.A. or B.S.)* **
- ☐ Computer Science (Online, Panama City only)
- ☐ Computer Programming and Applications (B.A.)
- ☐ Criminology/Criminal Justice
- ☐ Crime Scene Investigation (Panama City only)*
- ☐ Economics**
- ☐ Engineering
  - Biomedical
  - Chemical
  - Civil/Environmental*
  - Computer*
  - Electrical*
  - Industrial
  - Mechanical*
- ☐ Environmental Chemistry
- ☐ Environmental Science (B.S.)
- ☐ Environmental Science & Policy (B.A.)
- ☐ Environment and Society
- ☐ Food and Nutrition Science
- ☐ Geography
- ☐ Geology
- ☐ Information Technology
- ☐ International Affairs
- ☐ Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences
  - Pre-Clinical Professions
  - Community Patient Care
  - Health Management, Policy, and Information
- ☐ Mathematics (Pure, Applied, Biomathematics)
- ☐ Meteorology
- ☐ Neuroscience
- ☐ Physical Science
- ☐ Physics
- ☐ Physics and Astrophysics
- ☐ Psychology*
- ☐ Public Safety and Security (Panama City only)*
- ☐ Sociology
- ☐ Statistics

Artistic

- ☐ Art, Studio (B.A. and B.F.A.)
- ☐ Classics
  - Classical Archaeology
  - Classical Civilization
  - Classics & Religion
  - Greek
  - Latin
  - Latin & Greek
- ☐ Communication, Digital Media Production**
- ☐ Dance**
- ☐ English
  - Creative Writing
  - Editing, Writing, & Media**
  - English Studies
  - Literature
- ☐ Entrepreneurship** *
  - Retail Entrepreneurship**
- ☐ Interior Architecture and Design
- ☐ Modern Languages
  - Chinese
  - Co-major in Chinese & Japanese
  - Co-major in Modern Languages and Linguistics
  - French
  - German
  - Italian
  - Japanese
  - Language with a Concentration in Business
  - Russian

STEP 7: Choose My Potential FSU Major Options

- Spanish
- ☐ Motion Picture Arts/Film**
  - Animation and Digital Arts**
  - Production**
- ☐ Music**
  - B.A. Program (Jazz/Sacred Music/Commercial)**
  - Music Composition**
  - Music Performance**
  - Music Theatre**
  - Music Theory**
- ☐ Philosophy
- ☐ Theatre**
  - B.A. Program**
  - B.F.A., Acting**
  - Music Theatre**

Social

- ☐ African American Studies
- ☐ Asian Studies
- ☐ Athletic Training (Pre AT/PT/PA/Sports Medicine)
- ☐ Criminology/Criminal Justice
- ☐ Dietetics
- ☐ Elementary Education** *
- ☐ English Education**
- ☐ Exercise Physiology
- ☐ Family & Child Sciences
- ☐ FSU Teach
  - Biology
  - Chemical Science
  - Environmental Sciences
  - Geosciences, Applied
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Science
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- ☐ Middle Eastern Studies
- ☐ Music Education (Choral/Instrumental/General)
- ☐ Music Therapy**
- ☐ Nursing**
- ☐ Nursing, Accelerated** (B.S.N.)
- ☐ Psychology*
- ☐ Religion (and Religion-Classics)
- ☐ Russian & East European Studies
- ☐ Social Science Education*
- ☐ Social Sciences, Interdisciplinary*
- ☐ Social Work*
- ☐ Special Education**
  - Exceptional Student Education**
  - Visual Disabilities (Teacher Preparation)**
- ☐ Women's Studies

Enterprising

- ☐ Art History
- ☐ Business**
  - Business Administration (Panama City only)**
  - Finance**
  - Human Resource Management**
  - Management**
  - Management Information Systems**
  - Marketing**
  - Professional Sales**
  - Real Estate**
  - Retail Management**
  - Risk Management & Insurance**
- ☐ Entrepreneurship** *
  - Social Entrepreneurship**
  - Commercial Entrepreneurship**
  - Retail Entrepreneurship**
- ☐ Global Club Management and Leadership**
- ☐ Hospitality Management and Tourism** *
- ☐ Communication/Information**
  - Advertising**
  - Information, Communication &Technology(ICT)**
  - Media/Communication Studies**
  - Public Relations**
  - Professional Communication(Panama City only)**
  - Professional Communication/Corporate and Public Communication (B.S./M.S. Combined) (Panama City only)**
- ☐ History
- ☐ Language with a concentration in Business (Modern Languages)
- ☐ Political Science
- ☐ Recreation, Tourism, & Events*
- ☐ Sport Management**

Conventional

- ☐ Business: Accounting* **
- ☐ Actuarial Science

**These majors are also available at the FSU Panama City campus.*
***These majors are limited access. Requirements can be found on departmental websites.*

NOTE: Students may declare their major as "Exploratory" until term 3. Then, they must change into a departmental major. For more information, contact the Center for Exploratory Students or the

STEP 8: Explore and Narrow My Options

Now that you've identified your values/interests/skills and possible majors and occupations, it is time to explore these options.

For majors, this includes understanding prerequisite courses, academic milestones, and application procedures. **For occupational exploration**, this exploration may include work descriptions, education/training requirements, growth outlook, average salaries, and representative employers.

List your top majors/occupations on the lines below. Using the online resources below, explore these options. Consider the pros and cons of each one.

Majors/Occupations

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Online Resources

- **Undergraduate Academic Program Guide** provides descriptions of each major, along with mapping requirements, academic milestones, and advising contact information at www.academic-guide.fsu.edu.
- **Match Major Sheets** allow you to find occupations, books, and professional organizations that match your major or broader fields of study at www.career.fsu.edu/resources/match-major-sheets.
- **Career Key** helps you search for resources about your major and occupations at The Career Center and other libraries at www.career.fsu.edu/resources/career-center-library.
- **Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)** describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, training and education needed, earnings, and the occupational outlook for hundreds of occupations at www.bls.gov/OOH.
- **O*Net** is a continually updated online database with descriptions of occupations at www.onetonline.org.
- **Focus 2** is an online, interactive, self-guided career and education planning system designed to help you make decisions about your future career goals and education plans available at www.career.fsu.edu/FOCUS.
- **General Bulletin** provides class descriptions for major courses at http://registrar.fsu.edu/archive/bulletin/undergraduate/2017_gen_bulletin.pdf
- **Departmental Websites** offer information about how to get involved in your area of study at http://www.fsu.edu/departments/

STEP 9: Evaluate My Final Options

Once you have gathered information on your options, it should be easier to narrow your selection to 3 or less. The best way to assemble your final list is to compare your new possibilities to your most important values, interests, and skills checklist. Write your top 3 majors/occupations.

Majors/Occupations

1.

2.

3.

Making a final decision often comes about through experience and "hands-on" learning. Here are some recommended action steps:

- **Exploration Course:** With the help of an academic advisor, consider enrolling in specific classes to have a better understanding of your top choices for a major.
- **Career Center:** Drop by The Career Center to speak with a career advisor about your major choices and learn about internships, co-ops, part-time work, and volunteer opportunities. More at www.career.fsu.edu.
- **Academic Advising:** Contact an advisor in a major of interest by using the advisor search at our.undergrad.fsu.edu/advisor_search/advisors.php to clarify major requirements and options.
- **Career Panels:** Attend an expert panel of faculty, staff, students, and business professionals to hear opportunities in different career zones. Explore panels at www.advisingfirst.fsu.edu/workshops and www.career.fsu.edu/students/workshops.
- **Academic Engagement Expo:** Attend this Spring event to speak with representatives from academic departments to learn more about majors, minors, certificate programs, and internship opportunities.
- **Informational Interviews:** Contact a professional in the major/career you are considering, and ask questions about that career. Use the "Conducting an Information Interview" guide at www.career.fsu.edu/resources/career-guides.
- **SDS 3340:** Enroll in the Introduction to Career Development class to engage in more in-depth career exploration and preparation: www.career.fsu.edu/students/plan-your-career.
- **Join a Club:** Explore FSU student organizations in the major or field you are considering: https://nolecentral.dsa.fsu.edu/.
- **Job Shadow:** Observe professionals in an occupation of interest. Visit the Career Center to learn about job shadow opportunities.
- **Volunteer/Community Service:** Learn more about jobs and occupations by volunteering through the Center for Leadership and Social Change: www.thecenter.fsu.edu/.
- **Career Fairs:** Attend Seminole Futures Career Fair to learn about career and internship opportunities. More info at www.career.fsu.edu/students/events.
- **Pizza and a Major:** Attend this 3-part workshop series in October to learn more about yourself, major options and careers.

My Action Steps	Date to Complete
1.	
2.	
3.	

STEP 10: Making A Choice

Am I ready to make a decision?

Yes? What? _____

_____

_____

No? Why not? _____

_____

_____

What would be helpful to me to make this decision?

_____

_____

The Career Center

100 S. Woodward Avenue
1200 Dunlap Success Center

Provides major/career exploration, self-assessment activities, occupational information, job outlook information, etc. Call 850-644-6431 or visit www.career.fsu.edu for information. Drop in and see a career advisor Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Call about evening hours during fall and spring.

Advising First - Center for Exploratory Students

143 Honors Way
G002 Johnston Building (WJB)

Provides special assistance to freshmen students who are undecided about their major Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Call 850-645-2847 to schedule an appointment or visit www.fsu.edu/AdvisingFirst for information.

Advising First - Center for Academic Planning

UCA 3200

Provides support for sophomores and above students experiencing indecision about their major selection or concerns with academic mapping. Call 850-644-3430 for more information.

Credits

The following sources were adapted for inclusion in this guide.

Sampson, J. P., Jr., Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., & Reardon, R. C. (1992). A cognitive approach to career services: Translating concepts into practice. *Career Development Quarterly*, 41, 61-67.

Peterson, G. W., Leasure, K. K., Carr, D. L., & Lenz, J. G. (2009-2010, Winter). The decision space worksheet: An assessment of context in career decision making. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, 25 (4), 87-97.

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The Career Center *linking futures*

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