

TIPS FOR CHOOSING A MAJOR AND CAREER



Learning Outcomes:

After completing this packet you should be able to...

- Understand what services and resources CC provides to students.
- Comprehend the necessary steps to decide on a major
- Articulate clearly personal values
- Communicate Personal Interests
- Identify personal skills and abilities
- Have knowledge of various majors and careers
- Develop a Career Profile
- Create an Action Plan with specific goals and strategies

The Career Center at Temple University offers a variety of services to help you make a smooth transition from the classroom to the workplace. Career development is an ongoing process. Whether you are a freshman seeking information, or a senior seeking employment—it begins now. We're here to assist you.

Our coaches are here to guide you in your educational and career goals. We also provide a variety of resources to assist you in making informed choices, identifying and exploring options, bringing you face to face with prospective employers, and much more.

- Career Library
- Career Coaching
- Self-Assessment tools
- Professional Development Workshops
- Career Expo / Part-Time Job Fair
- Internship/ Externship/ Co-Op Resources
- Videotaped Mock Interviewing
- Resume Critiques
- Job Search Resources/Strategies
- On-Campus Interviews
- Employer Information Sessions
- Graduate School Information

For more information, call, visit us on the web for 24 hours access, or stop by during our walk-in hours.

Walk-In Hours: Monday-Friday 11:00AM-2:00PM

Virtual Coaching for Resume Reviews: Monday-Friday 2:00PM-3:00PM

When choosing a major, an experienced career coach at the Center can help you:

- Comprehend what you've discovered about yourself
- Utilize additional self-assessment resources for further clarification

Choosing a Major: General Information

If you are unsure about coursework or credit requirements, please see your academic advisor. S/he can access your academic record and give you an idea of how long it will take you to graduate. When you are ready to decide, s/he can also help you fill out the necessary forms to declare (or change) your major.

Fact:

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the average college graduate changes jobs once every three years and changes career fields two or three times in their lifetime. So, for those of you who think choosing a college major locks you into a specific career for the rest of your life, think again.

What if I declare early but I change my mind?

For some majors, you must take prerequisites during your first two years before you can even be considered eligible for upper level courses. So, changing your major from, say, Engineering to French can result in a substantial time penalty, especially if you've never taken French!

Many factors can get in the way of your being able to make a major or career choice.

External Factors

External factors are not personal and are easier to manage than internal factors.

- Independence of majors and careers: Understanding that majors and careers have developed independently of each other will help you avoid becoming stuck wondering what you can do with a particular major.
- Lack of information: Often you just don't have enough information to be comfortable making a decision. You may not have learned about different majors and careers. CC is an excellent place to begin.
- Too much information: A huge amount of information is available and it's easy to become overwhelmed. Don't give up: You can find good, accurate information on the web, and CC can help.

Internal Factors

Internal factors are more personal. Sometimes, these concerns must be addressed before the decision-making process can be completed.

- Lack of self-confidence or fear/anxiety: If your choice of a major or career seems especially critical, you may not feel confident in your ability to make a good decision. While a little anxiety is positive and can keep you on your toes, too much can wear you down. Often, obtaining additional information can solve this problem. Other times, more coaching may be needed.
- Conflicting values: You may be considering paths that are not compatible with each other. Perhaps you would love to work as a performer but also need job security. Doing some values clarification work may help you here.
- Conflict with others: Parents and significant others often have definite ideas about your career choice. Wanting to please others and the need for continued financial support are real issues. CC may be able to help you identify ways to deal with this.
- Too many choices: If you have many interests and abilities, your problem may be one of narrowing down options rather than creating them. CC can help you find appropriate criteria for narrowing down your options.

Source: http://www.jobweb.com/resources/library/authors/Mary_Lou_Taylor.htm

Steps to Choosing a Major and Career

Step 1: Assess Yourself

Take a few moments to answer the questions on the Questions to Ask Yourself worksheet. This will help you better understand yourself and your VIPS (Values, Interests, Personality and Skills). Additionally, CC offers tools, such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator and Strong Interest Inventory to help you further assess your personality type and interests. Ask us for details!

Step 2: Gather Information and Explore Options

Examine the majors available to you at Temple University. See www.temple.edu/bulletin for a list of all Temple University majors (click "Academic Programs"). Make a list of your options and eliminate those that don't interest you. Read about the majors remaining on your list. Mark the courses in each major that most interest you, match your abilities, and share your values. This should help you further shorten your list.

- Review additional information about the majors on your short list. Visit each department's web pages, or read print materials they offer. Talk with an academic advisor, students currently in these majors, and faculty members.
- Complete the attached worksheet, "Exploring Career Options According to Major". Doing so will help you match majors with career possibilities and learn details about specific occupations.

Step 3: Reality Check

You need to honestly evaluate your options. Do you have an interest in being a doctor, but dislike (or do poorly in) science courses? Does your occupation require an advanced degree, but your future commitments preclude graduate study? Do you have a strong interest in the arts, but your family is convinced you will become a CPA like your father? There are often ways to get around some of the obstacles during the reality check, but it is still important to face these obstacles and be realistic about whether you can get around them.

Step 4: Evaluate and Make Your Decision

It's time to put together the information you have collected. Consider what you have learned. Weigh the pros and cons of each option. Consider the feasibility of a second choice or making one of your options your minor. Remember, you can also major in one subject and supplement your academic experience with an internship.

If you are still having difficulty deciding, talk with an advisor or career coach who can help you evaluate the information you have collected, suggest additional resources, and guide you through the decision-making process.

Step 5: Take Action

- Sample courses in the majors you are considering.
- Choose student activities, internships, volunteer work, and/or part-time employment that can help you further develop your skills in areas that interest you.
- Talk to people who work in the career fields you are considering. Ask them about their major and how it helped them. Visit www.myowlspace.com, the Temple University online community. This can be an excellent resource for learning more about the realities of specific career fields and making contacts.
- Declare your major and confidently pursue career building experience.

Questions to Ask Yourself*

(If needed, use another sheet of paper)

What do I like to do?

What do I dislike?

What classes do I enjoy? Why?

What are my interests?

What types of jobs or careers appeal to me?

What is the coolest job I can imagine?
(Describe it as specifically as you can)

What are my strengths? What are my weaknesses?

What types of things do I seem to do well?
(Are they technical, adventurous, intellectual or something else)

What am I good at?

What are my best academic subjects?
What were they in high school? Is there a pattern there?

What kinds of extracurricular activities did I participate in while in high school?
College?

What have I learned about myself from my part-time jobs or volunteer experiences?

What kind of skills do I have??

What activities do I enjoy regularly?

What do I value in my work?

What types of environments will I be happy working in?

What sorts of people will I work best with?

Prefer to work as part of a group or team, or prefer to work alone?

What is really important to me in my career?

Are my choices compatible w/ my values?

What activities do I want to try in the future?

What motivates me to do something new?

Have I tried anything new lately?

What tasks do I look forward to?

What can I imagine myself doing at a later time in life?

What does my ideal work environment look like?

What stops me from trying new ideas?

Work Values*

1. The following list describes a wide variety of satisfactions that people obtain from their jobs. Look at the definitions of these various satisfactions and rate the degree of importance to you using the scale below:

- 1 = Not important at all
- 2 = Not very important
- 3 = Reasonably important
- 4 = Very important in my choice of career

- Help Society: Do something that contributes to improving the world we live in
- Help Others: Be involved in directly helping people either individually or in small groups
- Public Contact: Have a lot of day-to-day contact with people
- Work with Others: Work as a team member towards common goals
- Affiliation: Be recognized as a member of a particular organization
- Make Decisions: Have the power to decide on courses of action and policies
- Work Alone: Do projects on your own with minimal contact with others
- Competition: Engage in activities that clearly compare my abilities to others
- Power and Authority: Oversee and delegate work activities of other people
- Work under Pressure: Work in situations where time pressure and deadlines are prevalent
- Influence People: Be in a position to change attitudes or opinions of other people
- Knowledge: Engage in the pursuit of knowledge and truth
- Intellectual Status: Become an expert in a given field
- Artistic Creativity: Engage in creative work related to the arts
- General Creativity: Create new ideas for programs, written materials and organization
- Aesthetics: Study or appreciate the beauty of objects and ideas
- Supervision: Have a job in which I am directly responsible for the work of others
- Change and Variety: Have work responsibilities, which frequently change.

- Precision Work: Work in settings where details are extremely important and there is little margin for error
- Stability: Have job duties and work routines that are highly predictable
- Security: Be assured of keeping my job and a reasonable financial reward
- Recognition: Be acknowledged publicly for the quality of my work
- Fast Pace: Work in situations where there is a lot of activity and tasks must be completed quickly
- Excitement: Experience a high or frequent level of excitement in the course of my work
- Adventure: Have work duties that require frequent risk taking
- Profit/Gain: Have a strong likelihood of earning a substantial salary for my work
- Independence: Be able to determine the nature of my work without significant direction from others
- Moral Fulfillment: Feel that my work contributes to a set of morals that I feel is important
- Location: Find a place to live, which is conducive to my lifestyle
- Community: Live where I can participate in community affairs
- Time Schedule: Be able to work according to my own schedule

2. Now choose four of these Work Values which are the most important to you and write them in the box below. If you can think of any work values (desired satisfactions) that are not included in the list above and which are especially important to you, add them to the four values you list in the box.

Your Work Values

1. 2. 3. 4.

3. For each value you have chosen, indicate how you would like to use it in your career/job. For example, "I would like to help others by talking to them about their problems."

Exploring Career Options According to Major

Look into possible career options according to specific majors or areas of interest by doing the following:

- Look on our website: www.temple.edu/careerdev: Click on “Students,” then click on “**What Can You Do With Your Major**”. These guides are also available in the Center.
- While you're on our website, click on the link for the **Vault Online Career Library**. This will give you valuable information about jobs, companies, and industries.
- From our website, click on “**OwlNetwork**”. To Login, please enter your username (your TU ID) for example, tu123456789; and the password (wiseowl).
- Also check out the Career Guides at <http://jobstar.org/tools/career/index.php>
- Explore the books in the Career Exploration section of the CC Career Library.

Researching Careers

Once you've found a few occupations that look interesting, you can research them by doing the following:

- Talk to people who do it (Informational Interviews) – This is where you will find your best info! And, networking contacts too!
- Talk to alumni. Join www.myowlspace.com the online community for Temple University Alumni.
- Check out these internet resources:

Career One Stop
www.acinet.org

Occupational Outlook Handbook
www.bls.gov/oco

O*Net <http://online.onetcenter.org>

Dictionary of Occupational Titles
www.occupationalinfo.org

- Check out professional organization web sites or join a local chapter.
- Read trade journals for the latest information on the field.
- For salary information, try www.salary.com or go to www.careerbuilder.com under the ‘Advice and Resources’ tab.
- Try it out – volunteer or get a part-time job or internship.

Matching Careers:

How Does the Career Fit You?

(If needed, use another sheet of paper)

- Personal skills/abilities needed and how they match up with your skills/abilities
- Nature of the work or main job functions (typical day on the job)
- Education, training, and experience needed
- Work environment (indoor/outdoor, travel, hours, etc.)
- Average salary/benefits for this occupation
- Non-monetary awards
- Employment outlook for the future
- Opportunities for career mobility
- Aspects you like about the occupation
- Aspects you dislike about the occupation
- Why you do or do not feel as though this occupation is a good fit for you?

Career Profile

Now that you've defined your VIPS and matched those to possible careers, it is time to develop your Career Profile. Complete the following profile and keep it in mind as you finalize your decision.

<u>Work Skills</u>	<u>Work Values</u>	<u>Interests</u>
<u>Best Accomplishments</u>	<u>Career Fantasies</u>	<u>Career Options</u>

Action Plan: Next Steps

Remember Step 5? It's time to put your work into action. Set goals and identify your next moves to help you confidently pursue career building experience.

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Next year(s)
People to talk to (information interview, networking)				
Further research to do				
Education and Training				
Organizations/Activities to join				
Experience to gain (PT, summer jobs, internships, volunteering)				
Other To Do's				