

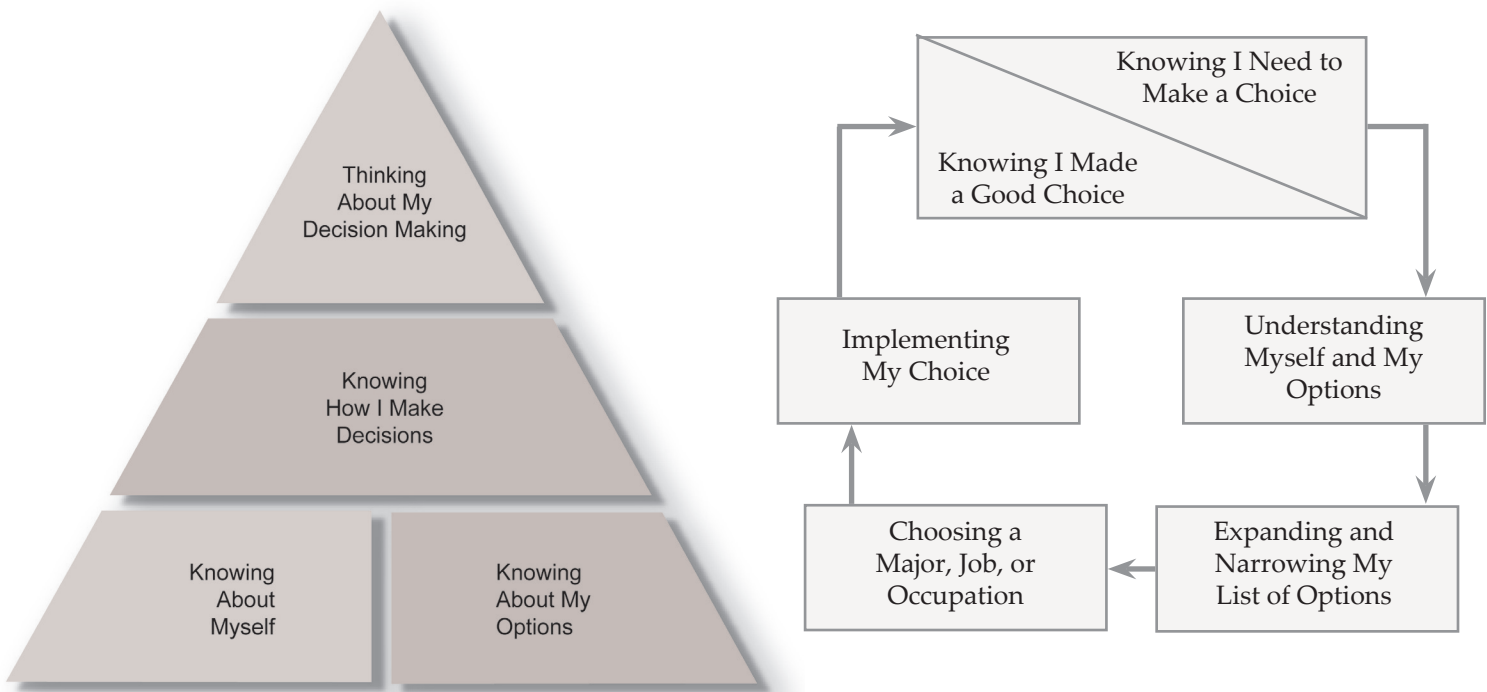
# Choosing a Major or Occupation



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.



## “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 and My Options**

**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

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### 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.

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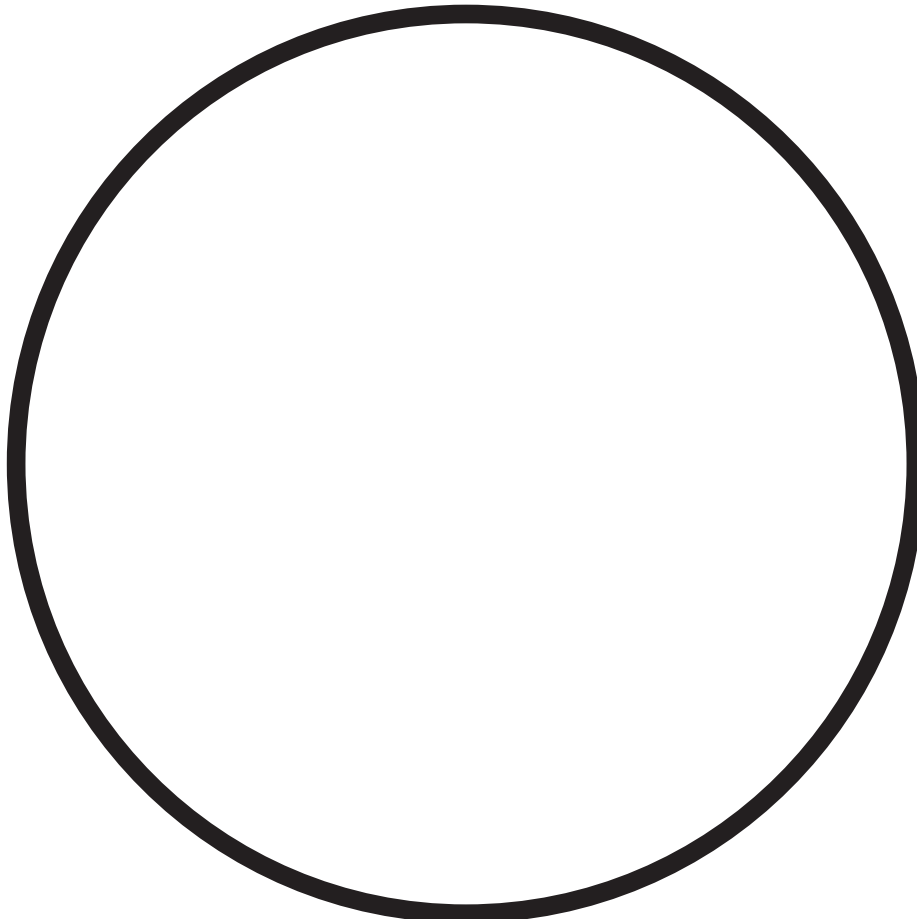
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Now, within the large circle below, draw and label smaller circles to represent each item on your list. Use the size of each circle you draw to represent the relative importance of each item to your decision-making process.



# STEP 3: Envision My Future

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## What is My Vision for the 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.

What do I want to accomplish in the future?

Who do I aspire to be?

What is my dream career?

What inspires me?

What am I passionate about?

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



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 4: Understand Myself

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## 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 5: 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 4 and 5, list your top three in each area.

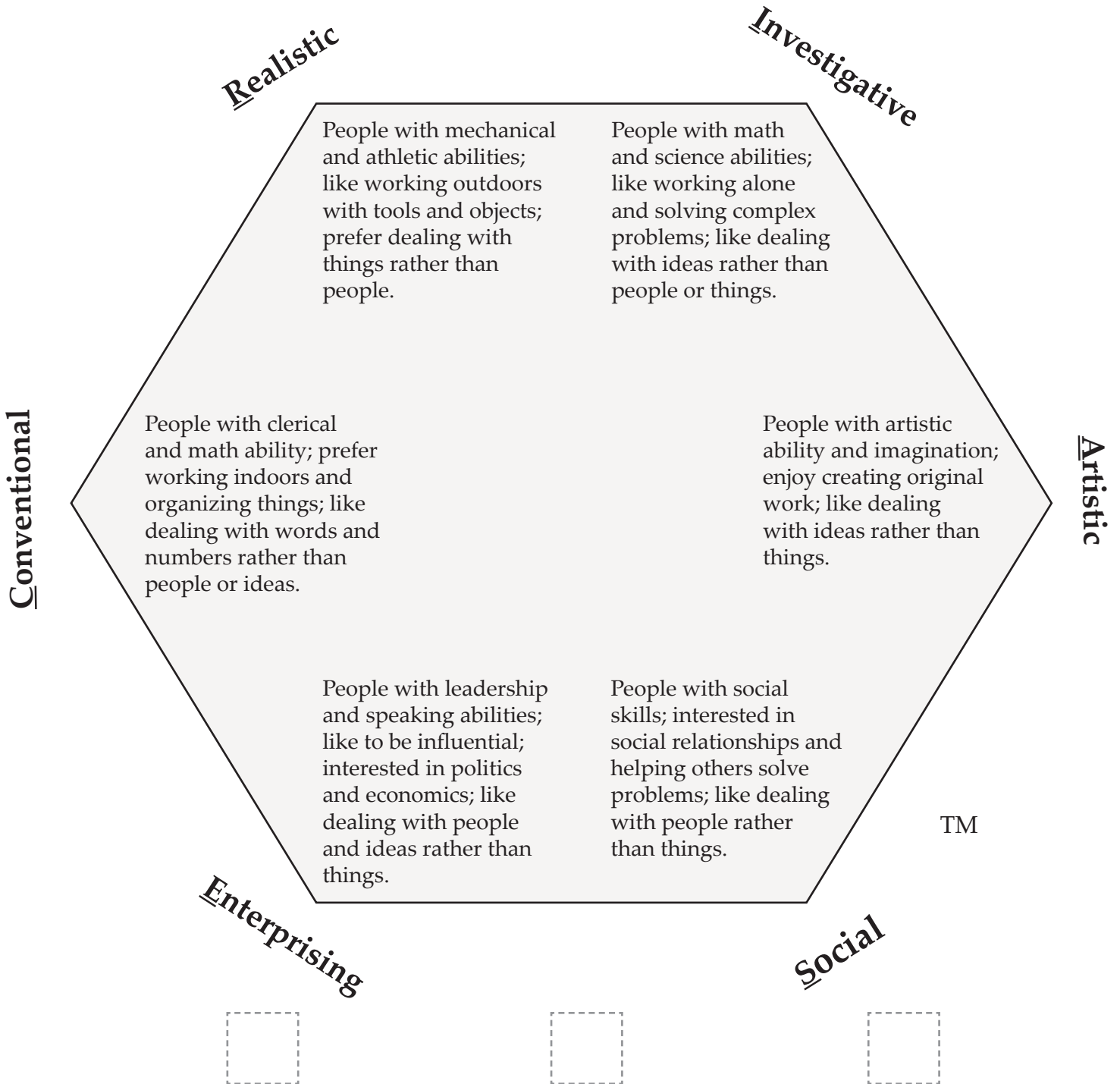
Values	Interests	Skills
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____

# STEP 6: Find My Ideal Work Environment

## The Holland Party Game<sup>3</sup>

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.



# STEP 7: Choose My Potential FSU Major Options

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Understanding your options is critical to making a decision. Patterns will emerge as you gain a better understanding of yourself and your options. Each step you take 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](http://www.academic-guide.fsu.edu).

### Realistic

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- Art, Studio (B.A. and B.F.A.)
- Engineering, Computer\*
- Engineering, Industrial\*

### Investigative

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- Actuarial Science
- Anthropology
- Applied Mathematics
- Biochemistry
- Biological Science
- Biomathematics
- Chemical Science
- Chemistry (including Environmental Track)
- Communication Science & Disorders
- Computational Biology (Biology & Computer Science)
- Computational Science
- Computer Criminology (Computer Science or Criminology)
- Computer Science (B.A. or B.S.)\*
- Computer Science (Online, Panama City only)\*
- Criminology/Criminal Justice
- Economics
- Engineering
  - Chemical
  - Chemical-Biomedical
  - Civil\*
  - Electrical\*
  - Environmental\*
  - Mechanical
- Environmental Chemistry
- Environmental Science (B.S.)
- Environmental Science & Policy (B.A.)
- Environmental Studies
- Geography
- Geology
- Geosciences, Applied
- Information Technology
- International Affairs
- Management Information Systems

- Mathematics (Mathematics, Applied, Biomathematics)
- Meteorology
- Physical Science
- Physics
- Physics and Astrophysics
- Psychology\*
- Public Safety and Security (Panama City only)\*
- Sociology
- Statistics

### Artistic

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- Art, Studio (B.A. and B.F.A.)
- Classics
  - Classical Archaeology
  - Classical Civilization
  - Classics & Religion
  - Greek
  - Latin
  - Latin & Greek
- Communication, Media Production
- Dance
- English
  - Creative Writing
  - Editing, Writing, & Media
  - English Studies
  - Literature
- Interior 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
  - Spanish
- Motion Picture Arts/Film
  - Animation and Digital Arts



# STEP 7: Choose My Potential FSU Major Options

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- 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

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- African American Studies
- Asian Studies
- Athletic Training
- Dietetics
- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Education\*
- English Education
- Exercise Science
- Family & Child Sciences
- Food and Nutrition Science
- FSU Teach
  - Biology
  - Chemical Science
  - Geosciences, Applied
  - Mathematics
  - Physical Science
- Humanities
- Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- Management, Human Resources
- Middle Eastern Studies
- Music Education (Choral/Instrumental/General)
- Music Therapy
- Nursing
- Nursing, Accelerated B.S.N.
- 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

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- Art History
- Business
  - Business Administration (Panama City only)\*
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Finance
  - Golf Management, Professional
  - Hospitality Management
  - Management, General
  - Marketing
  - Professional Sales
  - Real Estate
  - Retail Management
  - Risk Management & Insurance
- Communication/Information
  - Advertising
  - Information, Communication, & Technology (ICT)
  - Media/Communication Studies
  - Professional Communication (Panama City only)\*
  - Professional Communication/Corporate and Public Communication (B.S./M.S. Combined) (Panama City only)\*
  - Public Relations
- Economics, Applied
- History
- Political Science
- Recreation, Tourism, & Events (Panama City only)\*
- Retail Merchandising & Product Development
- Sport Management

## Conventional

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- Accounting\*
- Actuarial Science

*\*These majors are also available at the FSU Panama City campus.*

*NOTE: Students may declare their major as "Exploratory" until term 3. Then, they must change into a departmental major. For more information, contact Advising First or The Center for Exploratory Students (see page 12).*

# 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. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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](http://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/occupations/matchmajor](http://www.career.fsu.edu/occupations/matchmajor).
- **Career Key** helps you search for resources about your major and occupations at The Career Center and other libraries at [www.career.fsu.edu/library/](http://www.career.fsu.edu/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/OCO/](http://www.bls.gov/OCO/).
- **O\*Net** is a continually updated online database with descriptions of occupations at [www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org).
- **Choices Planner** contains information similar to the OOH and O\*Net but also contains additional assessment tools for values, interests, and skills at [www.flchoices.org](http://www.flchoices.org).

7. \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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](http://www.career.fsu.edu).
- **Major and Career Panels:** Attend a discussion by an expert panel of faculty, staff, students, and business professionals to hear about opportunities in different career zones. View a schedule at [www.advisingfirst.fsu.edu/ExploratoryCenter/](http://www.advisingfirst.fsu.edu/ExploratoryCenter/).
- **Informational Interviews:** Contact a professional in the major/career you are considering and ask them questions about that career: [www.career.fsu.edu/professionole](http://www.career.fsu.edu/professionole); [www.career.fsu.edu/IMAGES/PDFS/Guides/ConductingAnInformationInterview.pdf](http://www.career.fsu.edu/IMAGES/PDFS/Guides/ConductingAnInformationInterview.pdf).
- **SDS 3340:** Enroll in the Introduction to Career Development class to engage in more in-depth career exploration and preparation: [www.career.fsu.edu/courses/sds3340](http://www.career.fsu.edu/courses/sds3340).
- **Join a Club:** Explore FSU student organizations in the major or field you are considering: <https://studentgroups.fsu.edu/Organizations>.
- **Job Shadow:** Observe professionals in an occupation of interest: [www.career.fsu.edu/jobshadow](http://www.career.fsu.edu/jobshadow).
- **Volunteer/Community Service:** Learn more about jobs and occupations by volunteering through the Center for Leadership and Social Change: [www.thecenter.fsu.edu/](http://www.thecenter.fsu.edu/).
- **Career Fairs:** Attend Seminole Futures Career Fair to learn about career and internship opportunities. More information at [www.career.fsu.edu/fairs/futures](http://www.career.fsu.edu/fairs/futures).



### My Action Steps

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Date to Complete

# STEP 10: Making A Choice

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Am I ready to make a decision?



Yes? What? \_\_\_\_\_

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No? Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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What would be helpful to me to make this decision?

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## 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](http://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 first year 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](http://www.fsu.edu/AdvisingFirst) for information.

## Advising First - Center for Academic Planning

UCA 3200

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

## Credits

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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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Alternative format available.  
Revised 2/14.