

Selecting a Career/Major

There are many factors to consider when selecting a career, they include things like:

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| Your interests and skills | The education and training needed |
| The cost of obtaining that education and training | The geographic location of jobs |
| The job growth potential | The work environment and tasks |
| Salary and benefits with that job | Family and budget needs |
| Your personal values | |

1) **Know your personal interests:**

Evaluate jobs you may enjoy based on things you have already done. Think about or make a list about the following items:

- Hobbies or leisure interests and why do you enjoy those hobbies or leisure interests.
- Work and volunteer experience you have enjoyed and what you liked about that experience.
- Work or volunteer experience you didn't enjoy and what you didn't like about that experience.
- School subjects you enjoy.
- School subjects you do well in (not always the same as the ones you enjoy).
- Your learning style - Pictures, Reading, Handling things, Talking about things, Making things.
- Personality traits you really like about yourself.
- Things other people like about you or have told you that you do well.

2) **Values:**

The motivation or personal incentives needed for job satisfaction are unique to each person. Knowing your values can help you prioritize what role work plays in your life. However, as you mature, some values may change. Therefore, a job chosen at 20 may not match your values held at age 50.

Look at the list of values below; choose your top two values from each list. Think carefully about your choices.

Intrinsic Values

- Work for a good cause
- Express creativity in your work
- Requires precise, logical reasoning
- Help others
- Meet new people
- Manage a lot of small details
- Handle a heavy work load
- Work alone
- Manage a variety of projects/multi-task
- Influence others

Extrinsic Values

- Large salary
- Long-term job security
- Rewards with bonuses and gifts
- Family-friendly work environment
- Have prestige or social status
- A fast-paced environment
- Short commute
- A flexible schedule
- Consistent 40-hour week
- Advancement opportunities

3) **Lifestyle and Financial Considerations:**

Your preferred living conditions can affect your career and occupational choices, and vice versa. Knowledge of monthly expenses and having realistic financial goals can help in choosing appropriate occupations. Think about or make a list about the following items:

- Ideal work environment (inside vs. outside, etc.).
- Work environment you can't stand (if any).
- Dream geographic work location (country, state, size of town, etc.)
- Any geographic location you do not want to live in.

Use the budget worksheet to determine the following needed annual salary amounts:

"Bare Bones" salary –

Comfortable salary –

Dream salary –

4) Take an interest assessment or personality test:

Focus 2 is an interest assessment provided by the NWC advising center. Please use their webpage to access the program: <http://www.nwc.edu/careers/>. Each person's unique combination of emotional and behavioral characteristics constitutes their personality. Different careers fit better with different personality traits.

5) Making a match:

Compare the information about jobs suggested for you in section 4 to the information about you in sections 1-3, and remove any jobs you think you won't like or do not fit your needs. Sort the remaining jobs according to which you are most interested in based on your personality and life needs. Using Occupational Outlook and O-Net, see what "sector" these jobs fit into and find a common degree you might be interested in pursuing.

6) What can I do with this Major:

Use the associated worksheet to find out more about what jobs are usually related with which majors and more about those jobs. Select a major that you think will give you the most personal fulfillment and satisfy your life needs. Once you have selected a major – map out the courses you will take at NWC or a University to obtain that major using the degree requirements listed on the college website.

7) A few other key points:

Once you think you've settled on a major and career your work isn't done. More work to make sure it is really what you want is always a good idea. And remember – it is okay to change your mind.

- 1) Do more internet research to see how other people feel about jobs in that area, how the public feels about that job, how many years people with that job are working there and what the job really entails
- 2) Read books about the career
- 3) Interview someone with that job
- 4) Attend job fairs and career days on campus
- 5) Talk to your advisors, friends and family about your career choice
- 6) Job shadow someone with that job for a few days
- 7) Review the college or technical skills required for that job and make sure you are committed to the work needed
- 8) Keep an open mind when taking general education classes, you might find something you are interested in that you didn't even know about
- 9) Skills and technology needs for jobs are always changing, keep up with how your chosen career is changing and make sure you learn the newest information
- 10) Explore different scholarships and forms of financial aid, to make sure you are taking advantage of all the resources available to pay for your education in that career
- 11) **Most importantly** – Try it out: take an intense class on your chosen career, do an internship or volunteer – get hands on experience any way you can. Keep doing it – often! It is always heartbreaking when a student graduates with a degree they think they wanted and then they dislike the job.