

Choosing a career/major can seem like a lonely and confusing undertaking. It shouldn't be. There are practical steps you can take to help you to make a good choice. The staff at Career Services is available to provide you with personal assistance in navigating this decision-making process.

It is important that you base your career decisions on solid information about yourself. There are three areas that deserve special attention: your interests, skills and values. This checklist will help you take inventory of these factors.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT

### **INTERESTS/SKILLS: what you like and do well**

As you plan your career, it is important that you evaluate the skills you have acquired and enjoy using. Assess your skills realistically and honestly. **Check all the items that describe you most of the time:**

**Experience-Based Skills** are those which relate specifically to being able to do a particular job. These are gained through personal experience, reading, college courses or employment. You have developed many such skills. Some examples:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art/design            | <input type="checkbox"/> Research                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sales/persuasion      | <input type="checkbox"/> Statistics                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer programming  | <input type="checkbox"/> Using power/hand tools       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word processing       | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interior decoration   | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational leadership      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> News/magazine writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Human service/helping people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical writing     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                  |

**Self-Management Skills** (personal strengths) are related to your personality. They determine how you perform work within an organization. You normally acquire this group of skills in your early years from family, peers and school. They are further developed as you gain more educational and work experience.

As you evaluate which personal strengths you may possess, recall words people have used to describe you. Also think of compliments family, friends, teachers, etc., may have given you about some of your personal characteristics.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decisive                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patient                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Able to meet deadlines           | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organized                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong work ethic                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Able to work under stress           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Able to maintain confidentiality | <input type="checkbox"/> Show initiative                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Able to take risks               | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Resourceful/creative problem solver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic/tactful               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                         |

**Transferable ("Life") Skills** are general skills which can be applied in a wide variety of work settings. You acquired them either as "natural" talents, or through education or training.

Communication

- \_\_\_ Writing
- \_\_\_ Public speaking
- \_\_\_ Persuasion
- \_\_\_ Sales
- \_\_\_ Negotiation
- \_\_\_ Listening

Numerical

- \_\_\_ Budgeting/managing money
- \_\_\_ Work well with numbers
- \_\_\_ Computer skills
- \_\_\_ Solve math problems

Creative

- \_\_\_ Artistic
- \_\_\_ Imaginative with things
- \_\_\_ Imaginative with ideas
- \_\_\_ Generate new ideas easily

Social/Interpersonal

- \_\_\_ Deal effectively with customers/the public
- \_\_\_ At ease socially
- \_\_\_ Work well in groups/committees
- \_\_\_ Able to take criticism

Work with Others

- \_\_\_ Supervision
- \_\_\_ Teaching/training
- \_\_\_ Coaching
- \_\_\_ Advising

Investigative

- \_\_\_ Research/finding information
- \_\_\_ Scientific curiosity
- \_\_\_ Problem solving

Managerial

- \_\_\_ Ability to organize self and others
- \_\_\_ Planning
- \_\_\_ Attention to detail
- \_\_\_ Decision-making
- \_\_\_ Time management

Manual/Physical

- \_\_\_ Mechanical reasoning
- \_\_\_ Construction
- \_\_\_ Manual dexterity/good with my hands
- \_\_\_ Spatial perception/able to visualize 3 dimensional objects
- \_\_\_ Physical stamina

Another way to categorize your interests is by the type of people that you identify with. Research shows that you will be happiest in a job which attracts people with interests similar to yours. Read the following descriptions of personality types and rank the top three that best describe you:

- \_\_\_ Realistic: people who enjoy concrete, physical tasks. These may require athletic or mechanical ability. People in this group may also like machines/tools, animals or the outdoors.
- \_\_\_ Investigative: people who enjoy tasks calling for problem-solving, analyzing, evaluating or seeking new solutions.
- \_\_\_ Artistic: people who enjoy creating or interpreting artistic forms, synthesizing information and viewing ideas and objects in an imaginative way.
- \_\_\_ Social: people who enjoy helping, serving, teaching and communicating with people.
- \_\_\_ Enterprising: people who enjoy persuading or directing others, selling products or services, planning and supervising people projects.
- \_\_\_ Conventional: people who enjoy detailed tasks which require systematic or routine processing of information or data.

(Adapted from the work of Dr. John L. Holland)

An even simpler way to identify your interests is to categorize them according to their primary focus. Rank order the following categories:

- \_\_\_ data: working with numbers or other kinds of data.
- \_\_\_ things: doing work with your hands or using equipment or tools.
- \_\_\_ ideas: working with concepts or theories.
- \_\_\_ people: doing things with or for people.

**VALUES: what is important to you**

Each of us has developed a system of values -- a basis on which we make choices and decisions about what we will and will not do. These values are important to your career decision. If you choose to pursue a career which is at odds with what you consider to be important, you will probably not be happy with your choice. Some examples of values are listed below. Select the top three that are important to you.

- \_\_\_ Advancement -- able to move ahead in your career and take on more responsibility
- \_\_\_ Economic/financial -- having a lot of money and possessions
- \_\_\_ Social service -- service to others, helping people
- \_\_\_ Independence -- freedom to work independently and make own choices
- \_\_\_ Environmental responsibility -- caring about the environment
- \_\_\_ Global responsibility -- caring about social and world problems
- \_\_\_ Family -- having time for family and friends
- \_\_\_ Security -- feeling safe, having basic needs met
- \_\_\_ Power -- having control or authority over others
- \_\_\_ Prestige -- having others look up to you
- \_\_\_ Creativity -- able to find creative solutions or work artistically

**PERSONAL HISTORY**

To identify what you might enjoy doing with your future, it is often helpful to look at your past. The kinds of jobs you've had, hobbies, books you read, etc., can all be clues to what you might enjoy doing for a living. The following sections will help you to take stock of your past experience.

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

List the jobs that you've held.

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

What was your favorite job? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CLUBS/ORGANIZATIONS**

List the high school, college or community organizations to which you have belonged.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**HOBBIES/INTERESTS**

What do you do in your spare time? List any special interests you have.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**READING**

Do you enjoy reading? \_\_\_\_\_ What types of things do you read: books \_\_, magazines \_\_, newspapers \_\_?  
What topics or types of stories do you find yourself drawn to?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CAREER DREAMS**

Do you ever fantasize about careers or your future? Did you have a dream career when you were younger?  
These can often offer helpful insights into suitable careers.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PEOPLE CONTACT**

Most people will interact with others to some degree on the job. What would be the ideal level of interaction for you? Place an "x" on the continuum to indicate your preference:

Working alone                      One-on-one                      Small groups                      Large groups

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

Although almost everyone would like to make a lot of money, how truly important is money to you? What is the lowest salary level you are willing to consider?

Below average \_\_\_\_                      Average salary for an O.U. graduate \_\_\_\_                      Above average \_\_\_\_

## ACADEMICS

### CLASSES

Place an "L" (like) next to your favorite subjects and a "D" (dislike) next to your least favorite, then circle the classes you've actually taken.

\_\_\_ **Social Sciences**

- \_\_\_ Anthropology
- \_\_\_ Criminology/Criminal Justice
- \_\_\_ Family Studies
- \_\_\_ Geography
- \_\_\_ History
- \_\_\_ Law
- \_\_\_ Psychology
- \_\_\_ Political Science
- \_\_\_ Social Work
- \_\_\_ Sociology

\_\_\_ **Science**

- \_\_\_ Biology
- \_\_\_ Chemistry
- \_\_\_ Environmental Studies
- \_\_\_ Geology
- \_\_\_ Physics

\_\_\_ **Languages**

- \_\_\_ Foreign Language \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Linguistics

\_\_\_ **Humanities**

- \_\_\_ English
- \_\_\_ Philosophy

\_\_\_ **Math**

- \_\_\_ Advanced Math (calculus, trigonometry, etc.)
- \_\_\_ Basic Math (arithmetic, algebra, geometry, etc.)
- \_\_\_ Statistics

\_\_\_ **Business**

- \_\_\_ Accounting
- \_\_\_ Economics
- \_\_\_ Finance
- \_\_\_ Human Resource Management
- \_\_\_ Management
- \_\_\_ Marketing
- \_\_\_ MIS
- \_\_\_ Retail Merchandising

\_\_\_ **Education**

\_\_\_ **Communication**

- \_\_\_ Advertising
- \_\_\_ Communication Systems Management
- \_\_\_ Interpersonal/Organizational Communications
- \_\_\_ Journalism
- \_\_\_ Public Relations
- \_\_\_ Radio/TV
- \_\_\_ Visual Communications

\_\_\_ **Engineering**

- \_\_\_ Aviation
- \_\_\_ Chemical
- \_\_\_ Civil
- \_\_\_ Computer Science
- \_\_\_ Electrical
- \_\_\_ Industrial
- \_\_\_ Mechanical

\_\_\_ **Arts**

- \_\_\_ Art History
- \_\_\_ Comparative Arts
- \_\_\_ Dance
- \_\_\_ Film
- \_\_\_ Graphic Design
- \_\_\_ Interior Design
- \_\_\_ Music
- \_\_\_ Photography
- \_\_\_ Theater
- \_\_\_ Visual Arts (painting, drawing, sculpture, etc.)

\_\_\_ **Health/Sports**

- \_\_\_ Health
- \_\_\_ Exercise/Athletics
- \_\_\_ Health Administration
- \_\_\_ Hearing and Speech Science
- \_\_\_ Industrial Hygiene
- \_\_\_ Nutrition
- \_\_\_ Recreation
- \_\_\_ Sports

\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Some academic programs require foreign language studies. How much foreign language have you had so far in either high school or college?

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**COMPUTER SKILLS**

Computer abilities and interests can figure into a lot of different career areas. List any computer hardware/software/languages with which you are familiar.

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**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Because some of the colleges at O.U. have competitive admissions, your chances of enrolling in a particular college will depend on your academic achievement. GPA:

**COLLEGE CHOICES**

After completing this sheet, which colleges do you feel are your most likely choices at this point? Don't be concerned if you are still unsure. You will develop clearer ideas as you work through this process. Indicate next to each college a "Y" for yes, "N" for no, or an "M" for maybe.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts & Sciences | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                | <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Human Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business        | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering & Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Tutorial         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication   | <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts                | <input type="checkbox"/> University              |

**CRITERIA**

List any admissions criteria (from the O.U. Catalog) that you will need to meet in order to enroll in programs you are considering (GPA, portfolios, auditions, prerequisite classes, etc.).

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Now that you have completed your self-assessment checklist, review your answers. Look for any patterns in your responses. Are there any interests or skills that seem to be similar to each other or are repeated in different places? These may indicate good starting places for further investigation. Do any careers/majors come to mind right away? Make note of these below.

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*A Career Services advisor can help you interpret your sheets and identify options for majors/careers that you may want to explore. You can schedule an appointment by calling 593-2909 or stopping by Baker University Center 533. **We look forward to working with you!***