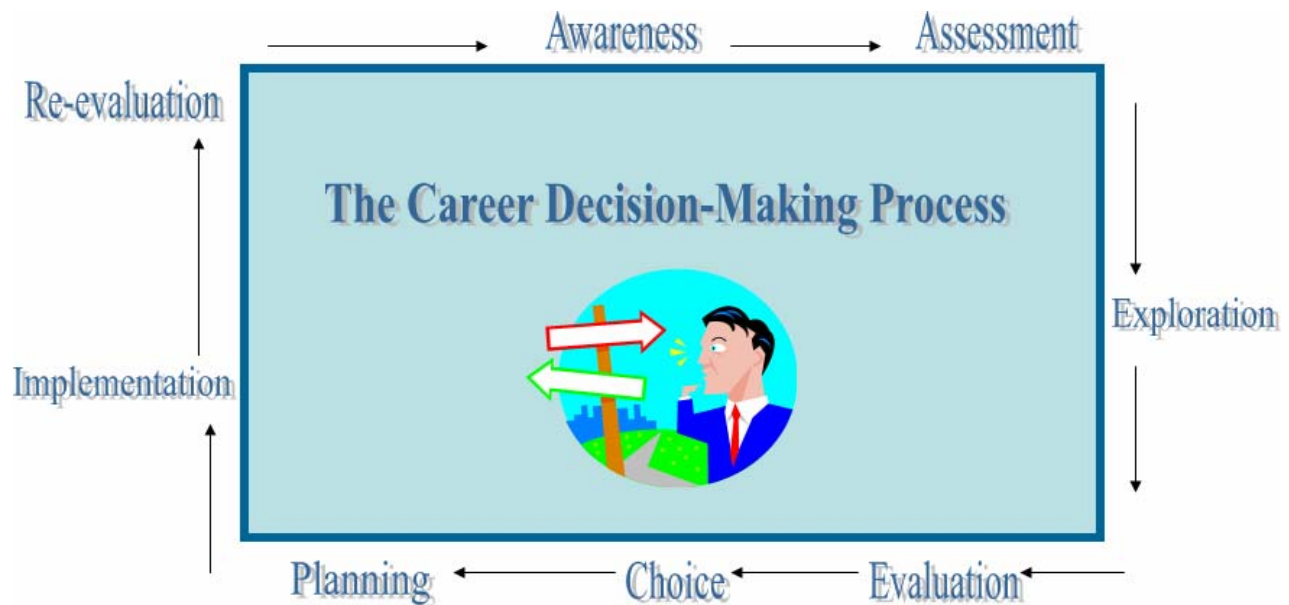




Choosing a Major or Career

Choosing a major or career can be an intimidating process. There may be several areas in which you can succeed. Also one major can lead to many careers. How do you decide on one? To make an informed decision, you need information. The more information you have the easier your choice will be. Keep in mind that decision-making is a process and will take some time and effort. The following are the steps you can take to make this decision easier.



- *What am I interested in?
- *What do I enjoy doing?
- *What kind of environment do I want to work in?
- *What are my strengths?
- *Where do I need to improve?
- *What is most important to me in a major or career?
- *What would make a job satisfying to me?
- *Which of my interests, skills and values do I want to use on the job?
- *Which interests will I satisfy with recreational activities?

3. Exploration

Now that you know more about yourself, you need to learn about occupations. You can do this through reading, talking to others, and gaining experience. Things to examine include; what does the major or career involve, what skills you will need, what is it like, how competitive is the field, etc. Resources for gathering this information include:

- **The Undergraduate Catalog**- find out what is required for different majors.

- [The Occupational Outlook Handbook online](#)- learn about different occupations, includes information such as educational requirements, average salary, and projected need for employees.
- **Informational interviews**- find out more about a career by talking with faculty or people working in the field. See the Alumni Career Network for CUA alumni who are willing to discuss their career path with you.
- **Part-time jobs, internships and volunteer work**- gain hands-on experience. This will give you the chance to see what a career is like first-hand. Check out [JOIN Online](#) for opportunities.
- **Career Series**- The Career Services Office presents a series of [events](#) in both fall and spring semesters to help you identify and explore your options. Plan on attending one or more of these events that are of interest to you.
- [Career information by major handouts](#)- The Career Services Office provides online handouts where you can find career and employment information for different fields.

4. Evaluation

Once you have gathered information about the majors or careers, you should compare each possibility with what you learned about yourself through assessment. Is this something you would enjoy doing every day? Why or why not? Weigh the pros and cons looking at how each option matches with your personality, needs and wants. Also look at the risks associated with each option. What are your chances for success?

5. Choice

Examine all of the information you have about yourself and each major or career area. Identify the best alternative for you. If you do not have enough information to choose, you may need to do more research.

6. Planning

Plan out how to get there. What are the steps in declaring your major? How will you gain experience in the career area that you selected? Be sure to look at all of the steps you will need to take and identify possible obstacles (for example, parental objection or a competitive job market) and plan how to overcome them. Set goals and a time frame to achieve them.

7. Implementation

Put your plan into action.

8. Re-evaluation

Once you have completed the decision-making process, you will want to re-evaluate your decision. Is it still satisfying? If not, start over from the beginning. Why is it not satisfying? What are your options?

Notice that the diagram above is circular. After you have made and implemented your decision, you may find that you need to do some "tweaking" to find a better fit. You should periodically re-examine your decision to make sure that you are still satisfied with it. If you are not, you can start the process over being more specific when defining the problem.

9. Assistance

If you need more assistance with this process, you can meet with a counselor in Career Services to discuss your situation. Call 202-319-5623 to schedule an appointment.

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