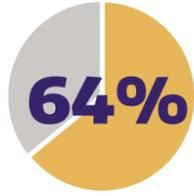


It's okay not to know what you want to do for the rest of your life when starting college, finishing college or even in a first job! Figuring out what to pursue for a major or career is an ongoing process with no right or wrong answer.

EXPLORING career interests



Of college graduates work in a job *unrelated* to their undergrad major



Of employees are *happy* with the college major they chose

11.7 Average number of jobs an American holds between ages 18 and 48



A high interest in a career path is directly related to **increasing levels of success, enjoyment and emotional well-being**

STRENGTHS & SKILLS

What tasks and duties would you want to do in a job every single day? Evaluate your personal strengths. Maybe you are really good at writing and public speaking. Think of a job that would allow you to write and talk about one of your personal hobbies or interests!

A "best fit" match encompasses your personal interests but plays into your capabilities, skills & strengths

INTEREST AREAS

When and where do you find enjoyment? What activities don't feel like "work"? Can your interests lead you to a type of industry or organization? Maybe you love sports but aren't going to be a professional athlete. What types of jobs are available in the world of sports?



SELF-EXPLORATION: Who are you?

Values:
Interests:
Personality:
Skills:



STRENGTHS & RESPONSIBILITIES: What's important to you? Do you want to help & support; problem solve; create & design; research & investigate; lead & influence; analyze & evaluate?



WORLD OF WORK: What majors & careers are you considering? Who could you talk to about a certain career? How can you test drive it?



MAKING DECISIONS: What information do you still need? Make a SMART goal (specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, timely) to begin your next steps.

EXPLORE YOUR STRENGTHS

Explore your strengths from good experiences in your academic, work and personal life

A career exploration process starts with you. Reflect and ask yourself: Who am I? What do I have to offer? What are my strengths, skills, talents abilities, in general and from my academics/major? Then use that information to explore areas of interest and career options. Exercises that can assist you in identifying your strengths, skills and talents are below. These exercises are taken from the Dependable Strengths Process. For further exploration attend a Strengths Identification Workshop and/or visit WOIS <http://www.wois.org/use/depstren/>

Start by identifying Good Experiences (GE) in your life. The definition of a GE for the purpose of this work is:

- Something YOU feel you DID well ... this means only your opinion counts and you actively made it happen
- Something you ENJOYED doing.... the event brought out joy in you; do not include things you do well but do not enjoy
- Something you are proud of...the event was accompanied by a sense of pride
- GEs happen any time or any place in your life. Review academic, extracurricular, hobbies, etc., for possibilities.
- A GE is a specific, concrete event that describes a particular short story of your life, and has a beginning and end.
- A GE is often a small "triumph" in your life that gives you a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment.

Reflect on and begin to list GEs from your life. As you do, consider GEs from all times in life-before the age of 10, adolescence, more current experiences. Questions to consider:

- What is a GE that first comes to mind?
- What activities give you the most enjoyment when you're not in school/work?
- In your most recent assignment/project/activity, which parts did you do best and enjoy most?
- In your educational experiences (UW and other), which 2-3 subjects did you do well in and enjoy?

GOOD EXPERIENCES:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

On a separate page, continue to list more GEs. For 4-5 of your top GEs, write one or two paragraphs describing the situation, the tasks you completed, the actions you took and the outcomes you felt good about. See STAR method in interviewing section of this Career Guide to help you construct your "story." Focus on what you did, how you did it and the results you achieved.

Examples:

- Created my own study abroad experience
- Business Management Group Project
- Hiked Mt. Rainier
- Tutored middle school age kids in math

EXAMPLE OF GOOD EXPERIENCE:

Created my own Study Abroad Experience

I wanted to have a study abroad experience but could not afford the cost of existing programs. To make it happen, I first went to the registrar to find out what was needed for credit. I learned the school I attend must be accredited and that the credits could fulfill some of my general education requirements. Then I talked with professors and other students to gather ideas, and checked all the bulletin boards near the language, culture and international studies departments. After identifying several accredited schools in Mexico and Spain, I wrote to them for more information. To increase my finances, I secured additional work study employment f/t employment during winter break. From my earnings I save \$1,000.

I chose one of the accredited schools in Mexico that had everything I wanted: language, culture, history courses in Spanish and a home-stay. I researched transportation to Mexico and found a cheap bus tour package that would get me there and back (a wonderful adventure on its own). In Mexico, I worked, played hard, immersed myself in the culture and improved my language skills enough to travel independently. The experience exceeded my expectations, raised my confidence and provided me with lifelong friends. I fulfilled my goal of a multicultural educational experience and earned 8 credits toward my BA in Latin American Studies.