

# CHOOSING A MAJOR

## CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

It is important to note that career planning is a cycle. It is not a one-time process.



### STEP 1: SELF-ASSESS

Begin exploring by asking yourself questions, such as:

- ▶ What's important to me?
- ▶ What are the most interesting jobs and careers I can think of?
- ▶ What skills and activities come naturally to me?
- ❑ Take a self-assessment through the Career Development Center
  - **FOCUS 2** <https://www.focuscareer2.com/Portal/Login.cfm?SID=1324>  
Access Code: **careers**
  - Bonus—you can click on the careers within the results page to learn more about each career

### STEP 2: EXPLORE & RESEARCH OPTIONS

#### Online Resources

- ❑ [What Can I Do With This Major?](#) – Provides information on career options and types of industry employers based on major
- ❑ [O\\*NET](#) – Database that includes information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, and interests associated with thousands of occupations
- ❑ [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) – Guide to career information for hundreds of occupations developed and provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

#### UCO Majors & Minors <https://www.uco.edu/programs/>

- ❑ Use the UCO degree list to see all of the undergraduate programs available to you here at UCO

#### Internships

- ❑ Search for opportunities to get experience in your field. [HireBronchos.com](http://HireBronchos.com) offers a database of jobs and internships for UCO students

#### Job Shadowing

- ❑ Identify individuals with the related major/occupation/company/industry you would like to learn more about and contact them. Most people would love to share what they do with you
- ❑ Read real interviews from professionals as they describe their jobs and career paths: [www.jobshadow.com/complete-list-of-interviews/](http://www.jobshadow.com/complete-list-of-interviews/)

#### Volunteering

- ❑ Visit the UCO Volunteer & Service Learning Center for more information on opportunities to volunteer in a variety of different fields

## Informational Interviews

- Arrange a time to interview contacts in the field
- Attend Major Quest in the fall semester to speak with faculty from every department across campus about their majors and the occupations/opportunities associated with them

## STEP 3: REFLECT & DECIDE

Some critical questions to ask yourself may include:

- ▶ Have I fully considered, to the best of my ability, all of my interests, values, and skills?
- ▶ Have I gathered enough information to make an informed and comfortable decision?
- ▶ What information do I still need that will help me make my decision?
- Begin to identify what is important to you in a career or major
- Identify roadblocks or obstacles
- Consider how you feel about the education requirements (beyond an undergraduate degree)
- Visit with the professionals on campus who may or may not teach. For example, if you are interested in graphic design, speak with one of the UCO graphic designers. Remember, a university campus is a small city, and many people practice their professions in their roles at UCO.
- Allow time to reflect
- Meet with a career development specialist. Just remember that career planning is a process; it often takes more than one appointment to fully address your needs.

## STEP 4: PLAN & TAKE ACTION

You may now be ready to choose or clarify your major if you have not already done so. You will also begin to develop a career action plan about what steps you will need to take to reach your goals. Some things to think about include:

- ▶ Do I know what majors would be most relevant to my career goals?
- ▶ Do I know the skills that are necessary in the fields I have chosen?
- ▶ How do I gain the necessary skills to be marketable to employers and graduate schools upon graduation?

### Set Goals

- Establish short-term and long-term goals
- Write these down, review, and update as needed

### Declare/Change Your Major

- Discuss your plan with those that need to know, such as family members and advisors
- Declare a major once you have found one that interests you and will meet your goals.
- Change your major if you already have one declared that does not line up with your goals

### Gain Experience

- Work towards goals and identify skills needed
- Build a resume by following our *Resume Writing Guide*
- Attend career related events
- Utilize HireBronchos

### Prepare for Graduate or Professional School (if you plan to attend)

- Understand the application process and explore programs
- Determine qualifications needed (curriculum vita, resume, professional statements, entrance exams, etc.)

#### ***Important Factors to Remember:***

- ▶ Career development is a proactive process—NOT a one-time event
- ▶ Choosing a major in college does not pre-determine your entire professional career
- ▶ ALL of your experiences, whether they are job-related or not, impact your career choices
- ▶ Keep an open mind and be open to opportunities that present themselves
- ▶ No one career could possibly meet all of your needs—choose the best fit career option