

Prospective Student Resource Guide

Career Planning Process

Career planning is not a one-time process—it's a cycle. You might go through the entire cycle and then "start over," or you might move forward in the process to later move back.

Think about where you are in the process. Look at that section of the guide to see the best resources for you!



STAGE ONE: 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?

Resources:

FOCUS 2 (<https://www.focuscareer2.com/Portal/Login.cfm?SID=1324>) - access code: careers

- FOCUS 2 has assessments for interests, skills, values, and personality preferences.
- You can combine your results from all of the assessments to see careers you might find interesting.
- Bonus—you can click on the careers within the results page to learn more about each career.

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. If you see a major you find interesting, you may want to research the degree further.

STAGE TWO: Explore and Research Options

After you have assessed your interests, values, and skills, there are many different ways in which you can explore career options that relate well to you. Some ways in which you can learn more about different types of careers include:

- Internships
- Job shadowing and/or informational interviews
- Contacting people you may know in the field
- Using resources

Resources:

What Can I Do With This Major? (<http://careers.uco.edu/resources/major-connections.asp>)

- *What Can I Do With This Major?* is a resource that shows you all of the majors available at UCO. By following the links on this page, you can find an outline of common careers, typical employers, and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities within any major.

O*NET (www.onetonline.org)

- This website provides concise occupational information on over 950 jobs.
- Descriptions include typical tasks, knowledge, skills, activities, and education required.

Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh)

- This website allows you to search for careers and learn information about different occupations.
- Descriptions include typical activities, work environment, job outlook, salary, and education requirements.

Job Shadow (www.jobshadow.com/complete-list-of-interviews/)

- This site allows you to read real interviews from professionals as they describe their jobs and career paths.
- The interviews include what people like and dislike about their jobs, what a typical work week looks like, the most challenging and rewarding aspects of the job, and much more.

STAGE THREE: Reflect and Decide

Once you have knowledge about your own interests and values as they relate to majors, it is time to make a decision regarding your major and career aspirations. At this stage it will be important to understand how you will evaluate your exploration experiences and how you will make your decision, including narrowing down career and major options. 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?

STAGE FOUR: Plan and Take Action

This is the stage where you will take action to ensure that you are heading on the right path towards your career. 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?

Resources:

What Can I Do With This Major? (<http://careers.uco.edu/resources/major-connections.asp>)

- *What Can I Do With This Major?* is also a helpful resource to use in stage four of the career planning process. Choose your expected major. Look at the **"Information/Strategies"** column on the right side of the page for suggestions of how you can develop skills and experience you need to get started in the career you want to pursue.

STAGE FIVE: Reevaluation

It will be important to review and evaluate your career decisions on a regular basis to ensure that they are still compatible with your priorities, interests, and values. These will shift over time, which will affect how you view your career choices.

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
- Choosing a major in college does not mean that you have to give up your other areas of interest
- 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

Campus and Community Involvement:

No matter what stage of career development you are in, getting involved on campus and in the community is a great way to develop skills and learn more about your interests.

- Volunteering: Visit UCO Volunteer & Service Learning Center for more information on opportunities to volunteer in a variety of fields.
- Student Organizations: There are a variety of student organizations on campus. Visit the directory (<http://www.uco.edu/student-life/orgs/orgdirectory.asp>) to look for some organizations you might want to join.