

CHOOSING A CAREER

There are five major steps to selecting a career or major. In reality, only YOU can make the decision. Others may try to make decisions for you, but the most important step, **The Foundation**: getting to **Know Yourself**, cannot be determined by anyone other than yourself.

The five steps of Career Selection are like a stairway, you may move up and down the stairs as needed. You may reposition yourself on the stairway at various times, for example, when you become dissatisfied with your current position, experience life changes, or find your position eliminated.

Begin with a solid foundation, Know Yourself, and work your way toward a solid career choice with the assistance of a Career Center consultant.

EVALUATE YOUR CHOICE

Throughout life and often times before reaching your first goals, you are presented with a series of crossroads. You must determine if you want to make changes in your roadmap and set different goals or if your original plan still fits. You may find information that you had not uncovered before that causes you to question your choice. If you decide this is the time to make a change, you need to reposition yourself on a previous step and conduct more research.

MAKE A DECISION

By test driving possible career choices, you have identified options that meet your selection criteria from the inventories completed in **Know Yourself**. Now is the time to evaluate and select career options that best meet the majority of your criteria. Develop a map or plan that will help you reach your career goals. Follow your map.

TEST DRIVE CAREERS

Test drive the career fields identified below in **Explore and Investigate** to see if they fit. Talk with people in the field, observe them working, or work in the field as an intern, co-op student, part-time, or temporary worker or take classes to learn more about the career. Add the third dimension to your career decision. How is the fit? This may be a time to reposition yourself on the stairway. As possible career choices are eliminated, others may need to be identified, requiring a step back.

EXPLORE AND INVESTIGATE CAREER FIELDS

What are the occupations and career fields that provide the best blend of your unique style, interests, skills, and values? The goal in this step is to identify possible career options that match your criteria for job satisfaction and those which offer no fit. In this step, books and computer programs can provide knowledge about career fields, so comparisons between occupational characteristics and personal characteristic can be made.

KNOW YOURSELF

A good career decision can only be made when you take inventory and become aware of your **personal style**, identify your **interests and skills**, and acknowledge your **work values**. **Without these pieces of the puzzle, a career decision is not grounded or based on criteria that matters to you.**