

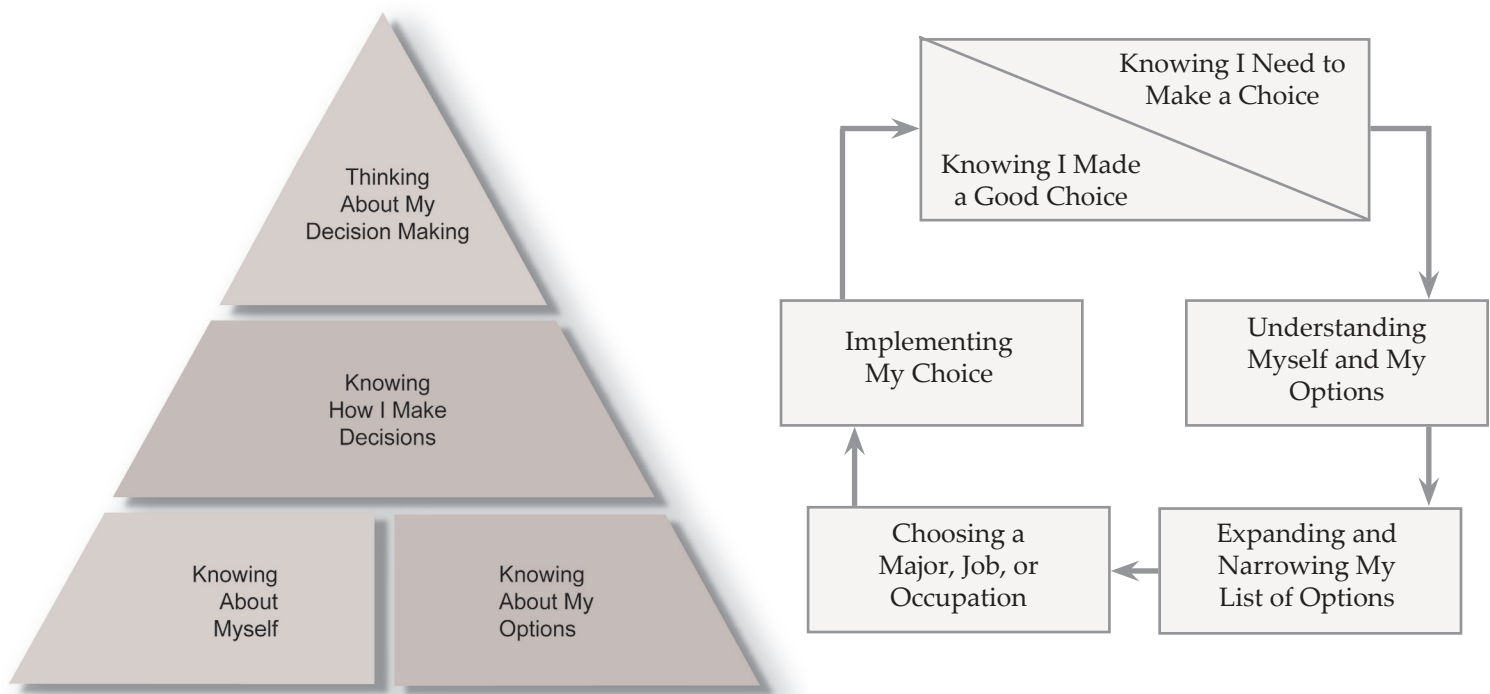
Choosing a Major or Occupation



This guide was developed for students who are ready to actively engage in the major selection and career decision-making process. It is a great resource for both Exploratory majors and other students who have declared a major but may be experiencing doubt about their initial decision. Please use this guide in consultation with an academic or career advisor.

STEP 1: Learn About the Process

Decision making involves both *knowing* and *doing*. In this guide, you will be introduced to *knowing* and led through *doing* in order to make a more informed decision. Review the figures below.



“Knowing”: What’s Involved in a Career Choice

Before making a career choice, evaluate what you know about yourself, your options, how you make decisions, and how you think about your decision making.

Knowing About Myself means knowing my values, interests, and skills.

Knowing About My Options means knowing my possible majors, occupations, and jobs.

“Doing”: How to Make a Better Decision

Once you know about yourself and your options, the next step is to make your major/occupation decision. To make your decision, use a decision-making method that works for you. The action-oriented model shown above can help you engage in the decision-making process and choose a major or occupation. The steps include:

Knowing I Need to Make a Choice

Understanding Myself and My Options

Expanding and Narrowing My List of Options

Choosing a Major, Job, or Occupation

Implementing My Choice

Knowing I Made a Good Choice

Thinking About My Decision Making

Be aware of your approach to decision making and listen to your self-talk for words like *always*, *never*, and *should*. Using these absolute terms can make it hard to move forward. An example of negative self-talk can include: “I’ll never be able to choose a major that I like.”



Circle each section of the pyramid where you believe you need further assistance.

Circle the step you believe you are currently at on the decision-making process model.

STEP 2: Consider My Decision

What's Impacting My Decision?



Before you can make a decision about your major or career, consider what things are influencing that decision and how important these factors are to you. List any thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people, or events that are impacting your decision or telling you that a decision is needed. List as few or as many as you would like.

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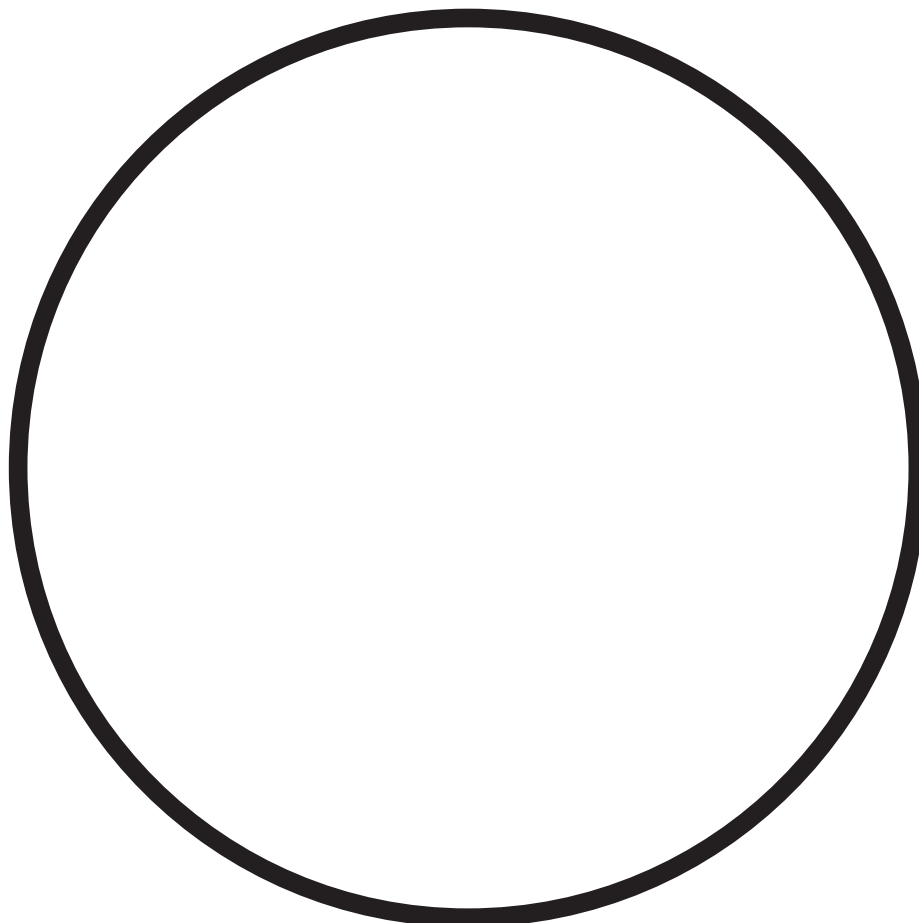
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Now, within the large circle below, draw and label smaller circles to represent each item on your list. Use the size of each circle you draw to represent the relative importance of each item to your decision-making process.



STEP 4: Understand Myself

Understand My Values, Interests, and Skills

Self-knowledge includes a clear understanding of your values, interests, and skills.

Values: Guiding principles that reflect what is most important to you in life.

Interests: Topics you enjoy reading about and activities that leave you energized.

Skills: Developed talents or abilities.



Review and write your answers to the following questions below.

Values

- What did I like most and least about the past experiences that I have had? (jobs, community service, school involvement, etc.)
- What is important to me?
- What makes my life and work meaningful?

Interests

- What do I enjoy doing?
- What kind of clubs/organizations am I interested in joining?
- When reading, surfing the Internet, or watching television, which issues/topics am I drawn to?

Skills

- What subjects/classes have I performed well in?
- Where have I had successful experiences?
- What do people I am close to say I do well?

STEP 5: Rank My Values, Interests, and Skills



In the columns below, circle the values important to you, areas of interests, and skills you possess. Put a line through the ones that don't apply to you.

Values	Interests	Skills
Adventure	Community Service	Analytical/Problem Solving
Being Outdoors	Creative/Performing Arts	Communication
Creativity	Cultures/Languages	Counseling
Independence	Environment/Animals	Creativity/Artistic/Design
Job Security	Fashion	Instructional/Mentoring
Leadership	Healthy Living/Medical	Interpersonal
Learning & Education	Interpersonal Relationships	Languages
Low Stress	Investing/Finance/Business	Leadership/Managerial
Money	Literature/Reading/Writing	Mathematical
People Interaction	Music	Mechanical
Personal/Professional Balance	Organizing/Planning	Organizational
Prestige	Politics/Law	Persuasion
Service to Others	Science	Research
Set Routines	Sports	Scientific
Traveling	Teaching	Technological
Variety of Tasks	Technology/Computers	Writing
Other _____	Other _____	Other _____
Other _____	Other _____	Other _____



Referring back to Steps 4 and 5, list your top three in each area.

Values	Interests	Skills
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____

STEP 3: Envision My Future

What is My Vision for the Future?



Please draw or write any thoughts, feelings, or ideas you hold for your future in the space below. Let the following questions guide your vision of the future.

What do I want to accomplish in the future?

Who do I aspire to be?

What is my dream career?

What inspires me?

What am I passionate about?

When I think about a happy life, what does that include?



As you look at your future goals, write a one-sentence statement that expresses the vision that you have for your future and how you currently see yourself accomplishing it.

I will... _____

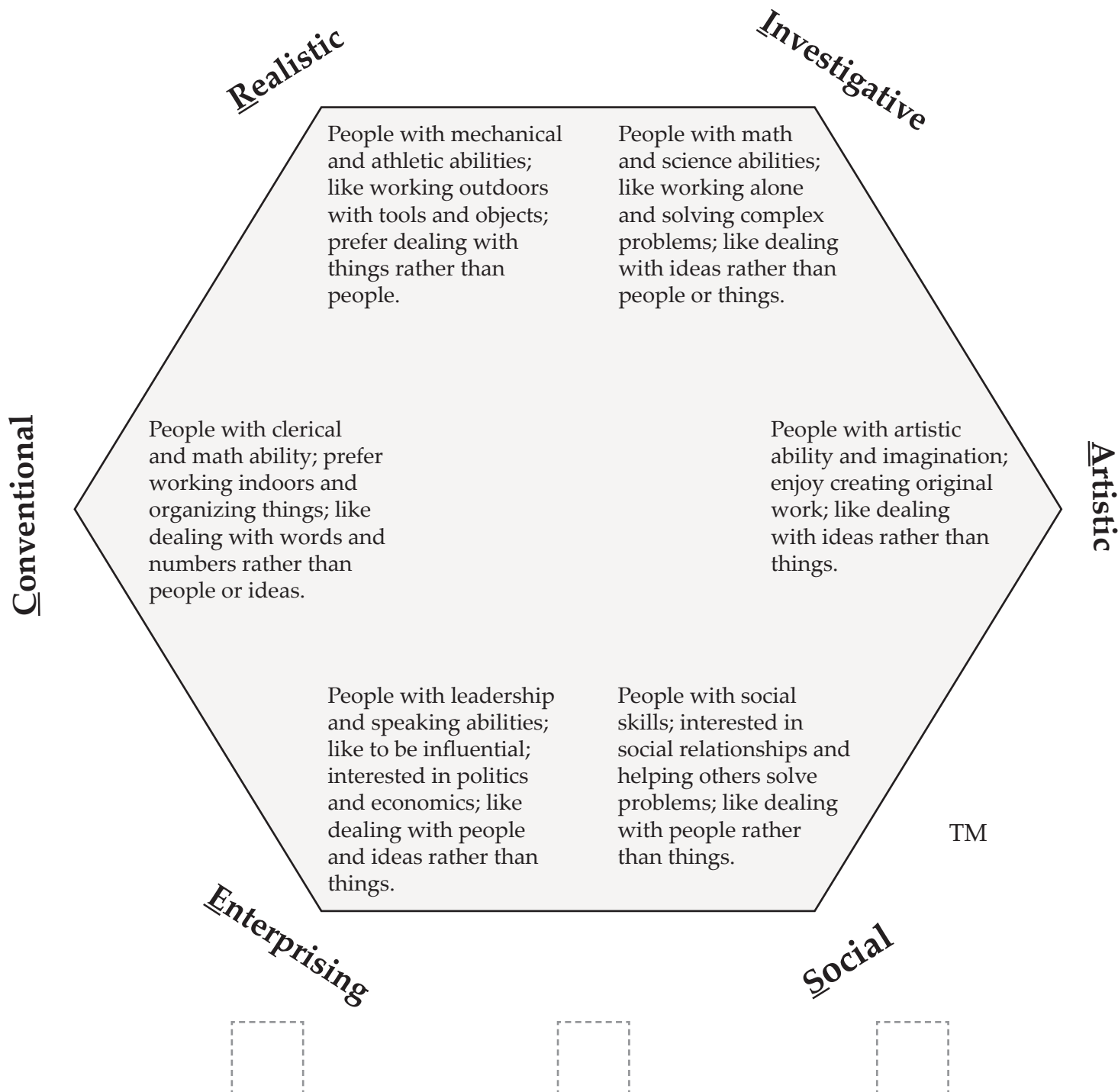
by doing... _____

STEP 6: Find My Ideal Work Environment

The Holland Party Game³

There are many ways to identify enjoyable majors and occupations. To complete this simple exercise:

1. Read about each of the six groups of people inside the hexagon below. Which three groups or types of people would you enjoy spending time with at a party?
2. Write the underlined letter of the group you would most like to spend time with in the first block below, the letter of the group you would spend time with next in the second block, and the letter of the third group in the last block. These three letters are called your Holland Code.
3. Continue to the next page to match your three letters to Florida State majors.



STEP 7: Choose My Potential UNA Major Options

Understanding your options is critical to making a decision. Patterns will emerge as you gain a better understanding of yourself and your options. Each step you take brings your academic and career choices into sharper focus.

UNA Majors by Holland Code



Using your Holland Code as a starting point, place a check next to majors which interest you. To learn more about a major, visit www.una.edu/academics/.

Realistic

- Art, Studio (B.A. and B.F.A.)

Investigative

- Applied Mathematics
- Biological Science
 - Cellular and Molecular
 - Environmental
 - General Biology
 - Professional Biology
- Chemical Science
 - General Chemistry
 - Professional Chemistry
- Communications
- Computer Science (B.A. or B.S.)
- Computer Information Systems
- Criminal Justice
- Economics
- Engineering Technology
 - Mechanical
 - Technical
- Earth Systems/Sustainability
- Geography
 - General Geography
 - Geographic Informational System
- Industrial Hygiene
- Information Technology
- Information Technology
- Mathematics
- Marine Biology
- Physical Science
- Physics
 - General Physics
 - Geophysics
 - Professional Physics
- Psychology
- Sociology
 - Criminology
 - Gerontology

Artistic

- Art
 - Culinary Arts Management
 - Fashion Merchandising
 - Hospitality and Events Management
 - Interior Architecture and Design
 - Professional Fine Art
- Communications
 - Cinematic Arts
 - Communications Studies
- English
 - Creative Writing
 - English Studies
 - Literature
- Interior Design
- Interdisciplinary Studies
 - Applied Entrepreneurship
 - Flexible/ Individualized Option
 - Organizational Leadership
- Mass Communication
 - Journalism and Digital Media
 - Public Relations
- Modern Languages
 - French
 - German
 - Language with a Concentration in Business
 - Spanish
- Motion Picture Arts/Film
 - Animation and Digital Arts
 - Production
- Music
 - Instrumental Music
 - Performance (Instrumental, Piano, Vocal)
 - Vocal/Choral Music
- Theatre
 - Acting
 - Design Tech
 - General Theatre

STEP 7: Choose My Potential UNA Major Options

Social

- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Education*
- English Education
- Health, Physical Education, & Recreation
 - Exercise Science
 - Health, Physical Education, & Recreation
 - Pre-Professional Studies
 - Sport Recreation Management
- Human Sciences, Hospitality & Design
- Management, Human Resources
- Music Education (Choral/Instrumental/General)
- Nursing
- Nursing, Accelerated B.S.N.
- Political Science
- Pre-health Professions
 - Allied Health
 - Chiropractic Medicine
 - Dentistry
 - Medical Technology
 - Medicine
 - Naturopathic Medicine
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Optometry
 - Pharmacy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Physician Assistant
 - Podiatry
 - Veterinary Medicine
- Secondary Education
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Foreign Languages
 - History
 - Mathematics
 - Physical Sciences
 - Social Science
 - Visual Art
- Social Work
- Special Education
- Public Relations
- Economics
- Entertainment Industry
 - Business
 - Technology
- Finance
 - Banking & Financial Services
 - Professional Finance
- History
- Information Technology
- Military Science
- Political Science
- Professional Studies
 - Agriculture and Forestry
 - Allied Health
 - Architecture
 - Engineering
 - Law
 - Library Services
 - Medical Technology
 - Medicine, Dentistry, Optometry, and Podiatry
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Pharmacy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Physicians Assistant
 - Religious Education
 - Theology
 - Veterinary Medicine
- Professional Management
 - Entrepreneurship Concentration
 - General Management
 - Hospitality Management
 - Human Resources Management
- Professional Marketing
 - Category management
 - General Marketing
 - Sales Marketing
- Sport Management

Enterprising

- Communication/Information
 - Cinematic Arts
 - Communication Studies
 - Journalism and Digital Media

Conventional

- Accounting
- Computer Information Systems
- Economics
- Finance

STEP 8: Explore and Narrow My Options

Now that you’ve identified your values/interests/skills and possible majors and occupations, it is time to explore these options.

For majors, this includes understanding prerequisite courses, academic milestones, and application procedures. **For occupational exploration**, this exploration may include work descriptions, education/training requirements, growth outlook, average salaries, and representative employers.



List your top majors/occupations on the lines below. Using the online resources below, explore these options. Consider the pros and cons of each one.

Majors/Occupations

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Online Resources

- **Undergraduate Academic Program Guide** provides descriptions of each major, along with mapping requirements, academic milestones, and advising contact information at www.una.edu/academics/majors
- **Match Major Sheets** allow you to find occupations, books, and professional organizations that match your major or broader fields of study at www.una.edu/career/major-and-career-exploration
- **Career Key** helps you search for resources about your major and occupations at The Career Center and other libraries at www.una.edu/career/job-search
- **Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)** describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, training and education needed, earnings, and the occupational outlook for hundreds of occupations at www.bls.gov/OCO/.
- **O*Net** is a continually updated online database with descriptions of occupations at www.onetonline.org.
- **What can I do with my Major?** contains information on in depth options for all of the majors at UNA at www.una.edu/career/what-can-i-do-with-this-major

STEP 9: Evaluate My Final Options



Once you have gathered information on your options, it should be easier to narrow your selection to 3 or less. The best way to assemble your final list is to compare your new possibilities to your most important values, interests, and skills checklist. Write your top 3 majors/occupations.

Majors/Occupations

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Making a final decision often comes about through experience and “hands-on” learning. Here are some recommended action steps:

- **Exploration Course:** With the help of an academic advisor, consider enrolling in specific classes to have a better understanding of your top choices for a major.
- **Career Center:** Drop by The Career Center to speak with a career advisor about your major choices and learn about internships, co-ops, part-time work, and volunteer opportunities. More at www.una.edu/career.
- **Major and Career Panels:** Attend a discussion by an expert panel of faculty, staff, students, and business professionals to hear about opportunities in different career zones.
- **Informational Interviews:** Contact a professional in the major/career you are considering and ask them questions about that career:
- **Join a Club:** Explore UNA student organizations in the major or field you are considering: <https://una.presence.io/organizations>
- **Job Shadow:** Observe professionals in an occupation of interest:
- **Volunteer/Community Service:** Learn more about jobs and occupations by volunteering through the Office of Student Engagement www.una.edu/students/volunteer/
- **Career Fairs:** Attend Career Center's Career Fair to learn about career and internship opportunities. More information at www.una.edu/career/events



My Action Steps

Date to Complete

- | My Action Steps | Date to Complete |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |

STEP 10: Making A Choice

Am I ready to make a decision?



Yes? What? _____

No? Why not? _____

What would be helpful to me to make this decision?

The Career Center

Pine Street

207 Guillot University Center

Provides major/career exploration, self-assessment activities, occupational information, job outlook information, etc. Call 256-765-4276 or visit www.una.edu/career for information. Drop in and see a career advisor Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

University Success Center- Exploratory Advising

Main Campus

Collier Library, 2nd floor

Provides special assistance to first year students who are undecided about their major, Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Call 256-765-4722 to schedule an appointment or visit www.una.edu/successcenter/uas/exploratory-advising

University Success Center- Academic Advising

Main Campus

Collier Library, 2nd floor

Provides support for sophomores and upperclassmen students experiencing indecision about their major selection or concerns with academic mapping. Visit Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. or call 256-765-4722 for more information.

Credits

The following sources were adapted for inclusion in this guide.

Sampson, J. P., Jr., Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., & Reardon, R. C. (1992). A cognitive approach to career services: Translating concepts into practice. *Career Development Quarterly*, 41, 61-67.

Peterson, G. W., Leasure, K. K., Carr, D. L., & Lenz, J. G. (2009-2010, Winter). The decision space worksheet: An assessment of context in career decision making. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, 25 (4), 87-97.

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