

Career Development Steps

Career Exploration Series

Career development is a lifelong and ongoing process. There are *five steps in the process* of selecting a career or major. These steps can be used each time you consider a career change. With each career change the details may change, but the process will remain the same. Throughout this process you might need to recycle back to previous steps as you continue self-exploration and eliminate options.

In reality, only the individual who faces the choice can make the choice. Others are available to help, but ultimately the decision is yours! You will get out of the process what you choose to put in. This is your future, so it is worth the effort. The five steps of career selection follow, beginning with the foundation, which is to Know Yourself. Activities are given which support each step.

Step One: Know Yourself | Determining a Major or Career Path

A good career decision can only be made when you become aware of your personal style, identify your interest and skill areas, and acknowledge your work values. Without these pieces of the puzzle, a career decision is not grounded or based on criteria which matters to you.

Activities to consider

- Enroll in Career Planning & Decision Making (ARSC 1040) that will guide you through the career exploration process.
- Join a student organization to gain valuable skills that all employers seek.
- Become familiar with the majors offered at Marquette and enroll in a variety of courses to explore majors that appeal to you.
- Engage in self-assessment to identify your interests, skills, values and personality characteristics and match those to possible career choices.
- Consider volunteer activities and service learning. Combining community service with classroom theory enriches students' learning, personal growth and sense of civic responsibility.

This typically takes place in your freshman or sophomore year; however, many graduating seniors need some assistance in this area. The Counseling Center (288.7172) is a good place to start if you are selecting or clarifying your major.

Step Two: Understanding Career Fields

What are 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 which match your criteria for job satisfaction and those which offer no fit. In this step, books and electronic resources can provide information about career fields so that comparisons can be made between occupation characteristics and personal characteristics.

Activities to consider

- Research careers using on-line resources, informational interviewing, job shadowing, and networking with professionals in your career interest area. Vault, LinkedIn, and MU Connect are good places to begin.
- Learn first-hand from professionals in your field and begin building your professional network using the MU Connect: Career Alumni Network database.
- Using online job searching databases such as MU Career Manager and Golden Eagle Search to learn what kinds of jobs are out there for someone with your career interests.
- Register with MU Career Manager to view full-time positions, participate in on campus interviews, and become eligible for the resume referral program.
- Attend career fairs so that you can talk to many employers in a short time span, present them with your resume, and verbally give them a short summary of what you have to offer.
- Schedule an appointment with a career counselor to identify careers based on your chosen major, learn about internships, practice interviewing skills in a mock interview, and develop a career plan.

This typically takes place in the freshman or sophomore year; however, many students who have already chosen a major may still be unclear as to what to do with it. Juniors and seniors can benefit from this step as well.

Step Three: Try-on Careers

Test-drive your career choice to see if there is a fit. Talk with people in the field; observe them working, work in the field while gaining career-related experience, or take classes to learn more about the field. Add the third dimension to your career decision. How is the fit? This may be a time to recycle. As possible career choices are eliminated, others may need to be identified, requiring a step back.

Activities to consider

- Gain skills through career-related experiences, such as internships, co-ops, part-time or summer jobs, volunteer activities and service learning.
- Develop a resume and e-mail it as an attachment to be critiqued to career.services@marquette.edu.
- Register with MU Career Manager to view full-time positions, participate in on-campus interviews, and become eligible for the resume referral program.
- Attend career fairs so that you can talk to many employers in a short time span, present them with your resume, and verbally give them a short summary of what you have to offer.
- Explore options for graduate and professional school.

You may be ready for an internship as early as your sophomore year but typically juniors and seniors are involved in this type of career-related experience.

Step Four: Make a Decision and Act on that Decision

By test driving possible career choices, you have identified options which meet your selection criteria from step one. Now is the time to evaluate and select options which best meet the majority of your criteria. Develop a map or plan which will help you reach your career goals. Work your plan. Once you have made a decision and developed a career goal, you could be ready for your job search. Studies show it takes about six months of active job searching to find a position that fits with your education and career goals. In addition to helping with your career development, the Career Services Center is also here to aid you in conducting a meaningful and effective job search.

Activities to consider

- Enroll in Job Search Strategies (ARSC 1050) that will guide you through the job search process.
- Schedule an appointment with a career counselor to clarify career goals based on your chosen major, learn about internships, practice interviewing skills in a mock interview, and develop a career plan.
- Identify skills employers seek and transferable skills you possess.
- Build your professional network using the MU Connect: Career Alumni Network database.
- Develop a resume and e-mail it as an attachment to be critiqued to career.services@marquette.edu.
- Register with MU Career Manager to view full-time positions, participate in on-campus interviews, and become eligible for the resume referral program.
- Develop a job search plan. Need help? Make an appointment with a career counselor.
- Practice your interviewing skills. Get interviewing feedback through a mock interview.
- Attend career fairs so that you can talk to many employers in a short time span, present them with your resume, and verbally give them a short summary of what you have to offer.
- If required to fulfill your career goal, apply for graduate and professional school.

Seniors should begin this process in earnest the fall prior to a May graduation. These same steps may be used for alumni or students seeking an internship.

Step Five: 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 that this is the time to make a change, you need to recycle back to a previous step, or even step one, and do some more research.