



How to Choose Your Major Self-Assessment

Making the right plans for your future can be difficult. Starting with a self-assessment can assist you in making decisions about jobs by defining your personal qualities, skills, interests, values, etc. The more you know about yourself, the easier it will be to find job titles and industries that match your personal characteristics and match a major to your selections. This packet will help you to identify your personal characteristics. Interest and personality assessments are also available in the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center. If you are interested in taking an assessment, please make an appointment to see a Career Counselor.

Your Personality

Think about your emotions, behaviors, and ways of thinking. We all have unique personality traits that can make a difference in the way we perform a job or how much job satisfaction we have. Here are some questions to help begin thinking about your personality traits.

- Are you outgoing or shy?
- Are you assertive or passive?
- Do you seek out excitement or peace and quiet?
- Are you open to new experiences or do you avoid them?
- Are you chronically late, or are you always on time?
- Are you anxious and nervous or really laid-back?
- Do you act impulsively or do you take your time to make decisions?
- Are you patient and understanding or do you lose your temper easily?
- Do you like being the center of attention or blending in with the crowd?
- How else would you describe your personality?

Consider each personal quality and **check those that apply to you.**

Be honest! Check what you *ARE*, not what you hope you are or would like to be.

	Able to concentrate		Curious		Meticulous		Responsible
	Able to manage stress		Diplomatic		Modest		Risk-taking
	Accurate		Discreet		Motivated		Self-confident
	Adaptable		Easy going		Open-minded		Self-controlled
	Adventurous		Efficient		Optimistic		Sensible
	Aggressive		Emotional		Organized		Sensitive
	Ambitious		Empathetic		Outgoing		Sincere
	Analytical		Enthusiastic		Patient		Sociable
	Assertive		Friendly		Persevering		Stable
	Attention to detail		Good-natured		Persuasive		Supportive
	Business-like		Helpful		Poised		Tactful
	Calm		Honest		Practical		Teachable
	Careful		Humorous		Precise		Tenacious
	Cautious		Imaginative		Progressive		Thorough
	Cheerful		Independent		Punctual		Thoughtful
	Clear-thinking		Intelligent		Quick		Tough
	Competent		Inventive		Quiet		Trusting
	Competitive		Kind		Rational		Trustworthy
	Confident		Likeable		Realistic		Understanding
	Conscientious		Logical		Reflective		Versatile
	Conservative		Loyal		Reliable		Witty
	Consistent		Mature		Reserved		
	Creative		Methodical		Resourceful		

Here are a few questions to keep in mind throughout your decision making process:

Personality traits may not be easy to change. Does your personality match with the majors/careers you are considering?

If you are shy and introverted, how would you feel about having to work in groups or give a speech to a roomful of people?

If you are impatient, would you be able to work with young children?

If you like to take your time to make decisions, how would you react to tight deadlines?

Your Skills

Skills are about what you can do, not about what you like to do. Use this sheet to help you identify some of your skills. Here are a few sample questions to help you start to think about your skills.

- Do you seem to have a natural talent for helping other people, explaining instructions, influencing people to see your point or agree with you?
- Are you good at working with numbers, solving problems (not necessarily number problems), or create original work?
- Can you organize events that go off without a hitch or organize a group of people?

Consider each of the skills below. Think of how your skill level compares to other people.

Rank your skill level from 1-3, as **compared to others**.

1 – Above Average

2 – Average

3 – Below Average

Communication Skills

- Explaining
- Listening
- Persuading
- Selling
- Speaking
- Teaching
- Writing

Problem-Solving Skills

- Investigating
- Researching
- Observing
- Locating (possible solutions)
- Obtaining Information
- Trouble Shooting
- Asking

Creative Skills

- Inventing
- Decorating
- Designing
- Entertaining
- Dramatizing
- Innovating
- Displaying
- Building

Interpersonal Skills

- Advising
- Cooperating
- Confronting
- Providing Customer Service
- Group Facilitating
- Interviewing
- Negotiating
- Participating
- Presenting
- Explaining
- Understanding

Job Maintenance Skills

- Compiling (data, information, files, etc)
- Handling Detail Work
- Record Keeping
- Setting Up
- Updating
- Serving (customers, clients, supervisors, etc)
- Carrying out requests

Leadership Skills

- Administrating
- Coordinating
- Deciding
- Delegating
- Initiating
- Managing
- Supervising
- Motivating

Organizational Skills

- Setting Priorities
- Planning (setting goals, timelines, gathering information, deciding on materials, etc)
- Predicting (vision of what lies ahead)
- Preparing (putting plans into action, developing materials, etc.)
- Managing Time
- Budgeting Resources (time, materials, etc)
- Analyzing (problems, data)
- Evaluating (reviewing product, assessing pluses and short-comings, making plans for any changes)
- Anticipating (idea of possible outcomes and possible pitfalls)

Are there other skills you can think of that are not listed?

Your Abilities

Abilities are how well you perform. Keep these questions into consideration as you are considering your career and major choices.

- How do your SAT scores and high school grades compare to those of other students?
- How have others judged your abilities in the past?
- Have you won academic honors, awards for excellence in art, music, debate, sports, or other performance areas?
- How strong are your study skills?
- Do you have the ability to be successful in the course work required in a particular major?

Your Interests

While above we focused on your skills and abilities, now it's time to think about what you like to do. Here are a few questions to get you started thinking about your interests. You may also want to evaluate your skills above by marking which ones interest you. This section is very brief. We also suggest taking an interest inventory in the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center and having the results interpreted by a career counselor.

- What activities do you like to participate in just for fun?
- What do you like to watch on TV?
- What topics do you enjoy reading or talking about?
- What courses did you like most in high school?
- When you fantasize about a career, what do you think you would enjoy doing or being?
- What other things are you interested in?
- What kinds of activities are you not interested in, and why?

Don't underestimate how important your interests can be when choosing a major. Imagine not being interested in a subject and studying it in depth for four years or more. Would you be interested in the course work required in a particular major?

Your Accomplishments

It is often difficult to talk to other people about our accomplishments. In interviews, however, you need to be able to express what you have accomplished and what you can contribute to their company. We know that there are many things you have accomplished in your life so far. Here, you are only asked to identify five.

Consider your academic achievements, extra-curricular and community activities, work experience, etc. Accomplishments can include something as simple as 'passing a very difficult test' or 'helping a neighborhood kid learn how to ride their bike.'

List 5 Accomplishments:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Challenge

Can you take each accomplishment and list all of the skills that apply to each?

Ex.: Passing a really difficult test.

Skills: time-management (attending class and studying), organization (of notes), being driven or self-motivated (wanting to do well in class, so staying focused even though there were more fun things to do), etc.

1. Accomplishment: _____ Skill: _____
2. Accomplishment: _____ Skill: _____
3. Accomplishment: _____ Skill: _____
4. Accomplishment: _____ Skill: _____
5. Accomplishment: _____ Skill: _____

Your Values

Your values are the principles that guide your life – the things that are really important to you. Identifying values will help you decide whether a career, the nature of a job, or a workplace is consistent with your values and whether it is a place in which you will enjoy working. Here is a list of questions to help you start to think about your values:

- Are your decisions and choices in life influenced by religious, spiritual, philosophical, moral, or ethical beliefs and teachings?
- Where do you stand politically on various issues?
- How important is it for you to help others or serve your community?

- Is making a lot of money really important to you? Or how about just a comfortable living?
- When faced with a moral dilemma, do you always “do the right thing,” even if it's difficult?
- Could you work in a job that promotes unethical, illegal, immoral, or unhealthy activities?
- What place does a family have in your future?
- What other things are really important to you?
- How would you feel if your values didn't match with a particular major or career you were considering?

Below is a list of personal values that many people identified as being important to them in the workplace and in their careers.

Rate each value as follows:

- 1** – Things you value **VERY MUCH**
- 2** – Things you **VALUE** somewhat
- 3** – Things you **DON'T VALUE**

	Help Society	Do something which contributes to improving the world we live in
	Help Others	Be directly included in helping other people, either individually or in groups
	Public Contact	Have a lot of day-to-day contact with the public
	Work with Others	Work as a team member toward a common goal
	Work Alone	Do projects by myself, with limited contact with others
	Competition	Engage in activities which pit my abilities against others
	Make Decisions	Have the power to decided courses of action and policies
	Work Under Pressure	Work in situations where time pressure is prevalent
	Influence People	Be in a position to influence the attitudes of opinions of other people
	Knowledge	Engage in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding
	Work Mastery	Become an expert in whatever work I do
	Artistic Creativity	Engage in creative artistic expression
	General Creativity	Have the opportunity to create new programs, materials, or organizational structures
	Aesthetics	Participate in studying or appreciating the beauty of things, ideas, etc.
	Supervision	Have a job which you are directly responsible for the work of others
	Change and Variety	Have work activities which frequently change
	Precision Work	Work in situations where attention to detail and accuracy are very important
	Routine	Have a work routine and job duties that are mostly predictable and similar day-to-day
	Security	Be assured of keeping your job and receiving satisfactory compensation
	Recognition	Be publicly recognized (or in the workplace) for the high quality of your work
	Fast Pace	Work in circumstances where work must be done rapidly
	Excitement	Experience a high degree of (or frequent) excitement in the course of your work
	Adventure	Have work duties which require frequent risk-taking
	Financial Gain	Have a high likelihood of achieving very great monetary rewards for your work
	Physical Challenge	Do activities that use your physical capabilities
	Independence	Be able to determine the nature of my work without significant direction from others
	Moral Fulfillment	Feel that your work contributes to moral standards which you feel are important
	Community	Live where you can participate in community affairs
	Time Freedom	Be able to work according to your won schedule

We often have to make compromises when looking for a career field or a job. Chances are no job is going to satisfy all of our values. Evaluate the above values. Choose your top 5 and number them 1 (most important) through 5 in the left column.

Your Motivations

Do you know what is influencing your decisions or making choosing a major difficult? Some motivations/influences in decision making are internal motivations (inside you), while others are external (other influences). Often, people who make choices consistent with their internal motivations report higher job satisfaction. Think about the following questions.

- Are you motivated mostly by your interests, your abilities, your values, or something else?
- Are outside pressures from family, friends, or the job market influencing your decisions?
- Are you considering a major just because you think it will be easy?
- Are you thinking about choosing a major because somebody else said you “should”?

- Are you considering only majors that you think will lead to good jobs and a lot of money?
- What other things are motivating you?

Would your motivation be strong enough to allow you to succeed in a major even if other factors seemed to point away from that major?

Your Life

Consider what situations in your life may have a strong and overriding influence on your choice of major. Here are some questions to help get you started thinking about life influences. Consider these and other outside factors that may make a significant difference to you. Is your choice of major a realistic one?

- Do your interests, abilities, values, personality, and motivations conflict with each other or are they in agreement? (Sometimes students are very interested in a major but find that they don't have the abilities to handle the required courses. On the other hand, some students have strong abilities in a particular area but don't have any real interest in studying that topic. And sometimes students have both interests and abilities in a major but aren't willing to risk four or more years of time and money if it seems unlikely they'll find a job in that area.)
- Will you be able to meet entrance-to-major requirements on time?
- If not all of your credits can be applied to your degree/major, what is your expected date of graduation?
- Does Albright offer the major(s) you're interested in, or would you have to transfer to another school?
- Can you afford to pay for four or five years of college, or only two years?
- What other realities are you facing?

Your Decision

Now all that is left is for you to make a decision! The additional guide about how to research and choose your major, combined with this self-assessment (and any other outside self-assessment activities you do) should provide you with the tools and information to make an informed decision in which you feel confident.

If you have questions, get overwhelmed, are confused, or need additional assistance, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see a Career Counselor. We are excited to help you!

Resources

Experiential Learning and Career Development Center Resources

- **Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator (MBTI).** This assessment assists you in discovering what your preferred personality characteristics are and assists in identifying career types that may be compatible with your personality type.
- **Strong Interest Inventory.** This assessment assists you in identifying your interests and career fields that may be compatible with your interests. This assessment does not focus on skills because the developers believed that most skills can be learned.
- **Career Counseling.** Usually several appointments with a career counselor to assist you in your decision making process. This often includes administration and interpretation of the one or more of the above assessments, as well as one-on-one individual counseling.

Web Resources

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- *TheBalance* has a career self-assessment consisting of your values, skills, interests, and personality that you can take online at: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/self-assessment-tools-choose-a-career-526172>

VALUES

- http://www.career-test.biz/values_assessment.htm provides a life values assessment.
- *QuintCareers.com* provides many great career resources. This assessment helps you identify your values as related to the workplace, which are sometimes different from your personal values http://www.quintcareers.com/workplace_values.html

Book Resources

- *Do What You Are* by Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, 2001. This book is based on the Myers-Briggs Personality Type can help you figure out what careers you're best suited for based on your personality type.
- *Finding Your Perfect Work* by Paul and Sarah Edwards, 2003. The authors use worksheets and questionnaires to show you how to blend your goals and dreams with earning a living.
- *Wishcraft: How to Get What You Really Want* by Barbara Sher and Annie Gottlieb, 2003. Learn strategies that will help you make changes in your life. Discover your strengths and skills.