

Choosing the “Right” Major for You

Enrichment Event

Step 1: Self-Exploration

Before you begin looking at majors and careers, take a moment to reflect on your strengths, interests, and how much time and energy you are able to commit to your pursuits.



What are my strengths?





What are my interests or passions?





How many years of school am I willing (or able) to commit to?





What kind of work do I want to do?





What kind of life do I want to lead?



Step 2: Who am I?

Use your personality type to identify suitable careers/majors.

Holland Vocational Codes

- Psychologist John L. Holland created a theory of career suitability based on an individual's personality type:
 - **Realistic** Type (Doer)
 - **Investigative** Type (Thinkers)
 - **Artistic** Type (Creators)
 - **Social** Type (Helpers)
 - **Enterprising** Type (Persuaders)
 - **Conventional** Type (Organizers)
- Take the Holland Vocational Code Quiz Here:
 - <http://www.roguecc.edu/counseling/hollandcodes/test.asp>

More about Holland's Codes

- Most individuals cannot be defined by only ONE code (or personality type) but rather have one primary type along with one or two secondary (and tertiary) types.
 - For Example, you may find that you are primarily a SOCIAL type but that you are also an ENTERPRISING type.
- *Continue on for more information on each type...*

Realistic (Doer)

- Likes to work with animals, tools, or machines; generally avoids social activities like teaching, counseling, nursing, and informing others;
- Has good skills in working with tools, mechanical drawings, machines or animals,
- Values practical things you can see and touch -- like plants and animals you can grow, or things you can build or make better; and
- Sees self as practical, mechanical, and realistic

Investigative (Thinker)

- Likes to study and solve math or science problems; generally avoids leading, selling, or persuading people;
- Has good skills at understanding and solving science and math problems;
- Values science, and
- Sees self as precise, scientific, and intellectual.

Artistic (Creators)

- Likes to do creative activities like art, drama, crafts, dance, music, or creative writing; generally avoids highly ordered or repetitive activities;
- Has good artistic abilities - in creative writing, drama, crafts, music, or art
- Values the creative arts - like drama, music, art, or the works of creative writers; and
- Sees self as expressive, original, and independent.

Social (Helpers)

- Likes to do things to help people - like teaching, counseling, nursing, or giving information; generally avoids using machines, tools, or animals to achieve a goal;
- Has good skills at teaching, counseling, nursing, or giving information;
- Values helping people and solving social problems; and
- Sees self as helpful, friendly, and trustworthy.

Enterprising (Persuaders)

- Likes to lead and persuade people, and to sell things and ideas; generally avoids activities that require careful observation and scientific, analytical thinking;
- Is good at leading people and selling things or ideas;
- Values success in politics, leadership, or business; and
- Sees self as energetic, ambitious, and sociable.

Conventional (Organizers)

- Likes to work with numbers, records, or machines in a set, orderly way; generally avoids ambiguous, unstructured activities
- Is good at working with written records and numbers in a systematic, orderly way;
- Values success in business; and
- Sees self as orderly, and good at following a set plan.



Step 3: Explore Careers

Finding an occupation that “fits” you!

Searching for a good fit

- Using the US Department of Labor's career search engine, O*Net, you can quickly identify careers that fit your Holland Vocational Codes.
 - **Step 1:** go to www.onetonline.org
 - **Step 2:** Scroll over “Advanced Search” drop-down menu and select “Interests”
 - **Step 3:** Select your primary Holland Code using the links provided
 - *(Optional)* **Step 4:** Select your secondary Holland Code
 - **Step 5:** Check out individual careers on the list provided

O*Net

- **The O*Net website has some great features:**
 - The  indicates a job field with a “Bright Outlook”, meaning that it’s a growing field (i.e., LOTS OF JOBS!!)
 - The  indicates a job field that is “Green Occupation” associated with new environmentally-friendly technology, increased demand and high levels of change.

Step 4: Research Careers

Use what you found in your career exploration to guide a more focused occupational quest.

Going from “search” to “research”

- **Searching** on O*Net is a great way to expose yourself to new occupations.
- After finding an occupation you think you'd enjoy it's important to **Research** that occupation to understand how much education is needed, how much the average salary may be, and where you can go to get the education/training needed.
- This is where the US Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook comes in.

Occupational Outlook Handbook

- **Step 1:** go to www.bls.gov/ooh
- **Step 2:** search for your chosen career in the “Search Handbook” box on the right-hand side.
- **Step 3:** Select the correct occupation
 - *For example: If you search for “Nurse” you will find four entries: Registered Nurses, Nursing Aides, Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses, and Medical and Health Services Managers.*
- **Step 4:** Check out all the information provided on your chosen career.

Step 5: Majors & Schools

Find out what major you need for your chosen career and which colleges and universities that offer your major.

What about my major?

- Some college majors relate directly to occupations
 - (Ex: Accountants major in Accounting)
- Other occupations may not have clear “majors” and multiple majors may lead to a particular career
 - (Ex: Human Resources Specialists may major in Business, Human Resources, Communication, or a related field)
- The Occupational Outlook Handbook will provide you with information on what major is appropriate.

Choosing a College or University

- Victoria College offers many Certificates and **Associate of Applied Science** degree programs that lead directly into an occupation (i.e., Nursing, Firefighting, Administrative Assistant, Computer Technician...)
- VC also offers an **Associate of Arts or Science** degree plan that allows students to complete the first 2 years of their Bachelor's degree (at a reduced cost).
 - If you are interested in completing a Bachelor's degree program, you'll need to find out which colleges offer the degree you want.

Searching for your Degree

- Using the US Department of Education's **College Navigator**, you can quickly find colleges that offer the degree you want.
 - Access it here: <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>
- **Step 1:** Select the State(s) you want to attend college
- **Step 2:** Select your Program/Major
- **Step 3:** Select the Level of Award (i.e., Bachelor's)
- **Step 4:** Select Institution Type (i.e., Public 4-year)
- **Step 5:** Click "Show Results"

Transfer Advising

- Once you have determined which schools offer the degree plan you want, it's important to spend time checking out the College or University website for information on degree requirements.
- **Make an appointment with your Academic Advisor** for help understanding degree requirements and admission policies other colleges and universities.
 - It's important that you understand which classes transfer and which do not.

Review

1. Self-Exploration

Ask yourself some pointed questions about your interests, motivation and responsibilities outside of college.

2. Who am I?

Determine your Holland Vocational Codes (personality type)

3. Career Exploration

Use O*Net to find occupations that “fit” your personality and interests

4. Research Careers

Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook to do more in-depth research on careers

5. Explore Majors and Schools

Use College Navigator and your Advisor to determine which colleges and universities offer your desired degree and figure out which classes you need to take at Victoria College.