# A black and red logo Description automatically generatedDECISION MAKING WORKSHEET

There are many ways to make a decision. This worksheet is designed to help you work through the decision making process using two methods. You can use this worksheet on your own, but it can also be helpful to go through it with a someone like a friend or a Career Coach.

## Decision Making Tips:

1. Try to **avoid rushed decisions**. If you are under pressure from others to make a quick decision, request time to make the decision more carefully and ask about alternatives that will allow you more time (i.e. asking for a deferment of your studies).
2. **Gather the information** you need to make the best decision. For example, if you are thinking about switching programs, talk with your Academic Advisor, review the outcomes of your decision with a Career Coach, speak with the department you want to switch into to see if that option is feasible.
3. **Brainstorm alternatives**. Even if the alternatives are not the best, establishing what is possible allows you to view all options and understand the factors that make certain choices unfeasible, therefore giving more clarity on which are better and why.
4. **Use tools** to weigh your alternatives and talk to others (e.g. friends, family, Career Coach) to help **clarify what is important** to you and the impact of each possible decision.
5. Pay attention to and **value your emotional (gut) reaction** to each choice.
6. Remember that **there is no wrong decision** and there is no one-way to reach your goals. Every decision provides new options and sets some limitations. If find that you are dissatisfied with your initial decision, it is time to look at your next steps based on where you are.

“Hard choices are hard because there is no best option.” For more information watch [Ruth Chang’s Ted Talk, *How to make hard choices*:](file:///C:/Users/aag7/Downloads/Ruth%20Chang’s%20Ted%20Talk,%20How%20to%20make%20hard%20choices:) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GQZuzIdeQQ.

## Activity 1: Establish the Decision and Parameters

Before you make a decision, you must identify it and be able to understand what is fundamentally important to you before you can weigh the alternatives. Use these questions to brainstorm and develop a clearer picture of the decision, your goals, and possible alternatives.

| 1. What is the decision I need to make? |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Why do I have to make the decision? |  |  |
| 1. How soon do I need to make this decision? |  |  |
| 1. What am I most worried about regarding this decision? |  |  |
| 1. Do I have all the information necessary to make this decision? Where can I find the information that I need? |  |  |
| 1. What is my goal associated with this decision? |  |  |
| 1. What are the factors that are part of this decision? |  |  |
| 1. What are my alternatives? |  |  |
| 1. What are some of the benefits of the alternatives? What are some of the drawbacks of each alternative? |  |  |

## Activity 2: Pros & Cons Lists

Creating a list of pros & cons allows you to truly scrutinize both the benefits and drawbacks of a possible decision. Although creating a pros & cons list encourages you to approach your decision objectively, remember that just because one alternative more pros or cons than another list doesn’t mean it is the best decision for you. Using the t-charts below list the pros and cons of your alternative decision.

### Option 1:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pros | Cons |
|  |  |

### Option 2:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pros | Cons |
|  |  |

### Example:

### Option 1: Change Programs

| Pros | Cons |
| --- | --- |
| * More enjoyable * Get better grades * Happier with career opportunities * Grad school options | * Extra year of school * Cost! * Fewer career options * Friends graduating earlier than me |

## Activity 3: Decision Making Matrix

Using a matrix allows you to give a numerical value to the intangible values of things such as career opportunities or job location and to compare them. After completing this exercise, you should be able to see patterns that may confirm your gut-feeling about a decision.

Using the matrix below, decide what your options (or solutions) are to the decision you are making. Next determine the important factors that influence this decision. Rate each option on a scale of 0 (not meeting the requirement) to 5 (fully meeting the requirement). You can see an example of this below.

|  | Option 1: | Option 2: | Option 3: | Option 4: |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Requirement 1: |  |  |  |  |
| Requirement 2: |  |  |  |  |
| Requirement 3: |  |  |  |  |
| Requirement 4: |  |  |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |  |  |
| Total: |  |  |  |  |

If you are interested in a more in-depth version of a decision making matrix, where you can weight the important factors of your decision, see Queen’s Law’s Career Development for an example of creating a decision-making matrix when deciding on a program: [Career Development Office - Choosing a Law School | Queen's Law (queensu.ca)](https://law.queensu.ca/programs/jd/career-development/career-development-office-students/career-development-office-choosing-a-law-school).

### Example:

In this example, a student is unhappy in their current program but is trying to decide whether it is easier just to stick with their current program, change program, or drop-out entirely. It is clear to this student that dropping out does not meet their goals or values. However, Option 1 and Option 2 are close. In this case, the student can go back to each Requirement and decide which is more important or feasible at this point in their life.

|  | Option 1:  Stick with program | Option 2:  Change program | Option 3:  Drop-out |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Requirement 1:  Overall Enjoyment | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| Requirement 2:  Career Opportunities | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Requirement 3:  Cost—time/money | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Requirement 4:  Sense of achievement | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Total: | 14 | 15 | 12 |