

DECIDE ON COURSES

DECISION MAKING TOOLS

There are many approaches to this task, and an online search will deliver you a range of tools. Two we think are effective are T charts and the more complex weighted decision making matrix.

T charts

T charts are a simple way to compare the pros and cons of a course. If you have your course criteria worked out, you can use these as a way to look at the advantages and disadvantages of each course you are considering. See the below examples to get you started.

Course A	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I meet the prerequisites and other requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> It pretty much appeals to my interests and strengths. <input type="checkbox"/> It offers me quite a lot of opportunities, like an international exchange year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x It doesn't offer a major in Psychology which is one of the subjects I'm interested in.

Course B	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I meet the prerequisites and other requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> It appeals to my interests, strengths, and offers a major in Psychology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x It doesn't offer me sporting opportunities. x It's a long way away, but I could get there if I can get a lift to the station, or if I can live out of home. I'm not confident I'll get a place.

Course C	
Pros	Cons
<input type="checkbox"/> Everything is perfect about this course, except.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I don't meet the prerequisites and other requirements.

A weighted decision-making matrix

A more sophisticated decision-making tool is a weighted decision-making matrix. You allocate a raw score for how well each course fits each criterion, but you also allocate each a weighting to indicate how important that criterion is to you: 3 = essential, 2 = preferred. 1 = moderate.

Raw scores are 0-10. To get the weighted score, multiply the raw score by the weighting.

Criteria	Weighting	Course A		Course B		Course C	
		raw	weighted	raw	weighted	raw	weighted
Criterion 1 I meet the prerequisites	3	10	30	10	30	0	0
Criterion 2 Appeals to my interest and strengths	3	7	21	9	27	10	30
Criterion 3 Offers me lots of opportunities	2	8	16	6	12	10	20
Criterion 4 Location is convenient	2	8	16	2	4	8	16
Criterion 5 I'm confident I'll get a place	1	9	9	5	5	7	7
Raw score/weighted score		42	92	32	78	35	73

While it's a good idea to include courses you are confident about getting a place in, don't omit a course you are highly enthusiastic about just because you are concerned about getting in. That's why the weighting on this criterion has been rated 1.

If you don't meet the prerequisites, it's not worth applying for a place in the course. Consider planning a pathway, instead.

Your turn

Make a list of your own course criteria

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Make your own T charts

If you're just starting your research, you can find course names, descriptions and their requirements on VTAC's CourseSearch.

Course name:

Pros	Cons

Course name:

Pros	Cons

Course name:

Pros	Cons

Make your own weighted decision-making matrix

- Insert each criterion under the 'Criteria' column Allocate each criterion a weighting to indicate how important that criterion is to you: 3 = essential, 2 = preferred, 1 = moderate.
- Allocate the courses a raw score from 0-10 for each criterion. To get the weighted score, multiply the raw score by the weighting.

Criteria	Weighting	Course name		Course name		Course name	
		raw	weighted	raw	weighted	raw	weighted
Raw score/weighted score							