

Are you a maximiser or satisficer?

People tend towards being a maximiser or a satisficer when it comes to decision-making. Read the descriptions below and see which applies to you. Each approach has their strengths and pitfalls it is important to have insight into your natural tendency to ensure you avoid the pitfalls.

Maximisers

People with a tendency to maximise their decision-making will seek out the best outcome. They will research until they have exhausted all possibilities and have found the best option from all those available.

The challenge for people taking this approach is the volume of information that is needed in order to fully exhaust all possibilities. It is rare that you can know all the information and all possible outcomes to any decision.

In this case, the training programme for Foundation trainees does not allow for you to experience all specialties. So individuals who tend towards a maximising approach are unlikely to feel that they have enough information and as such may find it hard to make a final decision. The resulting feeling of not having enough information can be paralysing and result in uncertainty and indecision.

Satisficers

People with a tendency to satisfy in their decision-making have a minimum acceptable level and they will sort through the available options until the threshold is reached. Those who take a satisficing approach may be able to make decisions more quickly and efficiently than maximisers.

However, they may miss out on a better option depending on where they have set the acceptable threshold for the decision. Satisficers must ensure that the threshold they have set is genuinely at a level that will allow them to be happy in the future or they risk disappointment with their decision.

In career decisions, a satisficer may more quickly decide upon a specialty but if they close down their research too quickly, they risk finding something more appealing later in life.