

How to Find Your Future Career

Following are the four phases of Career Development and the steps involved in each one. Under each phase you will find a list of things to do to complete that phase, and the Career Center resources available to carry them out.

PHASE 1 SELF-ASSESSMENT

When deciding on a major and a career path, it helps to understand yourself. Start by exploring the following:

Interests - Make note of activities, hobbies and academic subjects you enjoy.

Skills - Identify natural talents, acquired skills and academic activities in which you excel.

Values - Clarify work-related factors and life-style preferences important for your career satisfaction.

Personality - Discover your unique personal characteristics, work preferences, and decision-making style.

How to Implement Phase 1:

Consult a career counselor for a comprehensive assessment of your interests, skills, values and personality style.

Use computerized career guidance programs in the Career Center.

Take classes related to your area of interests.

Identify and develop skills through career-related employment in student organizations

PHASE 2 OCCUPATIONAL EXPLORATION

This phase of career development requires you to gather specific information on occupations that interest you, including education and training needed.

Step 1 - Research Occupations of Interest

Obtain the following information:

1. Nature of work involved
2. Working conditions
3. Education & training needed
4. Job outlook and expected earnings
5. Reported advantages and disadvantages
6. Related occupations

Step 2 - Inquire about Relevant Education

Learn about specific majors, including the type of courses needed and what skills will be developed.

Step 3 - Get Hands-on Experience

Participate in Experiential Learning (Co-op or an internship), work as a volunteer, and join academic student organizations.

How to Implement Phase 2:

Consult a career counselor, use the Career Center resources, and use the internet to research occupations.

Obtain an informational interview with professionals in the career you're considering.

Talk with faculty and academic advisors about college majors for careers that interest you.

Review requirements for selected majors in the college catalogue.

Explore graduate & professional school options.

Obtain career-related experience via an internship to try out your tentative career choice.

PHASE 3 CAREER DECISION-MAKING AND CHOICE OF MAJOR.

You should now be ready to use information from Phases 1 and 2 to determine career options and goals, and decide on a major.

Step 1 - Start by making a detailed plan that includes steps 2-4. Re-examine it periodically.

Step 2 - Identify and create a list of several career fields and jobs within that field that interest you, based on the results of your self-assessment and occupational exploration (E.g. Field: Psychology. Related Jobs: recreation director, sales, counselor, case worker, admissions rep, program coordinator, etc.)

Step 3 - Gather detailed information about each job you've listed

Step 4 - Narrow the field by identifying two to five of the most appealing jobs on your list, and rank them based on information about yourself obtained from the Self-assessment and Occupational Exploration phases.

How to Implement Phase 3:

Create a detailed decision-making plan.

Consult with a career counselor about areas of indecision.

Talk with a career counselor about getting career-related experience.

Continue with informational interviews if necessary.

Get feedback from faculty members, academic advisors, employers, family and friends about your plans.

PHASE 4 JOB SEARCH IMPLEMENTATION.

This phase involves developing and carrying out a customized job search and campaign to obtain a professional position in your chosen career field.

Step 1 - Prepare for Your Job Search

Determine a specific "career objective".

Create an effective resume.

Research preferred employers.

Plan strategies for contacting employers.

Practice interview skills.

Step 3 - Participate in Interviews

Send a thank you letter after the interview

Continue to follow-up afterwards.

Step 4 - Accept an Offer

Evaluate the offer

Negotiate salary & benefits

Send letter of acceptance or non-acceptance

Step 2 - Contact Targeted List of Employers

Apply for interviews.

How to Implement Phase 4:

Put your job search plan on paper.

Have your resume critiqued by career counselor.

Participate in a videotaped practice interview.

Network and cultivate contacts with hiring employers.

Research employer profiles via their websites.

Attend campus career fairs.