

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Acquisition of self-knowledge is the first and perhaps most important step in your career decision-making process. Identifying, clarifying and prioritizing your unique work values, skills, interests and personal style will enable you to formulate clear and realistic objectives in your job search. This process results in:

- Increased confidence and optimism in your job search
- Targeting a job market matching your career goals
- Effective communication of a sense of purpose to employers
- Development of focused and well-designed resumes and cover letters

VALUES

Research shows that most career decisions are driven by values. What we do and how we spend our time reflects our values.

The process of values clarification can help you evaluate job settings and select one that is right for you. Before you can clarify your values, however, you must first be clear on what constitutes a value. A value involves **PRIZING, CHOOSING, and ACTING**. The following criteria can help you assess your values:

- **Prized and cherished.** The key here is the enthusiasm associated with a value.
- **Publicly affirmed.** A willingness to acknowledge values important to you. At the very least, this means that if challenged by another person, you would not deny one of your prized values.
- **Chosen freely.** Freely chosen values are ultimately chosen yourself rather than following the influence of others. They do **NOT** result from pressure or the need to please others.
- **Chosen from alternatives.** Without alternatives, there is no choice and no true value.
- **Chosen after consideration of consequences.** To create a true value, you must examine each alternative for its positive and negative consequences. There are **ALWAYS** “trade-offs” to be considered. (e.g. high income versus low work stress, travel and mobility versus time with family and friends, etc.)
- **Acted upon.** You affirm your values by acting upon them. Unless you act upon something, it is not a value but rather just a good idea. For example, if you value your role as citizen, you demonstrate it by voting, supporting candidates, or lobbying.

Repeatedly and consistently acting upon your values will form a definite pattern. Examining your life for such patterns of *repeated and consistent action* will help you identify your values.

It is vital that you take time to perform this kind of personal values self-assessment and take the time to prioritize those values – of both a professional and personal nature - which are important to you. Such a process will inform and shape the development of your long-term career goals.

INTERESTS

Finding a career in which you can fulfill your interests increases your chances of enjoying, being motivated and successful in that career. While your interests are key to developing a fulfilling, richer lifestyle, it is unreasonable to expect that all of your interests will be fulfilled solely in a career. Developing interests outside the workplace will enrich your relationships to family and community life. It is therefore important to:

Identify your interests

- Evaluate which interests are most important to you
- Determine how your interests may relate to a career
- Determine how other interests can be fulfilled outside your career

The first step in your career and life planning is to assess your interests and determine how they relate to your career and life plans.

SKILLS

A skill is an ability you have spent time, energy, and money developing into an area of expertise. Skills are the foundation on which your job search is built. The following are the three basic types.

Job-content skills

These skills refer to specialized knowledge and abilities that are generally acquired through formal education or training. Your job-content skills should relate to those cited in job descriptions. If you are to remain marketable, they will need to be updated constantly.

Self-management skills.

These skills relate to your personality - your ability to do well in certain career environments. e.g. structured or unstructured, traditional or unconventional, stressful or relaxed, under supervision or self-directed. They also have to do with your preference for different types of work: working with people or being alone, dealing with the big picture or details, initiating programs or implementing existing projects.

Transferable skills.

These are natural abilities that you possess which are applicable in many situations. For example, perhaps you are persuasive, good at explaining ideas, or able to organize things. These skills:

- Are the most important of the three skills, since you take them from one job to the next.
- Come so naturally that you often take them for granted, but make you special and attractive to employers
- Are the constant factors you can rely on to make you marketable, no matter what changes occur in your career
- Are the key to entering, redirecting, or changing careers

For example, if you have an ability for organizing, you can make use of that skill in a host of projects and settings, depending on what INTERESTS you: e.g.: organizing paperwork in an office; organizing volunteers into effective work groups; organizing resources in a law library; organizing ideas; organizing data for research projects.

PERSONAL STYLE

One way of identifying how your personality, combined with your skills and abilities, matches career choices in which you will find job satisfaction and perform effectively, is to take the International Career Direction Assessment (ICDA). It will help you to narrow down options, explore occupations relating to the field of International Affairs, and provide a sound basis on which to formulate an effective job-search strategy tailored to the requirements of those occupations. This is a computerized career assessment and you can find out how to take it on the Career Services home page.

Feel free to discuss additional exercises and assessments on each aspect of SELF ASSESSMENT with a Career Counselor.

Functional/Transferable Skills List

REALISTIC

- assembling
- building
- operating tools or machinery
- repairing equipment
- physical activities
- outdoor activities
- sports
- being able to read blueprints
- handling with precision

ARTISTIC

- sizing up a person or situation accurately
- having insight
- acting on “gut reactions” or instinct
- writing up ideas
- imagining
- inventing
- designing
- composing or playing music
- creating with different materials
- expressing feelings and thoughts

ENTERPRISING

- managing money, developing a budget
- beginning new projects
- seeing a problem & acting to solve it
- organizing people
- leading, taking charge
- making decisions
- taking risks
- selling, persuading, influencing
- negotiating

INVESTIGATIVE

- calculating, computing
- researching
- analyzing
- organizing information
- diagnosing
- observing
- showing foresight
- reviewing, evaluating
- working self-directedly

SOCIAL

- communicating verbally
- teaching, helping
- editing
- showing sensitivity to other’s feelings
- listening, understanding, supporting
- motivating
- working on a team
- counseling
- interviewing
- consulting

CONVENTIONAL

- taking inventory, classifying
- keeping records
- number memory
- organizing things, coordinating
- comparing
- doing cost analysis
- using what others develop
- following through on plans
- attending to detail

Self-Management Skills

- Ability to be decisive/ make a decision
- Alertness
- Assertiveness
- Astuteness
- Attention to detail, awareness, thoroughness, conscientiousness
- Authenticity
- Calmness
- Commitment to grow
- Concentration
- Cooperation
- Courage, risk-taking, adventuresome
- Curiosity
- Diplomacy
- Easy-going
- Emotional stability
- Empathy
- Enthusiasm
- Expressiveness
- Firmness
- Flexibility
- Generosity
- Good Judgement
- High Energy Level
- Honesty, Integrity
- Initiative, drive
- Loyalty
- Open-mindedness
- Optimism
- Orderliness
- Patience, persistence
- Performing well under stress
- Poise, self-confidence
- Politeness
- Punctuality
- Reliability, dependability
- Resourcefulness
- Self-control
- Self-reliance
- Self-respect
- Sense of humor
- Sincerity
- Spontaneity
- Tactfulness
- Team player
- Tidiness
- Tolerance
- Versatility

VALUES WORKSHEET

Read over the following list of values. Check the seven that are most important to you.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having high income | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping society | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having job security | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining new knowledge | 1. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Serving others | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having status | 2. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having time freedom | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Controlling my work | 3.c |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Influencing others | 4. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having authority over others | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choosing my work locations | 5. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating with colleagues | 6. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having interests outside of work | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being part of a team | 7. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working primarily alone | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having public contact | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using new skills | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging myself intellectually | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being content with my work | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing my career | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pursuing excellence | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being well known | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being loyal at work | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having major accomplishments | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making my own decisions | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having low work stress | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having power | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining physical fitness | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being well liked | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being competitive | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time with family and friends | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being independent | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being active in the community | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being creative | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being self motivated | |

Review your seven important values and prioritize

Questions to Consider

To what extent are my values a good 'fit' with my life right now?

What kinds of personal value conflicts have I experienced or can I foresee in my future?

What do your values tell you about your career choice?

What do your values tell you about your preferred work environment?

What do your values tell you about your preferred type of organization?

What do your values tell you about your practical concerns (money, travel, etc.)?