



I need a job! Where do I start...?

Checklist for exploring and deciding on careers

Explore
yourself

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Explore
occupations

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Make better
career decisions

Explore yourself: Reflect on and assess your interests, personality, skills, values and accomplishments

Career Services offers a number of assessment tools to help you articulate who you are:

- Strong Interest Inventory (online)
- TypeFocus Careers or Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (personality assessments) (online)
- Career Values Card Sort (e.g. helping society, security, status, working alone or in groups, spending time with family, being outdoors, etc.)
- SkillScan Card Sort
- Reflection activities

Other steps include:

- Create a list of accomplishments/strengths as well as weaknesses
- Brainstorm skills you possess (use Liberal Arts Transferable Skills checklist as a tool) and write examples of how you've used these skills
- Identify classes you've really enjoyed
- Identify what you like to do when you're not in school, what extracurricular activities you have been involved in

Answer logistical questions:

- Will I need an income right away after graduation? (i.e. will I be homeless and foodless if I don't have a paying job?)
- Will I have student load debt to repay?
- Will I need to live with my family? (i.e. will I need to work where my family lives?)
- Do I have other commitments I need to consider? (e.g. significant other's career/educational plans)
- Are there particular geographical areas I want to be in/be away from?

Explore occupations

Read

- Career Services' Resource Center (more than 500 print publications with information about different occupations)
- US Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco/) – For thousands of job titles, learn what preparation is needed, whether the field is growing, shrinking or stable, earnings potential, tasks and responsibilities, etc.
- Career Services' Major Possibilities guides – For each SU major, get alumni contacts, see what jobs recent grads have gone on to, get weblinks, lists of professional organizations, etc.
- Google – Try researching fields that interest you in your favorite search engine; just type in keyword such as "healthcare jobs"

Talk to real people

- Ask your family members, friends' family members, older friends already working and anyone you meet what they do and how they got there
- Use contacts from Career Services (e.g. SU alumni and parents, other employers)
- Conduct "informational interviews" (i.e. "interview" your contact about their occupation) – see Career Services' Informational Interviewing handout
- Attend Career Services events (e.g. Careers in..., Career Connections BBQ, Experience Externships)
- Attend job fairs just to learn more about different companies

Test the waters

- Job shadow – Arrange to follow around someone whose profession interests you. School breaks are good times to do so. Sophomores can take part in Winter Break job shadowing through SU Pirate Apprentice Days.
- Volunteer – It's easier to convince someone to let you get experience at no cost to them than to demand pay.
- Intern – Some organizations offer structured internship programs. For others, you can contact them and pitch the idea. Some companies hire for full-time jobs from their intern pools.
- Work – You may just have to take the plunge and try out a career field, any one of your interest areas, to see if you really like it. If not, you can always change.

