



CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Checklist for exploring and deciding on careers

EXPLORE YOURSELF + EXPLORE CAREER OPTIONS = MAKE BETTER CAREER DECISIONS

Explore yourself:

The Center for Career & Professional Development (CCPD) offers self-assessment tools to help you reflect on, assess, and articulate your interests, personality, skills, and values to make meaning of your academic experience and shape your professional identity:

- TypeFocus Careers (online personality, values and interests assessments)
- SkillScan Card Sort

OTHER STEPS

- Create a list of accomplishments and strengths and a list of weaknesses and areas of possible improvement
- Brainstorm 21st century career-readiness skills you possess (use the Liberal Arts Transferable Skills checklist as a tool) and write out 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 (e.g., extracurricular activities you have been involved in)

ANSWER LOGISTICAL QUESTIONS

- Will I need an income right away after graduation? 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

- US Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/ooh/) - For thousands of jobs, learn what preparation is needed; whether the field is growing, shrinking, or stable; earnings potential; tasks and responsibilities; etc.
- CCPD's Major Possibilities guides - For each SU major, get alumni contacts, see what jobs recent grads have gone on to, find sample job titles and lists of professional organizations, and get useful weblinks.
- Google - Try researching fields that interest you; just type in keywords such as "healthcare jobs"

TALK TO REAL PEOPLE

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

TEST THE WATERS

- Job shadow - Arrange to shadow someone whose profession interests you. School breaks are good times to do so.
- 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 look to their intern pools when hiring for full-time positions.
- Work - You may just have to take the plunge and try out a career field in one of your interest areas to see if you really like it. If not, you can always change.