

College, Career & Life Planning



Career & Education Planning Instructions

1. Goal: Get motivated!

- a. Listen to: “Typical Career Planning Approach”, “My Life Could Be So Different”, and “Irrational Behavior”.
- b. Review the **changing work environment**. Listen to: “Global Workplace” and “Disappearing Social Safety Net”.
- c. Review “**Suggestions Before You Start**” and listen to: “Too Young to Decide on a Career” and “Already Picked a Career”.
- d. Review the “**Steps for Career Success**” (C001).
- e. Make a commitment to yourself to invest the time to make informed education and career choices. Your future depends on it!

2. Goal: Self Analysis. Clarify your interests, skills and needs. Identify careers that potentially “fit” you.

- a. Print “Your Individual Profile Summary” (C050) & “Careers for Consideration Worksheet” (C100)
- b. Listen to “Miserable \$200,000/yr. Job.
- c. Go to “Interests, Skills and Needs”
 - i. Select and use several of the tools (C052, W221, W223, W225).
 - ii. Select and use several of the self-assessments (W240, W242, W244, W250, W253). Insert your results into “Your Individual Profile Summary” (C050).
- d. Go to “Choices Planner” (W280)
 - i. Click on “Jump in (no ID required)” under Adults & Post Secondary (left column)
 - ii. Click on the Choices Planner orange arrow.
 - iii. Under the “Work” box, click on the Interest Profiler, Work Values Sorter and Basic Skills Survey to take these assessments.
 - iv. Click on the blue “Work” tab and then click on “Career Finder” (center column).
 - v. Scan the screening criteria in the left column and (one-at-a-time) choose the categories that are most important to you and insert your specific screening criteria. Input the results from your assessments from step 2) c. ii. Once you finish inputting your criteria, click “See Your Matching Careers” at the bottom of the page.
 - vi. Check your criteria listed at the top (to confirm your input). Scan the list of occupations that met your criteria. Click on any of the occupations for a brief description. Note that the more criteria you specify, the fewer the number of occupations that will meet all of your criteria. Use some judgment when reviewing the list and eliminate from further consideration any careers that are clearly not a good fit for you.

3. **Goal: Develop a “relatively long” list of careers to consider.** Use your “Careers for Consideration Worksheet” (C100)
 - a. Insert careers suggested by the self-analysis tools in step 2.
 - b. Scan the following lists/web sites and add careers that you wish to evaluate further:
 - i. Fastest Growing, Most Openings, Highest Paying (C108)
 - ii. Occupational Outlook Handbook Careers (C110)
 - iii. Jobs with Good Pay and Many Openings (C120)
 - c. If you know that you have a strong interest in a particular career area or “career cluster” (e.g. Healthcare, Business, Legal/Social Services), review the specific careers listed in that OOH Career Cluster Booklet (C200-C216) for additional career possibilities.
 - d. Add other occupations that you wish to investigate further. Remember: A long list of career prospects is OK at this point in the process.
 - e. Listen to “Follow Your Dreams (But Have A Backup Plan)”.

4. **Goal: Obtain clear, concise, relevant information about each career to be evaluated.** Obtain specific information (e.g. working conditions, pay, education requirements, job growth rate, number of openings, skills required, tasks) from the following sources:
 - a. Listen to “Career Information for an Informed Choice”.
 - b. Occupational Outlook Handbook Career Links (C110)
 - i. Scan the list of careers. Careers are organized by career areas/clusters.
 - ii. Click on occupations that interest you. Next, in the upper right-hand corner of the page, click on printer-friendly version and print each document.
 - c. CareerOneStop (W332) in the “Evaluating Career Possibilities” section
 - i. Click on “Occupational Profile”. Under the menu search section, click on the career area of interest and then click on a specific occupation in that career area.
 - ii. Scroll down to find your state. Click on your state. Click on the “continue” button.
 - iii. Next, in the upper right-hand corner of the page, click on “printer-friendly version” and print document.

5. **Goal: Evaluate pluses and minus of careers on your “long list”, eliminate less attractive options and develop your “finalists” career list.** Review the documents printed in Step 4 above. Highlight any information that is important (positive or negative factor) **to you** and place a plus or minus sign next to each highlighted item. See an example of a “marked-up” document for imaginary student “Chris Jones” for Nursing:
 - a. OOH Mark-up Nursing Example (C307)
 - b. CareerOneStop Mark-up Nursing Example (C305)

6. **Goal: Summarize your evaluation of each career on your “finalists” career list.**
 - a. Complete the “Career Evaluation Worksheet” (C303) for careers of interest (three careers per page). For an illustration, see the “Career Evaluation Worksheet – Nursing Example” (C309)

7. Goal: Learn more about your top career prospects from people in those careers. Network!

- a. See “Questions You Can Ask People About Their Careers” (C801)
- b. Listen to “Networking – Talk to Adults About Their Careers”.
- c. Network: Seek out opportunities to talk to people in careers that interest you (e.g., your parents, aunts/uncles, your friends’ parents, your parents’ friends). Remember: Most adults will be flattered that you are interested in their career and will be delighted to speak with you.
- d. Ask your school to hold a “Career Day” with outside career speakers.
- e. Ask your guidance counselor about opportunities for job shadowing, internships & volunteering.
- f. Based on your research in steps 2 – 6 of these instructions and the insight you gain from networking, identify the career area (e.g. healthcare, business, engineering) that you find the most attractive and that is the best fit for you.

8. Goal: Develop an education plan.

- a. For education/training requirements for the career area that you select, refer to the documents printed in steps 4b and 4c above.
 - i. Occupational Outlook Handbook Career Links (C110): Refer to the “Training, Other Qualifications and Advancement”.
 - ii. CareerOneStop (W332): Refer to the “Education and Training” section.
- b. If the career area that you choose requires **career/technical training**:
 - i. Go to “Choosing a Technical School” (W085) for guidance in finding the right school for your interests and needs.
 - ii. Use “Career Training Search” (W075) to locate specific schools/programs that will best meet your education needs.
 - iii. Read “Apprenticeships” (E102) to learn more about apprenticeships.
 - iv. Use “Apprenticeship Search” (W073), “Apprentice Training Offices by State” (W091) and “Finding an Apprenticeship Program” (W095) to identify/locate specific apprenticeship opportunities for your chosen career.
 - v. Read “Financial Aid Information” (E232) and “NASFAA Student Financial Aid Info (W146) to identify potential sources of financial assistance to support your education plan.
 - vi. Use “Federal Financial Aid FAFSA” (W145) to determine your eligibility for financial assistance and to determine whether the schools that you are considering offer programs that qualify.
 - vii. Use “Education Plan Worksheet” (E203) - “Career Track” version to prepare a written summary of your analysis and your personal education plan.
- c. If the career area that you choose requires a **bachelors degree and/or masters degree** from a college/university:
 - i. Consider the majors that are appropriate for your career plan. These majors were identified in step 8a (i & ii). Review “Major Profiles: My Major” (W100) to help you decide which of these “career-appropriate” majors are best for you.
 - ii. Read “Selecting the Right College for You” (E201) to clarify your personal criteria for evaluating colleges/universities.
 - iii. Using the “College Search Tools” (W115), identify colleges that provide a strong program for the major that you have selected and that meet your other criteria (e.g., size, location).

- iv. You may wish to consider some of the “College Ranking” (W120) information, but remember that these rankings are not a substitute for research, direct evaluation nor your judgment.
- v. Use “Find a College” (W104) for guidance/information on campus visits, college web sites/virtual tours, campus life, academics, etc.
- vi. For colleges of interest, review their web site in detail, arrange to speak with alumni/current students and visit the campus/classrooms (when classes are in session).
- vii. Use “Graduation Rates by College – Search Tool” (W105) to determine the percentage of students who actually graduate with a degree from specific colleges.
- viii. Read “Financial Aid Information” (E232) and “NASFAA Student Financial Aid Info (W146) to identify potential sources of financial assistance to support your education plan.
- ix. Use “Federal Financial Aid FAFSA” (W145) to determine your eligibility for financial assistance and to determine whether the schools that you are considering offer programs that qualify.
- x. Use “Scholarship Search” (W155) to get specific information about thousands of scholarships that are available.
- xi. Use “Education Plan Worksheet” (E203) – “College Bound” version to provide a written summary of your analysis and your personal education plan.

9. Goal: Choose the “right” industry and company.

- a. Read “Choosing the Right Industry & Company” (C602)
- b. Listen to “Pick an Attractive Industry” and “Pick an Attractive Company”.
- c. Obtain relevant information about specific industries by reviewing the documents (C604 – C620) and links (W440 – W463) under the “Company & Industry Evaluation” section.
- d. Review any relevant documents (C701 – C710) under the “OOH Industry Summaries Section” for additional insight into specific industries.
- e. Review “Factors Affecting Employment by Industry” (C618)
- f. Use “Your Target Industries Worksheet” (C603) to summarize your analysis and identify your target industries for the “right” first job of your career.
- g. Use the tools in Company Research (W463) to obtain the information needed for company evaluation. SEC documents (e.g., annual reports, 10-Ks) provide detailed information on U. S. public companies.
- h. Use “Your Target Companies Worksheet” (W603) to summarize your analysis and identify your target companies for the “right” first job of your career.

10. Goal: Find the “Right” first job of your career. Listen to “Early Choices => Future Opportunities”.

- a. **Clarify your “first job” and “early career” priorities.** You need enough income to support yourself. However, we recommend placing much more weight on company attractiveness, industry attractiveness and “job opportunity/potential” (e.g., breadth/relevance of experience to career plan, scope of responsibility, quality of managers/mentors) than on initial salary early in your career.

- b. **Update your research/homework** on each of the industries/companies identified in step 9. e. and 9. g. If your target companies are public, review their annual reports and 10Ks (more comprehensive annual report). Both documents have detailed information about a company's products/services, strategy, competition, locations, senior managers, key issues, financial information, etc.
- c. **Network:** Networking provides a much better opportunity for "getting your foot in the door" than an unsolicited resume/cover letter or responding to a "job opening" advertisement. Review the checklist/tutorial resources for Networking. Do you know any employees/managers in your target companies? Do you have friends or relatives that know someone at these companies? Does your college have alumni that work at these targeted companies? Contact these individuals and obtain information about the company and about other potential contacts inside the company.
- d. Use "Locate Potential Employers by Industry/Location" (W521) if you are geographically constrained.
- e. Use the career management tools for guidance on writing resumes/ cover letters, preparing for job interviews and salary negotiation, and for interview follow-up.
- f. Check "Private Sector Job Banks" (W565) and/or your state job bank (W564) to identify some of the job opportunities at your target companies. Remember: Many of the best job opportunities are never posted and, when you respond to a posting, you are competing with hundreds of other candidates. Most people focus only on job postings, bombard the market with resumes and, naively, wait for phone to ring.
- g. Be pro-active, do your homework on the company/industry and network...network ...network.

REMEMBER:

Career planning and career management require time and effort, but
you will never get a better return on an investment.
You are investing in your FUTURE!

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