

# Choosing the Right Career Path

## Objective

To identify interests, skills, achievements, and values to assist you in choosing a job or career path.

## What to Know

Self-assessment is the first step in choosing an occupation or college major, planning your career, or beginning a job search.

Identifying your skills, values, interests, and preferences can help you determine what types of positions are of interest and would be a good fit. This self-assessment will not tell you what career or job is perfect for you, but it *will* help you gain insight about yourself so you can articulate what is important to you, focus your job search, and evaluate your options.

## What to Do

When completing this worksheet, answer the questions in a relaxing environment free from distractions. Please do not rush through the questions – take your time and return to questions you find challenging. The questions are divided into sections: Interests and Experiences, Skills, Achievements, and Values.

### I. Interests and Experiences

Think about all the activities you have participated in during the last five years, including school, work, volunteer, and leisure. Write down the activities, roles, and jobs that come to mind.

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What did you like about each activity?

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What did you dislike?

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Is there a common theme? For example, maybe you prefer selling products, or you enjoy working with animals.

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Was there anything in particular that you learned from each activity?

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Which (if any) aspects of the activities would you like to remain involved with?

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Of all the jobs you have had, which one was your favorite? Why?

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Which hobbies or leisure activities do you find most enjoyable? Why?

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What inspires you?

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## II. Skills

**Hard skills** are easily measured and consist of factual knowledge often learned during formal training or at school. Hard skills include technical expertise, laboratory techniques, computer skills, and languages. **Soft skills** can be acquired in various areas of your life, such as at school, work, or when engaged in leisure activities. These skills include interpersonal and communication abilities and can be transferred to work or volunteer activities.

What areas do you have potential in, or are you good at?

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List at least three skills you have that have helped you at work or in school.

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What kinds of tasks do you easily complete? Do you enjoy them? Why or why not?

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What skills would you like to enhance?

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What other skills would you like to develop in the future?

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What are the activities that make you bored, tired, or restless?

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### III. Achievements

One way to identify your strengths is to consider your achievements. Achievements are times when you recognized a problem and successfully acted on it. Achievements often demonstrate your abilities and skills and reveal your potential for taking initiative and solving problems.

Have you ever received some form of recognition (award, title, trophy, etc.)? Describe.

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During high school, college, or at work, what were your greatest achievements? List them.

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Have you ever intervened in a situation that could have become a serious problem? Describe what happened.

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Have you ever made a suggestion that was adopted by a classmate, teammate, or coworker? Explain.

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Have you ever done any of the following?

- accomplished a task using fewer resources than usual
- satisfied a particularly demanding customer or client
- initiated something that turned out to be a success
- trained or taught people

If so, describe.

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What do you feel most proud of?

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#### **IV. Values**

Values are the beliefs you develop early in life that make up your fundamental beliefs about what is right and wrong. They are shaped by your family, culture, education, religion, and different socialization processes. Some values are maintained throughout your life, while others may change in importance.

There are countless values, including financial stability, family, education, good health, job security, and so forth. Take some time to consider what is most important to you. Write down as many of your values as possible.

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How have your values shaped your educational or career choices? Explain.

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Do you learn and enjoy best through personal study or in groups?

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When developing projects, what is the ideal time duration for you? Are short turnaround times best or do you prefer long-term projects?

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Do you enjoy working with people? Why or why not?

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What kind of workplace culture brings out the best in you? The worst in you?

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What type of communication strategies or procedures do you prefer?

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Do you make friends easily? Why or why not?

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How much time would you like to work during your next job?

In a group environment within the workplace? \_\_\_\_\_%

Alone? \_\_\_\_\_%

Remote from a home office? \_\_\_\_\_%

Do you enjoy networking? Why or why not?

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How long is your ideal work week? \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions with YES or NO.

\_\_\_\_\_ To achieve your career goals, you are willing to relocate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Nationally?

\_\_\_\_\_ Internationally?

\_\_\_\_\_ To achieve your career goals, you are willing to separate from family and/or friends.

If yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ You are willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead in your career.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your family is supportive about career and work-related choices.

\_\_\_\_\_ You are willing to take courses or obtain a degree to achieve your career goals.

\_\_\_\_\_ You are willing to receive lower pay for a job you love.

\_\_\_\_\_ You are willing to put up with a high level of stress for higher pay.

How important are the following statements? Put a ✓ in the appropriate box.

In your job, it is important to...	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important
Be creative, artistic, and imaginative			
Feel secure			
Travel			
Have a healthy work/life balance			
Have consistency and routine			
Receive high earnings			
Increase competence or skills			
See the results of hard work			
Have self-reliance and/or independence			
Feel appreciated and respected			
Be humble and respectful toward others			
Have a high level of confidence			
Frequently engage with others or work with a team			

Next, discuss your answers with your coach or counselor. After reviewing the assessment, identify some common threads or patterns. Write them down.

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## Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this assessment?

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