

How To Choose a Major Career Planning Process

STEP 1. Self-Assessment - Discover your unique attributes through a self assessment inventory.

A. **Skills** - are the abilities and competencies acquired through experiences and education. Skills include the attributes and special talents people bring to the job. Transferable skills are skills that can be applied to a variety of occupations. Non-transferable skills are specific to a particular type of occupation.

B. **Values** - are motivators and beliefs that assist students in making decisions and choices. They serve as a guide to show us what we need in our work life to be satisfied.

C. **Interests** - are preferences for specific types of work experiences. Interests may include hobbies and leisure activities we participate in.

D. **Working Conditions** - refers to the various types of work environments such as working indoors versus outside or working for a large corporation versus a small company.

E. **Personality** - are the traits, tendencies, attitudes, and characteristics that make each individual unique.

F. **Life Style** - refers to the way people live based on a variety of behaviors including how they spend their time, social relationships, and entertainment

STEP 2. Explore Careers and Majors

A. **Library research** - includes print or online resources to provide information about an occupational field of interest. Informational Interview – call or meet with a professional in your area of interest

B. **Networking** – is developing a group of contacts by participating in professional associations, attending job fairs, seminars and conventions related to a field of interest.

C. **On the job exposure**– Work in an occupational field to determine if the job is appropriate for you. Job exposure can include volunteer or paid work

1. *Professional Experience
2. *Part-time/summer job (paid or volunteer)
3. Volunteer Experience/Service Learning – links students with non-profit agencies and they may be able to obtain extra credit.
4. Job Shadow – See what it's like to work in an occupation that interests you by "shadowing" a professional in the field.

STEP 3. Decision making - is the process of deciding how to make a career choice by setting goals, gathering information, and assessing alternatives occupations.

STEP 4. Developing an action plan – are the steps needed to prepare for a career choice. Students can start by developing an educational plan with a counselor that meets their educational and career goals.

STEP 5. Job Search

A. **Resume** - is a summary of job experience and education related to an occupation. The purpose of a resume is to obtain a job interview.

B. **Interview** – is a meeting with an employer and applicant to learn more about the candidate and determine if the applicant meets the job requirements.

C. **Job Search Strategies** – are steps to prepare for a successful search including contacting organizations related to an occupational field, mailing and e-mail resumes to targeted organizations, using network contacts and websites, attending job fairs, and applying for an internship.

*Visit the *Career Development Center*: www.umassd.edu/career for more information!