



Career Planning Process

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The Career Planning/Competency Model encourages individuals to explore and gather information which enables them to synthesize, gain competencies, make decisions, set goals and take action. Each individual varies in their progress through each of these stages for many reasons. Some advance rapidly through each or all of the stages while others progress more slowly. Individuals may repeat all or parts of the career development process at various points throughout their lives as values, interests, abilities, and life circumstances change.

Self Assessment

The first step in the Career Planning Model involves gathering information about yourself to assist in making a decision about a career. You should develop an understanding of self including values, interests, aptitudes, abilities, personal traits, and desired life style, and become aware of the interrelationship between self and occupational choice

Academic/Career options

The second step allows individuals to investigate the world of work in greater depth, narrow a general occupational direction into a specific one through an informed decision making process, and declare a major.

Occupational Investigation Topics

In order to make an intelligent and self appropriate occupational choice, you need to identify and explore your top occupational prospects in depth. Investigate the 11 topics outlined below for each of your top occupational prospects.

1. Nature of the work in the occupation

- Definition of the occupation (from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles)
- Why the job exists and the purpose and needs the occupation serves
- Major duties and responsibilities involved
- Products made or services provided by this occupation
- Specializations within the occupation



•Equipment, tools, machine, or work aids used in the occupation

2. Education, training or experience needed for the occupation

•College or school courses, or training required or helpful in preparation and location of education, training and work experience

•Previous work experience needed to enter the occupation

•Type of on-the-job training provided by employer

•Length of time required to get the necessary education , training, and work experience

3. Personal qualifications, skills, and abilities required for the occupation

•Abilities, skills, or aptitudes needed to enter the occupation

•Physical strength and/or demands a person should have to do the job

•Personal interest a person should have (like to work with things, people, data, ideas)

•Licensing, certification, or other legal requirements for employment

•Special requirements necessary or helpful (know a foreign language, type 60 word a minute)

4. Earnings, salary range, benefits form a job in the occupation (note regional differences)

•Beginning income earned from work in the occupation

•Average income earned form work in the occupation

•Top earnings from work in the occupation

•Fringe benefits typically offered (retirement pensions, medical insurance, vacations, sick leave, paid education, on-the-job training)

5. Working conditions in the occupation

•Physical working conditions (office, factory, inside/outside, noise level) and hazards associated with the kind of work in the occupation

•Work schedule (hours, time of day or night, overtime, seasonal work

•Opportunities for initiative, creativity, self-management, recognition



- Equipment, supplies, tools and materials to be furnished by the worker (car, datebook, reference books)
- Professional association membership or union required or suggested as a condition of employment (listed with other sources of information in the Occupational Outlook Handbook)

- Dress requirements or clothing preferences of employers. Why? (suit, lab coat)
- Travel requirements made necessary by the type of work in the occupation
- Possible discriminatory practices experienced by workers in the occupation or professional occupations in general. See Rating America's Corporate Conscience, CPC Salary Survey or other relevant sources)

6. Location of employment

- Type of work organizations in which this occupation is found (type of companies, agencies, institutions, businesses, industries that employ people in this occupation; opportunities for self-employment)
- Geographical areas where the occupation is predominantly found throughout the nation, or in certain regions or cities of the country

7. Employment and advancement outlook for the occupation

- Normal methods of entry into the occupation
- Employment trends for the occupation on the national level (note regional differences when available)
- Advancement or promotion opportunities in the occupation. Concept of career ladder - where do you start and what can you move up to? Average time it takes to get a promotion or advance to a higher position
- Stability of employment in the occupation

8. Related occupations

- Other occupations that are similar to this one

9. Sources of your occupation information

- Sources of additional information about the occupation
- Where to observe someone locally in this occupation
- Where to get part-time, co-op, work/study, internship, or temporary experience leading to a job in the occupation



10. Personality characteristics of typical people working in the occupation

Personality traits of people who dominate the environment of the occupation or compose a significant population in the occupation (able to work under pressure, work with accuracy, logical thinking, MBTI and Holland Type)

- Average age ranges found in the occupation
- Percentage of male and female workers in the occupation (see The Statistical Abstracts of the United States or other references with relevant information)
- Numbers of ethnic minority workers (i.e., blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, So. Pacific Islanders, and Alaskan Natives) in the occupation (see The Statistical Abstracts of the United States or other references with relevant information)

11. Personal satisfaction from the work in the occupation

- Values expressed in or by the occupation (high income, achievement, security, independence, creativity, time for leisure or family, variety, helping others, prestige, recognition) (see SIGI+ Information section)
- Status of the occupation as seen by society. What do members of society like about the occupation? What do members of society dislike about the occupation? (use your perceptions of actual values)

Relevant Practical experience

In Step III individuals evaluate occupational choices and gain practical experience through internships, cooperative education, relevant summer employment, volunteer work and campus activities. In addition, more specific decisions about occupational choices are made.

Informational Interview Questionnaire

Use the list of questions below as a guide. Compose questions of your own to fit the circumstances of the occupation or organization you are investigating. Where you read "this occupation/ organization" below, substitute the names of the actual occupation or organization in your question.



In the format below, the topic of the question is stated first, followed by a number of questions you could use to open the subject you want discussed.

1. Job search techniques used.

- How did you get into this occupation/organization?
- What steps did you take to get where you are now?
- What methods did you use to find work in the occupation you are in now?

2. Occupational/organizational interests.

- How did you become interested in this occupation/organization?
- What attracted you to this particular occupation/organization?

3. Getting started in this occupation.

- What entry-level jobs might qualify a person for this occupational field?
- What is the progression of jobs from the beginning to the top?

4. Responsibilities in the work.

- What does the company expect you to do on the job?
- What responsibilities and duties do you have in your work?
- What characteristics should a person look for in a job such as the one you have?

5. Products, services, competition.

- What products are manufactured (or services are provided) by the organization?
- Who are your customers? • Who are your competitors? •

What is your rank or standing with your competitors in the industry?

6. Abilities and qualifications required.



•What skills, aptitudes, or personal qualifications does a person need for this occupation (or to work in this organization)?

•What essential abilities are needed to do your job well?

7.Preparation and background needed.

- What preparation, education, training, or background is required for entrance into this field of work?
- Are particular degrees or licenses required to enter this occupation?

8.Values and personal satisfaction.

- What is there about this occupation/organization that gives you personal satisfaction?
- What values are expressed by this occupation/organization?

9.The organization culture.

- What basic assumptions and beliefs are shared and supported by most people in your division or organization?
- What practices and ceremonies mean a lot to those working here and to the organization?
- Who are the heroes or exemplary figures in this organization, and what do they stand for?
- What is the guiding philosophy of the organization?

10.Personality characteristics.

- What personal traits, values, and interests are necessary or helpful to succeed and advance in this occupation/organization?
- What personal qualities do administrators and supervisors look for in their employees here?

11.Causes of dissatisfaction.

- What are the major frustrations, annoyances, or sources of dissatisfaction in the occupation/organization? What problems, both internal and external, cause dissatisfaction in the job or workplace?



12. Unique qualities or strengths.

What strengths set this occupation/organization apart from others?

- What are the best things you can say about this occupation/organization?

13. Working conditions.

- How much time do you spend at work?
- Is the amount of the time spent on the job due more to the nature of the occupation or to the nature of the particular organization?
- Does your working time affect the amount of time you can spend with your family?
- How do people dress for work here?
- Is the work mostly indoors or outdoors?
- What is the noise level?
- Does the physical layout of the building(s) make the organization's work environment pleasant?
- Describe the morale of the people who work for the organization and give some reasons for their attitude.

14. Salary ranges.

- What are the beginning, average, and top salaries or wages in this occupation?
- How does your organization pay in comparison to other organizations in the same industry?
- What fringe benefits are offered? •(DO NOT ASK: What is your salary?)

15. Decision-making patterns.

- How would you describe the decision-making style of this organization?
- Who makes the decisions on how the work will be done in your department?

16. Organization of the organization.

- What are the lines of authority in your company?
- Ask for an organizational chart.



•To whom do you report?

•Whom do you supervise?

17. Advancement opportunities.

•What opportunities exist for advancement, promotion, or change of jobs within the organization?

•Where could I expect to be in this organization after five years with a good work record?

18. Typical day at work.

•Describe a typical day at work in your occupation and in this kind of organization.

•Can you leave your job behind after work, or is it the kind of job you take home with you? Explain.

19. Related occupations.

•What other occupations are closely related to this one?

•Would you need the same skills and aptitudes for them?

•Are any related occupations represented in this organization?

20. Temporary work and courses to take while in college.

•Could you suggest any temporary, part-time, or summer work experience that would help a person get ready for your occupation?

•What courses in school or college were especially helpful to you in preparing for this occupation?

21. Future projections.

•What do you see in the future for this occupation/organization?

•Will there be a continued demand for it?

•Is the occupation/organization growing or declining in numbers of workers?

•How secure will employment be in this occupation/organization?



22.Changes.

What changes do you think are coming for this occupation/organization over the next few years?

- How can a person prepare for those changes?

23.Special problems and concerns.

- Are there any special problems, concerns, situations, circumstances, or challenges of which a person should be aware when considering this occupation/organization?
- How would you try to solve these problems or face these challenges?

24.Other information or advice.

- What other advice or information can you give to a person considering, preparing for, or coming into this occupation or organization?
- Because you know this occupation/organization better than I do, what other questions should I be asking about it?

25.The return visit.

- Is it all right to contact you for another interview if I need more information and advice in the future?
- In case I need more advice and information in the future, could I make another appointment to talk with you?

26.The referral question.

- (Never conclude an information interview without trying to obtain the names of other people in the same or similar occupations/ organizations with whom you could conduct another information interview.) Could you suggest the names of other people with whom I could talk in this occupation/organization?
- May I mention your name as the person that referred me?
- Would you be willing to write a letter of introduction for me (or make an introduction for me over the telephone)?



An initial occupational choice is made in Step IV. Individuals prepare for and begin conducting a job search, or apply to graduate or professional schools.

Competencies Defined

Skills are obtained through full or part-time work, volunteering for a campus or off-campus organization, completing an internship or through extracurricular activities. You already have some transferable skills which can be used in any occupation. Speaking, listening, greeting people, writing, meeting deadlines, operating expensive equipment - cars, computers - developing a sense of humor, and maintaining a budget are examples of learned skills.

- Planning and Organizational Skills
- Oral and Written Communication Skills
- Decision-Making, Supervisory, Management and/or Leadership Skills
- Financial Management Skills
- Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution Skills
- Teamwork and Teambuilding Skills
- Ethics and Tolerance Skills
- Personal and Professional Management Skills
- Transferable Skills
- Information Management Skills
- Design and Planning Skills
- Research and Investigation Skills
- Communications Skills
- Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Management and Administrative Skills
- Valuing Skills



•Personal and Career Development Skills

Planning and Organizational Skills

- Follow up with others to evaluate progress of tasks
- Conduct meetings
- Give praise and credit to others for work well done
- Motivate others on group projects
- Facilitate brainstorming activities
- Develop goals for an organization
- Work effectively with organization members
- Identify tasks to be accomplished
- Prioritize tasks
- Facilitate discussions on program planning processes
- Give constructive feedback

Oral and Written Communication Skills

- Organize and present ideas effectively for formal and spontaneous speeches
- Effectively participate in group discussions
- Prepare concise and logically written materials
- Listen carefully and respond to verbal and nonverbal messages
- Effectively utilize campus resources for public relations
- Respond appropriately to positive and negative feedback
- Debate issues without being abrasive to others
- Possess courteous telephone skills

Decision-Making, Supervisory, Management and/or Leadership Skills

- Understand the steps involved with effective decision-making
- Facilitate groups in the decision-making process
- Implement sound decisions
- Take responsibility for decisions
- Evaluate the effects and effectiveness of a decision
- Be able to make decisions without feeling pressured
- Remain flexible with decisions
- Explain to others unpopular decisions
- Motivate others toward common goals
- Use effective coaching/mentoring skills with peers or subordinates

Financial Management Skills

- Develop a budget accurately estimating expenses and income
- Justify the organization's budget to others
- Work within a budget
- Keep accurate and complete financial records
- Ensure timeliness of payments
- Develop and implement a fund-raising event

Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution Skills



•Anticipate problems before they occur •Define the problem and identify possible/apparent causes •Identify possible alternative solutions and select the most appropriate ones •Facilitate group members in identifying and evaluating possible solutions •Develop plans to implement solutions •Handle several problems at one time •Understand the steps involved with critical thinking •Recognize if a problem needs to be addressed

Teamwork and Teambuilding Skills

•Motivate team members to work toward common goals •Understand strengths and weaknesses of members and use strengths to build team development •Collaborate on projects •Support and praise one another for reaching goals and accomplishments

Ethics and Tolerance Skills

•Define and explain ethical behavior •Practice ethical behavior in difficult situations •Accept others' opinions and actions in a non-judgmental way •Understand sexist, racist, ageist, and homophobic behavior and exhibit non-sexist, non-racist, non-ageist, and non-homophobic behavior •Interact with and appreciate people from diverse cultural, social, and religious backgrounds •Interact with and appreciate physically or mentally challenged individuals

Personal and Professional Management Skills

•Work effectively under pressure •Manage time and stress effectively •Seek additional opportunities for professional development •Regularly participate in a healthy combination of activities for stress management •Arrive at work at an appropriate time •Evaluate personal and professional strengths and weaknesses •Take initiative in job related duties •Discern appropriate behaviors for the workplace.

Transferable Skills

Information Management Skills

•sort data and objects •compile and rank information •apply information creatively to specific problems or tasks •synthesize facts, concepts, and principles •understand and use organizing principles •evaluate information based on appropriate standards



Design and Planning Skills

- identify alternatives courses of action
- set realistic goals
- follow through with a plan or decision
- manage time effectively
- predict future trends and patterns
- accommodate multiple demands for commitment of time, energy, and resources
- assess needs
- make and keep a schedule
- set priorities

Research and Investigation Skills

- use a variety of sources of information
- apply a variety of methods to test the validity of data
- identify problems and needs
- design an experiment, plan, or model that systematically defines a problem
- identify information sources appropriate to special needs or problems
- formulate questions relevant to clarifying a particular problem, topic, or issue

Communication Skills

- listen with objectivity and paraphrase the content of a message
- use various forms and styles of written communication
- speak effectively to individuals and groups
- use various media to present ideas imaginatively
- express one's need, wants, opinions and preferences without offending the sensitivities of others
- identify and communicate value judgments effectively
- describe objects or events with few errors
- convey a positive self image to others

Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills

- keep a group "on track" and moving toward the achievement of a goal
- maintain group cooperation and support
- delegate tasks and responsibilities
- interact effectively with peers, superiors, and subordinates
- express one's feelings appropriately
- understand the feelings of others
- use argumentation techniques to persuade others
- make commitments to people
- be will to take risks
- teach a skill, concept, or principle to others
- analyze behavior or self and others in group situations
- demonstrate effective social behavior in a variety of settings and under different circumstances
- work under time and environmental pressures



Critical Thinking Skills

identify quickly and accurately the critical issues when making a decision or solving a problem • identify a general principle that explains interrelated experiences of factual data • define the parameters of a problem • identify reasonable criteria for assessing the value or appropriateness of an action or behavior • adapt one's concepts and behavior to changing conventions and norms • apply appropriate criteria to strategies and action plans • take given premises and reason to their conclusion • create innovative solutions to complex problems • analyze the interrelationships of events and ideas from several perspectives.

Management and Administration Skills

• analyze tasks • identify people who can contribute to the solution of a problems or task • identify resource materials useful in the solution of a problem • delegate responsibility for completion of a task • motivate and lead people • organize people and tasks to achieve specific goals

Valuing Skills

• assess a course of action in terms of its long-range effects on the general human welfare • make decisions that will maximize both individual and collective good • appreciate the contributions of art, literature, science and technology to contemporary society • identify one's own values • assess one's values in relation to important life decisions

Personal and Career Development Skills

• analyze and learn form life experiences - both one's own and others • relate the skills developed in one environment (school, for instance) to the requirements of another environment (work) • match knowledge about one's own characteristics and abilities to information about job or career opportunities • identify, describe, and assess the relative importance of one's needs, values, interest, strengths, and weaknesses • develop personal growth goals that are motivating • identify and describe skill acquired through formal education and general life experiences • identify one's own strengths and weaknesses • accept and learn from negative criticism • persist with a project when faced with failure unless it is clear that the project cannot be carried out or is not worth the time or effort required to complete it • generate



trust and confidence in others •take risks •accepts the consequences of one's actions •market" one's self to prospective employers