

Analyzing your Work Preferences



Studies show that students who explore their own interests, values, likes and dislikes tend to make career choices that lead to greater job satisfaction. This handout will help you analyze your values, interests, skills, and work preferences.

I. Values

Individual, emotion-rooted wants and needs

II. Interests

Ideas, events and activities that stimulate your enthusiasm

III. Skills

Competencies that you have or can develop which are used in various work tasks and settings

IV. Work Preferences

All of those factors other than work roles and tasks that define an individual's environment

V. Now what?

VI. Additional resources

This self assessment process may benefit you at various times throughout your life.

I. Values

The following list describes a wide variety of satisfactions that people obtain from their jobs. Look at the definitions of these satisfactions and rate the degree of importance that you would assign to each for yourself, using the scale below:

- 1 = Not important at all
- 2 = Not very important
- 3 = Reasonably important
- 4 = Very important in my choice of career

- Help Society:** Do something to contribute to the betterment of the world I live in.
- Help Others:** Be involved in helping other people in a direct way, either individually or in small groups.
- Public Contact:** Have a lot of day-to-day contact with people.
- Work with Others:** Have close working relationships with a group; work as a team toward common goals.
- Affiliation:** Be recognized as a member of a particular organization.
- Friendships:** Develop close personal relationships with people as a result of my work activities.
- Competition:** Engage in activities that pit my abilities against others where there are clear win-and-lose outcomes.
- Make Decisions:** Have the power to decide courses of action, policies, etc.
- Work under Pressure:** Work in situations where time pressure is prevalent and/or the quality of my work is judged critically by supervisors, customers or others.
- Power and Authority:** Control the work activities or (partially) the destinies of other people.
- Influence People:** Be in a position to change attitudes or opinions of other people.

- Work Alone:** Do projects by myself, without any significant amount of contact with others.
- Knowledge:** Engage myself in the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and understanding.
- Intellectual Status:** Be rewarded as a person of high intellectual prowess or as one who is an acknowledged "expert" in a given field.
- Artistic Creativity:** Engage in creative work in any of several artistic forms.
- Creativity (general):** Create new ideas, programs, organizational structures, or anything else not following a format previously developed by others.
- Aesthetics:** Be involved in studying or appreciating the beauty of things, ideas, etc.
- Supervision:** Have a job in which I am directly responsible for the work done by others.
- Change and Variety:** Have work responsibilities which frequently change in their content and setting.
- Precision Work:** Work in situations where there is very little tolerance for error.
- Stability:** Have a work routine and job duties that are largely predictable and not likely to change over a long period of time.
- Security:** Be assured of keeping my job and a reasonable financial reward.
- Fast Pace:** Work in circumstances where there is a high pace of activity, in which work must be done rapidly.
- Recognition:** Be recognized for the quality of my work in some visible or public way.
- Excitement:** Experience a high degree of (or frequent) excitement in the course of my work.
- Adventure:** Have work duties which involve frequent risk-taking.
- Profit, Gain:** Have a strong likelihood of accumulating large amounts of money or other material gain.

- Independence:** Be able to determine the nature of my work without significant direction from others; not have to do what others tell me to do.
- Moral Fulfillment:** Feel that my work is contributing significantly to a set of moral standards that I feel are very important.
- Location:** Find a place to live (town, geographic area) which is conducive to my life style and affords me the opportunity to do the things I enjoy most.
- Community:** Live in a town or city where I can get involved in community affairs.
- Physical Challenge:** Have a job that makes physical demands which I would find rewarding.
- Time Freedom:** Have work responsibilities which I can work at according to my own time schedule; no specific work hours required.

Now choose five of these work values that are the most important to you and write them on the lines below. If you can think of any other work values (desired satisfactions) that are not included in the list and which are especially important to you, add them to the four values you list on the lines below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

II. Interests

Most people demonstrate their interests by how they spend their time. Review the list below and place a check () next to those activities which you currently enjoy doing. Place an asterisk (*) beside those things that you enjoy, but don't presently have the time and/or the opportunity to do. Think about which of these interests might translate into a fulfilling career.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> studying nature | <input type="checkbox"/> exchanging ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> operating computers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being outdoors | <input type="checkbox"/> conserving natural resources | <input type="checkbox"/> observing human behavior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rearranging furniture | <input type="checkbox"/> drawing, painting ,or sketching | <input type="checkbox"/> church activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> decorating things | <input type="checkbox"/> studying art | <input type="checkbox"/> working with your hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> collecting things | <input type="checkbox"/> bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> creating new things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> listening to music | <input type="checkbox"/> working with animals | <input type="checkbox"/> learning how things work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> traveling to new places | <input type="checkbox"/> being around animals | <input type="checkbox"/> reading philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> playing with children | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific research | <input type="checkbox"/> dissecting an organism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> solving problems | <input type="checkbox"/> the media | <input type="checkbox"/> dancing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with numbers | <input type="checkbox"/> reading for pleasure | <input type="checkbox"/> ballet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> raising funds for causes | <input type="checkbox"/> analyzing movies | <input type="checkbox"/> bird watching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working on cars/machines | <input type="checkbox"/> designing things | <input type="checkbox"/> anticipating needs of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> growing plants | <input type="checkbox"/> budgeting | <input type="checkbox"/> visiting older people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> meeting people | <input type="checkbox"/> joining public causes | <input type="checkbox"/> socializing at parties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> reading a spiritual guide | <input type="checkbox"/> talking about politics | <input type="checkbox"/> caring for sick people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building things | <input type="checkbox"/> doing electrical work | <input type="checkbox"/> giving advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> analyzing systems | <input type="checkbox"/> studying stocks and investments | <input type="checkbox"/> planning events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> studying languages | <input type="checkbox"/> data processing | <input type="checkbox"/> studying artifacts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> engaging in business activities | <input type="checkbox"/> reading novels | <input type="checkbox"/> using a microscope |
| <input type="checkbox"/> teaching others | <input type="checkbox"/> science fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> playing team sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> supervising people | <input type="checkbox"/> writing poetry and stories | <input type="checkbox"/> playing individual sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> exploring new places | <input type="checkbox"/> visiting forests and streams | <input type="checkbox"/> selling things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> singing | |

Other things not listed:

III. Skills

Look through the following skill families and check any that you feel you have demonstrated to your own satisfaction. In addition, circle words or phrases that have meaning for you.

Communication Skills

- Writing - copywriting for sales, creative writing, prose, poetry, expository writing, essays, reports
- Proposal Writing - for government funding; for revising organizational operations
- Editing - newspaper, magazine pieces, manuscripts
- Rewriting - technical language into popular form, revising articles or manuscripts
- Interviewing - evaluating people orally for specific purpose, obtaining information from others
- Corresponding - answering inquiries by mail, initiating letters with others, soliciting information by direct mail
- Speaking - publicly to an audience, individually to many people, on radio or television
- Selling - ideas to others, products, policies
- Listening - to extended conversations between others; to extended conversations from one person in order to help him/her
- Remembering - large quantities of information, names, faces, places, long sequences of events or instruction
- Motivating - others for peak physical performances; others for psychological efforts, helping them to overcome their inertia
- Politicking - generating support for one's ideas, generating financial support for an organization or project, attempting to influence policy
- Explaining - justifying one's actions to others, making obscure ideas clear to others
- Dramatizing - business/commercial ideas (advertising presentation); social concerns, problems; working behind the scenes for dramatic events

- Fund Raising - on a person-to-person basis, such as door-to-door collecting for charity; from large foundations, organizations; for political candidates; through sale of products and services; through advertising
- Persuading - influencing others to see your point of view; persuading others to help you
- Reading - large amounts of material quickly; reading written materials with great care

Numerical /Analytical Skills

- Auditing - assessing the financial status of an organization or program
- Record Keeping - orderly keeping of numerical data records, keeping log of sequential information, creating and maintaining files, clear and accurate financial records
- Measuring - obtaining accurate scientific measurements
- Calculating - performing mathematical computations, assessing the risks of an activity that is contemplated
- Updating - keeping a file of information up-to-date; completing records; acquiring new information on an old topic
- Budgeting - outlining the costs of a project; assuring that spending will not exceed available funds; using money efficiently
- Developing Mathematical Models - for scientific phenomena; for behavioral phenomena; for economic phenomena
- Working with Precision - with numerical data, in time and space situations calling for little error

Investigative/Research Skills

- Inspecting - physical objects to meet standards, people to determine criteria or detect information
- Appraising - evaluation programs or services, judging the value of something, evaluating performance of individuals
- Classifying - sorting information into categories, deciding about placement of people into programs
- Researching - extracting information from library, people, physical observations

- Analyzing - quantitative data, physical or scientific data, human/social situations
- Investigating - seeking information which individuals may attempt to keep secret, seeking the underlying causes for a problem
- Interpreting - other languages, obscure phrases or passages in English, meaning associated with statistical data
- Compiling - gathering numerical, statistical data, accumulating facts in a given topic area
- Reviewing - reassessing the effects of a program, the performance of an individual, evaluating a play, book, movie, etc.
- Evaluating - assessing a program to determine its success in meeting its objectives, judging the performance of an individual
- Finding - information from obscure, remote, or varied sources; finding people who can be helpful to you or others

Design/Planning Skills

- Displaying - ideas in an artistic form, pictures for public display, products in store windows, etc.
- Abstracting/Conceptualizing - parts of a system into a whole; non-observable physical phenomena; ideas from surface events
- Imagining - new ways of dealing with old problems; theoretical relationships; artistic ideas or perspectives
- Anticipating - staying one step ahead of moods of the public; being able to sense what will be fashionable in consumer goods; expecting a problem before it develops, seeing the first signs
- Handling Detail Work - doing numerous small tasks within a short period of time; making sure small details are not left unattended
- Initiating - new ideas, ways of doing things, new approaches; personal contacts with strangers
- Dealing with Unknowns - making decisions based upon severely limited information; making hypotheses about phenomena virtually unknown
- Making Layouts - for printed media, newspapers, etc. or for public displays, as in posters
- Sketching - pictures of things, people, diagrams, designs

- Predicting - forecasting physical phenomena, the outcomes of social interaction, the outcomes of contests
- Creating - new ideas, new ways of solving mechanical problems
- Designing - interiors of rooms, buildings, plans involving processing of information
- Planning - anticipating future needs of an organization, scheduling a sequence of events, arranging an itinerary
- Setting Up - arranging for a demonstration, getting people and things ready for a show, exhibit, etc.

Interpersonal Skills

- Recruiting - attempting to acquire the services or support of other people
- Serving - providing a service to an individual, serving a product to individuals
- Advising - giving counsel to others
- Coaching - guiding the activities of an athletic team, tutoring
- Negotiating - between individuals or groups in conflict
- Committee Working - attaining objectives through committee processes, creating and implementing committee structures
- Counseling - helping people with personal/emotional concerns, life development concerns, family matters, etc.
- Confronting - obtaining decisions from reluctant others, giving bad news to others, resolving personal conflicts with others
- Group Facilitating - facilitating the positive interaction of members of a group; specific facilitation involving therapy
- Handling Complaints - from customers, from citizens to government agencies, from parents of students, etc.
- Teaching - in school or college classrooms; individuals to perform certain tasks; tutoring
- Rehabilitating - helping people to resume use of physical limbs; working with handicapped people through non-physical media, such as art, music, etc.

- Meeting the Public - acting as receptionist, giving tours, greeting; being a public representative of an organization; selling products in a public place; polling the public
- Mediating - being a peacemaker between conflicting parties; acting as a liaison between competing interests

Administrative/Managerial Skills

- Administering - a specific project or activity, a test, etc.
- Deciding - making decisions about the use of money, making decisions involving others, making decisions about alternative courses of action
- Timing - organizing time efficiently so that many tasks are completed in a time period
- Coordinating - numerous events involving different people, great quantities of information, activities in different locations, events in time sequence
- Supervising - directly overseeing the work of others; overseeing a building, set of apartments, etc.
- Managing - being responsible for the work of others; having responsibility for the processing of information or data; guiding the activities of a team; having responsibility for meeting the objectives of an organization or department
- Organizing - bringing people together for certain tasks; gathering information and arranging it in clear, interpretable form; arranging political activity; rousing the public to action
- Delegating - distributing tasks to others; giving responsibility to others on a work team

Manual/Physical Skills

- Assembling - technical apparatus or equipment
- Using Instruments - of a scientific nature, or a medical nature, related to motion, transportation
- Repairing - mechanical devices, equipment, furniture, etc.
- Constructing - mechanical apparatus, physical objects
- Operating - scientific equipment, mechanical devices, vehicles, electronic data equipment, etc.
- Moving with Dexterity - being able to move athletically, with speed and grace

IV. Work Preferences

Check () the following work-related preferences that are important to you. You will feel more strongly about some than others. To note your priorities, write N next to those characteristics which you feel are non-negotiable. Put T (for tradeoffs) to show where you are willing to compromise.

Characteristics of the Place in Which You Would Like to Live

Community/cultural opportunities

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> museums | <input type="checkbox"/> further education | <input type="checkbox"/> size of city (to nearest 50,000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> art galleries | <input type="checkbox"/> civic clubs | <input type="checkbox"/> sporting events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> symphonies | <input type="checkbox"/> religious activities | <input type="checkbox"/> local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> movie houses | <input type="checkbox"/> social opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> community involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> theaters | <input type="checkbox"/> others? | <input type="checkbox"/> others? |

Geography

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> near mountains | <input type="checkbox"/> near ski slopes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> near ocean | <input type="checkbox"/> near desert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> access to rivers or lakes | <input type="checkbox"/> physical proximity to friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> others? (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> physical proximity to family |

Weather

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> all four seasons | <input type="checkbox"/> small temperature variation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> widely varied temperature | <input type="checkbox"/> little rain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lots of snow | <input type="checkbox"/> little snow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mostly sunshine | <input type="checkbox"/> other? (specify) |

Commuting

- | (means) | | (time) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> train | <input type="checkbox"/> walk | <input type="checkbox"/> less than 15 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bus | <input type="checkbox"/> bicycle | <input type="checkbox"/> 15-30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> carpool | <input type="checkbox"/> your car | <input type="checkbox"/> 30-60 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other? | | <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ minutes |

Characteristics of the Job and Job Setting

Financial Security

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> guaranteed salary | <input type="checkbox"/> job funded on time-limited basis, eg. grants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> paid by commission | <input type="checkbox"/> have enough money just to get by |
| <input type="checkbox"/> company stability | <input type="checkbox"/> live comfortably |
| <input type="checkbox"/> risks required to achieve | <input type="checkbox"/> continue the lifestyle in which raised |
| <input type="checkbox"/> financial reward | <input type="checkbox"/> have strong buying power |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tenured position | <input type="checkbox"/> able to make large financial investments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> merit raises | <input type="checkbox"/> be very wealthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self employed | <input type="checkbox"/> work in profit making environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the bottom line...(salary I seek in a first job) | \$ _____ |

The Work Environment

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> outdoors | <input type="checkbox"/> have your own office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fast paced | <input type="checkbox"/> have your own secretary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> business-like | <input type="checkbox"/> free from health hazards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> physical movement on the job | <input type="checkbox"/> chaotic atmosphere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> seasonal work | <input type="checkbox"/> easygoing and congenial atmosphere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> indoors | <input type="checkbox"/> fragmented (work on lots of tasks simultaneously) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> low noise level | <input type="checkbox"/> other? (specify) |

Time Requirements

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> time to pursue leisure activities | <input type="checkbox"/> must put in time socializing with employees, customers, and/or supervisors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> firmly fixed workday schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> peak times, slack times |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flexible daily schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> summers and school holidays free |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overtime expected | <input type="checkbox"/> can take vacations when you choose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other? (specify) | |

The Organization

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> company life insurance plan | <input type="checkbox"/> health and gym facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> company health insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> further educational opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> company organized activities | <input type="checkbox"/> size of organization is important (specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> retirement plan | |
-

Characteristics of co-workers

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> associates as close friends | <input type="checkbox"/> people whose work is their primary interest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> competition with co-workers | <input type="checkbox"/> people you socialize with after work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> people who prefer to work autonomously | <input type="checkbox"/> people who like to collaborate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> colleagues willing to work as hard as you | <input type="checkbox"/> develop close relationship with the boss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other? (specify) | |

Diversity in the Workplace

Consider your beliefs about working with those who are different from you. Remember, there are many types of diversity:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cultural background• ethnic background• educational level• fields of specialty• political persuasion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ethnic background• sex• income level• philosophy/religious belief |
|--|--|

Your Preferred Roles and Relationships

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> supervising the work of others | <input type="checkbox"/> coaching others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> instructing others | <input type="checkbox"/> coordinating the work of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> counseling others | <input type="checkbox"/> acting as a catalyst |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mediating concerns of persons or groups | <input type="checkbox"/> instigating projects, ideas, events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> persuading, selling | <input type="checkbox"/> solving problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> providing advice | <input type="checkbox"/> helping others (check those populations you'd like to serve) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> defining problems for others | <input type="checkbox"/> elderly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> organizing others | <input type="checkbox"/> adolescents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dispensing information | <input type="checkbox"/> disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> healing others | <input type="checkbox"/> students |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> low income |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> disadvantaged |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> children |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> physically ill/handicapped |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> adults |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> mentally ill/handicapped |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> in crisis |

V. Now What?

You have looked at your values, interests, skills, and work preferences. This information will help you explore your career options and also help you market yourself to potential employers. It may be helpful to note the words you have checked, circled, or highlighted throughout this handout. You may wish to go over this handout with a UCS counselor.

Here's an example of the type of conclusions you might draw from this self-assessment.

"I seek a job in which **communicating** both verbally and in writing is central. Specifically, I'm good at **compiling** *information* from a variety of sources into a final report form. I am better at **writing** *factual* rather than persuasive *material*. I enjoy **explaining** *information* to individuals or small groups. My organizing skills evident in **preparing** *reports* are also demonstrated in my ability to **coordinate** *people* and *resources* to **complete** a *project*. In addition to these primary skill areas, I am good at **budgeting** my *time*, **setting** *priorities* and **attending** to *details*."

VI. Additional Resources (available at UCS)

There are a number of assessment tools available at UCS (both online and print), including:

- Myers Briggs
- Strong Interest Inventory
- *The Complete Job Search Handbook*, Figler. Part 1 contains thoughtfully developed and very readable chapters on work-related values, skills identification and goal setting.
- *Your Career: Choices, Chances, Changes*, Borchard/Kelly/Weaver. A workbook that utilizes a simple but thorough decision-making model to assist with exploring careers, developing alternatives, setting goals, and making plans.
- *The Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance*, 4 volumes. Offers concise information on 22 industries and over 1000 occupations within those industries.
- *Jobs for English Majors and Other Smart People*, Munschauer. One of the most useful job search guides available. Good advice on resume preparation, finding positions with unique and unusual features, information interviews, etc.
- *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Outlines hundreds of careers by describing nature of the work, working conditions, training requirements, job outlook, earnings, and sources of additional information.
- *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*, Boldt. Provides a philosophical outlook to the career planning process, in addition to practical exercises. Excellent motivational quotes to keep you going.
- *Do What You Are*, Tieger/Barron-Tieger. Focuses on how to find work that matches your personality type. Specific job search strategies and lists of occupations popular

with people of your personality type. Excellent book to use in conjunction with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (personality inventory available at UCS).

- *I Could Do Anything, If I Only Knew What It Was*, Sher/Smith. A book for people who want to find their passion and make it their life; for creating a life they will love. Lots of stories and exercises to help people know what they want.
- *What Color Is Your Parachute*, Bolles. The best-selling job hunting book in the world for nearly thirty years. Very comprehensive, with hundreds of practical suggestions for approaching every aspect of the job search, from figuring out what you want to do to negotiating salary.

Portions of this handout were adapted from Figler, H., et.al. *The Liberal View: A Career Guide for Dickinson College*. Carlisle, PA: Dickinson College Counseling Center, pp. II-7 - II-13; Van Aalst, F. and Munce, J. "Office of Career Development & Placement, College of Charleston, Memo". Charleston, SC; and *College Outcome Measure Project*. ACT Educational Programs and Services. Aubry Forrest, Director. FIPSE funded project.