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.

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

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

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<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>art galleries</td>
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<td>symphonies</td>
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<td>movie houses</td>
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<td>theaters</td>
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<td>further education</td>
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<td>civic clubs</td>
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<td>religious activities</td>
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<td>social opportunities</td>
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<td>others?</td>
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#### Geography

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<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>near mountains</td>
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<td>near ocean</td>
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<td>access to rivers or lakes</td>
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<td>others? (specify)</td>
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<td>near ski slopes</td>
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<td>near desert</td>
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<td>physical proximity to friends</td>
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<td>physical proximity to family</td>
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#### Weather

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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td>all four seasons</td>
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<td>widely varied temperature</td>
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<td>lots of snow</td>
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<td>mostly sunshine</td>
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<td>small temperature variation</td>
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<td>little rain</td>
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<td>little snow</td>
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<td>other? (specify)</td>
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#### Commuting

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<tr>
<td>train</td>
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<td>less than 15 minutes</td>
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<td>bus</td>
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<td>15-30 minutes</td>
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<td>carpool</td>
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<td>30-60 minutes</td>
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<td>other?</td>
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<td>60+ minutes</td>
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<td>walk</td>
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<td>bicycle</td>
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<tr>
<td>your car</td>
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</table>
Characteristics of the Job and Job Setting

Financial Security
- □ guaranteed salary
- □ paid by commission
- □ company stability
- □ risks required to achieve
- □ financial reward
- □ tenured position
- □ merit raises
- □ self employed

□ the bottom line…(salary I seek in a first job) $

The Work Environment
- □ outdoors
- □ fast paced
- □ business-like
- □ physical movement on the job
- □ seasonal work
- □ indoors
- □ low noise level
- □ have your own office
- □ have your own secretary
- □ free from health hazards
- □ chaotic atmosphere
- □ easygoing and congenial atmosphere
- □ fragmented (work on lots of tasks simultaneously)
- □ other? (specify)

Time Requirements
- □ time to pursue leisure activities
- □ firmly fixed workday schedule
- □ flexible daily schedule
- □ overtime expected
- □ other? (specify)

□ must put in time socializing with employees, customers, and/or supervisors
- □ peak times, slack times
- □ summers and school holidays free
- □ can take vacations when you choose

The Organization
- □ company life insurance plan
- □ company health insurance
- □ company organized activities
- □ retirement plan
- □ health and gym facilities
- □ further educational opportunities
- □ size of organization is important (specify)
Characteristics of co-workers

- associates as close friends
- competition with co-workers
- people who prefer to work autonomously
- colleagues willing to work as hard as you
- 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:

- cultural background
- ethnic background
- educational level
- fields of specialty
- political persuasion
- sex
- income level
- philosophy/religious belief

Your Preferred Roles and Relationships

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


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.