

SELF-ASSESSMENT

WHERE YOUR TALENTS AND THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD CROSS, THERE LIES YOUR VOCATION.

Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC), Greek Philosopher

How many people do you know who can honestly say, “I’m really excited about my job”? Job satisfaction does not happen by accident. Most people who find their work personally meaningful have invested considerable time discovering what they want to do by:

- Examining their values and interests
- Determining how their talents and skills can be best used in the world of work
- Identifying work environments that truly suit their personality
- Investigating the many occupations and career paths available to them
- Making informed decisions about occupations that align with their values, interests, skills, and personality
- Developing specific career and life goals and implementing a realistic action plan with timelines to achieve them

This process of self-exploration, occupational research, decision-making, goal setting, and implementation will be repeated many times throughout your life. As you embark on your job search, it will be helpful to answer the following questions:

- What type of work best suits your talents, skills, interests, and values?
- What are the most important features of the job or lifestyle you want?
- Where do you want to live?
- What goals have you set for this stage of your life?
- How do you intend to achieve these goals? Do you have alternative plans, just in case?

- What strategies will you use to identify organizations employing recent graduates with your career interest or field of study?
- How will you present your knowledge, skills, and abilities to prospective employers?
- What criteria will you use to evaluate job offers?
- What will you need to make a successful transition into your job?

The ability to take charge of your career and life choices is essential in today’s society. You will be responsible for your own lifelong learning and skill development throughout your career. The notion of lifetime employment with one organization is outdated. In the 21st century workplace, your employment security depends primarily on acquiring varied work experiences, continuing to learn and build a strong portfolio of skills, and developing a broad knowledge base you can offer prospective employers.

Often, college students view career planning as a series of single, point-in-time decisions (e.g., pick a major, get an internship, graduate from college, accept a job, live happily ever after). Many students wait until after graduation to establish career and life goals, engage in job search activities, pursue a career, and gain job-related experiences. This approach is especially unwise given the increased competition graduates face in today’s unpredictable job market. Remember, no one is going to hand you a job at graduation; a college degree does not entitle you to or guarantee you a job.

It is not uncommon for recent college graduates to realize they have limited knowledge about suitable positions, occupations, and career paths. The exercises in this chapter will help you:

- Understand what makes you unique (e.g., your values, interests, personality traits, skills)
- Collect detailed information about specific occupations (e.g., the nature of the work, working conditions, educational requirements, salaries, job outlook, available career paths)
- Evaluate your occupational options
- Make a decision based on your personal criteria

Remember, you are more likely to enjoy your life and find satisfaction in your work when your occupational decisions match your values, interests, personality traits, and skills.



Values

Before beginning your job search, it is important to gain an understanding of your personal and work values. Your values have been shaped by your life experiences — upbringing, environment, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, education, and other variables. Your values serve as criteria for your judgments, preferences, and choices. Based on his review of the literature on values, Schwartz (1992) found five characteristics of values consistently reported. Values: 1) are beliefs, 2) relate to desirable end states of behavior, 3) guide evaluation of behaviors or events, 4) remain stable across time and context, and 5) are ordered by relative importance. Making career and life choices that agree with your core values is essential to satisfaction and happiness.

Values are often divided into personal, or life values and work values. Your personal values are those core aspects of your life that matter the most. Work values are those factors contributing to job satisfaction, such as salary and benefits, challenge, variety, achievement, and recognition. Clarifying your values is not an easy assignment. To start your thinking about values, consider the following questions:

1. What is important to me?
2. What makes my life and work meaningful?
3. What influences my decision-making process?
4. What aspects of a work environment do I find important and essential for me?

Work Values Assessment

Listed below are values associated with work satisfaction. Rate the degree of importance you would assign to each item on a scale of 1–4 with 1 = avoid work that has this characteristic, 2 = not important, 3 = somewhat important, and 4 = very important.

- ___ Achievement: attain mastery of a field, self-advancement, and growth.
- ___ Advancement: work in a job in which you make rapid career advancement.
- ___ Adventure: work in a job that requires taking risks.
- ___ Altruism: devotion to the welfare of or service to others; satisfaction attained through pursuit of a greater good.
- ___ Aesthetics: study or appreciation of the beauty of things, ideas, etc.
- ___ Authority and power: work in a job in which you control the activities of others.
- ___ Challenge: handle difficult or complex work.
- ___ Competence: work in a job in which you have a high degree of expertise or ability.
- ___ Competition: work in a job in which you compete with others.
- ___ Co-workers: build relationships with colleagues that promotes a sense of belonging.
- ___ Creativity and self-expression: work in a job in which you use your imagination to find new ways to do or say something.
- ___ Flexible work schedule: work in a job where you choose the work hours.
- ___ Help others: work in a job in which you provide direct services to individuals with problems.
- ___ High salary: work in a job where you earn a large amount of money and can afford the luxuries of life.
- ___ Independence: work in a job in which you decide for yourself what work to do and how to do it.
- ___ Influence others: work in a job in which you influence the opinions or decisions of others.
- ___ Inside work: work primarily indoors.
- ___ Intellectual stimulation: work in a job requiring a considerable amount of thought and reasoning.
- ___ Interpersonal relations: work with other employees and colleagues.
- ___ Leadership: work in a job in which you direct, manage, or supervise the activities of others.
- ___ Location: live in a place conducive to your lifestyle.
- ___ Low pressure: work in a relatively stress free job.
- ___ Moral values: behave in a way consistent with ethical or moral standards.
- ___ Outside work: work primarily outdoors.
- ___ Physical work: work in a physically demanding job that you find rewarding.
- ___ Prestige: work in a job affording you status and respect in the community.
- ___ Public contact: work in a job in which you have daily dealings with the public.
- ___ Recognition: work in a job in which you gain public notice.
- ___ Knowledge: work in the frontiers of human, science, or technological research or new product development.
- ___ Security: work relatively free from turnover with reasonable financial rewards.
- ___ Social welfare: accomplish something having meaning for others; work for society or another person's benefit.
- ___ Stability: work that is largely predictable, routine, and not likely to change much over time.
- ___ Supervisory relations: work done under a fair, agreeable, and professionally nurturing boss.
- ___ Travel: work in a job in which you take frequent trips.
- ___ Variety: work in a job in which your responsibilities and projects change frequently.
- ___ Work alone: work in a job where you complete projects or assignments by yourself or with limited contact with others.
- ___ Work with children: work in a job where you teach or care for children.
- ___ Work with hands: work in a job in which you use your hands or hand tools.
- ___ Work with machines or equipment: work in a job in which you use machines or equipment.
- ___ Work with numbers: work in a job in which you use mathematics or statistics.
- ___ Work under pressure: work in a job where there is a high pace of activity; work must be done quickly.

Top 5 Work-Related Values

From the items you rated as very important, select your five most important work values. For each, give a specific example from your life that demonstrates the importance of this value.

Rank	Work Value	Example
Ex.	Work with children	At age 14, I was a child care worker for three small children after school. I enjoyed helping them learn to read. It was fun to take them on field trips.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Interests

Everyone has likes and dislikes that are the foundation for our individual interests. Your interests include activities you enjoy or want to do and subject areas arousing your curiosity or holding your attention. Your interests began evolving in your early childhood and continue to grow and develop throughout your lifetime. As you try different activities, take interesting classes, work in your field, travel and experience new cultures, and meet interesting people, you will discover new interests. The more pleasurable or appealing the experience is for you, the more inspired and motivated you will be to pursue it.

While some students can create a long list of their interests, others may have difficulty identifying theirs. Limited life experience, little or no work experience, perceived and real environmental constraints, limited access to resources, and low self-esteem are among the wide-ranging and complex reasons why people struggle to identify their interests. The following activities will help you examine your interests in greater detail.

Exploring Your Interests

Academic subjects you really enjoyed studying in high school and college can provide insight into your interests. Conversely, subjects you disliked, found completely boring, or had difficulty grasping should also be taken into account. In the next section, think about the courses you enjoyed most in high school and in college and those you disliked most or found boring.

What did you like about the classes you enjoyed?

What did you dislike about prior classes?

One of the best indicators of your interests is how you choose to spend your time. List the clubs and groups you participated in during college. Don't forget the causes and community groups you volunteered your time to assist. Be sure to list the name of the organization, committee roles, and leadership positions you held.

What motivated you to become involved in these clubs and organizations?

How did you benefit from your involvement in these clubs and organizations and what did you learn about yourself?

Your past and current job experiences can help you identify what you like and dislike about work. Some areas to think about include: job assignments and duties (e.g., varied/routine, people-oriented/task-oriented, work alone/work on a team), working conditions (e.g., fixed hours/flexible schedule, work outdoors/indoors, fast-paced/slow-paced), the skills you enjoyed using (e.g., teaching, selling, performing manual labor, web design, event planning), your supervisor and co-workers (e.g., same age or older, same or opposite gender, married or single, similar interests), and clients or customers (e.g., children, shoppers, patients, business associates).

Jobs You Liked and Why

Jobs You Disliked and Why

What themes or patterns do you notice?

The time and energy you devote to your hobbies and other leisure pursuits can reveal a great deal about your interests. How you spend your unstructured, free time is one of the best indicators of your interests and values. In the section below, list your hobbies and other leisure pursuits.

While your hobbies reveal much about activities you enjoy, you may not want to incorporate them in your work. For example, you may love to cook and entertain, yet reject the idea of working as a chef or caterer for other reasons (e.g. the irregular hours would interfere with raising a family). Refer to your list above and place a check next to those activities you want to retain only as hobbies. Then, circle the activities you may want to include in your future career.

Places you enjoy visiting (e.g., foreign countries, large cities, ranches) can reflect your interests. List below places you have traveled. What are the similarities or commonalities you notice about the places you have visited (e.g., all are small towns, all have water close by, all have areas to go hiking)?

Your interests throughout your life influence your future career choices. Keeping your interests in mind, write your response to the following questions. If you never had to work again and you could do whatever you wanted all day long, how would you spend your time? Would you work? Go to school? Volunteer? Travel the world? Or just hang out with friends? What else would you do?

If you could have any job in the world, what would it be? Even if you cannot name the occupation, describe in as much detail as you can what you would be doing in a typical day (e.g., work activities, environment, types of people).

Personality Assessment

John L. Holland, a renowned career theorist, stated vocational interests can be viewed as an expression of personality. Personality traits are identified by preferences for school subjects, recreational activities, hobbies, and work. The focus of Holland's work on personality (1985, 1997) was the study of types; Holland's work can be summarized in the following statements:

- There are six distinct personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Your parents, peers, social status, culture, and physical environment have shaped your experiences. Through your experiences, you have learned to prefer some activities over others. Your preferred activities became strong interests leading to skills in similar areas. For example, if you enjoy helping your mother or father with car maintenance (a realistic interest), you probably have mechanical skills.
- Most people exhibit a few characteristics of each type, but one or two types will be dominant.
- There are six different kinds of environments: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional, all of which are populated by a given type of personality. People tend to

surround themselves with people who are like them and who share similar interests, skills, and outlooks on the world.

- People seek out an environment that matches or is similar to their personality type. When you work in an environment that is similar to your personality type, you are more likely to be satisfied with the job. For example, if you are an investigative type and enjoy biology and research, you would most likely enjoy working as a scientist (an investigative job). Conversely, if you have little interest in the enterprising preference, you probably would be unhappy in a job requiring you to influence people on a daily basis such as a Vice President of Sales (an enterprising job).
- The six types of environments are usually displayed in a hexagon (see diagram below). The types adjacent on the hexagon (e.g., realistic and investigative) have more in common than the opposite types on the hexagon (e.g., realistic and social).

Read the descriptions of the activities and interests in the next column of the six Holland types. Then, rank the Holland types from 1 - 6, with 1 = most like you and 6 = least like you. Then, take a few minutes to review the sampling of occupations listed on the next page for each Holland type.

Holland Type Descriptions

Realistic (*Technically and Athletically Inclined*)

- Enjoy the outdoors and an active lifestyle
- Prefer to use tools, objects, and machines
- Have mechanical, technical, and athletic abilities
- Prefer ordered problem solving techniques

Investigative (*Abstract Problem Solvers*)

- Prefer observation and investigation
- Have scientific, research, mathematical, and analytic abilities
- Value scientific or scholarly activities and achievements
- Like to solve problems by gathering and analyzing data

Artistic (*Idea Creators*)

- Viewed as creative, ambiguous, and unsystematic
- Value imagination and self-expression
- View themselves as having musical, artistic, or writing skills
- Prefer to solve problems innovatively

Social (*People Helpers*)

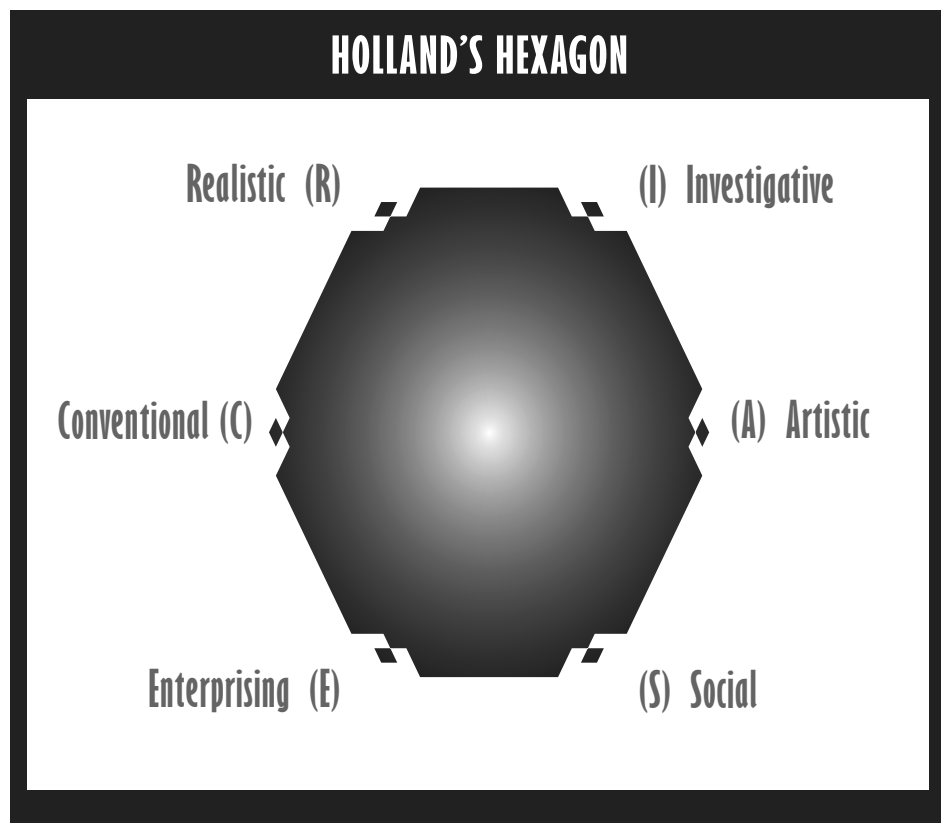
- Enjoy collaboration
- Want to be around, work with, or teach others
- Value equality
- Prefer to solve problems by working with people

Enterprising (*People Influencers*)

- Enjoy persuading and leading others
- Viewed as confident and popular
- Value being in authority and having ambition
- Believe they possess leadership skills

Conventional (*Data and Detail Organizers*)

- Enjoy orderly and systematic things
- Value conformity and details
- Prefer to solve problems by following specific procedures
- Believe they possess clerical and numerical skills



Careers and Holland Types

REALISTIC CAREERS

Archaeologist (IRE)
 Athletic Trainer (SRE)
 Automotive Engineer (RIE)
 Biomedical Equipment Technician (RIE)
 Carpenter (RCE)
 Chemical Supervisor (RES)
 Computer Systems Hardware Analyst (RIE)
 Computer-Aided Design Technician (RCI)
 Construction Inspector (REC)
 Dental Technician (REI)
 Fish and Game Warden (RES)
 Flight Engineer (RIE)
 Floral Designer (ARE)
 Forester (RIS)
 Industrial Arts Teacher (REI)
 Jeweler (REC)
 Laboratory Technician (RIE)
 Manufacturer's Service Representative (RES)
 Mechanical Engineer (RIS)
 Optician (REI)
 Pilot, Commercial Airline (RIE)
 Radiological Specialist (RES)
 Software Technician (RCI)
 Sound Mixer (RCS)
 Teacher, Industrial Arts (REI)
 Ultrasound Technologist (RSI)
 Wildlife Control Agent (RSE)

INVESTIGATIVE CAREERS

Actuary (ISE)
 Agronomist (IRS)
 Anesthesiologist (IRS)
 Anthropologist (IRE)
 Archaeologist (IRE)
 Art Appraiser (IAS)
 Auditor, Internal (ICR)
 Biologist (IAR)
 Chemical Engineer (IRE)
 Chemist (IRE)
 Chiropractor (ISR)
 Computer Programmer (IRC)
 Computer Systems Analyst (IRE)
 Coroner (ISE)
 Dentist (ISR)
 Ecologist (IRE)
 Economist (IAS)
 Electrical Engineer (IRE)
 Environmental Analyst (IRE)
 Geologist (IRE)
 Horticulturist (IRS)
 Market Research Analyst (ISC)
 Mathematician (IER)
 Medical Technologist (ISA)
 Meteorologist (IRS)

Optometrist (ISE)
 Osteopathic Physician (ISR)
 Pharmacist (IES)
 Physician, General Practice (ISC)
 Psychologist (IES)
 Public Health Service Officer (IES)
 Sociologist (IES)
 Statistician (IRE)
 Surgeon (IRA)
 Technical Writer (IRS)
 Toxicologist (IRC)
 Veterinarian (IRS)
 Zoologist (IRE)

ARTISTIC CAREERS

Actor (AES)
 Advertising Art Director (AES)
 Advertising Manager (ASE)
 Architect (AIR)
 Art Teacher (ASE)
 Copy Writer (ASI)
 Costumer (ARI)
 Dance Instructor (ASE)
 Drama Coach (ASE)
 Editor (AES)
 English Teacher (ASE)
 Entertainer/Performer (AES)
 Fashion Illustrator (AER)
 Graphic Designer (AER)
 Illustrator, Medical and Scientific (AIE)
 Interior Designer (AES)
 Journalist/Reporter (ASI)
 Landscape Architect (AIR)
 Medical Illustrator (AIE)
 Music Teacher (AES)
 Optical Effects Layout Person (ASC)
 Photojournalist (AEC)
 Reporter (ASI)
 Set Design (Motion Pictures) (AIE)
 Writer (AIE)

ENTERPRISING CAREERS

Accountant, Tax (ECS)
 Advertising Executive (Promotions) (ESA)
 Banker/Financial Planner (ESC)
 Branch Manager (ESA)
 Business Manager (ESC)
 Buyer (ESC)
 Credit Analyst (ESR)
 Customer Service Manager (ESA)
 Education & Training Manager (EIS)
 Engineer, Industrial (EIR)
 Entrepreneur (ESA)
 Fashion Coordinator (EAS)
 Foreign Exchange Trader (EIC)
 Foreign Service Officer (ESA)
 Funeral Director (ESR)

Golf Club Manager (ECS)
 Insurance Manager (ESC)
 Interpreter (ESA)
 Lawyer/Attorney (ESA)
 Literary Agent (ESA)
 Lobbyist (ESA)
 Park Superintendent (ERA)
 President (ESR)
 Retail Store Manager (ESC)
 Sales Manager (ESA)
 Social Service Director (ESA)
 Sports Director (ESR)
 Urban Planner (ESI)

SOCIAL CAREERS

Athletic Coach/Trainer (SRE)
 City Manager (SEC)
 Clinical Dietitian (SIE)
 Community Organization Director (SEA)
 Counseling Psychologist (SIA)
 Counselor/Therapist (SAE)
 Dean of Students (SEA)
 Detective (SER)
 Elementary School Teacher (SAE)
 Extension Service Specialist (SEC)
 Faculty Member, College or University (SEI)
 Historian (SEI)
 Hospital Administrator (SER)
 Insurance Claims Examiner (SIE)
 Librarian (SAI)
 Medical Assistant (SCR)
 Minister/Priest/Rabbi (SAE)
 Occupational Therapist (SRE)
 Park Naturalist (SEI)
 Personnel Recruiter (SCE)
 Physical Therapist (SIE)
 Police Officer (SER)
 Probation and Parole Officer (SIE)

CONVENTIONAL CAREERS

Accountant (CSI)
 Budget Analyst (CER)
 Business Programmer (CRI)
 Cardiology Technologist (ICR)
 Credit Manager (ESC)
 Customer Service Representative (CSE)
 Expeditor (CSE)
 Legal Secretary or Assistant (CSE)
 Loan Officer (SCE)
 Inspector (RCE)
 Insurance Underwriter (CSE)
 Investment Analyst (CIS)
 Human Service Caseworkers (SCE)
 Medical Laboratory Assistant (SCR)
 Real Estate Appraisers (SEC)
 Title Examiner (CSE)
 Warehouse Distribution Manager (CSE)

Skills

Often the words ability, talent, aptitude, competency, and skill are used interchangeably, yet each has a distinct definition. Ability is the capacity to perform an activity with proficiency. Talent is defined as an innate ability in some field or activity. An aptitude is defined as a natural ability or a capacity to learn. Competency is a holistic concept encompassing skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and physical capacity. A skill is the ability to perform a task effectively, usually learned through education, training, and experience. In a work setting, a skill is having knowledge with the ability to apply the knowledge on the job. It is important to remember your skills are shaped by heredity, your environment, cultural influences, education, and experiences.

Just as you assessed your values and interests in previous sections, assessing your skills is another important component of career and life planning. Throughout your life, you have acquired hundreds of skills. Everyday, you use many skills to accomplish a variety of activities, from routine (e.g., making breakfast, socializing with friends) to complex (e.g., making career decisions, writing

research papers, rock climbing). Some skills you perform so easily and unconsciously, you do not even think of them as skills. Other skills may be undiscovered. Perhaps you have convinced yourself that you would never be good at something or have a preconception or bias, such as, men are unable to become good decorators. You may even possess skills you do not enjoy using (e.g., typing, sewing, construction). As you complete the skill assessment exercises in this section, pay particular attention to identifying skills you enjoy using, would enjoy developing, or could learn easily.

Skills can be divided into three types: 1) work-content, 2) self-management, and 3) functional. Work-content skills require specialized training to learn a particular procedure, process, or subject matter (e.g., programming in C++, graphic design, speaking Russian, rules for playing Skip-Bo). To begin identifying your work-content skills, think of all the topics you have studied, your hobbies or leisure activities, past and current jobs, and subject areas about which you know a great deal. While work content skills may not be easily transferable to other work settings, they can help you identify favorite subjects that could be incorporated into your future career (e.g., learning other computer

programs). Self-management skills can be thought of as personality or character traits, usually acquired early in life as you learned to adapt to your environment, get along with others, and manage your daily life (e.g., sociable, competent, patient, meticulous, honest, dependable). These skills are highly transferable to your work life and are essential to success on the job. Functional skills are acquired abilities and talents that are developed and refined by experience, education, and practice (e.g., problem solving, managing, public speaking, teaching, writing, researching). These skills are transferable and can be applied to a variety of jobs and careers.

Accomplishments List

One of the best ways to recognize your skills is to identify your past accomplishments. On the following chart, list five accomplishments that made you feel proud or happy. These should be things you did well, enjoyed doing, and found energizing. Use specific examples (e.g., won first prize in school art show) rather than general situations (e.g., painted in oils). Then, use the appropriate column to identify the skills you used for each accomplishment.

Accomplishments	Work-Content Skills	Self-Management Skills	Functional Skills
<p>Example: Planned and organized senior class trip</p>	<p>Hotels, budgets, flight reservations, geography, ground transportation, publicity, catering, museums</p>	<p>Confident, frugal, helpful, responsive, patient, persistent, efficient, open-minded, responsible, enterprising</p>	<p>Taking initiative, managing details, locating hotels, negotiating prices, finding transportation, fundraising</p>

Accomplishments

Work-Content
Skills

Self-Management
Skills

Functional
Skills

Equipped for the Future (EFF)

The Equipped for the Future Standards for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning (<http://eff.cls.utk.edu/resources/default.htm>) are the result of six years of effort by hundreds of people nationwide to agree on the goals of teaching and learning. The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) led

this effort to clearly identify what educators, administrators, employers, and policy makers need to do nationally to answer a complex question: What do adults need to know and be able to do in order to carry out their roles and responsibilities as workers, parents, family members, citizens, and community members in the 21st Century? EFF identified 16 core skills or standards

that constitute a foundation for future success. The EFF 16 core skills were grouped into four fundamental categories: 1) Communication, 2) Decision Making Skills, 3) Interpersonal Skills, and 4) Lifelong Learning Skills. Review the descriptions for each skill area listed below. Circle your already well-developed skills. Place an “x” next to the skills that need additional work.

The Four EFF Skills: Communication, Decision-Making, Interpersonal, and Lifelong Learning

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Observe Critically

- Attend to visual sources of information, including television and other media.
- Determine the purpose for observation and use strategies appropriate to the purpose.
- Monitor comprehension and adjust strategies.
- Analyze the accuracy, bias, and usefulness of the information.
- Integrate observations and information with prior knowledge.

Convey Ideas in Writing

- Determine the purpose for communicating.
- Organize and present information to serve the purpose, context, and audience.
- Pay attention to conventions of English language usage, including grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, to minimize barriers to reader's comprehension.
- Seek feedback to revise and enhance the effectiveness of the communication.

Listen Actively

- Attend to oral information.
- Clarify purpose for listening and use listening strategies appropriate to that purpose.
- Monitor comprehension and adjust listening strategies to overcome barriers to comprehension.
- Integrate information from listening with prior knowledge to address listening purpose.

Speak So Others Can Understand

- Determine the purpose for communicating.

- Organize and relay information to effectively serve the purpose, context, and listener.
- Pay attention to conventions of oral English communication, including grammar, word choice, register, pace, and gesture in order to minimize barriers to listener's comprehension.
- Use multiple strategies to monitor the effectiveness of the communication.

Read With Understanding

- Determine the reading purpose.
- Select reading strategies appropriate to the purpose.
- Monitor comprehension and adjust reading strategies.
- Analyze the information and reflect on its underlying meaning.
- Integrate information with prior knowledge to address reading purpose.

DECISION MAKING SKILLS

Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate

- Understand, interpret, and work with pictures, numbers, and symbolic information.
- Apply knowledge of mathematical concepts and procedures to figure out how to answer a question, solve a problem, make a prediction, or carry out a task that has a mathematical dimension.
- Define and select data to be used in solving the problem.
- Determine the degree of precision required by the situation.
- Solve problems using appropriate quantitative procedures and verify that the results are reasonable.

- Communicate results using a variety of mathematical representations, including graphs, charts, tables, and algebraic models.

Solve Problems and Make Decisions

- Anticipate or identify problems.
- Use information from diverse sources to arrive at a clearer understanding of the problem and its root causes.
- Generate alternative solutions.
- Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of alternatives, including potential risks and benefits and short- and long-term consequences.
- Select an alternative that is most appropriate to goal, context, and available resources.
- Establish criteria for evaluating effectiveness of solution or decision.

Plan

- Set and prioritize goals.
- Develop an organized approach of activities and objectives.
- Actively carry out the plan.
- Monitor the plan's progress while considering any need to adjust the plan.
- Evaluate the plan's effectiveness in achieving the goals.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Cooperate With Others

- Interact with others in friendly, courteous, and tactful ways that demonstrate respect for others' ideas, opinions, and contributions.

- Seek input from others in order to understand their actions and reactions.
- Offer clear input on own interests and attitudes so others can understand one's actions and reactions.
- Try to adjust one's actions to take into account the needs of others and/or the task to be accomplished.

Advocate and Influence

- Define what one is trying to achieve.
- Assess interests, resources, and the potential for success.
- Gather facts and supporting information to build a case that takes into account the interests and attitudes of others.
- Present a clear case using a strategy taking into account purpose and audience.
- Revise, as necessary, in response to feedback.

Resolve Conflict and Negotiate

- Acknowledge that there is a conflict.
- Identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- Generate options for resolving conflict having a "win/win" potential.
- Engage parties in trying to reach agreement on a course of action that can satisfy the needs and interests of all.

- Evaluate results of efforts and revise approach as necessary.

Guide Others

- Assess the needs of others and one's own ability to assist.
- Use strategies for providing guidance taking into account the goals, task, context, and learning styles of others.
- Arrange opportunities for learning building on the learner's strengths.
- Seek feedback on the usefulness and results of the assistance.

LIFELONG LEARNING SKILLS

Take Responsibility for Learning

- Establish learning goals that are based on an understanding of one's own current and future learning needs.
- Identify own strengths and weaknesses as a learner and seek opportunities for learning that help build self-concept as a learner.
- Become familiar with a range of learning strategies to acquire or retain knowledge.
- Identify and use strategies appropriate to goals, task, context, and the resources available for learning.
- Monitor progress toward goals and modify strategies or other features of the learning situation as necessary to achieve goals.

- Test out new learning in real-life applications.

Use Information and Communications Technology

- Determine the purpose for using information and communications technology.
- Select the technology tool(s) and resources appropriate for the purpose.
- Apply technological knowledge, skills, and strategies to use technology tool(s) to locate, process, or communicate information.
- Monitor own ability to use tools and the effectiveness of the tools in achieving the purpose; if needed, use strategies to overcome barriers to achieving goals.

Learn Through Research

- Pose a question to be answered or make a prediction about objects or events.
- Use multiple lines of inquiry to collect information.
- Organize, evaluate, and analyze findings.
- Interpret and communicate findings.

Reflect and Evaluate

- Take stock of where one is: assess what one already knows and the relevance of that knowledge.
- Make inferences, predictions, or judgments based on one's reflections.

What do your well-developed skills have in common?

What do your undeveloped skills have in common?

Skill Assessment Exercise

This exercise has three steps.

Step 1: Assess your level of proficiency for each skill below by circling the appropriate number in the far left hand column. Note: It is acceptable to select both high and low ratings. Use the scale below to assign a rating.

- 1 = if you do not have the skill
- 2 = if you are less skilled than most people
- 3 = if you are as skilled as most people
- 4 = if you are somewhat more skilled than most people
- 5 = if you are much more skilled than most people

Step 2: Place a check mark next to 15 skills you most enjoy using in the first column on the right side of the page.

Step 3: Select five to seven skills you want to learn, develop, or improve by placing a check mark in the far right column.

Step 1 Circle Your Level of Proficiency or Skill	Step 2 Check 15 Skills You Enjoy Using	Step 3 Check 7-10 Skills You Want to Learn/Improve
Interpersonal Skills		
1 2 3 4 5 Collaborating with others on a team	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Providing feedback and encouragement	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Teaching, training, advising others	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Leading others	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Facilitating compromise/agreement	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Analyzing the behavior of self and others in group situations	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Serving/meeting customer expectations	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Other _____	_____	_____
Communication Skills		
1 2 3 4 5 Speaking clearly	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Selling a product or service	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Giving effective oral presentations	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Listening effectively	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Interviewing and probing for information	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Using language, grammar, and punctuation correctly	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Editing and preparing concise written materials	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Writing creatively	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Other _____	_____	_____
Decision-Making Skills		
1 2 3 4 5 Defining the problem and collecting relevant information	_____	_____
1 2 3 4 5 Generating alternative solutions	_____	_____

1	2	3	4	5	Evaluating alternatives including costs and benefits	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Selecting appropriate solutions	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Developing plans to implement solutions	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Implementing solutions to complex problems	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Establishing criteria to evaluate effectiveness of solutions	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____

Planning and Organizational Skills

1	2	3	4	5	Forecasting, predicting, foreseeing, perceiving trends	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Organizing resources to meet goals	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Identifying goals, objectives, and tasks to be accomplished	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Prioritizing steps	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Making and keeping a schedule	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Handling multiple demands for time, energy, and resources	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Evaluating progress	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____

Leadership and Team Building Skills

1	2	3	4	5	Organizing people and tasks to achieve specific goals	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding strengths and weaknesses of others	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Using strengths to build and develop the team	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Formulating a series of steps to meet goals/objectives	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Delegating responsibility for various tasks	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Developing strategies for executing an action plan	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Coaching/mentoring team members	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Resolving/negotiating any team conflicts	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Working effectively with organization members	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____

Financial Management Skills

1	2	3	4	5	Preparing a budget including justification	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Monitoring expenses	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Making payments on time	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Keeping accurate records of accounts receivables	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Preparing monthly statements	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____

Mechanical and Technical Skills							
1	2	3	4	5	Building, making, repairing objects	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Driving or operating vehicles and special equipment	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Applying mechanical principles to practical situations	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Using machines or hand tools	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Moving with dexterity, physical coordination, and agility	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____
Scientific, Mathematical, Research, and Investigative Skills							
1	2	3	4	5	Using logic or scientific thinking to solve problems	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding complex technical and scientific information	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Developing a hypothesis and designing an experiment, plan, or model	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Using words, diagrams, numbers, and chemical formulas	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding and using scientific and technical language and symbols	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Working precisely and accurately	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Observing, reflecting, and using insight	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Experimenting, dissecting, and applying various methods to test the validity of data	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Sorting information into categories, classifying, comparing, and finding patterns	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Locating resources using a variety of sources of information	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Developing mathematical models for scientific, behavioral, or economic phenomena	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Using non-verbal symbols to express ideas and interpret data	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____
Physical Performance							
1	2	3	4	5	Learning rules of a sport and performing them accurately	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Making decisions quickly	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Coordinating eye, hand, body, and foot movements with skill	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Coping with the physical/mental pressures of competition	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Following training schedule strictly	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Assuming the risk of physical injury	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Judging distance, speed, and movement of objects or people	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Observing, reflecting, and using insight	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____
Creative Expressions							
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding and applying artistic principles/techniques	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Visualizing how the final product will look from rough sketches or working drawings	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Using eyes, hands, and fingers skillfully to guide tools precisely	_____	_____

1	2	3	4	5	Designing buildings or interiors of rooms	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Performing before an audience with poise and self-confidence	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Interpreting roles and expressing emotions through gestures, facial expressions, and voice inflections	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Speaking clearly and loudly, memorizing dialogue, and responding to cues promptly	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Spending long hours developing and perfecting your talent and continuing to practice daily	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Recognizing and following music symbols and oral or written instructions for interpreting music properly	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Orchestrating or arranging compositions to create desired effects	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Applying musical theories and techniques to direct performances or vocal or instrumental groups	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Imagining, creating, inventing, and innovating	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Critiquing plays or other writings	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Influencing the opinions of people through words	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Reading literature and preparing summaries	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____

Human Relations Skills

1	2	3	4	5	Empathizing, offering support, and caring	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Recognizing needs of others	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Developing rapport and establishing relationships	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Valuing people from diverse socioeconomic, religious, racial, ability, and sexual orientation backgrounds	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Helping others see themselves as valuable assets to society	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Mentoring, coaching, counseling, and advising	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Facilitating groups	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____

Personal and Career Development Skills

1	2	3	4	5	Matching self-knowledge to information about occupations	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Identifying, describing, and assessing your needs, values, and interests	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Identifying and describing skills gained through education and life experiences	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Identifying your own strengths and weaknesses	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Accepting responsibility for your actions and learning from constructive criticism	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Maintaining a healthy lifestyle	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Seeking opportunities for personal growth and professional development	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Understanding and displaying appropriate behaviors for the workplace	_____	_____
1	2	3	4	5	Other _____	_____	_____

Skill Assessment Summary

In the first column, record the 15 skills you selected in Step 2.	In second column, give an example that best illustrates your use of each skill.
Example: Teaching/training others	Example: Taught Sunday School for three years.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	

Skill Development Strategies

In the first column, record the 7-10 skills to learn or improve that you selected in Step 3.	In the second column, give examples of strategies you can use to learn, develop, or improve each skill.
Example: Giving effective oral presentations	Example: Join Toast Masters.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Researching Occupations

Occupational research is an investigative process for exploring vocational prospects and career paths best suited to one's skills, values, interests, and personality. Your values, interests, skills, and personality all contribute to your uniqueness. To recap the basic definitions, your values are personal beliefs that are especially significant to you (e.g., independence, achievement, security). Your interests are activities you enjoy (e.g., debating, attending concerts, exercising) and subjects that intrigue or fascinate you (e.g., digital art, Civil War History, accounting). Your skills are developed competencies acquired by learning and practice, (e.g., teaching, web design, analysis, writing). Finally, your personality consists of characteristics, traits, and qualities (e.g., reliable, sincere, helpful, easygoing) that make you who you are. You are more likely to enjoy your life and find satisfaction in your work when your values, interests, skills, and personality match not only your initial choice occupation, but also the choices you will make over a lifetime.

In this section, you will be introduced to several online resources to help you identify occupations and job titles, gather detailed information, and apply specific criteria to narrow your list of occupational prospects. By using many different resources, you will be able to find a great deal of information about specific industries, occupations, job titles, and career paths.

FOCUS: Career & Educational Planning Solutions

FOCUS is a Computer Assisted Career Guidance System featuring career assessments for interests, values, skills, and personality types. Once the assessments are completed, FOCUS generates a list of occupations that match your assessment results. FOCUS can be found online through MyBGSU. Select the Quicklinks tab at the top of the page. In the Misc Services box, click on "FOCUS: Career & Education Planning Solutions."

Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)

The DOT provides concise, accurate job descriptions for more than 12,000 occupations. Each occupation is assigned a nine-digit DOT code number. You can search for occupations using the alphabet letters and subgroups. Access the DOT online at <http://www.occupationalinfo.org/contents.html> to search for specific job titles.

Occupational Information Network: (O*NET)

Access O*NET online at <http://online.onetcenter.org/>. Occupations can be searched by keywords, job families, O*Net Descriptors (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities), and DOT codes or titles. A summary report can be obtained for 280 occupations, including: a brief description, sample job titles, tasks, work activities, work context, interests, work styles, work values, knowledge and skills required, wages, employment trends, and related occupations.

Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)

The OOH can be found online at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>. Use the A-Z index to find a specific occupation by clicking on the letter that corresponds with the first letter of the occupation you want to review. You can also type in the name of an occupation or job title directly. Each occupational description includes the following information: 1) nature of the work; 2) working conditions; 3) employment statistics; 4) training, other qualifications, and advancement; 5) job outlook; 6) earnings; 7) related occupations; and 8) sources of additional information.

Other Helpful Websites

ACT's World-of-Work map

(<http://www.act.org/wwm/student.html>) This map organizes occupations into 26 career groups and 12 different clusters. Each career falls into one of four primary work tasks: Data, Ideas, People, and Things.

Riley Guide (<http://www.rileyguide.com/careers.html>) This guide offers many ways to explore career options. It contains links to various assessments for personality, skills, interests, and values.

Job Web (http://www.jobweb.com/resources/library/careers_in/default.htm) Job Web identifies various careers and required training in and licensure for each field. It also identifies different ways to research careers and make decisions about your future.

Federal Employment

(<http://www.fedworld.gov/>) Fed World identifies the various government jobs. This site also offers information on the funding sources for business, science, and technology fields.

US Department of Labor's Career Guide

(<http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/home.htm>) This site features industries by cluster.

Occupational Outlook Quarterly

(<http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/ooqhome.htm>) This website features articles on trends in the workplace and emerging occupations.

America's Career InfoNet

(http://www.acinet.org/acinet/select_occupation.asp?stfips=&next=ksas1) A career exploration site that provides occupational information, industry information, and state information. Career InfoNet features mini videos on the different career prospects at <http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp?tab=generaloutlook>.

LifeWorks Health and Medical Science Career Exploration

(<http://www.science.education.nih.gov/LifeWorks.nsf/feature/index.htm>)

University of California, Berkley's Career

Exploration Links (<http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/sudents/careerlibrary/links/occup.cfm>)

Sources of Employer Information

- Almanac of American Employers
- Standard & Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors, and Executives
- Dun's Employment Opportunities Directory (Dun's Career Guide)
- Job Seekers Guide to Public and Private Companies
- Telephone books (yellow pages)
- Online telephone directories (yellow pages + keyword search, e.g., occupational title)
- Employer websites
- Chambers of Commerce websites (local employers)
- Trade Journals (e.g., Advertising Age)
- Newspapers (e.g., Wall Street Journal, Blade)

This chapter of the BIG Job Search Guide has led you through a variety of self-assessment exercises. After completing all of the activities in this chapter, reflect upon the new insights you have gained regarding your values, interests, personality, core competencies, and weaknesses or undeveloped skills. Use the Self-Assessment Summary on page 21 to record your conclusions. We recommend you refer to this Summary as you investigate occupations and employment options. Use the web-based tools listed on this page to help you identify a wide variety of occupations, industries, and employers that match your personal preferences. As you conduct your research, we recommend using the Occupational Information Form on page 22, or creating your own chart, to capture detailed information about each occupation you are considering. Using a methodical approach to gather and evaluate information will make your comparison of your career and life options easier and more thorough.

There are other advantages you will gain from investing time now in self-assessment and occupational research. You will be better prepared to write cover letters, interview for positions, evaluate job offers, and make informed decisions about your future. The BIG Job Search Guide was created to help you successfully navigate each step of the job search process. If you start your job search at least six months prior to graduation and carefully follow the strategies and action steps outlined in each chapter, you should have multiple job offers to consider at graduation. The Job Evaluation Worksheet on page 92 can help you compare offers based on your personal criteria. We invite you to contact the Career Center for assistance with any aspect of your job search or employment transition.

Self-Assessment Summary

Values (List your top five work-related and personal values.)

Strongest Interests (Indicate the types of activities, people, and subjects you enjoy.)

Personality traits (Consider your temperament, emotional capabilities, energy level, motivation, and interpersonal behavior.)

Core competencies (Include your most-developed skills, areas of special knowledge or expertise, and physical capabilities.)

Weaknesses, limitations, or undeveloped skills (List skills you want to learn or improve.)

Add other important factors (e.g., your short and long term goals, needs, lifestyle preferences.)

Occupational Information Form

Name of occupation

Definition, nature of the work,
job description

Working conditions

Education, training, and/or
experience needed

Skills and/or specialized knowledge
required

Earnings
(use two sources)

Employment and advancement
outlook

Types of organizations that employ
people in the occupation

Professional associations

Related occupations

Sources of additional information