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 lifestyle 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 five values you list on the lines below.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
II. Interests

Many 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 a great deal. Place an asterisk (*) beside those things that you enjoy a great deal, but don't presently have the time and/or the opportunity to explore. Of the interests you've marked, circle the ones that you think 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
- volunteering for 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
- opera
- anticipating needs of others
- visiting older people
- socializing at parties
- caring for sick people
- giving advice
- planning events
- Visiting art museums
- 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, research papers

☐ Proposal Writing – creating documents for 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 – Persuading others to adopt ideas, products, or 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 - making ideas clear to others; justifying one's actions to others

Fund Raising - procuring money on a person-to-person basis, such as door-to-door collecting for charity; or from large foundations, organizations; or for political candidates; or through sale of products and services; or through advertising

Reading - large amounts of material quickly; reviewing 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, creating surveys

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, accounting for expenditures
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, the internet

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
Design/Planning Skills

- Displaying - ideas in an artistic form, pictures for public display, products in store windows, etc.
- Synthesizing / 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; new ways of solving mechanical problems; personal contacts with strangers
- Dealing with Unknowns - making decisions based upon severely limited information; making hypotheses about phenomena virtually unknown; guesstimating
- 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
- 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
- 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
- Managing 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 – Following specific specifications to produce a product or a process, activity, test, pamphlet 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 – arranging 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

☐ museums
☐ art galleries
☐ symphonies
☐ movie houses
☐ theaters
☐ further education
☐ civic clubs
☐ religious activities
☐ social opportunities
☐ others?
☐ size of city (to nearest 50,000)
☐ sporting events
☐ local government
☐ community involvement
☐ others?

Geography

☐ near mountains
☐ near ocean
☐ access to rivers or lakes
☐ others? (specify)
☐ near ski slopes
☐ near desert
☐ physical proximity to friends
☐ physical proximity to family

Weather

☐ all four seasons
☐ widely varied temperature
☐ lots of snow
☐ small temperature variation
☐ little rain
☐ little snow
mostly sunshine [ ] other? (specify) [ ]

**Commuting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(means)</th>
<th>(time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>train</td>
<td>less than 15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus</td>
<td>15-30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpool</td>
<td>30-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your car</td>
<td>60+ minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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) $ __________

- job funded on time-limited basis, eg. grants
- have enough money just to get by
- live comfortably
- continue the lifestyle in which raised
- have strong buying power
- able to make large financial investments
- be very wealthy
- work in profit making environment

**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
- must put in time socializing with employees, customers, and/or supervisors
flexible daily schedule ☑  peak times, slack times ☑
over time expected ☑  summers and school holidays free ☑
other? (specify) ☑  can take vacations when you choose ☑

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

Characteristics of co-workers
associates as close friends ☑  people whose work is their primary interest ☑
competition with co-workers ☑  people you socialize with after work ☑
people who prefer to work autonomously ☑  people who like to collaborate ☑
colleagues willing to work as hard as you ☑  develop close relationship with the boss ☑
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
- sex
- educational level
- income level
- fields of specialty
- philosophy/religious belief
- political persuasion

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
- 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)
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.”

Try writing your own paragraph, synthesizing your interests, values and preferences into a potential ideal job description. Talk about the skills you’d like to utilize, the interests you’d want to focus on and the general work environment that would be most satisfactory to you.
There are a number of assessment tools available at UCS (both online and print), including:

- Myers Briggs
- Strong Interest Inventory
- UCS Career Exploration Guide
- 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. 11-7 - 11-13; 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.