

Self-Assessment Roadmap: Navigating Your Future

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Self-Assessment: The First Step

Wondering how to get started thinking about your future?

Start with you.

Assessing your *skills, interests, values, and personality type* can help you:

Decide “What’s next?” – whether it’s finding your first job after Smith, gaining internship experience, pursuing further study, or taking some time out.

Determine what careers and fields of study might be a good fit.

Market yourself to potential employers and graduate/professional schools.

This handout is designed to help you identify your skills, interests, and values and plan for your next steps.

Defining Skills, Interests, and Values

Skills are competencies developed through everything you do: jobs and internships, activities, courses, and pastimes. A Smith degree builds highly marketable skills transferable to a variety of fields.

Interests are issues, activities, or fields of knowledge important to you. Connecting with people who share your interests is an important part of researching jobs, internships, and options for further study.

Values are qualities you consider important about your work and life. Your definition of career success may reflect the work values most meaningful to you.

After completing the exercises in this handout, feel free to discuss your findings with a career advisor.

Other Self-Assessment Tools

The Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator (MBTI) is a personality questionnaire that suggests work settings, careers, and academic fields that might be a good fit. A career advisor may suggest you take the MBTI as a follow-up to an appointment. The assessment takes less than 30 minutes to complete, and a one-hour interpretation appointment is needed. MBTI group workshops are offered each semester.

The SkillScan Advance Pack is a fun and interactive card sort which helps you identify core skills and connect them to career options. To take SkillScan, meet with a career advisor.

Self-Assessment: An Ongoing Process

As you gain new skills and experiences, always take time to re-assess before moving ahead. Your decisions will be more focused, and as a result, you’ll have more confidence in them and yourself.

Skill Sort

Directions:

1. On the list below, check all of the skills you're capable of using.
2. Of the skills you've checked, circle the ones you most enjoy using.
3. Below, list the five skills you most want in your work; when you use them, you're at your best and happiest.
4. List five additional skills you're good at and would be able to use at work, even if they aren't your favorites.

Leadership/Management Skills:

- Organize
- Implement
- Make decisions
- Manage projects
- Coordinate
- Build a team
- Envision
- Coach
- Set goals
- Lead

Relationship Skills:

- Collaborate
- Serve clients and customers
- Resolve conflict
- Facilitate groups
- Demonstrate social/cultural awareness
- Provide care and support
- Advocate
- Serve as liaison
- Counsel
- Train/instruct

Creativity Skills:

- Perform artistically
- Synthesize/integrate
- Use intuition
- Conceptualize
- Visualize
- Brainstorm
- Demonstrate foresight
- Design
- Author/compose written work
- Create images

Communication Skills:

- Listen
- Consult
- Negotiate
- Interview
- Speak to groups
- Persuade
- Speak/interact
- Sell
- Write
- Promote

Physical Skills:

- Sketch/draw
- Hand dexterity/use tools and equipment
- Install
- Body coordination
- Observe
- Build/construct
- Restore/renovate
- Inspect/test
- Repair
- Operate equipment (electronic, mechanical)

Analytical Skills:

- Analyze
- Categorize/classify objects or information
- Evaluate
- Calculate/compute data
- Forecast
- Research
- Solve problems
- Budget/allocate resources
- Manage data or records
- Estimate/make rough calculation

Five skills I most want to use in my work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Five more skills I could use in my work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Interest Inventory

What if you could get paid to do what you find most interesting and important? Use this exercise to start thinking about what you really enjoy and interests that might become part of your work.

1. What course have you found most interesting and why? _____

2. What do you find most interesting about your major or intended major? _____

3. What do you most enjoy reading and why? _____

4. How do you like to spend your free time and why? _____

5. If you had time each week to volunteer, what organization, cause, or population would you serve and why?

6. What three local, national, social, or global issues most interest you and why? _____

7. Think of the jobs and internships you've held, and the activities you've been involved in. What has been the most interesting and why? _____

8. What themes do you see most often in the above answers? _____

Based on your answers above, complete the following:

Interests which could be part of my work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Interests important to my leisure time:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Career Values

Understanding what motivates you can help you make career decisions that are a good fit. Review the following values and check those most important to you. Add any you like.

Rank your top five career values in order of priority and record them below.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work as part of a team | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity, self-expression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work independently | <input type="checkbox"/> Job security and benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with people one-on-one | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast-paced environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with groups of people | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed, casual environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lots of public contact | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition, respect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little public contact | <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to advance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive workplace | <input type="checkbox"/> See the results of my work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Predictable, routine schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structured work environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpredictable environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help others | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive, mentoring supervisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geographic flexibility | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to a cause important to me | Other values important to me: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional status | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic work environment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Risk-taking, adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly, collegial co-workers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-workers I respect | My five most important career values: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use skills I already have | 1. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life/work balance | 2. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detail-oriented workplace | 3. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas-oriented workplace | 4. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop new skills, learn | 5. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of daily tasks | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial reward, wealth | |

Definition of Success

Describe the time you felt most successful.

Now think of a person who epitomizes success, as you define it. What characteristics or competencies make this person a success, in your opinion?

Based on the above, write a definition of what it means *to you* to be successful.

Putting It All Together: Next Steps

Transfer your findings from the skills, interests, and values exercises to the spaces below:

Five top skills to use in my work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Five more skills I could use in my work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Interests I'd like to incorporate into my work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Values important in my work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My definition of success (may include interests important to your leisure time):

If there are work options you'd like to explore suggested by the above, list them below.

Options to explore: _____

To generate and research additional options, try the following:

1. Search [Handshake](#) for descriptions of jobs and internships. Read a variety of descriptions (regardless of location), and think about what you find appealing.
 - In the keyword field, enter a skill that you'd like to use in your work (ex: writing), an issue that interests you (ex: sustainability), or a population you'd like to focus on (ex: LGBTQ). Run different searches to net the greatest number of descriptions.
 - Use filters to elect Job Function or Industry settings for additional results.
 - Identify positions for which your major is sought, also in filters.
2. Browse Career Field Links in Job Resources on the Lazarus Center website for field-specific information.
3. Speak with people about their career fields during [informational interviews](#). Consider:
 - Alums on LinkedIn. Use the online alumnae directory (see Alumnae Office site) to find email addresses.
 - Contacts suggested by faculty, former supervisors, friends, family, and others you meet.
 - Anyone whose career path and professional achievements interest you.
4. Take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and research the job titles listed in your results.
5. Meet with a career advisor to discuss your findings, generate new ideas, and plan your next steps.