

Career Exploration Guide

In order to maximize the benefits of taking a career assessment, it is important to explore industries, subjects, and occupations of interest by using quality career resources and information. This guide provides career development resources and strategies, as well as an interactive worksheet to help you track your findings and reactions to your career research.

Should I take a class in an area of interest?

Of course! Take your assessment feedback to your next advising appointment and build in some new coursework to explore different interests.

- o Contact your Academic Advisors for an appointment.
- o Visit the Registrar's Office website to explore available majors and minors - www.uky.edu/academics.

What occupations are typically associated with a major in _____ ?

- o "What Can I Do With This Major" can be accessed via Handshake. Log into your account and find the "Resources" section. Locate the link for the resources there. The link will take you to <https://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major>, but this can only be accessed through a UK based link.

What does this career involve? How much does it pay? How is the job market in this field?

- o Visit <http://www.onetonline.org> and <http://www.bls.gov/ooh>.

What does a typical day on the job look like? How do I learn more about careers?

- o Set up a FREE account with **Career Insider by Vault** within your Handshake account within the "Resources" section.
 - o Review occupational descriptions and descriptions of career paths.
 - o Research companies and industries—"Top Ranked Companies"
- o Watch videos of people discussing their jobs on **Candid Career**. This resource can be access via Handshake in the "Resources Section or at: <http://www.uky.edu/careercenter/students/career-major-exploration>.

Conduct a job description audit.

- o Jump on www.indeed.com (our favorite job search site) and start looking up actual jobs with the titles that interest you. Pay attention to the themes you notice across different positions and within different industries. Do you like the sound of the jobs? What qualifications and skills will you need?

Consult a professional in the field by completing an informational interview.

- o Network with professionals in your field of interest. Your counselor can help provide leads.
- o Research potential contacts using LinkedIn.com or LinkedIn.com/alumni (set up your profile and add University of Kentucky as your school).
- o Utilize CareerShift, a search tool that returns results from every career site and job board, within Handshake (within "Resources"). Search for contacts under "My Jobs" or "My Companies"
- o See next page for more details on conducting informational interviews.

How can I gain experience to try out an occupation or industry?

- o Secure and complete an internship; job shadow and asked to observe professionals in occupations of interest at their place of work.
- o Search internship postings in your Handshake Account under "Jobs/Internships"
- o Attend the Internship & Career Fairs (held each fall and spring).
- o Meet with your personal development counselor to strategize.
- o Network, network, network: let your contacts know you are seeking an internship.

Informational Interviews

Often the most current information about a career field, especially in a specific geographic location, may not be available in print or online resources. The best information comes from people who are actually working in that career field.

An **informational interview** is an informal conversation with someone working in an area of interest to you who will give you information and advice. It is an effective research tool in addition to reading books, exploring the Internet and examining job descriptions. **It is not a job interview, and the objective is not to find job openings.**

You may feel awkward making arrangements to talk with people you don't know about their work. However, most people actually enjoy taking a few moments out of their day to reflect on their professional life and to give advice to someone with an interest in their field. Be sure to dress professionally and make a good impression on your interviewee. Bringing copies of your resume and asking for feedback is acceptable if time allows. Research your interviewee as much as you can by utilizing LinkedIn or online portfolios, in order to express that you have taken an interest in their specific career.

Examples of Questions to Ask:

- What attracted you to this industry, your company, and your job?
- What do you enjoy most about this industry, your company, and your job? What motivates you about your position?
- What are your educational and career backgrounds? Is this background typical for most people in your position?
- What are your short-term and long-term career expectations?
- What are your primary responsibilities?
- What does a typical day or week look like for you?
- How much time do you spend in meetings, on the phone, and traveling?
- How often do you work in teams versus working independently?
- What skills are most critical to your success?
- What weaknesses in a person's skill set would make him or her ineffective in this business?
- How do you keep your skills current? What do you read? Does your company require continuing education workshops?
- Are there any common misconceptions about working for this company or the industry as a whole?
- What are some of the defining characteristics of individuals who have been hired by your company in the past for this position? How do you determine a candidate's potential for this position, considering education, personality, and culture?
- What do you expect of people starting out in this field?
- What are some of the ways I can become familiar with the industry jargon?
- Is there anything else you think would be helpful as I consider this program?
- Looking at my resume, what advice would you have for me on the next steps if I were interested in career opportunities with your company?

Potential Professionals to Interview:

Career Exploration Worksheet

My Top 5: Which occupations would you like to research?	Examples of tasks/duties performed in this occupation	Key skills needed	Typical educational path (How do I become one?)	Who do I know to contact to learn more about this occupation?	What I like about this occupation	What I do not like about this occupation	Questions I still have about this occupation

You can also conduct career research by researching organizations. List companies, organizations, or institutions of interest and a brief explanation of how you fit with them, or why you are interested in them:

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

Career Action Plan

Goal: _____

Activities to help me reach my goal	People or information resources needed	Personal deadline to complete this activity	Activity completed (✓)