Career and Employment tip sheets

CAREER ASSESSMENTS

Are you:

Unsure of your career direction? Interested in a lot of things, but nothing in particular?
Clear on the academic program you are interested in but not on careers related to it?
Wondering what specific career/work options are a good fit for your interests?
Know what professional degree you want to pursue after your undergraduate degree, but don't have a Plan "B" or "C"?
Considering two possibilities, but aren't sure how to decide between them?

Speak with an experienced career development professional to see if career inventories, assessments and exercises may help you understand yourself better or to better evaluate occupational choices that might be right for you.

What career assessment tools can do

Assessments provide a snapshot of a dimension of what you are like at a particular time. As a student in an undergraduate program, you are continually learning, growing and changing – a process which will continue over all stages of your life.

Assessing yourself periodically allows you to:

- » capture and appreciate the unique growth you are undergoing;
- » identify preferred situations to put into practice what you have learned;
- » significantly enhance your ability to recognize, pursue and accept the most personally satisfying career and employment opportunities.
- ✓ Inventories, assessments and exercises help you think systematically about specific areas such as work values, preferred work styles, interests, job specific or transferable skills, personal preferences and areas to consider developing further for continued success.
- ✓ Each tool will help you clarify what you want, what is important to you and gaps to work on in the context of possible career or work alternatives.
- ✓ Doing informal assessments can be helpful simply by providing a structured way to put into words what you know and believe, how you feel and what you can do so it can be viewed from a new perspective.

What career assessment tools can't do

* Assessments can't point you to a 'perfect fit' career or give you definitive answers about jobs, occupations or programs to pursue. They will not provide you with 'answers' to what you should do or take. You are the expert on yourself; the 'answers' come from knowing yourself and the world around you better.





- × Assessment tools, including inventories and exercises, are not tests. There are no right or wrong answers, and informal assessments do not measure or report aptitude or intelligence. Rather, they will help you reflect on your own strengths and preferences as they relate to careers and career building activities.
- * Each assessment measures only certain aspects of a person and bases suggestions on that limited information. Work with a career development professional to interpret assessment results, clarify what is unique about you, and suggest a plan that connects you with alternatives you might enjoy.

How do I start?

Based on your responses to standardized questions, career assessments assign you to predetermined categories, each representing people who have answered the same questions in a similar way. You may be very similar to the group profile, or different in important ways. It is your self-understanding that you will use to decide between what is truly a good career fit and what may be an attractive idea but not a great fit for you.

There are so many different kinds of career assessments, tools and exercises that deciding which ones will be of maximum value for you will be confusing.

For help in identifying what tools, if any, are best suited for your needs, book an appointment at Career Services. Visit Career Services at A200 Kerby Hall or call 403.440.6307.

Informal assessment tool options

Informal assessments may use formats such as agree/disagree, multiple choice, free-form or rank ordering responses. Topics fall into five broad categories and are detailed with sample questions below.

1.	What you like to do	Interests
2.	What you do well	Competencies/skills/abilities
3.	What is important to you	Work values, preferences, priorities
4.	What you are like	Work style/personality
5.	What could hold you back	Personal barriers

1. Interests

Interests are things you enjoy doing and learning. To make good decisions, it helps to know what subject matter captures your attention and keeps you involved. Interest inventories help you categorize what you do (at work, at school, at home and at play) to identify and organize areas of interest.

Remember, interest and passion are not the same as an ability to do something well.

Where do your interests lie?

Sample: I like to work with numbers and statistics.

Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

Sample: I would prefer to (a) write reports, or (b) help someone fix something.

Sample: What topics have always been of interest to you? _

2. Competencies/skills/abilities

Nobody is good at everything, but you have already developed a number of valuable competencies worth keeping in mind. Being able to speak about what you do well is extremely important, yet most of us have trouble identifying and quantifying our skills despite using them daily. We all have talents that go unmentioned and therefore unappreciated. In addition, skills are not static. We are always developing new skills, strengthening existing skills and losing skills we no longer use.

What are you good at?

Sample: What is one thing you do better than your friends, classmates or co-workers?

Sample: Describe how you showed leadership during a challenging situation.

Sample: Rate your skill level:

Speaking in Public: Delivering a speech/presentation to an audience or large group.

Unskilled Basic Skill Somewhat Skilled Skilled Highly Skilled

3. Work values, preferences, priorities and lifestyle considerations

Many of us are not aware of our personal priorities, or have not examined our assumptions and beliefs about occupations and characteristics of the workplace that are important to us. It is important for career satisfaction to ensure that the work and the work setting you choose reflects your values and preferences. Significant discrepancies may cause unhappiness, increased stress and disillusionment.

What do you find valuable in work?

Sample:	Rank in order of importance to you the work values below:			
	Adventure/Excitement			
	Helping Others/Society			
	Receiving Recognition/Advancement			
Sample: What was your favourite high school or University course and what were thre this course that you found rewarding?				
Sample:	Choose one statement that best describes you. I like to:			
	□ accomplish tangible results			
	☐ analyze facts and data			

4. Work style/personality

Your personality makes you uniquely different from others and is a combination of the way you think, what you feel and how you naturally act. Personality is made up, in part, of common traits. Specific traits are often found more frequently in people working in specific careers and may be valued more or less highly in specific occupations. Career options which relate to your natural style may increase career satisfaction.

What does your work style reflect?

Sample:	Choose the sentence ending that best describes you. I am:	
	□ careful, logical, rational and act with forethought	
	☐ creative, imaginative, inventive and act on intuition	
Sample:	I enjoy meeting and spending time with people I have not previously met.	TRUE / FALSE
Sample:	Choose one statement that best describes you	
	☐ I am competitive	
	□ Leniov collaborating with others	

5. Personal barriers

Taking stock of barriers may be useful for individuals who have had trouble finding opportunities, are unable to keep a job, are repeatedly unhappy in the work they choose or are unsuccessful in landing the work they desire. Once identified, a career development professional can suggest strategies to overcome these barriers, create effective action plans or identify appealing alternatives.

Are you missing terrific opportunities by being unaware of personal barriers?

Sample: I have a large personal network I can leverage that includes family, friends, neighbours and coworkers.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

Sample: I delay important tasks I know I should be working on. TRUE / FALSE

Sample: I can clearly and concisely talk about my specific career strengths, skills and interests.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree



To get maximum benefit, discuss completed tools with a Certified Career Development Professional at Career Services. They can help point out patterns or themes and help synthesize information with your unique academic, volunteer and work experiences to make the most of your potential.

Finding the right career, occupation and job takes:

- √ time
- √ research
- ✓ self awareness

Get to know yourself and your career options better

✓ Book an appointment with a Career Development Coordinator to discuss your career questions and the type of inventories, assessments or exercises to meet your needs.

or

✓ Visit www.mtroyal.ca/careerservices and click on Students >> Online Resource Centre.

Career Services can help you:

Meet with a Certified Career Development Professional to discuss your career options. Have your resume critiqued and get one-on-one interview preparation assistance.

Connect early with employers through events, fairs, job postings and work experience programs.

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