Career Exploration

Exploring different careers can be overwhelming. There are an infinite number of different career possibilities, and choosing only one may seem like a daunting task. However, as a college student, beginning to focus on a particular industry or career that you find interesting is tremendously important, as choosing an industry or position is only the first step in a long and successful career. Regardless of whether you already know exactly what you want to do, or have no idea what you want to do after college, engaging in the process of career exploration will increase the chances of making your upcoming career goal a not only a reality, but a dream come true.

START THINKING ABOUT POSSIBLE CAREERS

To “start thinking” about possible careers is a large task, and one that is much easier said than done. To begin, it is necessary to understand who you are, and what drives you to success.

UNDERSTAND YOURSELF

Before you can begin to explore different career options, you must first begin to explore yourself. It is important to have a full understanding of your values, interests, personality, and skills, as all of these things will lead you to a career in which those attributes are favored. After all, you cannot spell “future” without a “u!”

These Resources Can Help You Get to Know You, A Little Bit Better:

- Vick Center for Strategic Advising and Career Counseling’s Assessments
- Focus2’s Self Assessment
- ACT Profiler
- Authentic Happiness Questionnaires via UPenn
- 16 Personalities
RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS

Once you discover more about yourself, the things that you are interested in, and determine what you are skilled at doing, start to think about where you can apply those interests and that talent. Research the different industries and possible careers for which those interests and skills might be an asset, and the majors that would foster those interests and allow those skills to grow.

These Resources Can Help You Discover Your Professional Options:

- What Can I Do With My Major?
- Wayfinder
- Vault
- Focus2
- SeekUT
- Career Discovery Videos
- Resources for Your Major
- Industry Research Guide
- LinkedIn Alumni Finder
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Science Careers
- O* NET
- My Next Move via O*NET
- Salary.com
- Texas Reality Check
- Audit Classes
- Professional Associations

Also, see the Book of Lists, via the BizJournals.

This resource is available only to students at the University of Texas, and must be accessed with a UTEID.

To Access This Resource:

1. Click here, to see the UT Library Databases.
2. Search “Book of Lists.”
3. Click the link, called “Databases – BizJournals – Austin.”
4. Click “Access This Database.”
5. Click “Book of Lists.”
START PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE CAREERS

To start preparing for possible careers, it is necessary to get real experience in your field-of-choice, as well as form valuable connections with those already in that particular field. Both hands-on experience and personal connections are equally important, as they each contribute to making “possible” careers, actual careers.

GET EXPERIENCE

To gain real, hands-on experience in your field-of-choice is extremely important, as it makes you a significantly more qualified job candidate. Additionally, real experience also allows you to discover what a career in that field would involve, allowing you to determine whether or not it is actually something that you want to pursue.

Job and Internship Resources:

- EUREKA
- HireUTexas
- Hire-A-Longhorn
- Handshake
  Create an Account!
- Indeed.com
- Science Careers
- Careers Fairs
NETWORK YOURSELF

Creating personal connections with those already working in your field-of-choice is extremely important and necessary. These are people already doing what you hope to do and they can offer you a wealth of valuable knowledge about the industry and how to break into it. Furthermore, when submitting job applications, having the ability to reference a current employee could quickly make you a “high priority” candidate.

*Networking Resources:*

- [Informational Interviews](#)
  *See More Information on Page 5!*

- [LinkedIn](#)
  *See More Information on Page 7!*

- Student Organizations

- Community Events

Remember, approximately **80%** of jobs are secured through networking!

**Why is networking so important?**

See below to find out!

- [5 Reasons You Should Invest Your Time in Networking](#)
- [The Underestimated Important of Personal Networking](#)
- [The Important of Networking](#)
- [Networking is Even More Important and More Powerful for Business than Personal Purposes](#)
- [Why Networking is Important for Your Job Search and Career Development](#)
- [Why Networking is Important](#)
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Informational interviewing is incredibly useful for anyone looking to get more information about a particular job, company or industry. It’s an opportunity for you to get a sense of what goes on in that role and what you might need to do to hold such a role. Unlike a typical job interview, in an informational interview, you ask the questions. However, those questions must be carefully crafted, such that you not only get the answers you’re looking for, but that you also sound like an appealing candidate – a candidate that someone would refer.

5 TIPS FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

1. Don’t be Afraid to Ask
   Asking someone for an informational interview not only makes that person feel important, but also gives them a chance to discuss their achievements. Thus, most people would love the opportunity to be interviewed.

2. Do Your Research
   Make sure you already know the basic information regarding the particular industry, company or job of the person you are to interview. It is not acceptable to waste the time of anyone that has gone out of his or her way to help you.

3. Prepare Your Questions
   It’s great when the interview flows naturally, in a “conversation-like” fashion, but it is also necessary to have both general and more abstract questions prepared, so that you are ready for wherever the conversation might go.

4. Keep it Short
   If the interviewee agreed to speak with you, he or she most likely had to set aside some time for the interview to take place. However “some time” does not mean “lots of time,” and as such, be sure to be respectful keep the interview an appropriate length. Twenty to thirty minutes should be plenty of time.

5. Cement the Connection
   For all interviews, both where you are the interviewer and the interviewee, it is important to follow up. In this case, it is both respectful and important to follow up by expressing your gratitude for their time and information. Thus, you must always, without fail, send a thank-you note. Be sure to keep the connection “warm” by checking in with them every so often and maintaining that relationship.

For more information, see 5 Tips for Non-Awkward Informational Interviews.
5 QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

1. How did you get started in this field?
2. What is a typical day like for you?
3. What are the pros and cons of working in this field?
4. From you experience, what are the skills or traits that employers look for this most when it comes to this field?
5. Is there anyone else you would suggest I connect with?

5 QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK DURING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

1. Would you hire me? Is there a position available for me?
   *Informational interviews are NOT to be used as job interviews.*

2. What is your salary?
   *You should be more interested in the company or position itself, not the salary it earns. Check out Glassdoor for salary information.*

3. Do you think that I would be successful at this company?
   *Once again, informational interviews are NOT to be used as job interviews.*

4. Tell me about your company or position.
   *This questions covers an appropriate topic, but is entirely too broad.*

5. What is the path one usually takes from (Interviewee's Current Position) to (Promoted Position)?
   *This question implies that the interviewee's current position is not good enough, which is both rude and disrespectful.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- How to Land and Ace an Informational Interview – Forbes
- Mastering the Informational Interview – The New York Times
- What to Ask in an Informational Interview – Fortune
- 3 Tips for Acing an Informational Interview – Careerealism
LinkedIn is an excellent resource, as it allows you to not only manage your professional online identity, but also gives you access to an extensive professional network. LinkedIn will allow you to visualize and grow your professional network, increasing your chances of making connections, getting a job, and landing valuable and necessary experience.

WHO USES LINKEDIN?

- More than 332 Million Professionals
- More than 60,000 College and Professional Groups
- More than 150 Industries
- More than 39 Million Students and Recent Graduates
- Executives from Every Fortune 500 Company

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE ON LINKEDIN?

Both the Field of Study Explorer and the Alumni Finder allow you to refine and narrow your goals, as they provide specific information about careers and alumni. This information is wildly helpful, as it will allow you to determine if your current field-of-study aligns with the career you want.

Field of Study Explorer

- Designed to allow you to see how a degree connects to a career by providing information about where people with a certain degree work, what they do, where they attended university, where they live, and how you are connected

The Field of Study Explorer can be accessed through either the Education of Interests menu, depending on whether or not you are a current student.

More directly, if you have a LinkedIn account, the Field of Study Explorer can be accessed here.

Alumni Finder

- Similar to the Field of Study Explorer, however, it provides career information regarding students and alumni from your specific institution
- Provides information regarding where alumni live, where they work, what they do, what they studied, what they’re skills are, and how you are connected.

If you have a LinkedIn account, the Alumni Finder can be accessed here.