



Career Decision Making

The process of deciding on a career is complex and time consuming. In order to make an informed career decision; it is helpful to go through the following process, which includes four steps:

- 1) Develop sufficient self-awareness and understanding of yourself;
- 2) Accumulate enough information about fields of study and careers to understand why you might move toward or away from certain choices;
- 3) Make sense of who you are and what you know about career options so you can make good choices; and
- 4) Develop a plan that will guide you toward your chosen career path.

1. Develop Self-Awareness and Understanding

This step involves a thorough investigation of one's beliefs, interests, values, feelings, abilities, needs, ambitions, successes, life style, etc.

Questions to consider include:

1. What type of activities and tasks do I enjoy?
2. What are my values and how do they match certain work environments?
3. What type of personality and unique characteristics do I have?
4. What are my special talents and skills?
5. In what areas of study have I done well?
6. What type of work environment best suits me?
7. What type of worker am I?

Counselors at the Career Center can use assessments, interviews and group procedures to help you gather information about yourself and integrate it into a meaningful whole. The Career Center Library also provides many helpful resources.

2. Acquire Knowledge of Fields of Study and Careers

This step involves extensive investigation and research of the world of work.

Questions to consider include:

1. What majors are offered here at USC?
2. How do I find out what kinds of career paths exist for various majors?
3. What qualifications (grades, degree, special skills) must one have to pursue a particular position.
4. What kind of traits and characteristics must one have to succeed in a particular field?
5. What kind of work conditions, salary and benefits do various careers provide?
6. What continuing education or training might be necessary in my chosen field(s)?

(OVER)

Information on the world of work can be gathered through information interviews, job shadowing, on-site visitations, viewing of media presentations regarding careers and the research of career literature, both hard copy and internet-based. The Career Center Library at USC provides these, and additional resources.

3. Synthesize Information and Make Choices

This step involves the synthesizing of all accumulated information regarding one's self and the world of work to determine good fits.

Questions to consider include:

1. How can I be sure this choice is best for me?
2. Am I really capable of being successful in this area?
3. Am I suited for the types of opportunities that exist in this area?
4. Do my interests, skills and values match the characteristics of this field?
5. What careers are going to provide for my needs best, and what potential do I have in those fields?
6. How will I be able to explain my choice to my parents since it might not be what they want for me?

Counselors at the Career Center can assist you in synthesizing information.

4. Develop an Effective Plan for Achieving One's Goals

This step involves the development of a plan or strategy for achieving desired career goals and an awareness of options.

Questions to consider include:

1. Have I tested out career choices through part-time work, internships, Co-op, or job shadowing, available through the Career Center?
2. Have I researched information about organizations which have positions related to my career choice?
3. Has my search included organizations representing values important to me?
4. Have I used family, friends, and faculty as networking resources?
5. Have I talked with a counselor at the Career Center to determine where to locate position vacancies?
6. Have I set goals to develop my skills in resume writing, interviewing, cover letter writing, networking and job search skills, utilizing available resources at the Career Center?

Counselors at the Career Center can help you develop a career objective and resume, refine interviewing style and technique, identify key people who will serve as references, search for a job, and learn how to put your "best foot forward."

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, VISIT THE CAREER CENTER, H. WILLIAM CLOSE (BA) BLDG., 6th FL.
PHONE: 777-7280 E-MAIL: career@sc.edu WEB PAGE: <http://www.sc.edu/career>**