

What is Career Planning?

Career planning is a lifelong process, which includes choosing an occupation, getting a job, growing in our job, possibly changing careers, and eventually retiring. The Career Planning Site offers coverage of all these areas. This article will focus on career choice and the process one goes through in selecting an occupation. This may happen once in our lifetimes, but it is more likely to happen several times as we first define and then redefine ourselves and our goals.

Career Planning: A Four Step Process

The career planning process is comprised of four steps. One might seek the services of a [career development professional](#) to help facilitate his or her journey through this process. Whether or not you choose to work with a professional, or work through the process on your own is less important than the amount of thought and energy you put into choosing a career.

Self

Gather information about yourself ([self assessment](#))

- Interests
- Values
- Roles
- Skills/Aptitudes
- Preferred Environments
- Developmental Needs
- Your realities

Options

- [Explore the occupations](#) in which you are interested
- Research the [industries](#) in which you would like to work
- Research the [Labor Market](#)

Get more specific information after you narrow down your options by:

- [Job Shadowing](#)
- Part time work, [internships](#), or [volunteer opportunities](#)
- [Written materials](#)
- [Informational interviews](#)

Match

During this phase of the process, you will:

- Identify possible occupations
- Evaluate these occupations
- Explore alternatives
- Choose both a short term and a long term option

Action

You will [develop the steps](#) you need to take in order to reach your goal, for example:

- Investigating sources of additional [training and education](#), if needed
- [Developing a job search strategy](#)
- [Writing your resume](#)
- [Gathering company information](#)
- [Composing cover letters](#)
- [Preparing for job interviews](#)

Related Articles

- [Career Planning Process](#)
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