Career planning is learning about yourself and the world of work and then planning your career choices based on what you’ve learned. Knowing what you know about yourself, how do various occupations match up with your interests, skills, personality, and values?

An effective career planner is someone who:
- Views a plan as subject to change.
- Equates career success with personal satisfaction.
- Believes goals are independent of age.
- Assumes responsibility for his/her own career direction.

--Robert Barner, The Futurist

THE CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

Career planning helps you to:
- Decide what type of job you want.
- Determine the skills you need to attain the ideal job.
- Discover how to obtain those skills.
- Develop ways to implement your plan.

To begin the process, ask yourself: What are my goals for the future?

Keep in Mind That...

- The working world is changing rapidly.
- You need goals and strategies to make your dreams come true.
- You are in charge of your career.
- You will need to be proactive in your career search.
- Employers are looking for employees who will enjoy their work.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Fortunately, you do not have to go through all the career options in the world to find a suitable occupation. In order to start your career exploration, you need to create a list of different occupations that might match your interests and skills. Before you begin narrowing down your possibilities, do some brainstorming to broaden your options.

Brainstorm on Your Own
- Libraries, Career Services, and Employment Offices
- Labor market information: www.bls.gov/ooh/
- Look back at your list of interests, skills, values, and traits that you possess

Brainstorm with Others
Talk with friends, parents, teachers, neighbors, relatives, co-workers, etc. Tell them you are trying to figure out what to do with your life. They will probably jump at the chance to throw in their two cents. Keep in mind you are trying to come up with a master list of possibilities. Do not dismiss any suggestions. Do not make any commitments, either.

Career Assessments
- Focus2 Career Exploration
- Reality Check - What can you earn?
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Candid Career
- Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire

GATHER INFORMATION

There are many methods of research that you can use to gather information about potential careers. The list below begins with the least time-consuming method. As you narrow down your options however, use methods that require more time.

The Internet
There are plenty of Internet resources that contain useful occupational information. You can even research individual occupations through search sites. Many useful websites can be found on Career Services homepage at www.careerservices.txstate.edu.

Labor Market Information
This information focuses on such things as working conditions, wages, trends, qualifications, employer demands, as well as other factors which affect the market for labor.
MAKE A DECISION

You have now come to the point where you need to make some choices. This may be more painful than the research. Follow these steps to help you through the process of making a decision.

1. Name the Decision
   Stating precisely what it is that you need to decide may help give you some perspective on the situation. What exactly is it that you need to know? What does a career mean to you in the first place? Five years?

2. List the Alternatives
   Write down at least two occupations that stood out during your search.

3. Test Your Choice
   Think of ways to test the alternatives you have chosen.

4. Evaluate your Decision
   How well did your choice work? If you need to, you can begin the process again.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Having chosen one of the career options, you can now begin developing and implementing a plan of action through internships, cooperative education, relevant summer employment, volunteer work, and campus activities. Some additional steps that you will need to take are:

1. Investigate Any Additional Education or Training Needed
   Does the career path require additional courses and are you willing to complete these?

2. Develop a Job Search Strategy
   Plan how you will find a job once you meet the requirements. Networking and gaining experience can help get your foot in the door.

3. Write Your Resume and Compose a Cover Letter
   Career Services has 48-hour resume and cover letter critiquing, as well as Career Counselors/Advisors that can give professional advice.

4. Prepare For a Job Interview
   Draft answers to difficult questions that you could be asked. Career Services is available for mock interviews throughout the year.

5. Gather Company Information
   Investigate a potential employer to prepare for the interview, as well as to ensure that it is a workplace that fits your needs.