

Planning a career path

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Goals for Today

Provide context for the career decision making process

Provide vocabulary and framework for identifying and describing skills and interests in relation to career fields of interest

Consider the role of your skills and values in networking and exploring career options

Online Resources

Exploration

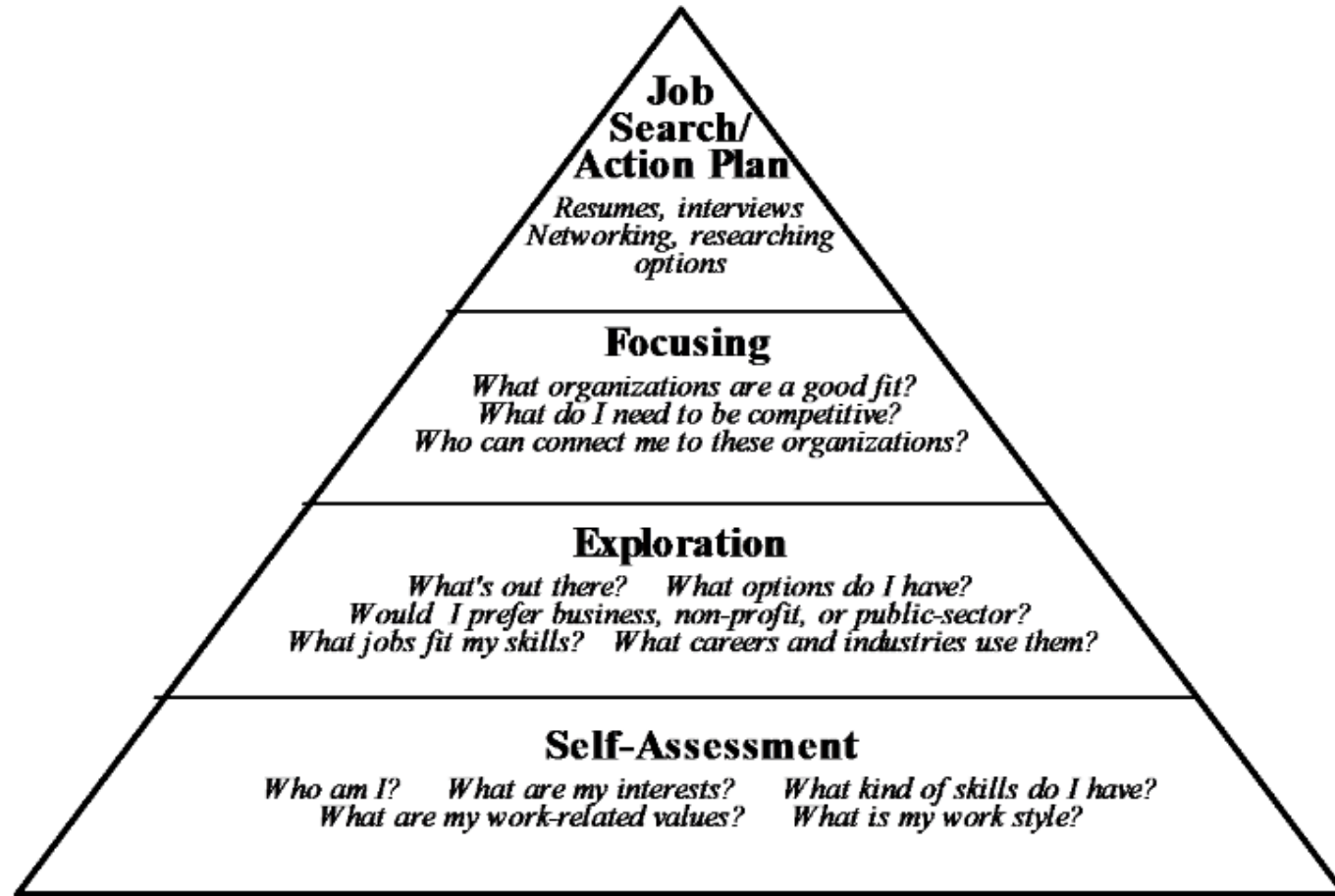
- [myIDP](#) is a unique, web-based career-planning tool tailored to meet the needs of PhD students and postdocs in the sciences. It provides exercises to help you examine your skills, interests, and values; a tool for setting strategic goals for the coming year, with optional reminders to keep you on track; articles and resources to guide you through the process
- [Intersect Job Simulations](#) engages with an individual's interests and extrapolates these interests to positions in actual professional settings in industry, academia, and government sectors. While the simulations do not evaluate an individual's performance on the task, they offer insight into the specific, real-life duties of varying career paths.

Networking

- Professional associations and organizations
- Alumni associations from all degree-granting institutions
- [LinkedIn](#), the world's largest professional network, to build relationships and connect with Northwestern alumni and other professionals.

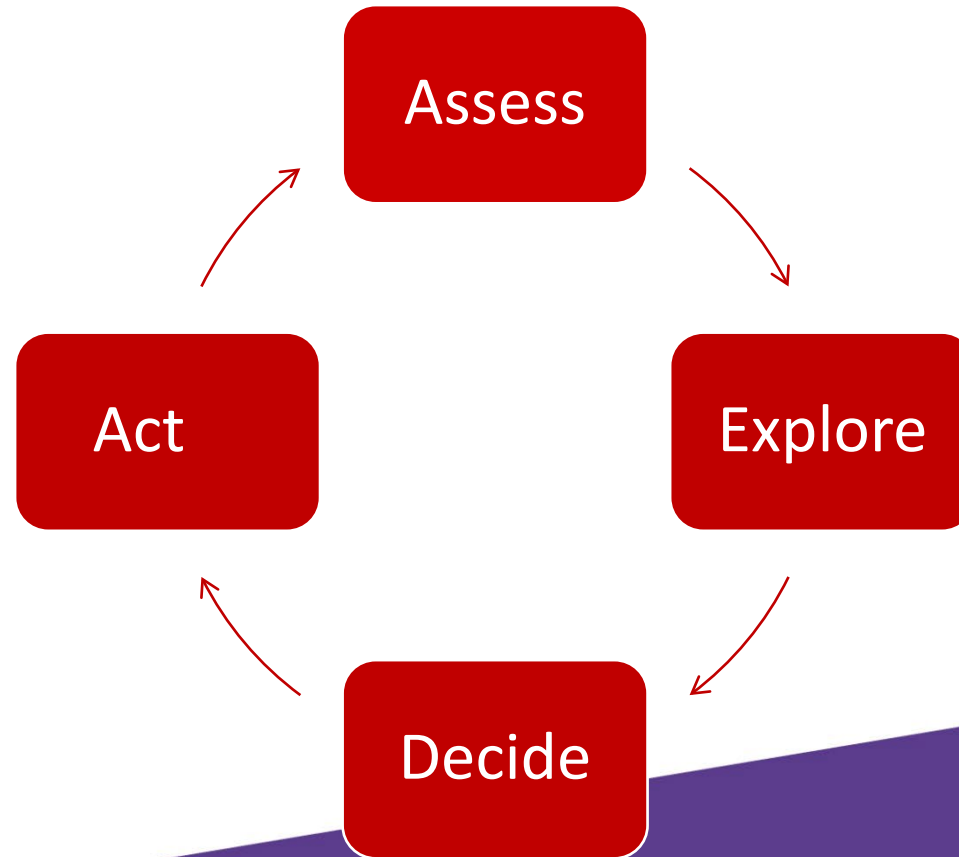
Steps in the Job Search Process

Source: Putting Your Science to Work: Practical Career Strategies for PhDs," by Peter Fiske, Ph.D.

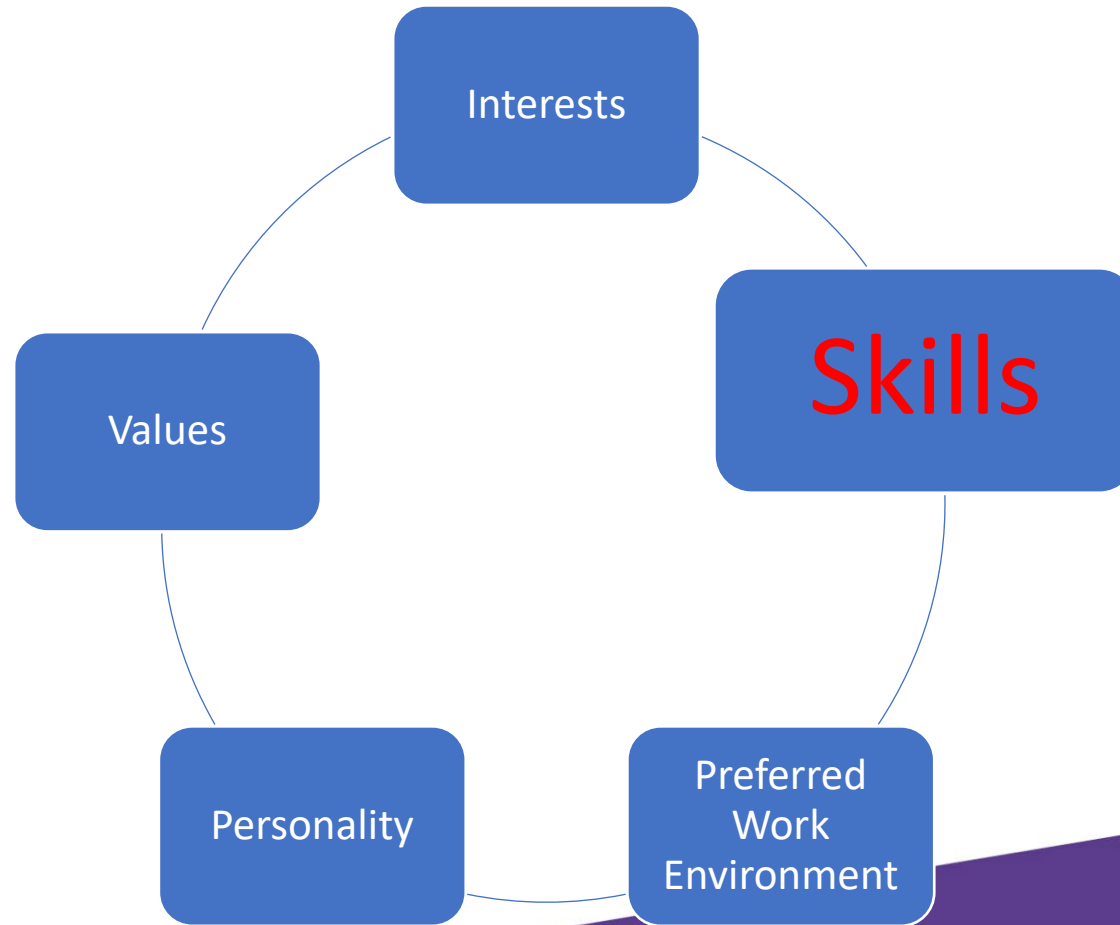


Career Decision Making Process

Career Decision Making Model



What are you trying to **Assess**?



Activity: Skills Assessment

Skills Reflection

Take a minute, consider your 5 top skills

- Take notes on how you are using and not using those top 5 skills in your current position and service commitments

Action items:

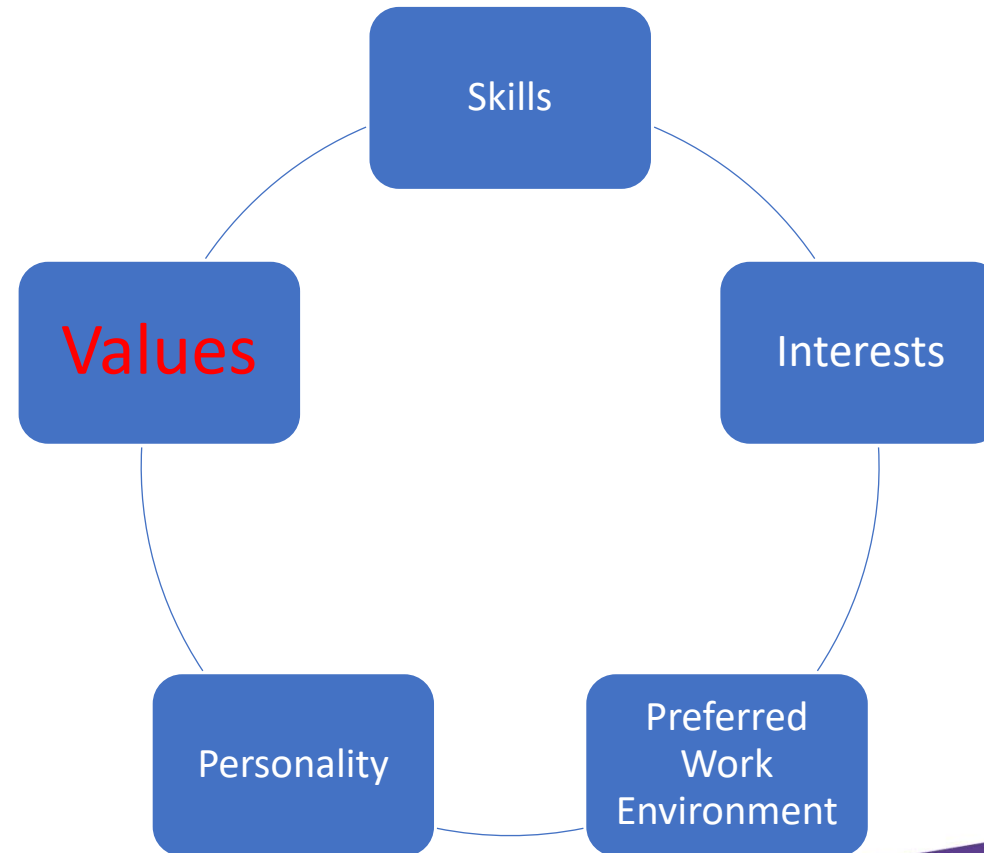
- Consider your motivated vs. burn out skills as you evaluate careers
- Identify positions leveraging your strengths and desired skill set
- Determine if there are skills gaps you need to address

Top Attributes Employers Seek on a Candidate's Resume

- Problem-solving skills
- Analytical/quantitative skills
- Ability to work in a team
- Communication skills (written)
- Initiative
- Strong work ethic
- Technical skills
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Detail oriented
- Leadership skills
- Communication skills (verbal)
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)

Job Outlook 2022 Survey, National Association of Colleges and Employers

What are you trying to **Assess**?



Activity: Values Assessment

Reflection

- What values do you have that originate from external influences (e.g. family, peers, mentors)?
- Were there any values that you had not thought about but realized were important?
- Consider a situation when one of your core 5 values was unfulfilled and the impact it had on your work

Action Item:

- Develop questions to help you better determine value-fit within different organizations.

Networking

"Networking is not the process of reaching out to people. Networking is the process of thinking about whom to reach out to, why, with what goal, and how to do so in a manner that minimizes the negative emotional states that both you and the other person experience and that maximizes the benefit you gain."

- Barber, Joseph. "A Networking Rule to Live By," Inside Higher Ed. 22 May 2017. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2017/05/22/how-make-job-contacts-want-help-you-essay>



Why Develop Relationships?

- To help you refine your understanding of different career paths
- To get advice from professionals working in a position or field that interests you
- To learn how to transfer skills and abilities learned through your degree/recent roles to careers outside of the academy
- To identify possible mentors
- To meet people in your field and build relationships with others who share similar interests
- To learn about and find jobs that may never be publicly advertised (the hidden job market)

Developing Your Online Presence Before Building Your Network

- Know your audience (keep your field/industries of interest in mind when developing your platforms of choice)
- Share purposeful information about yourself and your career interests
- Leverage and convey your relevant expertise*
- Demonstrate your skills and accomplishments
- Share your knowledge with colleagues
- Platforms to explore: LinkedIn, Twitter, Personal Websites (github, research gate, etc)

*HINT!

How do you do things? Those are your skills.

What do you do well? Those are your strengths.

LinkedIn Profile Considerations

Headline

Your headline is a short, memorable professional slogan that conveys your professional brand, strengths/skills, and interests/goals.

- *Strong Headlines:*
 - Applied Math Graduate Student at Northwestern | Expertise in SQL | Seeking Data Science Position
 - Science Policy Advocate & Solar Energy Specialist

Summary

Should build on your headline, describe who you are, including: background/experience, strengths/ skills, accomplishments, and goals/aspirations. Tie these elements together into a cohesive professional narrative.

Use industry keywords and keep it concise (4-6 sentences)

Example: Experienced scientist with a demonstrated history of leadership, innovation, successful grant writing, and effective science communication. Skilled in molecular biology, microbiology, nanotechnology, and immunology techniques. Ph.D. in Biology with a focus on Nanotechnology and Drug Delivery

Tip: Check out the profiles of students, alumni, and professionals in relevant industries. What works well? What doesn't? How are experiences framed?

Character limits.....

LinkedIn is a two step process.

1. Have your connection invitation accepted
2. Follow-up with an email-like message

Dear {Contact}-

I have a PhD in Life Sciences and am starting to explore career paths in intellectual property. This brought me to your profile and I would love to connect.

Best,

Name

Informational Interview Request: Draft

(if an email) Subject: Opportunities with Apple

Dear Dr. Teitle,

I am a Ph.D. student at Northwestern University focused on designing structured nanoscale materials with exceptional properties. My group makes precious metals more precious by tuning the size and shape of noble metals at the nanoscale. We use modeling to assist in understanding the properties of single structures as well as collective effects of assemblies of nanoparticles. Applications of our unique materials include nanomedicine, nano-lasing, photovoltaics, wetting, and imaging. I found your profile on LinkedIn and see that you work at Apple as a Research Scientist. I am very interested in learning more about the company and was wondering whether you could give me some insight into your career field, and some advice on my résumé if I were interested in a role in industry. Would you be able to speak with me in the next few weeks?

Many thanks,

Lesley

Informational Interview Request

(if an email) Subject: Advice for Northwestern PhD Student Interested in Research & Development in Tech

Dear Dr. Teitle,

I've been exploring opportunities in the nanotechnology space and our mutual contact Elysse mentioned your name. She encouraged me to reach out to you to learn more about your experience and advice on pivoting to the tech sector. Your career path is extremely interesting, and I would appreciate the opportunity to hear more about some of the experiences you have had with Apple. Would it be OK if I reached out by email with a couple of quick questions about your current position? Or could we perhaps find 15-20 minutes to connect on the phone?

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration,
Lesley

Advice on Crafting Emails

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20130624114114-69244073-6-ways-to-get-me-to-email-you-back/>

What goals do you have for a conversation?



Areas to avoid: salary & offer specific questions

Who's the audience?

Early career professional?

- Search perspective
- Company culture
- Job function specifics and essential skills

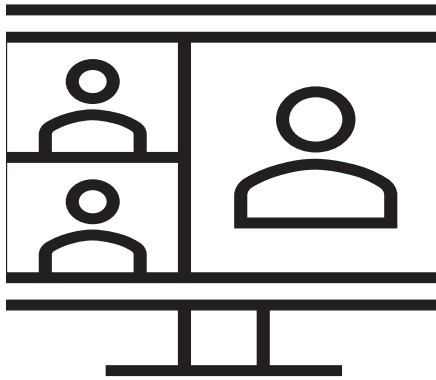
Mid-level professional?

- Career path
- Perspective of a hiring committee
- Company culture
- Industry landscape

Recruiter?

- Search process questions (i.e. recruitment timeline and structure)
- Position level questions

Questions?



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