

## Uncover What Drives You

Through a process of self-inquiry, you will gain insight into your values, interests, skills, personality, and what you have learned from unique experiences. These are the critical data that will drive your career planning and development.

Self-Inquiry is not a one-time event. It is the best way to start thinking about your career and a place to return when contemplating transitions and significant decisions about your career. As you grow and change with new experiences and exposure to new ideas, you will return to this process many times. The more aligned your career decisions are with who you know yourself to be, the more likely you will feel fulfilled and successful.

## Benefits of Self-Inquiry

You will make well-informed decisions to set yourself up for the outcomes that matter to you throughout your career.

You will better articulate your strengths and interests to others who can offer valuable guidance, connections, and opportunities.

## Assess your Values, Skills, Interests, and Personality

Values, skills, interests, and personality are lenses through which you can look at your life experience. Each is a different view into you. Use these viewpoints to identify patterns that naturally emerge through the choices you make. The exercises on the following pages can help you get started. A career adviser can help you interpret and learn from your responses.

Remember! This is only a starting point. Look beyond this guide to other Career Center resources for more.

## Explore Your Values

Values are the principles that we find important and influence the way we live our daily lives. Our identification with specific values tends not to grow or diminish instantly or dramatically but evolve over time.

**Exercise:** Rank the list of values below in order of importance for you. Use the blanks to incorporate values beyond what is included here.

- \_\_\_ Variety
- \_\_\_ Loyalty
- \_\_\_ Fun
- \_\_\_ Structure
- \_\_\_ Influence
- \_\_\_ Recognition
- \_\_\_ Creativity
- \_\_\_ Financial Compensation
- \_\_\_ Job Security
- \_\_\_ Having Visible Impact
- \_\_\_ Intellectual Stimulation
- \_\_\_ Colleague Relationships
- \_\_\_ Independence
- \_\_\_ Being an Expert
- \_\_\_ Respect
- \_\_\_ Taking Risks
- \_\_\_ Relationships
- \_\_\_ Learning

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Inventory Your Skills

Your skills are the abilities that you possess. Skills are developed and improved with practice and over time, though they can be influenced by a natural knack or unique talent. Communicating your skills in a way that builds confidence requires that you give evidence of your past exposure and success.

**Exercise:** Using the list below for inspiration, come up with ten skills that describe your current strengths. Next, come up with ten that describe those you expect will be important in your fields of interest. How do they compare? Note overlaps as well as gaps.

Communicating Clearly	_____	_____
Managing a Project	_____	_____
Collaborating towards a Goal	_____	_____
Writing Persuasively	_____	_____
Learning Quickly	_____	_____
Researching Thoroughly	_____	_____
Innovating	_____	_____
Compiling a Budget	_____	_____
Balancing Priorities	_____	_____

## Assess Your Personality

Your personality is unique to you and includes inherent traits as well as habits that you've acquired over time in realms like gathering information, making decisions, and relating to others. Better understanding characteristics of your personality can help you to articulate the circumstances under which you thrive, or natural strengths that you can utilize, regardless of your environment.

**Exercise:** Describe yourself at your best and most natural in response to these prompts.

What energizes you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you gather information? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What guides your decisions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What approaches do you use to conduct your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Identify Your Interests

Interests run the range from a passing curiosity to something with consistent and lifelong appeal. Your interests can include your passions, hobbies, and curiosities. Your career can evolve to include the interests that you have not yet pursued as much as those to which you are already committed.

**Exercise:** Psychologist John Holland identified these six areas of occupational interest. Rank this list from the most to least descriptive of the patterns in your interests.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| _____ Realistic     | Practical: Enjoy practical and physical; engage with tools, machines, and gadgets         |
| _____ Investigative | Analytical: Enjoy gathering information and analysis; appreciates intellectual activities |
| _____ Artistic      | Creative: Enjoy aesthetics and self-expression; favor unstructured environments           |
| _____ Social        | Connected: Enjoy helping, training, and counseling; thrive side-by-side with others       |
| _____ Enterprising  | Influential: Enjoy persuasion and managing; prefer to lead                                |
| _____ Conventional  | Systematic: Enjoy details and accuracy; comfortable within a chain of command             |

# Review your Experience

With a little distance (or a lot!) from the collection of your past activities, you can continue to discern the patterns and designs that make up the mosaic of your life's experiences. And while distance certainly comes with time, you can put some space between yourself and an ongoing experience through active, ongoing reflection, e.g., journaling.

To get started, make a list of memorable experiences. Include experiences you consider rewarding as well as those you consider disappointing. Make room for those that may seem irrelevant, unimportant, or too far in the past.

Feel free to use the following list of kinds of experiences to help you brainstorm:

- On-campus jobs
- Academic projects
- Research
- Internships
- Study abroad
- Political activities
- Sports
- Volunteer engagements
- Campus leadership
- Student clubs
- ROTC
- Job shadowing
- Faith community commitments
- Hobbies/recreational activities
- Entrepreneurial ventures
- Vacations

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For each experience you list, consider the following questions:

What led you to choose that experience?

Why did you choose that experience over others?

What, if anything, did you sacrifice when choosing that experience? How did you feel about that?

Who and/or what influenced your choosing that experience?

What did you especially like/dislike about that experience (activities, people, environment, etc)?

What skills and personal characteristics did you demonstrate or develop during that experience?

How was that experience connected or disconnected from other past and subsequent experiences?

What was most memorable about that experience?

MEMORABLE

## Next Steps and Selected Resources: Know Yourself—Uncover what drives you

- Start a notebook or file where you keep all of your thoughts in one place. Use it as you think of things.
- Attempt the values, interests, skills, personality, and experience exercises. Fifteen minutes apiece is a great start.
- Draw a timeline of your life. Mark all of the memorable experiences. Look for patterns in the things that have been compelling and exciting for you.
- Create a list of people you would ask to be on a personal Board of Advisors. Ask someone on your list to have a conversation and provide advice based on his or her life experiences.
  - Use a career advising appointment to begin exposing patterns in your values, skills, interests, and personality. Schedule online, <http://CareerConnections.duke.edu>.
  - Visit the Career Center website for an expanded set of self-inquiry exercises. **Self-Inquiry Guide** (<http://goo.gl/4b2MD>)
  - Consider the questions identified in the **Nine Domains to Find Your Fit** (<http://goo.gl/zbNngG>)
  - Seek input from members of your **Board of Directors** ([goo.gl/HyM9BM](http://goo.gl/HyM9BM))

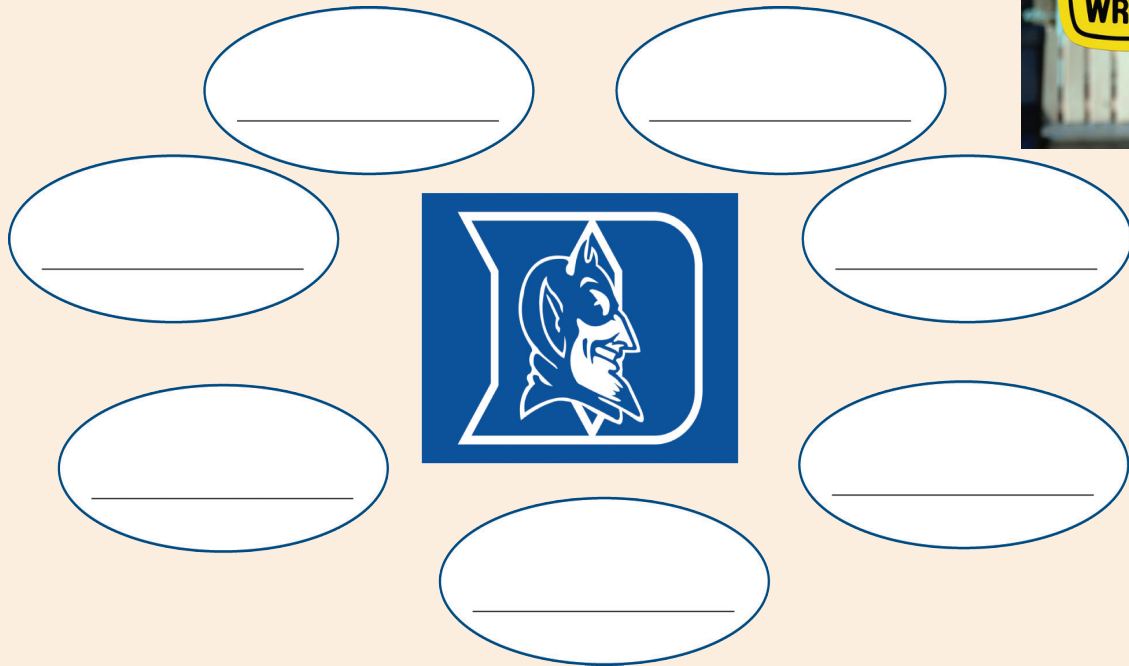


# Making Career Decisions

Take a moment to reflect on why you chose to apply and come to Duke. This decision was likely influenced by a number of factors such as advice from family, interest in a specific academic program, scholarships or financial aid, campus life and sports, geographic location, a campus visit, and others. You may wish to use the diagram below to recall the various factors that influenced YOUR decision. Feel free to create more bubbles if necessary!



Photo: andy\_cp16



Looking at the factors that were involved, mark those that were the strongest influence on this important decision and consider the following questions:

What does this specific decision teach you about your decision-making style?

Have the influences and factors in your decision-making process changed since deciding on Duke? How and why?

Are these the factors that drive most of your important decisions? What differs? How and why?

With hindsight, do you notice anything significant you may have overlooked at the time?

Would you bring different information to the table?

Remember! You can always choose to approach future decisions differently. This exercise reveals some of your past patterns and you can use this information to determine how to move forward.

## Taking Career Risks

In addition to all of these factors, go back and think about yourself as a risk taker. What kind of risk taker have you been? Were there elements of deciding to be here that involved a leap of faith? What about other options that you set aside in order to be here? Were they more risky? Less?

Taking measured risks by putting yourself out into the world to discover how you fit is a critical part of career discovery. We encourage you to build upon a series of comfortable risks over time, and to learn to identify your boundaries as you go.

The series of decisions you make over time can be exhilarating—do not let risk be paralyzing!