



Self - Assessment



In order to pursue a challenging and rewarding career after graduation, it is important to begin with some self-reflection. Rather than trying to adapt yourself to a job, take a long, hard look at yourself (your skills, interests, and lifestyle preferences) and look for a career that fulfills your professional and personal predilections.

Self-assessment is not always easy. It requires an honest and thorough examination of your abilities and values, your strengths and weaknesses. However, the process of self-assessment can also be profoundly liberating. By organizing information about your needs and assets, you have taken the first step in your career development.

This assessment is divided into six sections, designed to lead you toward a fuller understanding of the personal factors to consider as a foundation to beginning your job search.

Contents

Section One - Skills

[defines the set of skills you bring to an employer]

Section Two - Personality Traits

[colors that set of skills with your unique characteristics as a person]

Sections Three and Four - Lifestyle, Interests, Values

[will help you match your personal and professional goals]

Section Five - Work Environment

[will help you build a model of your ideal work setting]

Section Six - Self-Assessment Summary

[will help you put it all together]

Throughout the process of looking for a job, people will ask you why: why you pursued a particular area of study, why you are drawn to a certain industry, and why you are applying for a specific job. The more you have thought through these questions, the easier it will be to answer them and the better prepared you will be for formal and informal conversations.

Before your appointment, save and submit a copy of the finished assessment to the Economic Career Coordinator (Monroe Hall 228, jlh7b@virginia.edu). This reminder will also appear at the end of the assessment.

Section One: Skills

Think about the different experiences you have had (academic, professional, and volunteer/extracurricular) and how these have taught you different skills. Many of these abilities can be transferred to a variety of work situations. Then, use what you learn in this section to sharpen your resumes and cover letters and prepare yourself for interviewers who ask, "What will you bring to this organization?"

Using the list below, choose five skills you have mastered. Then, write in five skills you would like to develop.

Communication

- Advising
- Advocacy
- Editing
- Explaining
- Influencing
- Interpreting
- Languages
- Mediating
- Motivating
- Persuading
- Politicking
- Presenting
- Promoting
- Public Speaking
- Questioning
- Reporting
- Translating
- Writing

Analytical

- Accounting
- Analyzing
- Appraising
- Assessing
- Budgeting
- Calculating
- Classifying
- Comparing
- Computing
- Conceptualizing
- Critical Thinking
- Drawing Inferences
- Evaluating
- Formulating
- Investigating
- Measuring
- Observing
- Policy Analysis
- Researching
- Reasoning

Management

- Collaborating
- Deciding
- Delegating
- Effecting Change
- Implementing
- Initiating
- Leading Discussion
- Managing
- Monitoring
- Operating
- Problem Solving
- Project Mgmt
- Recommending
- Relating
- Supervising
- Training
- Trouble-shooting

Other

Technical

- Creating Graphics
- Copy-Editing
- Databases
- Desktop Publishing
- Drawing
- GIS, R, SQL, STATA
- HTML/Coding
- Layout/Design
- Modeling/Forecasting
- Online Research
- Proofreading
- Regression Analysis
- Statistics
- Word Processing

Organizational

- Attending to Detail
- Coordinating
- Expediting
- Keeping Records
- Planning
- Systematizing

Skills to acquire:



Exercise One:

A.

Choose one of these accomplishments and describe it completely, as if you were writing about it in a journal. Read over what you have written and underline all the skills involved. Do they coincide with the ones on your list from Section One?

B.

Write a list of five to ten accomplishments of which you feel especially proud. It does not matter if they are personal or professional, or whether they were recognized by others. Think about the skills involved and what you learned from these experiences.



Section Two: Personality Traits

Personality traits are often considered to be innate or acquired through socialization very early in life, while skills are learned. Personality traits and skills, however, are strongly connected. Often it is your innate characteristics that facilitate the development of a skill.

As you consider the various skills you currently have and are trying to develop, it is important to think about what makes you able and interested in doing something well. It is also important to be able to articulate this link to employers in interviews and cover letters.

From the list below, choose five personality traits that describe you (or write in your own). Then, ask a friend or family member to list five personality traits that they think apply to you. Are your lists similar? Where do they differ? Why?

Personality Traits

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accurate | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Open-minded | <input type="checkbox"/> Poised | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable | <input type="checkbox"/> Cool-headed | <input type="checkbox"/> Expressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Organized | <input type="checkbox"/> Progressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Sincere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> Outgoing | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual | <input type="checkbox"/> Stable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Forward-thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Patient | <input type="checkbox"/> Reflective | <input type="checkbox"/> Tactful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical | <input type="checkbox"/> Curious | <input type="checkbox"/> Generous | <input type="checkbox"/> Perceptive | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable | <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Detail-oriented | <input type="checkbox"/> Honest | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive | <input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated | <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Versatile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative | Other: | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Diligent | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrious | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Introspective | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Discreet | <input type="checkbox"/> Inventive | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Economical | <input type="checkbox"/> Logical | As perceived by others: | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congenial | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conscientious | <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic | <input type="checkbox"/> Observant | | | |
| | | | | | |

Exercise Two

Personality Traits to use in the blanks below (click and scroll for more):

Below, fill in the skills from Section One that you consider relevant. In the space provided, match the personality traits from the list above to the appropriate skill. Use two to five traits for each one.

Example:

Skill: project management _____



energetic
versatile
organized

Skill: _____



Personality
Traits:

Skill: _____



Personality
Traits:

Skill: _____



Personality
Traits:

Skill: _____



Personality
Traits:

Skill: _____



Personality
Traits:

Section Three: Lifestyle and Interests



The process of self-assessment means much more than just discovering the best way to present yourself to employers. It also involves careful consideration of exactly what you want in a career. Personal interests and values that are not directly tied to job skills are often overlooked when considering a possible career, but they are vital to job satisfaction. The opportunity to travel, the flexibility to spend time with family or even just the time to pursue a favorite hobby can sometimes be as important as salary and the chance for advancement. This section will help you think about the interests and values that are most important to you when considering a new job or career.

Lifestyle considerations that are most important to you: Write in five that are essential, and five that are flexible. Come up with your own, or choose from the list below.

Essential:

Flexible:



- Climate with seasons
- Community involvement
- Culturally rich city
- Physical activity
- Financial security
- Good public transportation
- Good public schools
- Life with children
- Life without children
- Live close to work
- Live in the city

- Live near friends, relatives
- Live near water
- Live outside the city
- Maintain good health
- Physically beautiful setting
- Stable marriage/partnership
- Time alone
- Time flexibility
- Time for hobbies
- Travel frequently
- Warm climate

Exercise Three



List five to ten interests or hobbies of yours. They can include anything from sailing to model airplane building to political activism. Which ones would you like to integrate into your job? Which ones are important enough to consider when choosing a job? Which ones would you like to have more time to pursue?

*Pick one or two of these interests and think about how you first became involved in them. Employers, particularly in an interview, often want to get a sense of the whole person, beyond just the resume. Being able to speak in an articulate manner about your interests and hobbies will not only help the interviewer remember you, but may also help establish some common ground.

Section Four: Work Values

Work values, like lifestyle considerations, are often overlooked when making job decisions, but they can be vital to success and satisfaction in your career. Work values are the intrinsic or extrinsic rewards that come with every job. They may not be listed in the job description, but you should think about them as carefully as you would job responsibilities, hours, and salary. Be honest with yourself when composing your list of work values. Rather than thinking about what you “should” want in a career, think about which values are more or less important to you. Be flexible! Different jobs offer different rewards, so think about the best combination for you.

Choose five to ten 'work values' that will influence your choice of a career. Choose from the list below and/or write in your own.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Moral fulfillment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship with co-workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical challenge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Become an expert | <input type="checkbox"/> Gain intellectual growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Precision work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change/variety | <input type="checkbox"/> Gain knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Profit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competition | <input type="checkbox"/> Help society | <input type="checkbox"/> Progressive environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservative environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Help others | <input type="checkbox"/> Racial/ethnic diversity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contact with public | <input type="checkbox"/> Hold power and authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition for work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Stability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement | <input type="checkbox"/> Influence people | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervise others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast pace | <input type="checkbox"/> Make decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> Work under pressure |

Other:

Section Five: Work Environment

Choosing an organization that best complements your own values, personality, and style of working also involves considering specific aspects of the work environment. These factors vary greatly from one organization to the next depending on the people in management, the industry in question, and even the geographic location of the specific office. Thinking about the ideal work environment will not only help focus your job search but will also give you criteria to use in deciding whether to take a job. Remember, the relative importance of these various factors will change over the course of your career. Thinking about them periodically will help you make informed decisions in the future.

For each of the following ten aspects of the work environment, describe what your ideal job would be like. Then, think about the last internship you held. How does it compare with your ideal? If you have not worked before, focus on your ideal. You will want to conduct more career/job research as a next step.

GROWTH (how fast is the industry/ company changing?)

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (traditional office? environmentally sensitive? offices/ cubicles?)

SIZE (small size independence or large corporate stability? is the firm growing or scaling back?)

SUPERVISION (closely monitored? by whom? freedom to work independently? performance reviews?)

Section Five: Work Environment (cont.)

TIME (flexible?
part-time option?
parental leave?
overtime expected?
weekends?
seasonal?)

ATMOSPHERE
(informal?
hierarchical? team-
oriented?)

COMPENSATION
(salary? health
benefits? vacation?
long-term earning
potential?
retirement?)

CO-WORKERS
(close relationship?
overlapping duties?
team projects?)

DIVERSITY
(gender/racial
balance? affirmative
action program?
mentorship
opportunities?)

GEOGRAPHY
(rural/urban?
coastal? limited by
spouse/partner?
overseas work?)

Self-Assessment Summary

Now it is time to compile all the information that you have collected from the previous exercises to create a snapshot of your professional profile. A complete picture of your career needs is a crucial step toward brainstorming career options and preparing for both informational interviews and actual job interviews. Because a job can rarely encompass *every* skill, interest, or lifestyle concern, it is important to prioritize those things that are most important to you.

The exercises above have helped you compile a comprehensive self-assessment. The final step is to fit each part of the self-assessment together in the Summary Sheet. Fill it in box by box, with the responses you gave for Sections 1-5 and their corresponding exercises. Note the 'Career Options' box at the end. This space is for notes on career fields you are considering and planning to research. Fill in at least three options, and be as specific as possible. For example, instead of 'federal government,' try 'federal government, housing policy, based in Washington, DC.'

After you have filled in as many career options as you can, review your Summary Sheet and see if you can add any more options based on your profile. Share the results with a friend, colleague, or career adviser to see if they can help you fill in any other options. This will form the basis for your occupational research.

Section One	10 Skills (<i>5 mastered, 5 to develop</i>)
Exercise One	10 Accomplishments
Section Two	10 Personality Traits (<i>5 Own, 5 Others' Perceptions</i>)
Exercise Two	Match 5 Skills with Personality Traits
Section Three	10 Lifestyle Considerations (<i>5 Essential, 5 Flexible</i>)
Exercise Three	10 Interests
Section Four	10 Work Values
Section Five	10 Aspects of Work Environment



Resources

Self-Assessment Advice

Change Your Job, Change Your Life. Published by Impact Publications.

Do What You Are. Published by Little, Brown and Company.

I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was. Published by Dell Publishing.

Is Your Genius at Work? Published by Davies-Black Publishing.

What Color Is Your Parachute?: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers. Published by Ten Speed Press.

What's Your Type of Career? Published by Davies-Black Publishing.

SKILLS

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <input type="text"/> | 6. <input type="text"/> |
| 2. <input type="text"/> | 7. <input type="text"/> |
| 3. <input type="text"/> | 8. <input type="text"/> |
| 4. <input type="text"/> | 9. <input type="text"/> |
| 5. <input type="text"/> | 10. <input type="text"/> |

MATCH SKILLS AND TRAITS

Skill 1. _____

Traits

Skill 2. _____

Traits

Skill 3. _____

Traits

Skill 4. _____

Traits

Skill 5. _____

Traits

LIFESTYLE

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

INTERESTS

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

WORK VALUES

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

CAREER OPTIONS

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <input type="text"/> | 6. <input type="text"/> |
| 2. <input type="text"/> | 7. <input type="text"/> |
| 3. <input type="text"/> | 8. <input type="text"/> |
| 4. <input type="text"/> | 9. <input type="text"/> |
| 5. <input type="text"/> | 10. <input type="text"/> |

Last but not least: Remember to save a copy of this assessment for your own records and email a copy to your Economics Career Coordinator before your appointment!

Jennifer Jones - Economics Career Coordinator
jlh7b@virginia.edu
Monroe Hall
Room 228