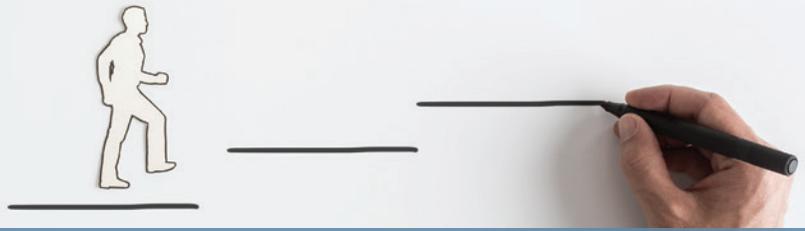


Steps to Your Career Development

Steer Your Career in the Right Direction!

Did you know that the average American spends about one third of their adult lives in the workplace, and is likely to change jobs between 10 - 12 times during their lifetime? With so much of your time and energy dedicated to working, it's important to take the time to determine the occupation that best matches your skills, interests, and values. By identifying the work you excel at and enjoy, you can develop a successful and satisfying career path.



What Is Career Development?

Career Development is the process of self-awareness, exploring, evaluating, choosing, and acting on educational and occupational opportunities that help shape your career. It is a lifelong process of actively learning and successfully navigating your options to train for jobs that best match your personal qualities, skills, values, and interests.

Why Focus on Your Career Development?

Engaging in career development is a wise investment of your time and energy. You will need to identify and assess your own strengths and blind spots, then work to hone your strengths and improve the skills that need fine tuning. Your career development also includes learning about different roles and occupations that best match your abilities, seeking out opportunities to advance, and possibly even changing occupations if you discover a more suitable one.

Although focusing on your career development may appear to be a complex task, there are a few basic concepts that define the process and break it down into manageable steps.

Here are the Four Main Steps in the Career Development Process:

- 1. Self-Assessment** – gathering important information about yourself by identifying skills, abilities, values, and interests to make informed educational, training, and career decisions. There are many career-assessment tools and resources to help you conduct a self-assessment.
- 2. Career Exploration** – learning more about a career interest, expanding on a current career, or choosing a new career path. This includes researching key occupational areas, understanding what training and education is needed, as well as learning more about your desired field and the overall job market. This exploration will help you make meaningful career decisions.
- 3. Decision Making/Planning** – evaluating and choosing options to reach a desired goal. This requires recognizing both short and long-term steps that are realistic and attainable, which will move you in the direction of your desired career outcomes.
- 4. Action Plan** – planning and following a series of steps or goals you have identified to target and reach your career goals. An action plan will detail the activities needed to accomplish your objectives and take action.

How Can The Career Development Process Help You?



The career development process is ongoing and often sequential, with measured and logical steps to follow. If you are unsure of your career direction or how to begin, you will want to start with self-assessment. This process is fluid, meaning you can use any steps out of sequence depending on your situation. **For example**, if you decide it is time for a job change, you may want to consider repeating the self-assessment and career exploration steps in the process. Going back to conduct some additional self-assessment and re-visit your interests, skills, and values can clarify and confirm your direction.

Suppose you are clear on your chosen career path and are ready to advance. In that case, you can move directly to the career exploration step to focus on finding the next best opportunity. Remember, career exploration will help determine if additional education or training is needed to advance your career and allow you to examine your options. Exploring your desired occupational field requirements will also help link your academic and training plans to career goals.

Suppose you already know your occupational interest and the training or education needed to move forward. In that case, you will want to target the other important steps in the career development process. These include setting goals, making decisions, and creating an action plan. Planning is an essential component of the process. Good decisions require good information: current and accurate knowledge about yourself and the world of work. Once you are provided good information, planning, and acting on your future career goals will unfold naturally and help you stay on course.



Steer Your Career!

Like stepping-stones along your path, the four phases of the career development process are guideposts for your educational and occupational journey. As you gain work experience and enhance your knowledge and skills, you will most likely refine your career direction several times during your lifetime. You may need to re-examine your goals and revise your plans to take advantage of new opportunities.

Workplace changes are a constant. Due to ever changing technology, many jobs that exist today may be reconfigured or could become outdated in the future. For some occupational fields, there are jobs that do not even exist yet! New jobs are created every year. You can best prepare for and embrace these types of changes by gaining a better understanding of the career development process and preparing for the future.

The work you pursue influences your entire lifestyle: your self-concept, amount of income, who your friends are, and where you live. Why not become the creator of your own destiny? Actively engaging in the planning and development of your career will give you an opportunity to discover the best-suited career path and live a fulfilling lifestyle with meaningful work.

Visit the [NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training Career Resources webpage](#) for helpful resources to help in each step of your career development.

Questions/Comments? Please email advisors@nyscseapartnership.org