Career Planning Tips: How to Find the Right Job or Career Path

Finding the job you want takes many steps and involves many decisions. This handout is designed to help you along the way and guide you to the appropriate resources.

Be sure to discuss your progress, thoughts, and questions with a UAA Career Exploration & Services (CES) staff. Also see the other Career Exploration & Services handouts for additional information on career planning tips, writing resumes, cover letters, and other professional correspondence, preparing for interviews, effectively job searching, and what to do once you’ve entered the workforce.

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

- Choose your ideal work environment—large corporation, small business, government agency or nonprofit.
- Choose your ideal location—urban, suburban or rural.
- List your three most useful job skills and know which is your strongest.
- Know whether you want to work with people, data or things.
- Know whether you enjoy new projects or prefer following a regular routine.
- List some of the main career areas that might interest you.
- List your favorite leisure time activities.
- Know what kind of reward is most important to you in a job—money, security, creative authority, etc.

RESEARCH CAREER OPTIONS

- Develop a list of career possibilities to research.
- Visit your career development library and utilize the Internet to learn about various careers. The Dictionary of Occupational Titles and the Occupational Outlook Handbook are resources and available in the CES library.
- Consider whether your desired career requires an advanced degree.
- Keep up with current trends in your field through trade publications, news/business magazines and websites.
- Identify employers interested in interviewing someone with your academic background and experience; create a list of three or more employers in the field you are considering.
- Use the Internet to learn more about potential employers and check out salary surveys and hiring trends in your anticipated career field.
- Make at least three professional contacts through friends, relatives or professors to learn more about your field of interest.
- Meet with faculty and alumni who work or who have worked in your field to talk about available jobs and the outlook for your field.

GET EXPERIENCE

- Narrow down the career options you are considering through coursework and personal research.
- Participate in a work experience or internship program in your chosen field to learn of the daily requirements of the careers you are considering. Such assignments can lead to permanent job offers following graduation.
- Become an active member in one or more professional associations.
- Volunteer for a community or charitable organization to gain further work experience. Volunteer positions can and should be included on your resume.

SEEING A UAA CAREER EXPLORATION & SERVICES CAREER ADVISOR: WHAT TO EXPECT

Meeting with a career advisor can be helpful in organizing and planning your future. A career advisor can stimulate your thinking, provide encouragement, respond to your ideas, give you suggestions, teach you strategies for making decisions and help you plan your job search.
Obviously, Career Exploration & Services career advisors cannot make a decision for you or tell you what to do in planning your career. Furthermore, career advisors cannot inform you of all possible careers associated with certain majors or personally educate you concerning the details of various careers. The career world is too complex to allow this.

However, when possible, career advisors will provide you with feedback concerning your interests and values and the career choice process. When the information is available, career advisors will offer some insight concerning the nature of various majors or careers.

The point is career advisors and students can work together in developing career plans. NO other individual or assessment measure can make choices for you. We will help to provide support as well as a decision making process, help you in understanding and learning more about yourself, and help you to begin to gather career information. Hopefully, the Career Exploration & Services advisors will serve as a bridge between you, UAA, and the career world. Ultimately, you will have to engage in further research and assume responsibility for making career choices.

**When meeting with a career advisor, you can do the following:**

- Begin to look at your interest, skills, and values through discussion, assessments and related activities.
- Learn about resources, as well as personal contacts, that are essential in gaining information about majors and careers.
- Discuss different opportunities, projects, and ideas that can assist you in making your college education satisfying, fun, and marketable.
- Engage in exercises that can help you to identify the career skills that your academic, leisure, extra-curricular, and part-time job experiences have developed.
- Explore personal, family, and social conflicts that can deter effective career planning and job hunting.
- Recognize personal strengths as well as limitations (e.g. self-confidence, assertiveness, communication skills) and how they affect career planning, then develop ways to use and/or improve them.
- Learn about the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS – see page three) and other computer-assisted guidance systems and how they may help you in decision making.
- Research employer leads, alumni contacts, and job vacancies as well as the best ways to put you in touch with employers.

**Checklist for seeing a Career Development Center Career Advisor**

- What is your goal? Try and pick one main topic for your appointment.
- Suggestions of topic items: Careers, Majors, Career Change, Occupations, International Careers, etc.
- Schedule your career advising appointment by calling (907) 786-6913.

**Prior to Your Appointment:**

- Make sure you have an updated resume
- Make sure you research your topic and utilize Career Exploration & Services resources
- Go to AKCIS to gain knowledge about your topic and come up with several questions to ask during appointment
- Complete and save the Career Cluster and Interest Profiler assessment results on AKCIS – see page three for more info
- Take notes as you are exploring and gathering information for your topic
- Know the criteria for your goal and search any related information to your topic
- Explore Career Exploration & Services website at [www.uaacareerservices.com](http://www.uaacareerservices.com)

**Day of Your Appointment:**

- Review the information you gathered and have your topic in mind
- Bring any information that you have gathered or created in digital format and hard copy
- Bring questions that you have developed
- Prepare for a professional appointment
- Keep your discussion professional and stay on task
- Take notes to review later as you continue through the career decision making process.
What is AKCIS?
AKCIS is a free, comprehensive career guidance system that provides vocational information and exploration tools to users in Alaska. AKCIS is a resource provided by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education.

How do I access AKCIS?
- Visit www.AKCIS.org
- Login using UAA school’s information
  - Username: uaanchorage
  - Password: 4Student
- Get started: Create a personal account, called a portfolio, within the UAA login to save and manage personal career plans, map your college classes, track your progress, and access more tools.
- Enjoy exploring all the features of AKCIS!

AKCIS is a great resource for you as you search for the most rewarding career. With the assessment tests, you can find out what your strongest interests and skills are and match them with an enjoyable and rewarding career.

AKCIS can help you:
- Find Your Occupation Matches using Free Skills Assessment Surveys, such as:
  - Reality Check – Find out how much money you’ll need to attain the lifestyle you desire
  - Interest Profiler – Find out which work areas match your interests and view occupations
  - Career Cluster Inventory – Help narrow down your career choices
  - SKILLS Inventory – Identify skills you enjoy using and view occupations that use those skills
  - Occupation Sort – Answer questions about your preferences to generate a list of occupations
- Choose a Major and School – view different programs of study, schools in Alaska and the U.S., and other info
- Explore Ways to Pay for School – view Alaska Scholarships and different financial aid strategies
- Occupations & Career Clusters – Learn about Careers, Employment Options and Alaska vs. National Wages
- Prepare for Employment – Job success and searching information

OTHER HELPFUL CAREER ADVISING RESOURCES
- O*Net – www.ONetOnline.org - O*Net OnLine has detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development, and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more! This national database, which is available at no cost, is continually updated by surveying a broad range of workers from each occupation. It provides various career exploration tools and assessments for job seekers looking to find or change careers.
- UAA Advising & Testing Center - www.uaa.alaska.edu/advising-testing/ - This UAA department offers many resources, such as one-on-one generalized academic advising and the “My Major Discovery” tool to help you discover a major that interests you. It also offers other assessment tests, such as the Strong Interest Inventory, that can help you determine a career path that would be a rewarding and exciting field for you to work in.
- Career Clusters – see page four of this handout or visit the UAA Advising & Testing Center for some awesome handouts on career clusters that can lead to a great career path.
- UAA academic departments and faculty
Career Clusters

1. Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
   The production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing, and development of agricultural commodities and resources including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products/resources.

2. Architecture & Construction
   Careers in designing, planning, managing, building and maintaining the built environment.

3. Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
   Designing, producing, exhibiting, performing, writing, and publishing multimedia content including visual and performing arts and design, journalism, and entertainment services.

4. Business Management & Administration
   Careers in planning, organizing, directing and evaluating business functions essential to efficient and productive business operations.

5. Education & Training
   Planning, managing and providing education and training services, and related learning support services such as administration, teaching/training, administrative support, and professional support services.

6. Health Science
   Planning, managing, and providing therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health informatics, support services, and biotechnology research and development.

7. Hospitality & Tourism
   Preparing individuals for employment in career pathways that relate to families and human needs such as restaurant and food/beverage services, lodging, travel and tourism, recreation, amusement and attractions.

8. Human Services
   Preparing individuals for employment in career pathways that relate to families and human needs such as counseling and mental health services, family and community services, personal care, and consumer services.

9. Information Technology
   Building linkages in IT occupations for entry level, technical, and professional careers related to the design, development, support and management of hardware, software, multimedia and systems integration services.

10. Law, Government, and Public Safety
    Planning, managing, and providing legal, public safety, protective services and homeland security, including professional and technical support services.

11. Science, Technology, Engineering & Research
    Planning, managing, and providing scientific research and professional and technical services (e.g., physical science, social science, engineering) including laboratory and testing services, and research and development services.

12. Transportation, Distribution & Logistics
    The planning, management, and movement of people, materials, and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail and water and related professional and technical support services such as transportation infrastructure planning and management, logistics services, mobile equipment and facility maintenance.

My top three Career Clusters

1. 

2. 

3. 