



INCREASE YOUR CHANCES

A 4-Step Method for Career Exploration:

READ • LISTEN • SEE • DO

INCREASE YOUR CHANCES

As you begin your career exploration, do not expect that in a matter of days (or weeks, or months) you will find out EXACTLY what you want to do for the rest of your life. It COULD happen that quickly, but not likely. Life is generally not that certain or quick. But that is OK. The goal here is to simply increase the chances of finding a compatible career at some point in the near future. That is it, simply to increase the chances. Let's use a comparison.

Say that you don't do any career exploration. You spend all of your free time playing video games at home. It is fairly obvious that the chances of your stumbling upon an interesting career under that scenario are close to nil. It is highly unlikely that someone will knock on your door and offer you a dream job. Highly unlikely. To "up the odds" slightly of finding satisfactory employment, you could read about careers of interest on the internet.

You could "up the odds" even more by interviewing people with interesting careers. "Up the odds" even more by watching someone perform a job you are considering. Even more if you sample a job by performing it. With each additional step you take, you increase your chances even more of finding a career/job that you like. You do not necessarily need to take EVERY step that this pamphlet suggests, but you increase the chances of finding that special job the more steps you take.

This pamphlet offers you a 4-step method:

Read, Listen, See, Do.

Resources (books and web links) are offered throughout.

1. READ

The first step to career exploration is to simply read about careers of interest.

2. LISTEN

The second step is to find someone with the career you are interested in and interview him or her.

3. SEE

The third step is to watch someone perform his or her job.

4. DO

The final step is to perform the job yourself.



If this is all you need to explore, then put this pamphlet down and get to it. If, on the other hand, you would like more help, then simply turn the page.

1. READ

The first step to career exploration is to read about careers of interest.

- A. Read about careers of interest on the internet. Simply enter the name of a career (e.g., accountant, teacher, police officer) on your search engine of choice and read about it on a couple of websites.
- B. Read about careers of interest in books obtained from the library or purchased from a bookseller.
- C. Visit Career Placement Services in Room 272A (508.854.4439) to view publications in the resource library.

2. LISTEN

The second step is to find someone with the career you are interested in and interview him or her.

- A. Do you know someone who has the career you are interested in? If yes, you could interview that person, or he or she might be able to refer you to someone else who also has that job.
- B. If you do not know someone who has the career you are interested in...do you know someone, who knows someone, whose brother-in-law's mother has the career you are interested in? Ask around.
- C. If you don't know anyone who has the career you are interested in, you may need to work a little harder to find someone. If you want to learn about a paralegal career, for example, you might want to call a law firm and ask to speak to a paralegal. If you are investigating a career in automobile mechanics, you might want to visit your local car repair shop.

A local college or university might be a good resource also: The professor teaching an engineering course, say, will be

an expert and may very well have worked (or is currently working) in the field.

The best way to interview is a direct (face-to-face) conversation. If that cannot happen, consider using email, Skype, or phone.

- D. For assistance in learning how to network, contact:
Career Placement Services at 508.854.4439 in Room 272A.

3. SEE

The third step is to watch someone perform his or her job. This is sometimes referred to as “job shadowing.”

You might be able to do this at the same time that you interview someone. Another option is to view a career video through YouTube or a career web site. Just Google the name of a career on YouTube.

4. DO

The final step is to perform the job yourself.

- A. Volunteer
- B. Take an entry level position.
- C. Participate in an internship, a co-op, or service learning.
- D. Visit Career Placement Services in Room 272A (508.854.4439) to find out how to access QCC’s Online Job Board, learn how to access job search resources, and attend employment workshops.

www.QCC.edu/career-placement-services



If this is all you need to explore, then put this pamphlet down and get to it. If, on the other hand, you would like more help, then simply turn the page.

1. READ

The first step to career exploration is to read about careers of interest.

A. Read about careers of interest on the internet. Simply enter the name of a career (e.g., accountant, teacher, police officer) on your search engine of choice and read about it on a couple of websites. Particularly helpful websites include:

- **Massachusetts Career Information Systems**
<http://masscis.intocareers.org>
- **The Occupational Outlook Handbook**
www.bls.gov/ooh
- **Career One Stop, Fastest Growing Occupations**
<http://acinet.org/acinet/oview1.asp?level+baplus>

If you are unsure of a specific career, you can search more generally. For example, you can search careers based on certain interests or categories. "Careers in _____ (sports, or finance, or health, etc.)" or "Careers with _____ (animals, or children, or the FBI, etc.)" can be helpful searches. View several websites so you can examine related careers. If you find a career that you would like to learn more about, then put the name of the career in a search engine and read about it on a couple of websites.

B. Read about careers of interest in books obtained from the library or purchased from a bookseller. To find these books, use the library data-base computer or Amazon's website to conduct searches.

C. Career Placement Services has a resource library that is accessible to all students in Room 272A.

After you read up on a career, you can then decide whether or not you would like to learn more about it. If you don't, then you can stop right there. If, however, you would like to learn more, then it is suggested that you move on to Step 2: Listen.

2. LISTEN

The second step is to find someone with the career you are interested in and interview him or her. This is called an informational interview.

It is a good idea to prepare for the interview by doing some background reading and preparing questions to ask.

- A. Do you know someone who has the career you are interested in? If yes, you could interview that person, or he or she might be able to refer you to someone else who also has that job.
- B. If you do not know someone who has the career you are interested in...do you know someone whose brother-in-law's mother has the career you are interested in? Ask around.
- C. If you don't know anyone who has the career you are interested in, you may need to work a little harder to find someone. If you want to learn about a paralegal career, for example, you might want to call a law firm and ask to speak to a paralegal. If you are investigating a career in automobile mechanics, you might want to visit your local car repair shop. The professor teaching an engineering course, say, will be an expert and may very well have worked (or is currently working) in the field.
- D. To learn more about informational interviewing, make an appointment with a Career Placement Representative at 508.854.4439 in Room 272A.

There are several advantages to talking with someone about his or her career. There are likely things to be learned by talking with someone that you wouldn't learn by reading. Talking with someone who actually does the job you are interested in can make it seem more real and more possible. The best way to interview is a direct (face-to-face) conversation. If that cannot happen, consider using email, Skype, or phone.

The website Quintessential Careers can help you prepare for your interview.

www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html

3. SEE

The third step is to watch someone perform his or her job. This is sometimes referred to as “job shadowing.”

You might be able to do this at the same time that you interview someone.

Now, due to reasons of danger or confidentiality, it might be difficult or impossible to watch someone perform certain jobs (e.g., oil rig worker, steel mill worker, therapist, financial planner). If this is the case, then make the best of it - interview the person at his or her job site. You might not be able to watch someone perform the job, but hopefully you can at least get a feel for the work environment. Is it noisy or busy? Is it indoors or outdoors? Is it a sit-down job or is it more active? Does anything about the work environment appeal to you or repel you?

The advantage to actually watching someone perform their job over simply talking about it is obvious: you get to see what someone does. Once again, it makes the career more real, more tangible, because you are right there, watching it being performed. It is likely that you will have a better sense of whether or not you would like the job or would be good at doing it.

Another option is to view a career video online at:

www.drkit.org/careerchoice/ or type the name of a career of your choice on YouTube.

4. DO

The final step is to perform the job yourself. This last step is the gold standard when it comes to career exploration.

Actually performing a job allows you to learn as much as you possibly can about the career.

Now some jobs do not allow for a novice to come in and try it on for a day. Teachers aid or graphic designer, sure, but not likely for police officer or jobs that have specific regulations. So the challenge becomes, “How can I at least approximate the experience of performing a job?”

A. *Volunteer.* Let’s say, for example, you are considering teaching. Is there a way for you to volunteer at a nearby school? Or let’s say you are considering a career in social work. Is there a way for you to volunteer at a church or a local agency where you would be helping people?

B. *Take an entry level position.* If interested in becoming a mechanic, you could consider trying to obtain a job at an instant oil-change business. Or if interested in working at a college, is there an entry-level reception or student-worker position you could apply for?

C. *Participate* in an internship, a co-op, or service learning. An internship or co-op is basically learning on-the-job. Co-ops are usually tied to a specific program of study, may be an actual requirement of your degree, and usually are paid. Internships can be tied to college programs, but they do not need to be and are usually unpaid. Service Learning is usually tied to a specific course and involves the students participating in meaningful community service.

For assistance, contact Career Placement Services at 508.854.4439 in Room 272A.

www.QCC.edu/career-placement-services



If this is all you need to explore, then put this pamphlet down and get to it. If, on the other hand, you would like more help, then simply turn the page.

PLAN OF ACTION

Do you need a plan of action in order to begin your career exploration? That's a question for YOU to answer. If the answer is "no" then...*put this pamphlet down and get to it!* If, on the other hand, you need some guidance, here is a sample plan of action:

1. Learn about careers:

Read • Listen • See • Do

2. Learn what type of education, training, experience, etc., is required to obtain any of the careers you are interested in.
3. Obtain any necessary education, training, experience, etc., required by one of the careers you are interested in.
4. Visit QCC's Transfer Office in Room 272A (508.854.4404) if the education you need requires more than an associate degree.
Transfer@qcc.mass.edu or **www.qcc.mass.edu/transfer/**
5. Visit QCC's Career Placement Office for resume, cover letter, and interview assistance in Room 272A (508.854.4439).
www.QCC.edu/career-placement-services
6. If at any point you change your mind about your career choice, go back to the beginning (i.e., read-listen-see-do) and begin the cycle again.
7. Apply for and be offered a job.



If this is all you need to explore, then put this pamphlet down and get to it. If, on the other hand, you would like more help, then simply turn the page.

RESOURCES

COURSES

The benefit of the Read-Listen-See-Do Career Exploration Method is that it is basically free. The down-side is that it requires a person to be self-motivated to follow the four steps. If you would like to do some career exploration but think that you either need a little push or would like more structure, Quinsigamond Community College has two college-level courses that you could consider taking:

ORT 110 STRATEGIES FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER—3 CREDITS

First time college students who want success and direction in their college experience gain practical skills that are directly applied to selection of a college major and future career paths. Students also gain effective learning strategies and information on how to navigate and use college procedures and resources. Specific topics include promoting self-knowledge through assessments, researching and obtaining career information, developing and practicing study and time management skills, and improving communication and decision making skills. Students integrate information about self, careers, and college in an academic and career plan. F/S/SU

COURSES-CONTINUED

PSY 115 SELF ASSESSMENT AND CAREER PLANNING—3 CREDITS

This course emphasizes self-discovery, the workplace, life decisions, and career/future planning within a multicultural framework. Students explore psychological theories and apply those theories to their own personal situations to formulate career/life plans. Students identify their abilities and explore their values, interests, motives, motivations, behaviors, personalities, and interaction styles. Students acquire and develop skills for career planning, job searching, and understanding job satisfaction. Students develop an e-portfolio that integrates information developed through the self-assessment and career development process.

Prerequisite: ENG 091 and ENG 096 or appropriate placement score.

MAJOR DECISIONS WORKSHOP

At no-cost (that means **free**), QCC also offers a 2-hour Major Decisions Workshop session that might help you jump-start your career exploration.

The Major Decision Workshop is for those who:

- Need help deciding on a QCC major
- Need help learning to navigate all of the possibilities
- Are unsure about a major
- Need help finding direction with all the possible majors

www.QCC.edu/major-decision

You may also reach the advising center for an appointment at
508.854.4308

BOOKS

If you would like more information on career exploration, you might consider checking out one or more of the books listed below, which present different approaches to career exploration.

1. Step-by-step, linear, rational approach (i.e., learn about yourself, then learn about related careers, then determine how to prepare yourself for a particular career). *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-hunters and Career-Changers* by Richard Nelson Bolles
2. Anecdotal: What other people did to find a career. *What Should I Do with My Life? The True Story of People Who Answered the Ultimate Question* by Po Bronson
3. Planned Happenstance: "...allows the opportunity for (people) to benefit from unplanned events". *Luck Is No Accident: Making the Most of Happenstance in Your Life and Career* by John D. Krumboltz and Al S. Levin
4. Inspirational Stories based on interviews conducted by college students (who didn't know what they wanted to do with their lives), during a road trip across the country. *Roadtrip Nation: A Guide to Discovering Your Path In Life*. By Nathan Geghard, Mike Marriner and Joanne Gordon
5. Practical information on the skills, values, activities, course work, and occupations associated with a variety of college majors. *College Majors and Careers, 6th Edition* by Paul Phifer

WEBSITES

1. Mass Careers – excellent career information based on Massachusetts jobs and economy. Also includes a comprehensive career assessment called the O’Net Interest Profiler (click on assessment link).

<http://masscis.intocareers.org/>

2. Occupational Outlook Handbook Online – one of the most comprehensive career information sites from the US Department of Labor

www.bls.gov/ooh

3. High Growth and Emerging Occupations

<http://www.onetonline.org/find/bright?b=3>

4. Quintessential Career Exploration Tools and Tests – a comprehensive list of links to career planning assessments

www.quintcareers.com/career_exploration.html

5. Kuder – Self Assessment and Career Planning System

www.qcc.kuder.com

6. Keirsey Temperament sorter

www.keirsey.com



Developed by Martin Muysenberg. With help from Maria Addison, Colleen Doherty, Jennifer Guzman-Gayflor, Diane Levinson, Raymond Lawless, Tenisha Mincey, Tom Patria, Henry Ritter, and Liza Smith. Editing and formatting by Laura Tino and Elsie Newmame.