My Career Plan

2 Introduction
3 Personality preferences
5 Aptitudes and skills
6 Interests
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Self-assessment is the best way to determine your career goals and how you can achieve them. Your personality preferences, aptitudes and skills, interests, values, and life and work experiences all play a role in the self-assessment process. This handout guides you through this process and helps you think about your longer term career plan. While it may seem like a lot of work, taking the time now to reflect on what you bring to the table and what you want out of your next job or internship is the initial phase of any successful career transition. By considering all of these areas of self-assessment, you can find a meaningful career that incorporates your personality preferences, aptitudes and skills, interests, values, and life and work experiences.

Ultimately, knowing your strengths and weaknesses, as well as what you’re looking for in your career, will help you:

- Be more focused, efficient, and effective in your job search.
- Identify the areas you have to work on in order to reach your goals.
- More accurately represent yourself to potential employers through your resume, your cover letters, and in interviews.
- More thoroughly evaluate your career options.
# Personality preferences overview

From *Introduction to Type and Communication*, Donna Dunning, CPP, Inc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraversion (E) “Let’s talk this over.”</th>
<th>Introversion (I) “I need to think about this.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Individuals with a preference for Extraversion tend to:</em></td>
<td><em>Individuals with a preference for Introversion tend to:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus their energy and process information externally</td>
<td>• Focus their energy and process information internally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dislike working on one thing for a long time, especially if they must do so on their own</td>
<td>• Prefer quiet places to work and can work on one thing for a long time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learn and work best when able to share, discuss, and process information with others</td>
<td>• Learn and work best by having time to relate, understand, and process information on their own</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ask questions and think out loud during activities or while working through a decision</td>
<td>• Think before they speak or act; can be uncomfortable when asked to perform or respond on demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understand their world best by acting on it or talking about it</td>
<td>• Downplay their strengths externally with the result that their abilities can often be underestimated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensing (S) “Just the facts, please.”</th>
<th>Intuition (N) “I can see it all now.”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Individuals who prefer Sensing tend to:</em></td>
<td><em>Individuals who prefer Intuition tend to:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on individual facts and details before seeing underlying patterns or whole concepts</td>
<td>• Focus first on what facts mean and how they fit together; see links, possibilities, and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be interested in the facts as they are known and the practical realities of a situation</td>
<td>• Pay more attention to connections and implications between facts than to facts and details alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prefer information and tasks that are organized and presented in an orderly, sequential format</td>
<td>• Prefer information that is introduced with a “big picture” overview; jump around between ideas and tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work at a steady pace</td>
<td>• Have bursts of energy rather than stamina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Become impatient or frustrated with complicated or future-oriented tasks that may take a long time to complete</td>
<td>• Become bored or impatient with tasks that require considerable focus on details, routines, or sequencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Like having their senses engaged as they work; have an immediate and realistic focus</td>
<td>• Like creating ideas and possibilities; have a future and change focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking (T) “Is this logical?”</th>
<th>Feeling (F) “Will anyone be hurt?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Individuals who prefer Thinking tend to:</em></td>
<td><em>Individuals who prefer Feeling tend to:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluate situations by focusing on logic and analysis</td>
<td>• Evaluate situations by focusing on relative value and personal factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be most influenced by objective data and cause-and-effect relationships</td>
<td>• Be most influenced by the effects that information and situations have on the people involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider pros and cons of ideas, information, and opinions</td>
<td>• Consider personal impacts of ideas, information and opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make decisions based mainly on logic</td>
<td>• Make subjective decisions that are based on their understanding of the needs, emotions, and feelings of the individuals involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prefer calm, objective interactions; often see work and private life as separate</td>
<td>• Prefer support and encouragement; often want personal connections with co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spot flaws and provide constructive feedback</td>
<td>• Understand and appreciate others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judging (J) “Just do something.”</th>
<th>Perceiving (P) “Let’s wait and see.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Individuals with a Judging orientation tend to:</em></td>
<td><em>Individuals with a Perceiving orientation tend to:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make decisions as soon as possible so they can work toward goals, complete tasks, and move on</td>
<td>• Defer judgments and gather more information; like to keep their options open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan and structure activities; organize time and tasks</td>
<td>• Act spontaneously and leave things to the last minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prefer to accomplish tasks and have closure</td>
<td>• Prefer starting projects to following through with projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be tolerant of routines and structure</td>
<td>• Be frustrated by rules, routines, and highly structured tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be uncomfortable with unplanned changes</td>
<td>• Be open, flexible, and adaptable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aptitudes and skills

Usually, you gain aptitudes and skills through your experiences that are generally transferable to other situations.

Exercise

Below you will find a list of transferable functional skills. As you review this list, conduct a personal inventory by analyzing your past experiences including school, work, and volunteering.

1. Check those skills that you are good at
2. Circle those skills that you enjoy
3. Categorize and place a letter next to the skills you:
   a. Have mastered and would like to use in your next position
   b. Have but would like to improve
   c. Do not have and would like to obtain

Think about how you can incorporate this information into your professional development goals and, in the case of skills you have already mastered, into your resume, cover letters, and interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
<th>Creative Skills</th>
<th>Financial Skills</th>
<th>Interpersonal Skills</th>
<th>Management Skills</th>
<th>Miscellaneous Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>editing</td>
<td>designing</td>
<td>allocating</td>
<td>advising</td>
<td>communicating</td>
<td>classifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explaining</td>
<td>developing</td>
<td>auditing</td>
<td>assisting</td>
<td>consulting</td>
<td>collecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influencing</td>
<td>establishing</td>
<td>balancing</td>
<td>counseling</td>
<td>coordinating</td>
<td>compiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpreting</td>
<td>illustrating</td>
<td>budgeting</td>
<td>empathizing</td>
<td>delegating</td>
<td>computing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening</td>
<td>imagining</td>
<td>calculating</td>
<td>facilitating</td>
<td>directing</td>
<td>examining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mediating</td>
<td>improvising</td>
<td>forecasting</td>
<td>guiding</td>
<td>evaluating</td>
<td>evaluating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promoting</td>
<td>inventing</td>
<td>investing</td>
<td>listening</td>
<td>leading</td>
<td>negotiating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaking</td>
<td>revitalizing</td>
<td>projecting</td>
<td>motivating</td>
<td>persuading</td>
<td>planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>translating</td>
<td>visualizing</td>
<td></td>
<td>representing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing</td>
<td>accounting</td>
<td></td>
<td>serving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adminstering</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Relations Skills</th>
<th>Problem Solving Skills</th>
<th>Research Skills</th>
<th>Selling Skills</th>
<th>Training Skills</th>
<th>Technical Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conducting</td>
<td>analyzing</td>
<td>assessing</td>
<td>communicating</td>
<td>communicating</td>
<td>adjusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consulting</td>
<td>appraising</td>
<td>calculating</td>
<td>demonstrating</td>
<td>demonstrating</td>
<td>aligning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informing</td>
<td>diagnosing</td>
<td>diagnosing</td>
<td>educating</td>
<td>encouraging</td>
<td>assembling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning</td>
<td>examining</td>
<td>evaluating</td>
<td>organizing</td>
<td>evaluating</td>
<td>drafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning</td>
<td>proving</td>
<td>examining</td>
<td>persuading</td>
<td>explaining</td>
<td>engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning</td>
<td>reasoning</td>
<td>extrapolating</td>
<td>planning</td>
<td>instructing</td>
<td>installing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promoting</td>
<td>recognizing</td>
<td>interviewing</td>
<td>planning</td>
<td>planning</td>
<td>operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representing</td>
<td>validating</td>
<td>investigating</td>
<td>scheduling</td>
<td>stimulating</td>
<td>programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responding</td>
<td></td>
<td>synthesizing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>repairing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researching</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing</td>
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</table>
Each person has personal preferences for certain types of activities and environments. There are also interests that you will ideally want to apply in your work.

**EXERCISE**

**PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS**

In trying to discern your professional areas of interest within the field of international relations, ask yourself the following:

1. What attracted me to a graduate program in international relations?

2. What other options did I consider, and why did I rule them out?

3. The classes that interest me most at Fletcher focus on...

   They interest me because...

4. The region(s) of the world that interests me most is...

   because...

5. While at Fletcher I want to explore the topic(s) of...

   because...

6. Someone who has become a professional role model for me is...

   because...
PERSONAL INTERESTS

Professional interests, however, are not the only ones you should consider when weighing a job search. Here are some questions to get you started in thinking about the activities and interests about which you are passionate. Your answers may push you to consider work in a field you might never have previously entertained – one that can perhaps combine some of your professional interests with your extra-curricular interests.

1 What hobbies or other interests are most important to you currently?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2 Which of these interests or activities do you want to keep time for once you start working?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3 How much time will you need each week?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you need some clarity to define your personal interest? Consider the following statements to bring to light issues around work/life balance.

1 When I was 10 years old, I loved to...

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2 The books I seek out in a bookstore are about...

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3 When I have free time, I love to...

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Values

Values are factors that an individual considers important or significant. Work values are the rewards, satisfactions, and desirable qualities that one seeks in a career - what makes work fulfilling or satisfying. Your rankings of these priorities may change over time with life events, such as family, marriage, and/or children. The goal is to find a career that meets your top values and needs now and into the foreseeable future. The following is a list of personal values that many people identified as being important to their satisfaction or fulfillment in their careers.

Look at the list of values below.

1. Rate the degree of importance that you assign to each for yourself, using the scale below:
   1 = very important
   2 = reasonably important
   3 = not very important
   4 = not important at all

2. Next, circle the five values most important to you today.

   ___ helping society
   ___ competition
   ___ helping others
   ___ influencing people
   ___ public contact
   ___ stability
   ___ working alone
   ___ ability to be creative
   ___ ability to make decisions
   ___ variety of responsibilities
   ___ working for something I believe in
   ___ independence
   ___ enjoyable colleagues
   ___ tranquility
   ___ being an expert
   ___ power
   ___ having authority

   ___ adventure/risk
   ___ time flexibility
   ___ opportunity for advancement
   ___ physical challenge
   ___ work under pressure
   ___ recognition from superiors/peers
   ___ work mastery
   ___ clear expectation and procedures
   ___ holding a supervisory role
   ___ fast paced
   ___ job security
   ___ location of workplace
   ___ financial gain
   ___ meeting challenges
   ___ travel
   ___ opportunity for personal growth
Your career plan

Now that you’ve spent some time assessing your personality, aptitudes and skills, interests, values, and experiences, it’s time to put it all together into your career plan. What is a career plan? A career plan is critical to your personal career success as it lays the groundwork for your career search.

The following steps will help you start the process of developing a career plan. However, we realize that developing a career plan is a very individualized process, so we encourage you to use these exercises as a stepping stone, and/or develop some additional exercises, including charts and timelines, of your own.

Here are the basic elements of a career plan:

1 **Self-assessment:**
   Build on the work we’ve done thus far in orientation and in this guide by recording your personality preferences, interests, values, aptitudes/skills, and life/work experience you want to consider in your career decisions. Looking at this information on one page will help you assess if you have the skills you want to use, aptitudes you want to develop, interests you want to exercise, and/or lifestyle considerations that will impact where or how you want to work. Remember that the self-assessment process is ongoing and will change for you over time.

2 **Research and evaluation:**
   Consider what job functions and organizations might combine your selected interests, values, preferences, aptitudes and experience. Explore and evaluate these options over the course of your time at Fletcher.

3 **Career mission statement:**
   Your career mission statement is an overall clear, succinct purpose of your longer term goals. Simply by defining your long term goals, you are more likely to achieve them.

4 **Short-term planning:**
   Let the goal setting begin! Consider the development opportunities you will have over the next two to five years. At Fletcher, this might include course selection, club participation or leadership, or networking opportunities within Fletcher, Tufts, and the surrounding community. Also, think about what kind of internship experience you want to have and how you will go about creating this opportunity. Be specific about these activities and give them timelines or deadlines to help you achieve your goals.

5 **Long-term planning:**
   Identify the core skills you want to be using, the work you want to be doing, and even where you want to be working. Consider how you can continue to develop skills that will help you succeed. Realize that long-term planning looks at the next five to ten years, and the professional landscape will change during that period of time. Revisit your long-term plan periodically to make adjustments for these changes in the landscape.
Self-assessment overview

Use this worksheet to summarize your self-assessment activities and create a visual chart for yourself.

Strongest aptitudes and skills
1. 
2. 
3. 

Top interests
1. 
2. 
3. 

Most important values
1. 
2. 
3. 

Best life/work experience
1. 
2. 
3. 

Personality preference (MBTI)  
Extravert (E) / Introvert (I)
Sensing (S) / Intuition (N)
Thinking (T) / Feeling (F)
Judging (J) / Perceiving (P)
Career Mission Statement

To get the most out of your career plan, take some time to think about the broad view of what you want to accomplish over the course of your career. Consider the following questions as you brainstorm your own personal career mission statement in the space below:

1. Where do you envision yourself being 10 to 15 years down the road?
2. What skills will you be using – building relationships, creating or analyzing opportunities, imagining alternatives?
3. What will you be responsible for?
4. With whom will you be interacting on a daily basis?
5. What will the organization you work for be like in terms of size, culture, and mission?
6. What will your work environment look like?
7. Where (geography) and how (lifestyle) do you want to live?

Career Mission Statement:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What skills/experience will you need to fulfill your mission statement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills/experience I need to gain:</th>
<th>Strategy for gaining these:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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Conclusion

We’ve helped you think through the first step of your career plan, now it’s your turn. Each week, we’ll devote time and energy to help you think about your professional development at Fletcher.

Leverage this time to think about your next steps in terms of research and evaluation, short-term planning, and long-term planning. By starting to think about your career plan now, you will give yourself an advantage as you continue along in your job search process.

Remember that the Office of Career Services (OCS) is here to guide you through this process. Please stop by our offices anytime and turn the page for additional resources.
Additional resources

Books
These reading resources are available in the OCS Resource Center.

*Diary of a Job Search*
  Tim Johnston

*Do What You Are*
  Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger

*StrengthsFinder 2.0*
  Tom Rath

*The Achievement Paradox*
  Ronald A. Warren

*What Color is Your Parachute?*
  Richard Nelson Bolles

*What's Your Type of Career?*
  Donna Dunning

*Working Identity*
  Herminia Ibarra

Websites & tools
We provide several tools that can further assist you in the self-assessment process. Please stop by our office for more details.

**John Holland's interest types**
Each person has personal preferences for certain types of activities and environments. The six general areas of vocational interest developed by psychologist John Holland are **Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.**

To learn more about Holland's interest types and how these relate to career choice, visit [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holland_Codes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holland_Codes)

**CareerLeader**
Created by faculty at the Harvard Business School, CareerLeader is an online self assessment tool which is particularly useful for students interested in the private sector. This program will give you information about your unique pattern of interests, values and abilities as they relate to the business world.

Email us at fletcherocs@tufts.edu to obtain a username, password, and directions.