Below, you will find an outline of the career planning process. Review these steps and discuss them with a Career Counselor who can help guide you through the career decision making and planning process. Remember that finding a career you’ll be both happy and successful in requires balancing self-knowledge with knowledge of the job market.

**Step 1: WHO**

You have to begin by assessing yourself in order to know how to screen the options available to you. Who are you – What are your interests? What are your abilities? What are your work values? In order for you to be happy in a career, it needs to align with your interests, abilities, values, and personality. Learning about who you are in all of these areas will help you to establish criteria to use when you start researching possible career options.

While only a tool in the process, taking a career assessment can help provide you with a concrete, organized picture of your interests, abilities, values, and personality preferences, and how they relate to different career fields.

The Career Center offers three Career Assessments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIGI Career Guidance System (Free)</td>
<td>Assesses work and academic interests, abilities, and values, and allows you to explore and learn about career options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) ($15.00)</td>
<td>Assesses personality preferences and how they affect your work preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Interest Inventory ($15.00)</td>
<td>Assesses your work interests in depth and tells you how similar your they are to professionals in various careers</td>
</tr>
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**Step 2: WHAT**

Now it’s time to explore what career options exist, research careers of interest, obtain job market information, and evaluate how well each fits with the criteria you’ve established. Both SIGI and the links below can help you to identify and research career options. When researching careers, some of the things you may want to know include:

- What are the job responsibilities/tasks?
- What kind of environment would you work in?
- What is the job outlook like?
- What’s the average salary range?
- What type and level of degree does it require?
- What are my options or requirements for majors?
- What are my options or requirements for majors?
- What can I do with this major? 

Additional web resources to use for your research:

- **Career Information Databases**: The 3 sites below are the major career informational databases available on the web that allow you to being to research any occupation. The Occupational Outlook Handbook and O*Net are both US Department of Labor sites, and Career OneStop is sponsored by them. They all have different features, so check them out, or ask your Career Counselor where to start.
  - Career OneStop: [http://www.careeronestop.com](http://www.careeronestop.com)
  - O*Net: [http://www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)
- “What Can I do With This Major?”: [http://career.boisestate.edu/](http://career.boisestate.edu/) (use link on homepage): This is a great tool for identifying possible career options for a given major, what types of places you could work for, and how to prepare. There is also a “Links” section that directs you to the relevant professional organizations, informational sites for careers in that major, and job posting sites.
- **Idaho CIS (Career Information System)**: [http://career.boisestate.edu](http://career.boisestate.edu) (use link on left side menu): Provided through the Idaho Department of Labor, this is a career information database that provides Idaho-specific data – expected numbers of openings by region, salaries, and links to lists of Idaho companies by industry.
- Use the above links to identify relevant professional organizations, and review their sites for more in-depth info
- **Career Center website – Career and Job Market Research**: [http://career.boisestate.edu](http://career.boisestate.edu) (use link on left side menu): Access all kinds of job market information, including national and local research on in demand majors and careers, what employers want, and Boise State graduate employment plans.

Once you’ve done your preliminary research online, there are a few more steps you’ll need to take to help ensure you’ve chosen the best career for you.

- Review the Boise State Course Catalog to determine what majors are available (see the Summary of Programs section), and discuss your options for majors with your Career Counselor. Next, talk with an advisor in the department of the major you’re considering. Look at classes and admissions requirements.
• **Conduct an informational interview** to gain real world info about the career. This is where you sit down with someone currently working in the career you’re considering and ask questions about their job. If possible, the next step would be to do a **job shadow**. Aside from actually doing the job, these are the two best ways to really figure out if the career is right for you.

**Step 3: HOW**

Once you’ve established a career goal, you need to put together a plan for how you will make that goal a reality. Meet with your Career Counselor for help with your plan, but here is an overview:

- Having experience in your field when you graduate is critical. There are lots of ways to gain experience, such as internships, jobs, volunteering, getting involved with organizations on campus, and service learning.
- Stay on top of what’s required for your career - it may require you to do more than what’s required for your major.
- Stay in touch with the Career Center – we can help make sure you’re on track to be competitive.

**Know what employers want!**

You can’t plan and prepare for your career without knowing what employers are going to expect from you, and what’s going to make you competitive for jobs. Access the information on the [Career and Job Market Research](http://career.boisestate.edu) page of the Career Center website to learn about the things all employers expect, but also conduct informational interviews to learn about the specific expectations of employers in your field.

**Don’t forget… A DEGREE IS NOT ENOUGH!**

Though having a degree is a minimum requirement for a lot of jobs, just a degree alone is not enough. Employers also expect you to have acquired hands-on experience in your field, and demonstrated the skills they’re looking for. Remember that your graduation requirements only tell you what you have to do to get your degree… NOT what you have to do to get a job. In this competitive job market, being employable means making sure you stand out from your fellow grads.

**The Skills Employers Expect**

Employers care about the skills you have, not just your major. You can access the lists of skills most important to local, regional, and national employers on the [Career and Job Market Research](http://career.boisestate.edu) page. Remember that employers want you to have *demonstrated* these skills. Some of the opportunities available to you to develop these skills are listed below.

**The Experience Employers Expect**

Employers *expect* you to graduate with hands-on experience in your field! There are many opportunities available to gain experience that employers value (but you have to take the initiative to seek them out!), including:

- Internships (for academic credit or not for credit)
- Volunteering (pursue opportunities to do work in your field, or volunteer for a company you want to work for)
- Service Learning (sign up for classes with a Service Learning component to get hands-on experience)
- Part-time jobs (look for jobs that will let you develop skills you currently lack)
- Involvement on campus in clubs and organizations (take on leadership roles and roles related to your career goals)
- Study abroad (develop global understanding and cultural awareness important to employers)
- Class projects (sign up for courses that will allow you to complete large projects related to your career goals)
- Research (get involved with the research a faculty member in your department is working on)

**Build Your Professional Network**

Your plan should also include meeting and building relationships with people in your field *while you’re in school*. The experiences listed above are all good opportunities to build your network, but also build it by conducting informational interviews and getting involved with professional organizations in your field. Join as a student member, attend all of their meetings and events, and even take on a volunteer position. It’s very important to not only have the right qualifications, but to know the people who can connect you with job opportunities. Don’t wait till it’s too late; meet these people NOW!

**YOUR EMPLOYABILITY WILL BE DETERMINED BY HOW WELL YOU PLAN FOR YOUR CAREER!**

Know what you want to do, know what employers are going to want from you, and put together a plan to obtain what you need. Don’t forget, the Career Center can help you, so keep in touch with us throughout your entire college experience!

http://career.boisestate.edu • (208) 426-1747

Facebook ([Boise State Career Center](http://facebook.com/BoiseStateCareerCenter)) • Twitter (@BSUCareerCenter) • LinkedIn Group ([Boise State University Career Center](http://linkedin.com/group/BoiseStateUniversityCareerCenter))