

Career Development

**Career Services Office, UW-Stevens Point
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Personal Career Contract

I, _____ commit myself to start researching and planning my career future on (date) _____.

Goal: I expect to accomplish through my research is:

- 1.
- 2.

Getting started: The steps I need to take to get started on my career development are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Career Development

What difference will it make?

Question: Have you ever contemplated the impact your career decisions will make in your life? Here are a few of the areas influenced by your decisions.



- ⇒ Your sense of self-esteem and worth
- ⇒ What kind of a lifestyle you will have
- ⇒ How much money you will make
- ⇒ Which of your interests will be used on the job
- ⇒ What kinds of things you will be learning
- ⇒ Type clothes you will wear
- ⇒ Kinds of benefits your job will provide
- ⇒ Kinds of organizations you will work for

- ⇒ The locations and environments you will work and live in
- ⇒ What kinds of people you will associate with
- ⇒ What kinds of activities will fill your working hours
- ⇒ How much time you'll have for home, family, and leisure
- ⇒ How much time you spend working
- ⇒ What kinds and levels of responsibilities you will have
- ⇒ How healthy you will be and how long you may live

need to make a choice and an ideal state of knowing you have made a good choice.

Problem Solving:

Solving a career problem involves developing and using information and resources to develop a course of action and alternatives to remove the gap.

Decision-Making:

Making a decision **involves transforming a chosen solution into action.** This process includes two additional components: first, is to derive a plan or strategy to implement the solution; and

second, the adoption of a risk-taking attitude and making a commitment to carry the plan to completion.

Perhaps this suggests taking a few minutes of your time to research and plan wisely!

Steps in Developing a Career Direction

Defining the Problem:

A career problem can be defined as a gap between an existing state of knowing you



Career Process Assumptions

1. Making career decisions **requires coping with change**. You need to understand your style of how you approach or avoid change and how to deal with it effectively.
2. People generally use only 5% of their **potential**. You must make a decision to tap the unused potential to make and act out life decisions.
3. You must deal with the factor of **choice**. There must be active personal commitment – no one will do it for you. You have the choice to change your situation or change your mindset of how you are perceiving your situation.
4. You must **organize and focus your thoughts and feelings** into an action plan to effectively contribute to satisfying progress.
5. Making career choices requires **taking risks**. It is unproductive to assume that career growth is a planned, predictable, and risk-free process.



Difficulty in Solving Your Career Problem

You must come to an understanding of what are your roadblocks to making an effective decision. One of the major



"How shall I torture you today?
Put you on the rack? Boil you in oil?
Make you call a technical support line?"

roadblocks for most people is the lack of knowledge and awareness about themselves and the world of work. Very few people have ever taken a careers course or done much research

into possible careers and/or into themselves. So it will be impossible to make a good decision until you have good information to decide upon.

People often comment that they are confused on a career direction. What they are is frustrated -- they don't have enough information to be confused. Your main goal is to gain enough information in order to be confused, then you can move on to problem solving.

If you know that you have enough information and are unable to make effective decisions, you may have a different problem and you will need to seek out assistance or counseling to deal with this roadblock. Keep in mind that it is normal, and in your best interest, not to make a career decision until you have appropriate information.

Other factors to consider:

- ⇒ Career problems tend to be complex due to the many factors to consider: economy, labor market, educational and training opportunities, and family issues interacting with an individual's personal values, interests, skills, and financial resources.

- ⇒ There are many possible solutions, each having distinct and often overlapping advantages and disadvantages.

There is no guarantee that the choice of college, occupation or job will ensure success or satisfaction, yet making the best informed choice and committing your efforts will maximize chances of success.

Ask the Right Questions to Get the Right Answers

When you develop questions, you develop direction for your research. There are many domains in which you must ask questions. The following are some domains you must begin to question.

Information is Knowledge...

Knowledge is Awareness

Self Knowledge

- ⇒ What are my values, interests, and skills?
- ⇒ What am I looking for in an occupation or college major?
- ⇒ What am I looking for in a job?

Occupational Knowledge

- ⇒ What kind of job can I get with my education and experience?
- ⇒ What is a typical day for a person employed as a _____?
- ⇒ What are the educational and training requirements for _____?
- ⇒ What kind of employers would hire a _____?

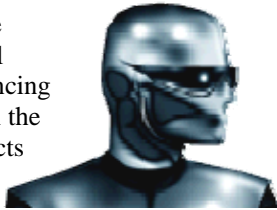
Decision-Making

- ⇒ What are the steps in choosing an occupation or college major that will meet my needs?
- ⇒ How do I usually make important decisions?

Developing a Compelling Future

One of the first steps you must take after your decision to commit to identifying and developing your career direction is to **create energy and momentum**. Instead of getting trapped in making a living you must design a life – develop bigger, more inspiring, more challenging goals. You must create some vision of what you want to be doing in the future.

Effective life planning will include balancing your goals in the various aspects of your life:



emotional, physical, intellectual, philosophical, vocational, and financial. Your goals have to be big enough to inspire you into action – to develop a passion!

Once you set your goals, you must immediately follow up with developing a plan for massive and consistent action towards its fulfillment. Actions must be taken early in the process to direct your time, efforts, and what you notice and pay attention to. Career planning takes energy and time; it is much easier to take the path of least resistance and avoid taking responsibility for your own life.

Commitment to Taking Action Steps

Make a strong commitment of effort and time in developing a career direction. You need to lock yourself into spending quality time in research on a continuous basis.



The following 12 action steps will assist in developing a better understanding of yourself, the job market, and what is the best occupational fit for you.

1. **Start Early:** Begin preparing for your career as soon as possible and continue throughout college. Set up a system to organize your research, ideas, and job search. Start a file system or 3 ring-notebook.

Organizing your information and ideas will help in gaining clarity out of confusion, when the time comes. Set a date and time to begin your organizational system.

Date: _____

Time: _____

2. **Develop Effective Questions:** You need to have purpose, a starting point, and direction. At the beginning of your file system or notebook begin a section to write down your questions and action steps you must take to answer these questions.

Take out a piece of paper and begin think and write questions about your future lifestyle, education, and occupation.

3. **Set Priorities and Goals:** Determine what is most important to you and identify realistic steps you can take to make your dreams become reality.

4. **Visit the Career Services Office:** We are located at 134 Old Main. The Career Services Office is staffed with professional career/job search counselors to assist you with questions and concerns you

have about your career development and/or job search. Located in our complex are an extensive career library and a mini computer lab. There are hundreds of resource books on careers, academic majors, and employers. Brochures on many of our services and career topics are available.

So no matter where you are in the career planning process, we can assist you to develop a plan of action and locate the resources to assist you in developing a more successful future. Our hours are: Monday – Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Set a date and time to visit the Career Service Office.

Date: _____

Time: _____

5. **Investigate Careers/Potential Employers:** Match your skills, interests and values to the world of work. Begin identifying settings in which your career options are found, what the salaries, working conditions, education requirements are, and which specific employers and geographic locations you'd consider. There are over 40,000 types of careers and millions of hybrid professions. Set a date and time to begin to investigate.

Date: _____

Time: _____

6. **Use the Career Services Web Site:** <http://www.uwsp.edu/career>

This site provides thousands of connections to gain information on careers





and employers. Learn how to effectively use search engines.

Set a date, time, and place to begin using the Internet and visit our site.

Date: _____

Time: _____

7. **Engage in Self-Assessment:** Develop an understanding of what you are good at (skills), what you enjoy (interests), and what is important to you (values) and their relationship to possible careers. Assessments are helpful to quickly get a starting point in understanding yourself and possible career options.

The Career Services Office provides a variety of career assessments that are easy and inexpensive to take.

Two assessments highly recommended are the **Campbell Interest and Skill Inventory** and the **Myers/Briggs Type Indicator**. Set a date and time to take these assessments.

Date: _____

Time: _____

8. **Career Development Internet Programs:**
- **WISCareer Internet Site:** This site guides you through the process of making important career and education decisions. Through this site you will have connection with information related to 700+ occupation, under and graduate schools, budget program, and job search tools. Go to: <http://www.uwsp.edu/career/CareerExploration/wiscareers.htm>

9. **Conduct Informational Interviews:** Visit workplaces to speak directly with employers before you are ready to apply for jobs. Get the "inside scoop" on what employers are looking for, skills you should develop, how to locate jobs, salary, working conditions, and job search tips. Develop contacts for future networking. Set a date and time start informational interviewing. <http://www.uwsp.edu/career/JobSearchInfo/InfoInterview.htm>

Date: _____

Time: _____

10. **Research and Obtain Practical Experiences:** Use involvement in campus activities, community volunteering, internships, summer jobs and related employment to develop your skills and test your career interests before graduation to develop a professional track record. Set a date and time to research and plan.

Date: _____

Time: _____

11. **Develop Effective Job Search Strategies:** You will need skills in writing effective resumes and cover letters, as well as interviewing. Learn how to research employers and find out about possible job openings. Set a date and time to start your resume.

Date: _____

Time: _____

12. **Be Patient and Persistent:** Finding a meaningful job will probably take more time than you expect. The keys are to

work hard and not give up. Think of your first job as a foundation upon which to build your career, and consider both short and long-term options that will enhance your employability.

Other Campus Resources

Use Available Resources Offices: Career Services, Academic Advising, the Tutoring-Learning Center, as well as your academic advisor, professionally-oriented student organizations, and the University Library are examples of campus resources that can assist you.

Calendar of Career Events

A calendar of career programs is published each semester listing a wide variety of topics for career development and job search. This list is available in the Career Service Office and on our web site: <http://www.uwsp.edu/career/Handout%20PDF%20Files/Programs.pdf>

Sample of Career Events:

- Choosing the Right Assessment
- What Can I do with a Major in ...?
- Resumes/Cover Letters
- Preparing for Interviewing
- Gaining Employment in Education
- Career Fairs
- Internships
- Federal Employment Applications