

GUIDEBOOK

Career Exploration

CENTER FOR CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Rusk Building, 3rd Floor

www.sfasu.edu/ccpd

936.468.3305 • ccpd@sfasu.edu

Let CCPD Help!

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Career coaching

Career Coaching is designed to:

- Assist in choosing a major and/or career
- Match career possibilities to participants' interests, values, personality, and major

[Career Coaching](#) is typically a three-session process, made up of an initial consultation, followed by the assessment interpretation and finally a wrap-up session; however, sessions can continue as long as the client needs.

Request a Career Coaching appointment through your [Jobs4Jacks](#)/Handshake account.

How to request a Career Coaching appointment through Handshake:

1. Visit the CCPD website at <http://www.sfasu.edu/ccpd>
2. Click "Student" and log in using mySFA credentials
3. Click on "Career Center" at the top of your homepage
4. Click on "Appointments"
5. Select "Schedule a New Appointment" and choose the appropriate appointment type
6. Choose a date and time that fits your schedule

Career Inventories

Career inventories are a self-assessment tool used in career planning that assesses a variety of areas including interests, abilities, values, skills and personality in order to discover career fields that might align with these important areas.

CCPD utilizes two inventories:

- TypeFocus
- Strong Interest Inventory

To obtain login instructions for TypeFocus and Strong Interest Inventory, request a Career Coaching appointment through your Jobs4Jacks account.

What Can I Do with This Major?

Are you trying to figure out what to major in? Are you wondering how to use your degree in the world of work? Utilize [What Can I Do with This Major?](#), a practical guide to majors and careers, to supplement your career exploration or job search efforts.

Career Exploration

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Career exploration is a developmental process that evolves over time. It consists of learning about yourself and the world of work, identifying and exploring potentially satisfying occupations, and developing an effective strategy to realize your goals.

Think about it: If you're a freshman in college, are you exactly the same as you were as a freshman in high school? If you're a senior in college, are you exactly the same as you were the day you walked onto the SFA campus? Most of you would say you are not, and it's most likely because your experiences have shaped your personality, interests, skills, abilities, and values. All of these things must be taken into account when choosing your career path.

So, how do you do it? You do it through career exploration. There is no set rhyme or reason, no exact science, but there are some basic methods to help guide you in the decision-making process; look to evaluate yourself, research possible career options, make helpful connections along the way and gain some experience in areas of interest to find if you are compatible with that occupation or major.

Evaluate yourself

How well do you know yourself? When making major decisions (especially something as big as choosing a major or career) it is important to identify some of your key characteristics so that the choices you make are well suited for YOU! Get to know what interests you, where your strengths and abilities lie, what your personality type is, and what you find valuable in life. Possessing self-awareness about your attributes will help you choose a major or career that brings a sense of satisfaction and happiness to your life.

So how can you get to know yourself a little bit better?

- Take a career assessment
- Make an appointment with a Career Coach; an in-depth discussion can be a helpful means to evaluating your personal characteristics as they relate to careers
- Talk with those that know you best: parents, family, friends, and mentors – get their input. It is always helpful to get input from those close to you; just remember that the decision is ultimately yours, not theirs!
- Recount your prior experiences (clubs, activities, courses, jobs, volunteer work, etc.). When were you happiest? What did you enjoy and what were you good at? What did you not enjoy?

Research possible options

Conduct basic research on these occupations or fields which you are considering. It is important to collect concrete information from non-biased sources so that you can make the best decision possible. Try your best to avoid making assumptions about a career field based on what you see in the media, testimonials from only one or two people you have met in the field, or what you hear from friends and family members.

Specifically, what should I be researching for each occupation?

- Typical job duties
- Educational and training requirements
- Job outlook
- Salary ranges

- Major employers in the occupation

Important! Researching various careers is helpful in building your awareness, but it is only useful if you do something with the information you've collected! As you research each career or academic option, put onto paper what you have learned to help you assess whether it is still a viable option.

Keep these questions in mind when doing your research:

- What are pros and cons about the occupation you are considering?
- How well does the occupation fit with your interests, skills, personality type, and values?
- Is the training or preparation you need to get into the field acceptable to you?
- Based on what you have learned about this occupation, will you keep it as one of your options? Yes? No? Why or why not?

Make connections!

Networking! Yes, that's right, you know the term well, but *really* what is networking, and how can it help you during the career exploration process? Networking is the act of talking to your personal and professional contacts about your career situation and asking for advice or referrals to other contacts that might be of assistance. Think about all the people you know: friends, classmates, family, parent's friends, professors, staff on campus, alumni of SFA, advisors of your organizations, the Center for Career and Professional Development team, etc. Let these people know how they can help you. You'd be surprised how many people are willing to help when you actually let your intentions be known!

Use your networking contacts to learn about a career field, industry, or career path to find out what it is like from those who live it. Gain VIP access to "behind the scenes" information by conducting an informational interview with someone in your field of interest. Ask them about the day-to-day responsibilities of a position, their insight into industry trends, training and educational requirements of the position, and any advice they have for someone trying to gain employment in that field. This type of subjective information can be a good compliment to the objective data you come across.

Get experience!

Through direct experience, you gain the kind of exposure that can best educate you about yourself and your compatibility with different jobs or careers. Whether you join a student organization on campus, volunteer, obtain an internship, or work part time, learning by doing will help you make smarter academic and career decisions!

Career Exploration Sites

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Below are some of the best sites on the Internet for researching occupations and majors. Although the main reason you might use this sheet is to work through the list of occupations and majors you and your career coach created while going through your Strong and/or Typefocus inventory results, feel free to research anything that strikes your interest! The research process by no means stops here. Consider the information you find as a doorway to help you further investigate and occupations that spark your interest! Find your passion and land your dream career today!

**The following tools can be found on your Jobs4Jacks account under the Career Center's Resource page or at the links provided.*



➤ Visit <http://online.onetcenter.org>

Tip: With O*Net (and the other sites listed below), you may have to search around to find the site's preferred keyword for certain occupations you're looking for. For example, if you were to type in "Nurse" in the keyword box at the top of the home page, you would get around ten results with "nurse" in the occupation title (e.g., "Registered Nurses", "Nurse Midwives," etc.).

Tip: Consider paying particular attention to the "Tasks" section at the top after you've selected an occupation to research. A generally good rule of thumb is that if at least seven of the tasks match your interests, this is something you might consider looking further into as a possible career, or something you may want to talk to your Career Coach about in your next session.

Occupational Outlook Handbook



1. Go to www.bls.gov/oco/
2. Search for an occupation by using the toolbar on the left, such as by looking at general professions (e.g., "Farming", "Professional", "Service", etc.) or by using the search box.

Tip: A great thing about the Occupational Outlook Handbook is that the information is updated on a yearly basis, including areas of job outlook, earnings, and projected job growth over a ten

year span. There is also plenty of information on job descriptions, which may go into more detail than the other sites listed here.

Occupational Videos



- Go to <http://tinyurl.com/clustervideos> to search videos by industry.
- Go to <http://tinyurl.com/alloccupations> to search all occupations.

Tip: There are over **500 different career videos** categorized according to different industries!

Lifestyle Calculator



Will you be able to afford the lifestyle you want?

It's difficult to predict the future, but it's never too early to start planning for it. Texas Reality Check will show you how much your living expenses will cost, and the amount of money you will need to earn to pay for them.

Tip: Utilize the Occupation Calculator! Choose an occupation, then review your expenses to see if its salary can support your lifestyle.

Occupational Interviews



- Visit www.candidcareer.com

CandidCareers is a premier provider of **thousands** of informational video interviews featuring industry professionals. They are dedicated to providing the inside scoop on careers as well as advice that will give you an edge in your job search. You will hear what made them choose their profession, what it's like to work in their field, and advice on being successful within that career.

What Can I Do with This Major?

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Are you trying to figure out what to major in? Are you wondering how to use your degree in the world of work? Utilize “What Can I Do with This Major?” a practical guide to majors and careers, to supplement your career exploration or job search efforts.

How do I use “What Can I Do with This Major?”?

View All Majors

Use the **View All Majors** tab to see a list of the 80 majors outlined on the site. Click on any major title to access information and links. The information outlines common career areas students enter with this major, typical employers that hire students in this field, and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities. Understand that the areas and websites are representative of typical career paths associated with each major and are not an exhaustive list. The websites included in the links section provide additional information about each major and the occupations commonly associated with it. Research links within four categories: Professional Associations, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Miscellaneous Career Sites, and Job Postings.

PDF's are available at the bottom of each major under the title Printable Version.

Categories

Use the **Categories** tab to explore multiple majors within one of eleven interest areas. The categories are particularly useful if you have a general idea about the types of majors that appeal to you and want to learn about more specific major options. You will find that many majors fall into more than one category.

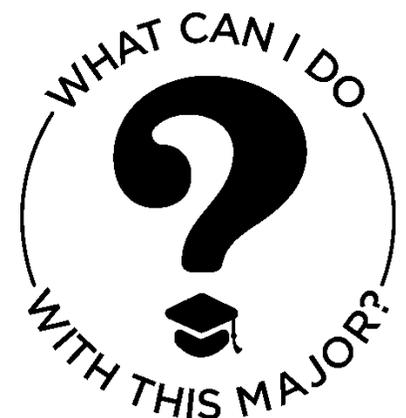
Search

Use the **search feature** to find majors that include a particular subject. For example, search for "counseling" to see all the majors that list it as an area. This helps you see the wide variety of paths you can choose to reach a particular career.

How do I access “What Can I Do with This Major?”?

1. Visit the CCPD website at <http://www.sfasu.edu/ccpd>
2. Click on Jobs4Jacks, click on Student or Alumni, and use your mySFA credentials to log in
3. On your homepage, click on “Career Center” at the top
4. Click on “Resources”
5. Click on “What Can I Do With This Major?” and find the link therein

*Disclaimer: Center for Career and Professional Development at Stephen F. Austin State University does not maintain the above mentioned website. Please direct any questions or concerns to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.



Career Coaching

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

It is never too early (or too late!) to start exploring your career options! A variety of programs are provided to assist in the career choice process, including individual coaching; assessment of interests, values, and personality characteristics relevant to career planning; and an extensive collection of self-help resources.

What is career coaching?

Career coaching promotes student development and self-knowledge through education and coaching to help students make appropriate and satisfying career choices. Services are designated to aid students in the process of selecting or changing major and matching career possibilities to their strengths, interests, and personality.

How does the process work?

Students discuss with the career coach various experiences in the areas of school, hobbies, any previous employment, etc. to give the coach a sense of who the student is, as well as what type of information or benefit they expect to gain by participating in the process. The coach then describes the services available to help students reach their goals. This typically involves the student completing some interest and personality inventories.

The Center for Career and Professional Development utilizes two career inventories:

- Strong Interest Inventory
- TypeFocus

After the student has completed the inventories, the coach will provide a personalized interpretation of the results. This includes discussing what careers match the student's interests and what work environments fit with their personality characteristics. Information on matching careers and academic programs the student may want to consider is provided, along with additional self-help resources, to help them reach their goals. After the student has an opportunity to research various career and academic options, they are provided with the opportunity to discuss any questions that have arisen during their search. At times, students may still feel conflicted about which path to follow. This is a great opportunity to explore the challenges of making certain choices and to process the information so the student feels comfortable with the academic and career path they have chosen.

How do I make an appointment?

Students who would like to see a career coach can submit a request through their Jobs4Jacks account via Handshake:

1. Go to www.sfasu.edu/ccpd and click on Jobs4Jacks
2. Click on Student or Alumni
3. Log in using your mySFA credentials
4. Click on Appointments at the top of your homepage
5. Click "Schedule a New Appointment"
6. Select the appropriate appointment type and then select the date and time that works best for your schedule!

Strong Interest Inventory

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

What is the Strong Interest Inventory?

The Strong Interest Inventory is a career assessment tool for individuals seeking guidance and direction on major and career exploration, decision making, and planning. The assessment allows you to reflect on your interests and skills, and learn about possible career, educational, and leisure option compatibilities based on your personal characteristics. The SII includes online questionnaires regarding your interests and skills, which take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete.

Use the Strong Interest Inventory to:

- Explore and identify careers related to your interests
- Choose education and training options that match your interests
- Understand how your personality is related to your interests
- Understand your leadership, risk-taking, and teamwork preferences
- Improve career direction and focus on the future
- Find your dream job and achieve satisfaction in your work

How can the Strong Interest Inventory help me?

Before you can select a career, you'll need to first find the path that's right for you. The Strong assessment can help! By gaining insight into your interests, preferences, and personal styles, the Strong enables you to identify specific courses, jobs, internships, and activities you're likely to enjoy.

Report Results

The Strong Interest Inventory provides highly personalized reports that paint a clear picture of how your interests and preferences link to various jobs, work settings, and career fields.

The report results include six sections:

1. **General Occupational Themes:** Interests, work activities, potential skills, and personal values
2. **Basic Interest Scales:** Work activities, projects, coursework, and leisure activities that are personally motivating and rewarding
3. **Occupational Scales:** Compares your likes and dislikes to those people who are satisfied working in 291 occupations; the top 10 occupations are the careers that most closely match your interests
4. **Personal Style Scales:** Learning, working, leadership, risk-taking, and team orientation
5. **Profile Summary:** Overview of your highest themes, top five interest areas, areas of least interest, top 10 strong occupations, occupations of dissimilar interest, and personal style scales preferences
6. **Response Summary:** Summary of the occupations, subject areas, activities, leisure activities, people, and characteristics sections

How do I complete Strong?

1. Visit the Center for Career and Professional Development website at <http://www.sfasu.edu/ccpd/400.asp>
2. Click on "Student" or "Alumni" and use your mySFA credentials to log-in
3. Request a Career Coaching Appointment by clicking on "Career Center" and then "Appointments"

4. Create a new appointment, select the appropriate appointment type, and the date and time that works best for you!
5. Once you meet with your coach, they will provide you with the log in information for the Strong Interest Inventory
6. Log onto your Jobs4Jacks profile and click on "Career Center" at the top of your homepage
7. Click on "Resources"
8. Scroll and find "Strong Interest Inventory" then use the link to access their webpage
9. Hover over the "Career Assessments" tab
10. Scroll down to "Strong Interest Inventory - Take the Assessment!"

TypeFocus

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

What is TypeFocus?

TypeFocus assesses personality type and generates customized reports, which allows users to better understand themselves so they can choose more effective career strategies.

As the student works through the reports, information from one section is automatically incorporated into the next section. For example, when a user identifies a career they are interested in within the career choice section, the program will also save the educational requirements needed for this career within the education section.

TypeFocus takes about half an hour to complete. After completion, the user has a set of five printable reports on personality type and potential careers, as well as how to showcase strengths on the résumé and in interviews.

How can TypeFocus help me?

You will receive five customized reports:

1. **Self-Awareness Report Area:** By understanding yourself better, you'll find work that will be satisfying in the long run – where it counts. This report will help you answer the question "Who am I ...really?"
 - Personality strengths; Careers that fits strengths; Values; Interests; Skills
2. **Setting Goals Report:** This report will help you discover deeply satisfying careers that work with your strengths and not against them. In this report, you answer the question "Where am I going?"
 - Focus and passion; Education plan; Life goals
3. **Getting the Job Report:** This report will help you use your personality strengths in your job search and answer the question, "How do I get there?"
 - Customizable tools; Interview guides; Résumé wizard; Career portfolio
4. **Success at Work:** Once you've won the job you've hoped for, how do you guarantee success? This report area will help you use your personality strengths to be successful on the job.
 - Understanding personality clashes; Two-person relationships; Learning styles
5. **Success Factor Results:** 10 factors related to successful completion of your education/career program. Each of these topics relates in some way to your success in achieving your career goals.

How do I complete TypeFocus?

If completing for a SFA101 class, refer to handout from instructor.

1. Visit the Center for Career and Professional Development website at www.sfasu.edu/ccpd
2. Click on "Jobs4Jacks"
3. Click on "Student" or "Alumni," and log-in using your mySFA credentials
4. Once on your homepage, click on "Career Center" at the top
5. Click on "Resources"
6. Scroll down until you find "TypeFocus"
7. Click on the link to access the website and register using your mySFA email
8. Take the assessments!
9. Follow up with CCPD and create an appointment to interpret your results using Jobs4Jacks/Handshake