

Career Decision Making/Goal Setting

The time and effort you devote to goal setting will pay off when you write your applications and interview for graduate programs.

Step 1: Identify your goal or objective.

*Ex. Decide if I'm going to grad school.
Ex. Decide which programs to apply to.*

Step 2: Determine your options/alternatives. **

Ex. Should I look at a Master's program or Ph.D? Should it be a Counseling Psychology or School Psychology degree?

Step 3: Research. Explore. Gather information. **

Ex. What do people with a master's degree in school psychology go on to do? What can I do with a master of education in counseling? How do they differ? What faculty research is done at this institution? Am I willing to live the lifestyle that goes with this career?

** It is critically important to establish a clear understanding of the field you are considering. Start by researching in the Career Resource Library. Conduct Informational Interviews (read the Networking article in our Job Search Guide) with alumni and others. Talk to faculty in your department. Talk to faculty at graduate schools you are considering. Do an internship (or two or three) or spend a day on the job with someone in the field.

Step 4: Evaluate the pros and cons of making this choice.

Ex. Am I likely to find a job? Am I willing to relocate? Can I live on the salary I will be offered after I graduate? Am I willing to learn the skills needed? Will my ultimate path be consistent with my values, interests and skills?

Step 5: Make a Realistic Action Plan.

Develop a timetable and write the steps you will take to accomplish the goal, given other commitments (current classes, campus activities, jobs, etc.).

Worksheet

Putting your goals in writing will help ensure that you will proceed toward them.

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Step 2: Determine your options/alternatives.

Step 3: Research. Explore. Gather information.

Step 4: Evaluate the pros and cons of making this choice.

Step 5: Make an Action Plan.

I will complete this process by: _____

Signature _____

(By signing and dating the worksheet you are more likely to follow through - give yourself that added incentive!)

If at a future date you decide to change your mind, begin the process again using this experience as added information to consider when you do Steps 2, 3, and 4.

Tip: If you prefer to talk rather than write, you can discuss the steps with a listening partner (friend, career counselor,

etc.) and ask that person to write down the main points of what you talk about.