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## Decide it. Experience it. Live it.

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The process of deciding on a career is complex and time consuming. In order to make an informed career decision; it is helpful to work through the following process, which includes four steps:

- Who am I?
- What's out there?
- How do I fit?
- What's my plan?

Who am I?

This step involves a thorough investigation of one's beliefs, interests, values, feelings, abilities, needs, ambitions, successes, lifestyle, etc.

Questions to consider include:

- What are interests and activities do I like and enjoy?
- What are the types of activities and the school subjects where I can be successful?
- What are the skill areas where I need additional practice?
- What are three to five job/career characteristics – salary, location, advancement, etc. – that will be important to me after college?
- What types of work activities do I prefer – working with people, organizing/analyzing data, creating ideas, doing hands-on and practical activities, or some combination? What are specific examples from my previous experiences that support my preferences?
- How have my family members or other significant people influenced my possible career direction?

Staff members at the Career Center can use assessments, interviews and group procedures to help you gather information about yourself. The Career Center Library also provides helpful resources.

What's out there?

This step involves extensive investigation and research of the world of work.

Questions to consider include:

- What are the majors/minors offered at the University of South Carolina and how they could help me reach my occupational goals?
- How can I research occupations/career fields that interest me?
- What are the career fields that will offer the most work opportunities in the next five to ten years?
- Who are the major employers and what types of work opportunities are there in the areas where I would prefer to live after graduation?
- Where can I find good information about the occupations/career fields that interest me?
- What types of internships, Job Shadowing experiences, and cooperative education positions will help me explore career options?

Information on the world of work can be gathered through information interviews, Job Shadowing, on-site visitations, viewing of media presentations regarding careers and the research of career literature, both hard copy and web-based. The Career Center Library at USC provides these, and additional resources.

How do I fit?

This step involves the synthesizing of all accumulated information regarding one's self and the world of work to determine good fits.

Questions to consider include:

- What are three to five occupations/career fields that interest me?
- How do my interests, skills, values, and personality fit occupations that interest me?
- How will I explain my career choice to others, especially if they are not supportive of my career choice?

Staff members at the Career Center can assist you in synthesizing information.

What's my plan?

This step involves the development of a plan or strategy for achieving desired career goals and an awareness of options.

Questions to consider include:

- What major/minor do I need to choose to pursue occupations that interest me?
- What are the academic requirements for my potential major/minor?
- What is my GPA goal?
- What additional education/training beyond a four-year bachelor's degree will be required?
- What are the types of career-related work experiences – internships, part-time jobs, cooperative education experiences, summer jobs, etc. – that will best assist me in reaching my career goals?
- What is my timeline for getting career-related work experience?
- What student organizations or other co-curricular activities will assist me in reaching my career goals?
- How will I develop leadership skills and assume leadership roles during the next four years?

Staff members at the Career Center can help you develop a career objective and resume, refine interviewing style and technique, identify key people who will serve as references, search for a job, and learn how to put your "best foot forward."