

# Making Career Decisions

**Use the following steps to help you explore your career options.**

## **Step 1 Understand the basic concepts**

- Career decision-making is not magic.
- No one else can make the decision for you.
- You must be actively involved in the process.
- It is never too late to start.
- There is not one 'ideal' occupation for you. There may be several occupations that will give you the satisfaction you want from work.
- In all likelihood you will have several occupations during your working lifetime. The career decision you are making now is not a lifetime decision.

## **Step 2 Look inwards – develop a profile of yourself**

What do you want from a job? Think about it. Do you want to:

- Work with other people or by yourself?
- Work outdoors or indoors?
- Sit at a desk or be physically active?
- Work with ideas or apply ideas (hands on) or do both?
- Help people in some way?
- Make a lot of money?
- Be always learning on the job?
- Have lots of variety and activity?
- Have a structured, predictable workday?
- Feel that the job you have is a secure job?
- Work intensely on a project and see it through to the end?
- Feel you are contributing to the community?
- Work with particular things or people e.g. engines, animals, children, the elderly, etc.?

What do you do best? What are your strengths? Are they in:

- Humanities, mathematics, science, etc.?
- Working with ideas, words, things, etc.?
- Working with people?
- Working with your hands?
- Working with computers or machines?

What other things influence your decision? Perhaps:

- The opinions of family and friends?
- The availability of employment?
- Your age?
- Staying in the local area?
- Salary?
- A physical or medical condition?
- Opportunity to travel and work overseas?
- The need to continue studying to progress in this job?

What occupational ideas have you already thought of? You can add to these ideas by completing a career questionnaire from one of the following websites:

- myfuture – My guide [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)
- Seek – Seek Direction [www.seek.com.au/if.asp?loc=direction](http://www.seek.com.au/if.asp?loc=direction)
- Australian Careers – Career quiz <http://joboutlook.gov.au/pages/careerquiz.aspx>
- Skills Road – Career Quiz [www.skillsroad.com.au](http://www.skillsroad.com.au)
- CareerOne - Personality Profiler - <http://career-services.careerone.com.au/personality-test-campaign/home.aspx>

### **Step 3 Look outwards – gather information**

Read about the jobs in your occupational ideas list. These resources will help you.

- MyFuture – The facts <http://www.myfuture.edu.au>
- Job Guide – borrow from your local library or view at <http://www.jobguide.deewr.gov.au/>
- Job Outlook – <http://joboutlook.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Evaluate the information you are reading. Does it fit with the profile you have developed of yourself in Step 2? Your eventual aim is to come up with 3 or 4 possible occupations that will give you satisfaction and use your strengths.

Next you need to talk to people who are already employed in the occupations on your list. Do not be afraid to do this as most people are prepared to help you with your career research if you are polite, prepared with questions, and do not waste their time. Use your own networks (friends, parents' friends, your friends' parents, neighbours, etc.) and the *Yellow Pages* to contact people in jobs you are interested in. Develop questions to ask them. Some possible questions are:

- What do you do in a typical work day?
- What do you like about the job?
- What do you dislike about the job?
- What is the recommended training to prepare for the job?
- Are there alternative training pathways?
- Are there people in the same occupation who do different things from you?
- Is there someone else you think I should speak to?
- Where do you go from here in this job?

It is helpful to discuss your findings with a friend or relative who knows you well and you feel comfortable talking with. Other peoples' insights can sometimes help us clarify our thinking.

### **Step 4 Prioritise the jobs**

By this time you should be able to put the jobs you have selected in order of your preference.

### **Step 5 Plan a training pathway**

Because of your research, you will already know the various pathways to obtaining your occupational goal. Select the pathway that best suits you.

### **Step 6 Act on your plan**

Seek assistance through a career counsellor if you need help with this process.