

Wellington Careers and Employment

Career Essentials—Making career decisions

Self-awareness, opportunity-awareness for work, and proactive planning are all important when looking for work. Career decision making is a lifelong process and regardless of your study, you will always have some choice in the career that you follow. You may well feel constrained if you limit your research initially to jobs that relate directly to your study plans, so feel free to explore different ideas.

Self-awareness

Start your research with yourself. Find out more about who you are and what you have to offer. This exercise does involve some work, but just like your study, there's a strong link between doing the background research and getting results! Giving some time to this will lead to healthy self-discovery and will bring you closer to making a wise career decision. Writing out this information will also help the process.

Values

What are the most important things to you? What are the most essential things about work? What are you committed to? What comprises happiness for you? What degree of flexibility do you need in your life and work? How much responsibility do you want in the workplace? How much of yourself do you want to put into your work—are you seeking to live to work, to work to live, or a balance between both?

There are no right or wrong answers to these and other questions. But your answers will have implications for your job search. The closer the match between your philosophy of life and your job, the happier and more successful you will be.

Achievements

Reflect on your achievements, starting with your academic achievements at school or at university. If you have little or no work experience, you can go back to school days. Think about what led you to choose your course of study, and the kinds of strengths you have developed along with specific knowledge gained. Identify which courses you enjoyed most and resulted in your best achievements. Other achievements, such as responsibilities accepted in organisations, socially, within your family, and through vacation or part-time work show that you are more than your degree. Recall those positive comments that friends, classmates, or colleagues have made.

Skills and abilities

Skills are the essence of what we contribute to the world, for example advising, coaching, communicating, analysing, researching, organising, painting, repairing. These are only a few of the hundreds of skills you possess. Think about situations and examples in which you have demonstrated your skills and highlight the skills that you enjoy using regularly as part of your ideal job.

[Careers.govt.nz](https://careers.govt.nz) has information on working out what your skills are and how they relate to certain types of work. The career advice section on [Seek](#) also has some helpful information on skills.

Interests

Think about the things you like doing. List 20 things you love to do, and then pick four or five favourites. Give some thought to areas which most interest you such as administrative, artistic, technological/digital, musical, outdoor, persuasive, scientific, and/or social service. Consider such aspects as working on your own or with



other people; leading others or being part of a team; persuading people; being entrepreneurial; the level of risk you are comfortable with; and new developments in the world of work that interest or excite you.

Personal circumstances

Be honest with yourself about factors that may impact upon what you want to do. It doesn't always mean you can't do a particular job, but it's helpful to be aware of how you would manage any challenges and what sort of assistance you may need. Focusing on the key skills you can offer, rather than any constraints, is a useful strategy, remembering that help is available for workplace modifications and that diversity and equal opportunity are important to most employers.

Opportunity-awareness

The world of work is changing, so researching what is out there and how different career options fit with your skills, interests, and values is an ongoing process.

- Job advertisements on vacancy sites such as [Seek](#) will give you insights into job requirements.
- [Careers.govt.nz](#) has information on job profiles, matching jobs by interest, and job market information.
- [Occupational Outlook](#) is provided by MBIE.
- The [Wellington Careers and Employment](#) website includes information on [What can I do with my degree?](#)

Employers will often expect you to have developed industry-specific or technical skills relevant to their organisation during your university study. Many of these skills can be developed through paid employment, university projects, internship or work-integrated learning experiences, student clubs, or by volunteering in an area relevant to your career path.

Transferable employability skills such as teamwork, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and customer service skills are usually valued by employers and often included in job advertisements. These can also be developed from a range of experiences during your time at university and can be recorded on your CV with relevant evidence or examples of each skill.

Informational interviewing

An informational interview is an excellent approach to acquiring industry-relevant knowledge that can assist in making wise career decisions. Refer to [Career Essentials—Informational interviews](#) for further details.

Proactive planning

Initially the uncertainty about your future career can be unsettling, but this is a normal part of the process. Once the self-awareness and opportunity-awareness have been done well, trying out different options via volunteering, immersing yourself in new opportunities that develop new skills and experiences, and continuing to explore and discuss ideas all contribute to a positive decision-making process. Refer to [Career possibilities and decisions](#) via the [online career centre](#). To discuss this further, you can make an appointment with a career consultant via [CareerHub](#).