It is a good idea to begin Career Exploration in your first year at the University. Your first step after graduation may lead to a long, rewarding, and direct career path, or it may be the first exploration of many opportunities in a long, wonderfully circuitous life journey. Perhaps your first job will utilize your art-design skills; perhaps it will support you while you pursue your own art-design ventures. In either case, planning and developing a strategy for that first step is important. When thinking about your plans consider the following:

1. What interests me most?
2. What are my skills and abilities?
3. What career(s) suit my personality best?
4. What are my values?
5. What living environment suits me best?
6. What kind of work environment suits me best?
7. How much education/training do I plan to undertake?
8. How many hours do I want to work?
9. How much money do I want to make?

Sometimes it can be difficult to know exactly what you want to do in the future. The best way to begin planning is to remove “job” from the equation and focus first on what general interests you have:

**Top Five Interests**

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<th>Examples: drawing, fishing, computers, old movies, sci fi, etc.</th>
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At any given time in our lives we have a variety of skills. Again, don’t think in terms of a job, only in terms of what skills you have:

**Top Five Skills**

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<th>Examples: Adobe Illustrator, painting, good organizer, leadership, Web Design, etc.</th>
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When considering ways in which you can support art-design pursuits, don’t forget about interests and skills. You may find that going to work every day will be much more fulfilling if it reflects your interests.

You may not know what careers best suit your personality (yet!) but you do know your own personality:

**Five words that describe your personality**

| Examples: Friendly, shy, outgoing, moody, passionate, etc. |
|---|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |

Values may help shape decision making more than any other factor. Sometimes artist-designers are looking for a job in a chosen field, sometimes for a job that sustains art-design pursuits. Either way, your values will play a significant role in how you plan your first step after graduation. From the following list, choose 5 that are most important to you:

- _____ An Exciting Life
- _____ Financial Security
- _____ Personal Freedom
- _____ A Balanced Life
- _____ Spirituality
- _____ A World of Beauty
- _____ Job Satisfaction
- _____ A Long Life and Good Health
- _____ An Ideal Setting
- _____ Political Power
- _____ Social Justice
- _____ An Authentic World

- _____ Social Recognition
- _____ Universal Brotherhood
- _____ An Ideal Family Life
- _____ Inner Peace
- _____ Respect for the Individual
- _____ Intelligence
- _____ Creativity
- _____ Wisdom
- _____ Self-Esteem
- _____ Deep Friendships
- _____ Mature Love
- _____ Community

- _____ Choose Your Own: __________________________________________
- _____ Choose Your Own: __________________________________________
Location, Location, Location. When exploring careers and your long-range goals, think about where you would like to live to make sure there are career options in that geographic area. Another consideration for art-design pursuits is the relative support for the arts in a geographic area. While it is not imperative that you live in such a location, many artist-designers are drawn to such places.

Check off the environment(s) that suit you best:

- Large City
- Smaller City
- Rural
- Suburban
- Hot Climate
- Temperate Climate
- Cool Climate
- Quiet
- Damp or Wet
- Dry or Arid

Now that you have considered the living environment, consider the work environment and check off the ones that suit you best:

- Indoors
- Outdoors
- Travel involved
- Regular Hours
- Variable Hours
- Weekend Hours
- Overtime necessary

How much further education or training are you willing to invest in your career? Remember, this is very changeable as new opportunities are open to you. Additional skills, knowledge and experience may be necessary. A graduate degree may be a future goal after you have developed further as an artist-designer.

- Undergraduate Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Certification or Post-Baccalaureate
- Not Sure
How much money would you like to make? Remember that most entry level positions pay less than the median salary for any career.

___$20,000-$30,000  ___$40,000-$50,000
___$30,000-$40,000  ___More than $50,000

Now that you have considered all of these variables, it is time to start exploring and to find out what careers suit your interests, values, location, ultimate education level, desired income, and can help you attain your goals. A good place to start is a large resource like the Occupational Outlook Handbook. The Handbook is created by the US Department of Labor and can be found online [http://www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/) Over 30,000 occupations are listed and you can easily search the database to find basic information about almost any interest.

After you have identified careers and goals that are of interest, do more research. Find books about careers at places like The Career Center on Central Campus or many of the University of Michigan Libraries. One of the best things you can do is contact people in your areas of interest. The School of Art and Design is fortunate to have an alumni population willing to speak with you about career exploration. Make an appointment with John Luther, the Career Development Coordinator, to find out how you can connect with someone in your areas of interest.

Once you have explored enough and established that a career goal seems right for you, try it on for size. Pursue an internship, volunteer, or get a part time job in the field. You will not only figure out if the career is right for you, but you will make valuable connections that may help later in your job search.

For more information about Career Exploration, or to discuss other issues related to career development, contact John Luther, Career Development Coordinator, by stopping at the front desk of the Student Academic Services Office or calling to make an appointment (734) 764-0397.

Portions of this document have been adapted from material created by The Career Center, University of Michigan, Division of Student Affairs.