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.

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:**

**Examples:** drawing, fishing, computers, old movies, sci fi, etc.

1) ____________________________________________

2) ____________________________________________

3) ____________________________________________

4) ____________________________________________

5) ____________________________________________

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:**

**Examples:** Adobe Illustrator, painting, good organizer, leadership, Web Design, etc.

1) ____________________________________________

2) ____________________________________________

3) ____________________________________________

4) ____________________________________________

5) ____________________________________________

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
- 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:

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

Check off the work environments and that suit you best:

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

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
- Certification or Post-Baccalaureate
- Graduate Degree
- 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.

____ $30,000 - $40,000  ____ $40,000 - $50,000  ____ $50,000 - $60,000  ____ More than $60,000

**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 on
line [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 Stamps 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
Smucker Wagstaff Academic Programs Center 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.*
CAREER PLANNING

TIMELINE

Freshman Year
• Meet with the Career Development Coordinator
• Check out Stamps’ online Career Resources
• Attend the Penny Stamps Speaker Series
to learn about others’ careers
• Learn about professional associations related to your interests
• Conduct Informational Interviews
• EXPLORE! EXPLORE! EXPLORE!
• Start working on your portfolio and web site

Sophomore Year
• Research companies and organizations for internships
• Conduct Informational Interviews (see “What Can I Do With My Stamps Degree?”)
• Attend the Career Center’s Career Expo
• Attend the Penny Stamps Lecture Series
to learn about others’ careers
• Attend Stamps Portfolio Expo and other Career Events
• Create a resume, cover letter and continue work on your portfolio/web site
• NETWORK! NETWORK! NETWORK!
• Use the Sophomore Review to work on:
  → Resume
  → Interviewing/Portfolio preparation and presentation
  → Articulation of future plans

Junior Year
• Focus studio and academic courses toward your interests
• Use your time abroad to develop transferable skills like:
  → Communication
  → Cultural competence
  → Adaptability
• Focus in the fall term on researching and applying for internships
• Attend the Penny Stamps Speaker Series
to learn about others’ careers
• Continue to research and apply for internships in the winter term
• Attend the Career Center’s Career Expo and other Career Events
• Attend the Stamps Portfolio Expo
• NETWORK! NETWORK! NETWORK!
• Refine your resume, cover letter, portfolio, web site

Senior Year
• Consider how the Integrative Project can relate to your plans after Stamps
• Focus in the fall term on researching the companies/organizations with whom you wish to work
• Focus in the winter term on applying for positions (your NETWORK can help!!!)
• Attend the Penny Stamps Lecture Series
to learn about others’ careers
• Attend the Career Center’s Career Expo and other Career Events
• Attend the Stamps Portfolio Expo
• NETWORK! NETWORK! NETWORK!
• Refine your resume and portfolio for each position
• Keep your website clean, readable and updated
• Follow up with contacts and potential employers

For more information about Career Planning, contact John Luther, Career Development Coordinator, by stopping at the front desk of the Smucker Wagstaff Academic Programs Center or calling to make an appointment (734) 764 0397