Taking career decisions
If you prefer a systematic approach
Process

In theory.
Career decision process

According to Peter Fiske – Put your degree to work
Career decision process

Self-assessment

Self-assessment - What matters for you?

- Interests
- Skills
- Values
- Personality
Career decision process

Self-assessment

What can you do?

- Use self-assessment tools
- Self-reflection
- Dream
Career decision process

Exploration

Exploring your options

- Which options are out there?
- Getting a feeling for these options
Career decision process

Exploration

What can you do

- Get informed about career options
- Research your career options
- Use your network: Do you know people (who know people) who can tell you about their experience?
- Informational interview
- Getting somewhat of experience
- Internships
- Job shadowing
- Volunteering
Career decision process

Decision taking

- Expectations vs reality – what seems realistic?
- What makes you competitive?
- What are your worries?
- Do you miss important information?
Career decision process

Decision taking

- Decisions need to be concrete
- Deciding for one option means letting go of the others
Career decision process

Taking action

Taking action

• Finding job openings
• Networking
• CV writing
• Interviewing
• Fillings gaps in know-how
Career decision process

Taking action

What can you do

- Network
- Apply
- Use LinkedIn
- Practice
- Take courses
Self-assessment

What goes into the equation.
What matters for career decisions

Values – what provides meaning for you?

Skills – what do you bring to the table?

Well-being/passion/flow – what do you enjoy doing?

Personality – where do you fit?
# Top 10 skills of employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Verbal communication</td>
<td>Able to express your ideas clearly and confidently in speech.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Work confidently within a group.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Commercial awareness</td>
<td>Understand the commercial realities affecting the organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Analysing &amp; investigating</td>
<td>Gather information systemically to establish facts &amp; principles. Problem solving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Initiative / self motivation</td>
<td>Ability to act on initiative, identify opportunities, proactive in putting forward ideas &amp; solutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>Determination to get things done. Make things happen &amp; constantly looking for better ways of doing things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>Ability to express yourself clearly in writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Planning and organizing</td>
<td>Ability to plan activities &amp; carry them through effectively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Adapt to successfully to changing situations &amp; environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Manage time effectively, prioritizing tasks and ability to work to deadlines.</td>
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Interests

Flow, baby! During which activities are you fully alive?

- Skills and interests are not necessarily the same

- Make a list of the activities you enjoy most and why you find them interesting
  - What do you like/dislike about your current work?
  - What do you spend most time on now?
  - Are there any interests that you would like to develop or to spend more time on?
“The first thing to look for when searching for a great employee is somebody with a personality that fits with your company culture. Most skills can be learned, but it is difficult to train people on their personality. If you can find people who are fun, friendly, caring and love helping others, you are on to a winner. Personality is the key.”

Richard Branson
Personality tests

Who are you – in comparison to others?

• Many are online, e.g. [https://discovermyprofile.com/tests](https://discovermyprofile.com/tests)

• Classical personality test in psychology: Big 5 personality traits
  • Openness to experiences: (inventive/curious vs. consistent/cautious)
  • Conscientiousness (efficient/organized vs. easy-going/careless)
  • Extroversion (outgoing/energetic vs. solitary/reserved)
  • Agreeableness (friendly/compassionate vs. challenging/detached)
  • Neuroticism (sensitive/nervous vs. secure/confident)

• Can help you to learn how to describe yourself or talk about yourself
Holland’s theory of vocational types
What are your values/motivators

When you look back what legacy will you leave behind?

• Your values are those things in your life that you consider to be important.
• In relation to work, values are what give purpose to a job in the eyes of the individual.
• The effort, commitment and motivation that a person brings to a job is usually in direct proportion to the values that they cherish.
• In the long term, your job should be compatible with your values
• Another name sometimes used for values is motivators.
Values

- Winning
- Security
- Creativity
- Personal growth/Self-fulfillment
- Prestige/status
- Family
- Work-life balance
- Social/environmental responsibility
- Freedom/autonomy
- Wealth
Values

What are you striving for?

Happiness

Meaning

Success
Career exploration

Ideas to make it easier
What jobs are there for STEM PhDs

3 upcoming talks – to be scheduled

• Careers in the higher education sector beyond research careers
• Careers for life scientists
• Careers for quantitative scientists
IST Austria’s perspective – be active!

No guilt to explore careers

• IST Austria’s take: It is absolutely vital that you think about your career options
• If your goal is to pursue a career in academia, we recommend that you nevertheless think about a plan B → risk mitigation
• There is no right or wrong career choice
• Use time to explore different career options
• It is your career, not your supervisor’s 😊
Allow yourself to dream

Focus on your resources

• To generate ideas, allow yourself to dream
• Focus on what motivates you
• Use imagination to create scenarios and options
• Helps to overcome delaying career decisions
Career process takes time

Within and beyond academia

• These are “big” decisions
• It’s a lot about self-exploration
• You might need to get out of your comfort zone
• It involves risk → it requires courage
• Career transitions outside of academia take even longer
Facing your worries

will shrink the worries

• We often avoid things we fear
• The more we avoid, the bigger the fears can get
• Proactively confront our worst fears and think about what you would do in such a situation?
• Be specific
• Compare your dreams with reality
• Plans that proactively deal with risks are more successful, thinking only about the goal is not enough
Decisions need to be concrete

- Do you want to stay in academia or move on to a career beyond academia?
- Otherwise you cannot know what you are deciding for/against
Not being able to decide

• Deciding for one option means not choosing the others
• What do you need to let go of the other options

• Possible method: Tetralemma
  • Solution A
  • Solution B
  • Both, A and B
  • None of them, neither A nor B
  • None of it altogether
Thank You

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