

Resource Guide

Student Career & Self-Awareness Strategies: *Understanding and Effectively Utilizing Assessment Tools to Facilitate Career Fulfillment*

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Introducing self assessment exercises and conversations about a student’s career planning in a law school setting can feel challenging not only because of constraints on your time and resources but also because many law students do not give significant advance thought to their reasons for attending law school and/or have limited pre-law school work/ life experience. Once students begin law school, the *tyranny of the shoulds* of the law school culture, expectations of family and friends, looming educational debt, not to mention a front loaded nature of the job search process for law firm summer associate positions, can make law students feel that they must pursue what they perceive to be the most prestigious law school activities and lucrative legal careers without giving thought to what brought them to law school and what do they want to do with their J.D..

You can best serve students by helping them to understand: 1. There are many different ways in which to use their J.D. and different people will find different roles and settings rewarding and stressful for a variety reasons depending on their interests, preferred skills and values; and 2. There is no generic legal employer. A District Attorney’s office, an appellate judge and a policy shop will require successful attorneys to exercise different skills, competencies and will call upon passions. Students cannot participate in every activity, competition and job fair law school has to offer, not to mention the off-campus opportunities that require a proactive search. Successful students make informed, thoughtful decisions about how to spend their energy and time based on their individual definition of success and fulfillment. Self assessment, whether done through formal exercises or more informal advising, can serve as a framework or guide that students refer to as they navigate all the career and academic choices they must make while in law school.

Self-Assessment Benefits

- Find your own meaning of “success,” outside the influence of friends, family, and societal norms.
- Identify your career “must-haves,” the elements critical to your career satisfaction and fulfillment.
- Hone in on opportunities that align with your professional and personal goals; find the perfect job for you at this time in your life.
- Discover ways to enhance your current job search to get what you most need and want professionally.
- Move towards a balance between those personal and professional elements that you value most.

Comment [S1]: I think one of the challenges is that students often struggle to identify what their “must-haves” and goals are because they have limited work/ life experience and sometimes unsure and on occasion, even defensive when asked about their motives for attending law school, so framing self assessment as an important first step in helping students begin to identify their goals, priorities, values that they will continue to test as they move thro law school thro coursework, internship/ externships, clinics and experiential learning opportunities can be helpful. This way, self assessment is a process students keep revisiting as they gain experience throughout law school and beyond. Also, noting that there are many different settings/ roles in which attorneys practice and work outside law, so it's not enough for students to think if they follow a check list of activities: journal, etc. that they will either know what they enjoy and not or best position themselves to find a job. A DA's office, a plaintiff's side law firm, an appellate judge may be looking for different skills and experiences—so there's no one set that legal employers will be looking for or will get them the job, so students do themselves a favor by engaging in self assessment. It's not just a touchy feely process but something they need to do to navigate the many types of lawyering and best position themselves to secure post-grad job, especially in a difficult market.

This section provides a series of insightful exercises that you can use with your students as part of the self-assessment process. Taking a comprehensive, multi-dimensional look at values, interests, skills, personal qualities, preferred work environment, and overall life balance, will facilitate greater insight and awareness for your students, and will help you be a more effective career advisor who can respond to the individual needs of your students.

At the end of the worksheets, there is the opportunity to create a Personal profile that pieces together the individual facets of your students' lives. This process is a holistic approach that promotes alignment between career and individual needs.

VALUES

Identifying values is a critical component of the career assessment process, as values significantly contribute to one's overall sense of fulfillment. When values are not being met in one's career, frustration and lack purpose might result. Therefore, Identifying and prioritizing one's values can help your students achieve greater fulfillment in their careers. Below is a resource for you to use with your students:

The following exercise will help you explore your most significant work values. Circle the number (1-4) that best corresponds with the level of importance you place on each value below. Then, go back through the list and identify the top five values that are essential to your satisfaction in the workplace. Consider whether your current position satisfies any of your top values.

- 4 – very important**
- 3 – important**
- 2 – indifferent**
- 1 – not important**

<u>Value</u>	<u>Level of Importance</u>
Achievement	1 2 3 4
Advancement	1 2 3 4
Adventure/Excitement	1 2 3 4
Aesthetics – attractive environment	1 2 3 4
Affiliation – belonging to a specific organization	1 2 3 4
Balance	1 2 3 4

Comment [S2]: It might be nice to briefly note up front that as a former career advisor at a school you are sensitive to the challenges they may face in doing self assessment with students... that this group will have competing demands on their time (volume of students, programming and administrative responsibilities, managing employment stats) but there are a variety of ways to use self assessment tools with students individually or in group programming and doing so will also help students view career planning as an active process that they must drive in order to not only feel successful in personal terms but also navigate a tough legal market. Can you also give some ball park as to how long the assessments that follow can be done with a student? Or how to incorporate some self assessment if they can first see 1Ls in Nov. and then are in the thick of back to back 1L appointments. How self assessment can then be used in follow-up appointments?

Comment [S3]: As an aside, GULC encouraged 1Ls who participated in a self assessment program called the Search Before the Search to take the free survey on this website before meeting with a career counselor. <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/>. I was already an academic advisor at the time, so I'm not sure to what extent it then informed 1L career advising but Lauren Dubin might have some thoughts. She was involved with this program and the Dean of Students Mitch Bailin was heavily involved as well. Will there be a space at the end for counselors to share best practices with which they have experimented?

Change/Variety	1	2	3	4
Community	1	2	3	4
Competence	1	2	3	4
Competition	1	2	3	4
Control over schedule	1	2	3	4
Creative expression	1	2	3	4
Ethics	1	2	3	4
Fame	1	2	3	4
Family	1	2	3	4
Financial security	1	2	3	4
Fun/Enjoyment	1	2	3	4
Helping society/Service	1	2	3	4
High earnings	1	2	3	4
Independence/Autonomy	1	2	3	4
Influence	1	2	3	4
Intellectual challenge	1	2	3	4
Interests	1	2	3	4
Job security	1	2	3	4
Justice/Fairness	1	2	3	4
Knowledge	1	2	3	4
Leadership	1	2	3	4
Leisure-time	1	2	3	4
Order	1	2	3	4
Power/Authority	1	2	3	4
Prestige/Recognition	1	2	3	4
Public contact	1	2	3	4

Religion/Spirituality	1	2	3	4
Sociability	1	2	3	4
Stability	1	2	3	4
Status	1	2	3	4
Supporting leadership	1	2	3	4
Teamwork	1	2	3	4
Time freedom	1	2	3	4
Tranquility	1	2	3	4
<i>Other:</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Other:</i>	1	2	3	4

Top Five Values:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

INTERESTS

Integrating interests into career decisions can ensure greater job satisfaction. Career Theorist, John Holland established a framework for classifying an individual’s interests into six themes: ***Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.***

Applying Holland’s framework to identify your students’ top interest themes can help them to better assess options both in different practice areas and outside the practice of law.

Listed below are Holland’s six themes, with descriptors and examples of related activities. Have your students review the themes and activities, reflect on interests and activities that they have enjoyed from childhood to the present. Ask them to consider which activities they **actually enjoyed**, and those for which they had an aptitude, found rewarding, or were rewarded for their participation. Have them add their own interests and activities under the corresponding themes. Finally, have them circle the theme or top two themes that best reflect their overall interests.

Comment [S4]: Maybe a brief note if this has been used with law students/ lawyers or if there are other tools for helping students identify top interests.

Comment [S5]: Perhaps also what about particular activities they found rewarding. Two people may find the same activity rewarding for different reasons.

Realistic

- Hands-on work (e.g. carpentry, mechanics, construction)
 - Athletics (e.g. participators, avid fans)
 - Nature (e.g. outdoor adventure, hiking, camping)
 - Agriculture (e.g. gardening, forestry)
 - Military/Protective service
-
-

Investigative

- Science (e.g. science fair, chemistry, physics)
 - Research & Analysis (e.g. science fiction, strategy games, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, Internet research)
 - Medicine (e.g. biology, anatomy, pharmacy)
 - Math (e.g. math team, engineering, statistics)
-
-

Artistic

- Writing & Communication (e.g. literature, poetry, journalism)
 - Art Appreciation (e.g. collecting artwork, attending museums and galleries)
 - Fine Arts (e.g. painting, photography, sculpture, drawing)
 - Performing Arts (e.g. attending plays or concerts, acting, singing, playing music)
-
-

Social

- Volunteering (e.g. soup kitchen, Habitat for Humanity, Peace Corps)
 - Entertaining (e.g. party planning or hosting)
 - Teaching (e.g. mentoring, training, coaching)
 - Care giving (e.g. babysitting, attending to sick or elderly)
 - Religion (e.g. youth group, ministry, spirituality)
-
-

Enterprising

- Politics (e.g. participating in student government, running for public office)
 - Persuading (e.g. debate club, moot court)
 - Sales (e.g. fund-raising, retail, marketing)
 - Entrepreneurship (e.g. investing, risk-taking, self-employment)
-
-

Conventional

- Organizing (e.g. collecting stamps and coins, performing home organization projects)
 - Finance (e.g. managing family funds, serving as treasurer of an organization)
 - Accounting (e.g. book-keeping, record-keeping)
 - Programming & Information Systems (e.g. developing computer software, IT)
-
-

SKILLS

Ask your students to consider what skills they possess and enjoy using. Have them review the following lists and circle those acquired skills that they have enjoyed, or believe they will enjoy using in the workplace. Then, ask them to star (*) any skills they do not yet have but would like to develop. Discuss the implication with them.

Data	People	Ideas
Budget	Advise, counsel	Analyze
Calculate, compute	Advocate	Brainstorm
Diagnose,	Anticipate needs	Conceptualize
Dissect	Communicate	Coordinate
Evaluate	Consult	Design
Examine, observe	Convey warmth and caring	Develop ideas
Follow instructions	Credit others	Edit
Investigate	Draw people out	Explain
Look for problems	Empathize	Generalize
Manage money	Help others	Implement ideas
Manage time	Initiate relationships	Improvise
Memorize	Inspire	Innovate
Organize, classify	Interview	Intuit
Plan	Lead	Issue spot
Prepare financial data	Listen	Read
Prioritize	Lobby	Research
Problem solve	Manage	Speak articulately

Read to extract facts	Mediate, settle disputes	Strategize
Research	Mentor	Summarize
Write reports	Negotiate	Trouble shoot
<i>Other:</i>	Network	Write
	Organize people	<i>Other:</i>
	Perform	
	Persuade	
	Present	
	Teach, train	
	<i>Other:</i>	

Top 10 acquired skills that you would most enjoy using at work:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Top 5 skills that you do not yet have but would like to develop:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PERSONAL QUALITIES

We all bring personal qualities and attributes to the workplace. Identifying personal qualities can help your students assess their aptitude for a career area. From the list of qualities below, ask your students to choose the five that best describe them. Then, ask them to identify five qualities that they might not inherently possess, but might offer the best opportunity for further growth and development.

Accurate	Intimate
Aggressive	Introspective
Analytical	Intuitive
Calm	Knowledgeable
Casual	Logical
Challenge-seeking	Meticulous
Communicative	Motivated
Competent	Objective
Competitive	Open to ideas
Concise	Organized
Confident	People-oriented
Congenial	Persevering
Conscientious	Persuasive
Cooperative	Political
Creative	Practical
Decisive	Pressure-prompted
Dedicated	Problem solver
Detail-oriented	Prompt, timely
Determined	Questioning
Driven	Quick learner
Empathetic	Quick-thinking
Enthusiastic	Realistic

Entrepreneurial

Expressive

Factual

Fair-minded

Flexible

Focused

Goal-oriented

Gregarious

Hardworking

Imaginative

Independent

Initiating

Intellectual

Intelligent

Other:

Resourceful

Results-oriented

Risk-taker

Savvy

Self-directed

Self-disciplined

Sensible

Sincere

Spiritual

Spontaneous

Structured

Task oriented

Team player

Verbal

Five personal qualities that best describe you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Five qualities that represent areas for potential development and future growth:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

PREFERRED WORK ENVIRONMENT

Much of our job satisfaction stems from that elusive “fit” with the people, culture, personality, and style of an organization. The following questions will help identify the type of professional environment that would best allow you to thrive. As you answer the questions, reflect on your own professional and educational experiences, good and bad.

People

- Describe the people with whom you have most enjoyed working. What were some of their characteristics?
- What qualities do you seek out in a mentor?
- What qualities do you think a good supervisor should possess? What type of supervisory style best motivates you?
- Do you appreciate working on a team, independently, or some combination?
- Do you consider your colleagues friends? Do you enjoy socializing with colleagues inside and outside of the office? Do you share information about your personal life with coworkers? Do you prefer to maintain a professional distance at work?

Culture

- Do you prefer a formal or casual environment? If given the choice would you prefer to wear a suit to work or dress casually?

- Do you like to set and maintain your own schedule? Do you enjoy putting out fires as they arise and welcome interruptions?
- If you are fully engaged in the work, do you mind working flexible, long hours, including nights and weekends? Are you more comfortable with a set, predictable workday?
- Do you care about an organization's commitment to diversity and/or social causes?
- Do you appreciate a high-energy, fast-paced office environment? Do you work best in a quiet, sedate setting?
- Would you like to work in an intellectual environment? Do you prefer a "bottom-line" organization driven by practicality?
- Do you feel most comfortable working within a clear hierarchical structure? Do you prefer a flexible, open managerial style?

Place

- Describe your perfect work setting taking the following into account: geography, aesthetics, commute, size, etc.

PERSONAL PROFILE

Once you have completed the prior exercises addressing your values, interests, skills, personal qualities, and preferred work environment, use your answers to create a Personal Profile. By reviewing and compiling your answers, you are creating a profile that will reveal emerging themes and trends. This profile will then help you identify those factors that will lead to your greatest level of satisfaction in a career transition.

Using your results from the prior exercises, create your Personal Profile on the next page.

PERSONAL PROFILE FOR: _____

CORE VALUES:

INTEREST THEMES:

(Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social,
Enterprising, or Conventional):

**SKILLS YOU WANT TO APPLY IN YOUR
NEXT POSITION:**

**FIVE PERSONAL QUALITIES
THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOU:**

LIFE PERSPECTIVE:

Area(s) of greatest satisfaction:

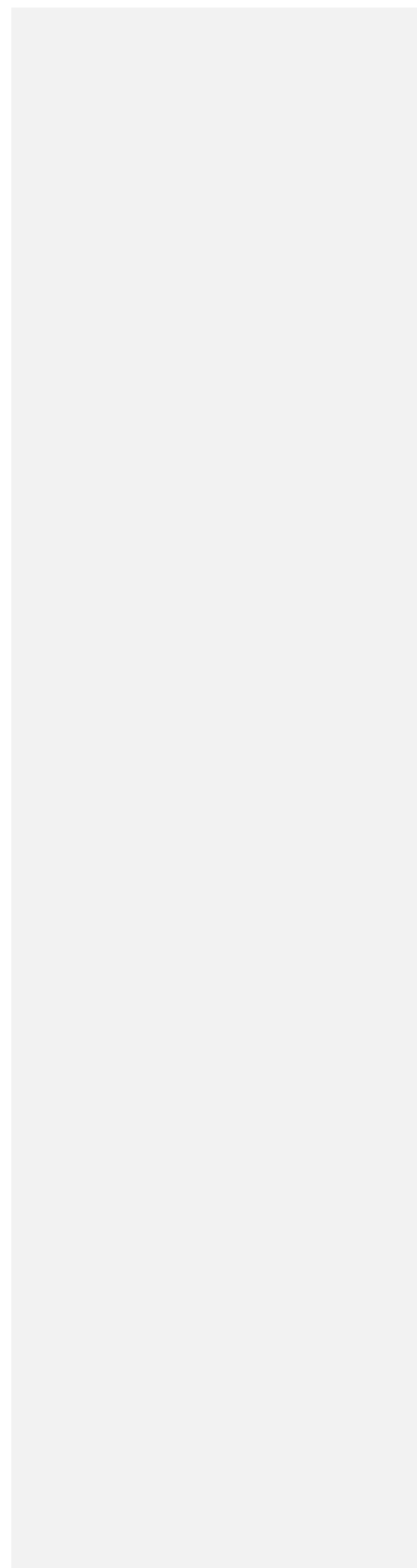
Area(s) of least satisfaction:

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL "MUST-HAVES":

People:

Culture:

Place:



Reflecting on your Personal Profile, consider the following:

- What recurrent themes run through your profile?
- What is your unique definition of “success”?

How can you use this information to assess possible internships/ externships, courses and extra-curricular activities and how they support your interests, skill development in key areas and goals? What more information do I need to gather?

- Brainstorm about different career paths and fields that might align with your profile.
 - Encourage students to attend upcoming career panels and programs that may be of interest and discuss ways to conduct informational interviews with alumni and the local legal community.
 - Look at on-line job posting sites such as Symplicity, psjd.org, the Arizona Guide to Government Honors Programs How do different opportunities within the world of public interest and even within the same organization speak to a student’s interests? At this point, keep all options open without imposing such limitations as salary, certifications, or geography.
- You can develop both short- and long-term career goals based on your profile. What are your short term career goals? What skills do I want to cultivate or test to confirm I enjoy using them in the work place? What are setting I hope to experience? What are populations I hope to serve? What are stressors I hope to avoid? How can you continue to integrate your career satisfaction factors into your long-term goals/ career planning?