WHAT ARE MY SKILLS?

1. When have you felt the most energized, confident and capable? List specific situations. (Example: giving a presentation and getting rave reviews, running in a 10K, planning and preparing food for a dinner party, teaching someone a particular technique, helping someone in a neighboring research group analyze their data, working on a particular type of experiment or analyzing a particular type of data)

2. What compliments or other positive feedback have you received for particular activities? Positive feedback may be as simple as a smile or as significant as a pay increase. Write down the positive feedback, briefly explaining each situation.
3. For several important work activities (examples: teaching a class, supervising a summer intern, completing a proteomic screen, writing a paper) list specific tasks associated with the activity and consider the transferable skills necessary to complete the tasks (Table on Page 2).

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<th>ACTIVITY #1:</th>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS</th>
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<th>ACTIVITY #2:</th>
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</table>
4) What are some of my highly developed or developing skills?

5) What skills do I wish to develop further? How will I accomplish this?
WHAT ARE MY JOB-RELATED NEEDS?

We all want and need different things from our jobs and we derive work satisfaction in different ways. To help you assess your needs rate each of the following statements as:

Not important to me (NI)
Important to me (I)
Very important to me (VI)

Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong ratings; it is a process of identifying what matters most to you rather than to someone else.

I am interested in a career that includes:

_________ A lot of mental challenge and problem-solving
_________ Autonomy, independence, freedom
_________ Creating or building things
_________ Friendships and warm working relationships
_________ Flexibility in work schedule and structure
_________ Frequent dealings with the public
_________ Global perspectives and international work
_________ Having a positive impact on others and society
_________ High degree of competition
_________ Immediate or rapid feedback and gratification
_________ Intellectual status; to acknowledged as an “expert” in a given field
_________ Job stability and security
_________ Making decisions and having power to decide courses of action
_________ Many deadlines and time demand/pressure challenges
_________ Opportunities for supervision, power, leadership, influence
_________ Opportunity for balance between work and family
_________ Order and structure
_________ Precision work with little tolerance for error
_________ Prestige, respect, or a level of social status
_________ Respect, recognition, being valued
_________ Routine, predictable work and work projects
_________ Substantial alone time and solitary work
_________ Substantial financial compensation and financial rewards
_________ Substantial teamwork and group interaction
_________ Tranquility, comfort, and avoidance of pressure
_________ Using creativity, imagination; being innovative
_________ Using cutting edge or pioneering technologies or techniques
_________ Variety and a changing work pace
Focusing on needs you rated as VERY IMPORTANT to you, rank them from most important to least important:

1. _____________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________________
4. _____________________________________________________
5. _____________________________________________________

What types of jobs will satisfy these very important job-related needs? What jobs that you are considering might prove challenging when you consider these personal needs/work values? How might you work around those challenges?
WHAT ARE MY INTERESTS?

List your scientific and/or artistic interests.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

List your hobbies and extracurricular activities.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

List activities that you enjoy, such as public speaking, planning events, debating, teaching others, analyzing data, writing.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

List activities that you do NOT enjoy, such as public speaking, planning events, debating, teaching others, analyzing data, writing.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Identify themes that emerge from the exercise:

Things that interest me: ______________________________________________________

Things that do NOT interest me: _____________________________________________
SELF-ASSESSMENT PROFILE

Review the previous three exercises and enter the data requested below:

List the top 3 skills you enjoy using most:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

List your top 3 interests:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

List your top 3 most important work needs:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

Do your interests and skills seem consistent with one another? If not, what are the potential implications for the inconsistency?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Do your values seem consistent with your interests and skills? If not, what are the potential implications for the inconsistency?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Potential careers to explore:
____________________________________________________________________
LEARNING ABOUT SCIENCE CAREERS

There are many different career options for science trainees. As you consider your options, it may be helpful for you to gather information from people currently working in careers of interest to you. Visiting work sites and talking with people about their jobs is often the most effective way to find out more about different fields.

Below are some questions you may want to ask as you start to talk with friends, family, or colleagues, visit work sites, and/or discuss job opportunities with potential employers:

- What do you do in a “typical day?” Is there such a thing as a typical day?
- Where is most of your work performed? (i.e., at a desk, with patients, on the road, in other people’s offices)
- What kinds of skills are important to have in your job?
- What kind of technical skills do you have? Do you work with specialized equipment?
- What are some of the things you like about your job?
- What are some of the frustrations in your job?
- Do you do your work mostly by yourself or with other people? Do you supervise other people?
- To whom do you usually report?
- Are there opportunities for advancement?
- What is the employment outlook in your field?
- Are there other people you would suggest I talk to about careers in your field?
- What kind of advice would you give people considering this field?
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Self-Assessment

Career Exploration
Newhouse, M. Outside the Ivory Tower: A Guide for Academics Considering Alternative Careers, An informative and intelligent guide, written especially for graduate students and recent Ph.D.s who want to explore alternatives to a traditional academic career and to actively seek nonacademic jobs. The book focuses on the process of career exploration itself, from self-assessment and skills identification to job searching, interviewing, and negotiating offers.
Articles on a wide range of science-related career paths.
Careers for…published by VGM (series of books for different personality types, such as Careers for Extroverts and Other Gregarious Types, and many more)
Opportunities in…published by VGM (series on different sectors, including Opportunities in Biotechnology Careers, Opportunities in Museum Careers, Opportunities in Overseas Careers, and many more)

Networking

Materials compiled by Dr. Sharon L. Milgram, NIH Office of Intramural Training & Education.
Adapted from Sinche 2009, OITE Career Workshop, the Career Service Website at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Your Career Planner, 8th ed., Borchard, D., Bonner, C., & Musich, S. (2002), and Outside the Ivory Tower: A Guide for Academics Considering Alternative Careers, Margaret Newhouse 2003