

## Finding your Dream Career Using Self Assessment

While resumes and cover letters are your chance to show off what skills you have to employers, figuring out exactly what skills you have can often be an overwhelming task. Self-assessment is a great tool that will make this process easier.

Self-assessment is a great way to help you identify not only your skills, but your interests, values and personal characteristics as well. Once you've identified some of the great skills you have, you can then compare them to job descriptions to better understand what jobs or careers might be a good fit for you, and conversely in which areas or skill sets you would like to grow. For example, if you come to find that you have more experience in data analysis but are also interested in working on campaigns that advocate for health equity, you can look for jobs that use data to inform health campaigns! This way, you are using the skills you already have as an opportunity to grow in other areas of interest.

Engaging in this process will help you find your place in public health. Not everyone is able to land their dream job on their first try, but every experience is an opportunity to learn more about yourself and help you discover where you want to be. Conducting a self-assessment of your skills is a great way to start this process of self-discovery, and will provide you with the knowledge to enhance your resume and cover letters.

### Steps to Self Assessment of Skills

Here are some simple steps you can take to conduct a self assessment of your skills.

First, understand the difference between hard and soft skills. Hard skills are highly teachable more technical skills that can often be learned in a classroom. Some examples include knowledge of a foreign language, knowledge of different machine learning tools like R or SAS, or skills gained through certifications. Hard skills can often be quantified or rated, such as level of knowledge of a foreign language such as elementary, intermediate, or fluent. Soft skills on the other hand often relate to *how* you carry out your job and how you interact with other people. Some examples include time management, flexibility, leadership, interpersonal skills, and persuasion.

Additionally, think about at least three professional or academic experiences that you have had, and list out all of the tasks you have completed. An example of what the list for one of these experiences might look like is:

- Conducted a literature review to see what knowledge exists surrounding community health workers and train-the-trainer programs.
- Developed various curricula for occupational health trainings targeting immigrant day laborers in NYC.
- Completed follow-up surveys to assess learning curves of previous trainings.

Finally, think about what skills were required to complete these tasks and create a separate list. Using the above list as an example, your skills list might look something like this:

- Organization, development of search strategy, and knowledge of online databases, excel and how to choose search terms.
- Cultural competency, bilingual skills, knowledge of effective teaching techniques
- Motivational interviewing skills, sensitivity training, interview and note-taking skills, survey development skills, flexible scheduling

Lastly, read carefully over the lists you have just created to make sure it is comprehensive and that you have included both hard and soft skills. Using the lists you have created you can now think more specifically about what skills you would like to continue using, which ones you would like to use less of, and what skills are not on your list that you would like to be. You can now use this knowledge to identify job postings that either allow you to use more of the skills you enjoy putting to use, or use the transferable skills you have listed to pivot your career in a different direction.

### Marketing These Skills

Conducting a self-assessment of your skills is great for both individuals who know exactly what kind of career they want, and for those who are just finding their way in public health. While the former group can use this tool to identify skills they didn't know they had to boost their resume, the latter can assess their likes and dislikes and gaps in skills to gear them in the direction they might want to go. Finding where you belong in public health can feel overwhelming since it is such an expansive and multi-sectoral field. However, you can use this fact to your advantage

and market the skills and experiences you have identified in your self-assessment in transferable ways.

**Interested in discussing self-assessment with a Career Coach?**

Schedule a 1:1 Career Coaching appointment with the Office of Career Services. [Book an appointment online now!](#)