

The *Career Directions Handbook* is a practical guide to help you manage your career throughout your lifetime. The *Career Directions Handbook* is a companion product to the *Career Directions: The Path to Your Ideal Career* textbook. The information found in the *Career Directions Handbook* is a useful resource when completing chapter activities and end of chapter reflection exercises.

Section A, “Career Paths,” shows you the many career areas that exist in your chosen field of study. Some of the actual jobs available in each of these career areas are outlined to show you how your chosen career may progress over the years. Section B, “Glossary of Terms Used in Job Descriptions,” defines some of the key words commonly found in job descriptions. This will help you use Section C, the “Index of Job Descriptions,” which is a comprehensive list of actual job descriptions defining job titles presented in “Career Paths.” These three sections work together to present you with a better understanding of the day-to-day job responsibilities in your chosen career and can be referred to periodically when making career decisions. Section D, “Bibliography,” provides you with additional sources of career information that will help guide your own job search and enhance your professional development.

Section A, “Career Paths,” is designed to help you decide how you want to apply your degree after graduation and then provides you direction for future career moves. It is useful for self-assessment and goal setting as you conduct periodic reviews of your own career. In almost any career field, there is a wide variety of jobs that suit interests, abilities, and personalities. The job titles listed range from high people-oriented to high task-oriented jobs. They show you that you may change jobs to try many different types of work without changing the career field you have chosen. The salary ranges listed vary according to geographic location, type of industry and employer, the overall state of the economy, and your own experience level; they should always be weighed against the relative cost of living in a given area. Understanding the overview of career paths in your career field can also help you communicate to an employer that you know your long-term professional goal, that you know the series of jobs you may need to hold before getting there, and that you realize it is necessary to start any career with an entry-level job.

In addition to helping you understand the terminology used in job descriptions, the “Glossary of Terms Used in Job Descriptions” is also a helpful tool for constructing your résumé. This section provides an additional resource for identifying words that best describe on your résumé what you bring to an employer. It is also good to review Section B of the Handbook when preparing for a job interview so you will be able to describe your specific skills to the interviewer.

Once you are aware of the career paths available to you and understand the main terms used in job descriptions, you should find that the “Index of Job Descriptions” will explain the responsibilities of the job(s) you are interested in. This information is useful in clarifying whether your perception of what a job entails is accurate and should be critical to helping you decide on your career goal. Being able to articulate to an employer, during an interview, a proper understanding of the job available to you may be important to the success of your interview. This is because employers frequently find that job candidates misunderstand what many jobs entail until an explanation is provided by the employer.

Some of the resources included can help you find information on prospective employers, refine your job search skills, and improve your professional skills. The *Career Directions Handbook* is something you will find useful at many points in your career, long after your first job.