

The most annoying (and misleading) question in the whole world must be,

What career are you going into after school?

It's annoying because everyone asks it and misleading given the realities of the modern world of work. It reinforces a static (unchanging) view of a career and implies that career choice is not a process but a once-off event.

The question is a throwback to the 'old' world of work which emphasised:

- Career choice for a long-term career (e.g. I've always wanted to be a doctor);
- Concern with only one career theme (e.g. medicine);
- Sequential (orderly) career growth (e.g. intern -> GP -> surgeon);
- Hierarchical (bottom-up) progression in status (e.g. intern -> GP -> surgeon);
- Career and job for life;
- Loyalty to one company and employer;
- Benefits (e.g. company medical aid) and a pension in recognition of loyalty.

But can you be certain about the career you'll follow before you even start studying? Do you know what all your options are and what's out there? Do you really have to decide in Grade 12 what you'll do for the rest of your life?

The answer: "No". Thanks to the 'new' world of work.

The 'new' world of work has been created by globalisation, increased competitiveness, growing populations and more students in tertiary education. It emphasises:

- Career choice for change and development;
- Ongoing learning and constant development of your skills;
- A portfolio career (4 to 8 career changes in your lifetime);
- Self- and short-term employment;
- Management of your own training and development (e.g. computer courses);
- Management of your own benefits (e.g. private medical aid/pension plans).

Clearly, study and career choice for the 'new' world of work is a process involving all-round development (see Steps in Choosing a Career). It's more than just taking an aptitude test and being told what to become. So, take care to choose a study course that matches your academic strengths and from which you can build a firm, solid career base. Be vigilant. Seek out opportunities. Survey the job market. And build your own self-reliance in terms of education and skills.

NOTE

Success in the new world of work is about continuous personal development.

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