Purpose:
The purpose of this Action Guide is to help you identify your own current set of skills as well as the skills required of various professions.

Description:
Many students are unaware of, or underestimate, their skills. Students also are often unsure of the skills required for various academic majors or career paths. The word “skill” is defined as “a learned power of doing something competently: a developed aptitude or ability” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010). A skill (also known as a competency) is different from a personality trait or innate quality. You may have heard of soft versus hard skills. Soft skills refer to general interpersonal skills; hard skills refer to technical competencies or expertise related to a specific job requirement.

In contrast to a skill, an interest is generally thought of as a natural curiosity or concern about something. It is helpful to understand both your interests and skills, along with your values, when making career or major decisions.

Remember that skills can be developed in many different ways: from classes, extracurricular activities, work experiences, and other activities.

Directions:
Please complete both exercises.

Exercise 1: Complete the ISEEK Skills Assessment

1) Go to iseek¹ and follow the instructions to complete the skills assessment.

2) When you are done, click the Results: Matching Jobs tab (Step 6 in the directions). You will find a list of 30 occupations on this page, ordered from highest to lowest match with your rankings of preferred skills.

3) For the top match occupation, read its “Career Profile” page and write down 4-5 Job Title examples or Similar Careers for this occupation. (Click “See More Job Titles” for a list of Similar Careers.) Use the space below to take notes.

¹ http://www.iseek.org/careers/skillsAssessment
Top Occupation: ______________________________________________________________

Job Title or Similar Career: ____________________________________________________

Job Title or Similar Career: ____________________________________________________

Job Title or Similar Career: ____________________________________________________

Job Title or Similar Career: ____________________________________________________

4) Go back to the previous page and click the “Skills Match-Up” page for your top occupation. Click Expand All in the middle of the page to see your full list of 35 skills. Use the space below to list your top five skills, which received ratings of 4 or 5.

Top Skills:

Top Skill:____________________________________________________________________

Top Skill:____________________________________________________________________

Top Skill:____________________________________________________________________

Top Skill:____________________________________________________________________

Exercise 2: Complete the Skills Card Sort

1) Go to Card Sort and follow the directions.

2) Rate each card by dragging and dropping it to the appropriate column. Click 'Create a New Card' if you want to create your own skill card.

3) Rank-order your cards in the first column (limit of 5). Print out a copy of your completed card sort. (There is no option to save).

Reflection Prompts:
When you meet with your coach, be prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What are your top skills?
- What did you learn about yourself by completing the skills assessment and card sort?
- Do your skills match your interests or the majors you want to explore? How can you develop the skills you will need?
- Are you willing to consider additional careers or majors that match your skills?

http://www.cce.umn.edu/cardsort/skills/