**Professional Association Activity**

Student Learning Objectives:

* Understand how knowledge is transmitted within a discipline
* Identify important ethical considerations in your discipline

Building a career can be enhanced by membership in one or more professional associations in your discipline. These groups offer an opportunity to share scholarship and professional concerns with like-minded practitioners by sponsoring conventions and other meetings, as well as publishing both scholarly and trade/professional publications in the field.

For this exercise we'll first examine the website of the American Historical Association ([www.historians.org](http://www.historians.org/)) and the types of services it offers its members. Then students will break into their major groups to find associations in their field.

The easiest way to do this is to google "associations" and the name of your major, e.g., associations and psychology (note that some groups use “society” or “institute” instead of “association”); also, some of the subject guides available at [http://infoguides.gmu.edu](http://infoguides.gmu.edu/) have lists of membership organizations.

Each group member should find one association; although this may be difficult for some majors. Try your best.

When you have located an association, review its web page and find the following information:

* Does it have a job bank (specialized "want ads" for people in your field)?
* Many groups have reasonable student rates; if yours does, how much does it cost per year?
* What types of educational services does it provide (usually workshops & conventions)? Provide a few specific examples.
* How often does the group have its major convention? (Some are yearly, some every two or three years.) Where is it held?
* Try to find a program from a past conference and briefly mention the title of the speech from the association president (they all give one major talk at these meetings) and give a sense of the panel topics (not all! generalize; if your group doesn't list either just say so:)
* What types of publications does it provide for its members? Most associations have a flagship scholarly journal (if the one you found doesn't, find another one that does), and any number of trade publications (newsletters, bulletins, or other non-peer reviewed sources of professional information). **List the title** of a scholarly journal (in italics!) and a trade/professional publication (also in italics) your group sponsors. You will need this for later assignments. If you aren't sure which ones are scholarly and which are trade/professional, don't forget you can use [Ulrich's database](http://ulrichsweb.serialssolutions.com.mutex.gmu.edu/) in our library system or check the publication's web site.
* Finally, most associations have codes of professional conduct. Briefly explain a few of the main points of those you found. If you can't readily access this on your association’s website, write what *you* think ethical practices would entail for your future profession.

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