



Career Exploration

Advanced Level

Well-being comes from feeling good about all areas of one's life including the career you choose. Finding a career that positively contributes to your well-being is accomplished through career exploration. Career exploration is a deliberate process that pairs personal interests and abilities with desired education level and type of employment. Follow the steps below to begin your career exploration process!

"Choose a job you'll love and you will never have to work a day in your life. – Confucius."

Step One: Learn More About Yourself

Identifying potential occupations (a grouping of similar jobs) is a great place to start the career exploration process. One way to identify potential occupations is to complete a career assessment. From here you can begin researching occupations that fit within your career expectations.

Career assessments are an essential tool to successfully identify potential occupations. A career assessment is a survey that matches your skills, abilities, interests, values, and/or other traits to a list of potential occupations. It can help you identify what you'd like to do as well as the tasks at which you excel. Go ahead and take a career assessment...you might be surprised at what you find out about yourself!

According to Career One Stop, it's important to consider the following when choosing a career assessment tool:

- What does the career assessment measure?
- Who developed it? Is it a trusted source?
- Is it a proven tool? Has it been validated?
- How can the results be used?
- Will you have to pay any fees to take the assessment or receive your results?



Step Two: Research Identified Occupations

Once you have identified some potential occupations, conduct career research using one or more of the following resources.

- The Bureau of Labor Statistic's Occupational Outlook Handbook is a comprehensive resource containing an extensive list of occupations.
- Interview: Conduct interviews with people in the occupation.
- Job Shadow: Spend a day on the job with people in the occupation.
- Job Experience: Obtain an entry-level position in a work environment you want to explore. This exposes you to the work environment and employees.

Step Two: Research Identified Occupations Continued

Use your research to answer these initial questions.

Experience and Formal Training Requirements:

- What formal training is required for this occupation?
- What can you do now to prepare for this occupation?

Occupation-Specific Information:

- What jobs are available for people in this occupation?
- What tasks would be completed in a typical day for some of the jobs in this occupation?
- What is a typical work schedule for the jobs in this occupation?

Current Job Availability, Future Outlook and Earnings:

- Currently, how many job openings are there for this occupation?
- Are job openings likely to increase or decrease in the future for this occupation?
- What are the entry level, median, and potential wages for jobs within this occupation?

Occupation Flexibility and Advancement:

- Are the skills and training used in this occupation transferable to other occupations?
- Does this occupation allow for advancement?

Well-Being:

- How will this occupation contribute to your well-being?



Step Three: Evaluate Research

After you have completed research on the occupations that interest you, evaluate the findings of your research to determine if each is still a good fit for you. Questions to consider include:

- Does the occupation match your interest and skills?
- Do characteristics of this occupation match your values thus supporting your well-being?
- Do the entry, median and potential wages match your desired standard of living?
- Are you willing to complete the formal training required for this occupation?
- How does the occupation rate based on other features that are important to you?

Everyone values different aspects of an occupation. One person may desire a flexible schedule and yet another may care more about the amount of training required to enter an occupation. Rank each aspect of an occupation to determine what is most important to you.

At this point in your career exploration, you've spent time learning more about yourself, researching an occupation you think might hold potential for future employment and ranking various characteristics related to the occupation. Now it's time to ask yourself this question, "Does this occupation still interest me?" If not, begin researching other occupations. Once you have discovered a potential occupation, create a plan to receive the necessary education and develop the necessary transferable skills to become a qualified candidate for that job. By using this approach you will increase your human capital even if you decide on a different occupation at a later date.

What are the two most important characteristics for you when choosing an occupation?

