

Figuring out what you want to be or considering a career change? This tip sheet outlines 4 basic stages that can help you explore careers. Start at the stage that makes sense for you and reflect and reassess along the way.

Stage 1: Get to know yourself

This is a crucial part of exploring career options. Figuring out your skills, values, interests, preferred work styles, strengths, limitations and personality can help you determine which careers could be a good fit for you. Use these resources to discover and learn about your:

Interests – the things you enjoy doing and learning

Guiding questions	Resources
<div><div>1. What subjects did/do you enjoy studying the most in school? Why?</div><div>2. What topics have always been of interest to you?</div><div>3. What kind of problems at work or in the world would you like to solve?</div><div>4. If you could make a living doing anything you wanted (without regard for money), what would you do?</div><div>5. What’s something that, when immersed in it, you lose track of time?</div></div>	<div>Career Cruising: https://public.careercruising.com/en/ username: compliments password: careerservices</div> <div>Government of Canada: https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/workpreference</div>

Skills and abilities – the things that you are good at

Guiding questions	Resources
<div><div>1. What skills come to you naturally?</div><div>2. What would people compliment you on from each job you have held?</div><div>3. What types of things do friends, colleagues, or family usually seek your input for?</div><div>4. What’s a challenge you’ve experienced in your life that you have overcome. How did you do it?</div></div>	<div>Career Cruising: https://public.careercruising.com/en/ username: compliments password: careerservices</div> <div>Government of Canada: https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/abilities</div>

Work values – your priorities and preferences in the workplace

Guiding questions	Resources
<div><div>1. What is important to you? What motivates you?</div><div>2. Who is someone in your life or in history whose work inspires and excites you? Why?</div><div>3. What type of work environment brings out the best in you?</div></div>	<div>ALIS Alberta: https://alis.alberta.ca/careerinsite/know-yourself/work-values-quiz/</div> <div>Government of Canada: https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/workvalue</div>

Personality – the ways you think and how you naturally act

Guiding questions	Resources
<div><div>1. What three words would your close friends or family use to best describe you?</div><div>2. Think about your typical self. What does that look like/entail?</div><div>3. How do you make decisions?</div><div>4. How do you respond to negative situations? What steps do you take to manage them?</div></div>	<div>ALIS Alberta: https://alis.alberta.ca/careerinsite/know-yourself/traits-quiz/</div>

Stage 2: Explore possibilities

If you understand your strengths and preferences, it's time to explore the different occupations out there. You can do this by:

- [Booking an appointment](#) with a Career Development professional that can help you discover options.
- Using these resources:
 - [National Occupation Classification \(NOC\) Career Handbook](#)
 - [Trend Analysis: Canada's Labour Market Report](#)
 - [Alberta Learning Information Services: Occupational Profiles](#)
 - [Professional Associations](#)
 - [Industry Profiles](#)
- Conducting [informational interviews](#) with people who have jobs that sound interesting.

When you come across a job that interests you in your research, use these questions to get more information:

1. What are the main tasks that a person in this occupation does? What skills are required to do this work well?
2. Are there jobs available in this occupation right now? Will there be in the future? Are these jobs near where I live?
3. What is the workplace like?
4. Will I need special education/training to do this work? If yes, where can I get the education/training? What will it cost? How long will it take?
5. What is the salary range?

Stage 3: Consider your options

Now that you've found some occupations of interest, it's time to discover which ones – if any – are really what you're looking for. Ask yourself:

- 1 Will I make enough money doing this work?
- 2 Will I be happy doing this work? Will I be learning and growing?
- 3 Do I feel that this work is worthwhile?
- 4 How will this work affect my personal life?

For occupations that you are still interested in, make a list of everything that would be good and bad about that job. Weigh each occupation and thoroughly consider what your life would look like with each.

If you think you have found the right job, move to stage 4 to make a plan of action. If you still feel unsure, that's perfectly fine. You don't have to have it all figured out right now. Consider [talking with a Career Development professional](#) for extra guidance.

Stage 4: Make a plan

Now that you know what career you want to pursue, it's time to figure out the steps to get there.

Develop a list of specific and achievable goals/ actions you must take that each will get you closer to achieving career success. As well, plan out a reasonable timeline of when each goal should be completed.

Your goals may include:

- [Volunteering](#) or [finding work](#) to build your skills and gain relevant experience.
- Taking courses or training to fill any knowledge gaps.
- Growing your [professional network](#) to have access to people and information.
- [Creating a portfolio](#) using your academic work and projects.

If you're feeling lost about what career paths might be right for you, [book an appointment](#) with Career Services or check out our [upcoming workshops](#) about finding your fit and discovering worthwhile work.

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NEED MORE HELP?

Book an appointment with us through [MyCareerHub](#).

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