

# Career Planning

M · I · C · R · O · C · O · U · R · S · E

**A brief, self-directed learning program to help you make effective career and educational choices.**

## WELCOME TO THE CAREER PLANNING MICROCOURSE!

We are pleased you are considering advancing your education at Sheridan College. With over a hundred program offerings in a broad range of career clusters, academic levels, and credentials, we have something for almost everyone!

### MicroCourse Purpose

This course is all about helping you determine your preferred future. While our intent is on helping you select the appropriate Sheridan program, it is not limited only to careers that Sheridan programs lead to. We offer you this MicroCourse within the context of effective career planning, as it is ideal to understand your general career direction before embarking upon an educational program.

Completing this micro-course will help you:

- Understand the career decision-making process.
- Generate possibilities and options.
- Consider how your interests, abilities, personality style, and work values link to careers.
- Research occupations, labour market information, and educational programs.
- Evaluate education and career alternatives and set goals.
- Plan a road map that will help you achieve your education and career goals.

In this Introduction, we'll start with some context on how we make career decisions, followed by an overview of the modules which make up this MicroCourse.

### Is this MicroCourse for You?

The Career Planning MicroCourse is designed for anyone who wants to gain insight into their vocational identity and make effective career and educational decisions.

Just like a conventional course you attend in person, it requires work, thought, and consideration. It's a cliché but, "the more you put in, the more you get out," could not be more true than when it comes to planning your career.

This MicroCourse will take you several hours to get through, and we don't recommend you do it all at once. Sometimes it is good to pause and take stock of things as you go along. If you choose to invest the time and effort in the modules that follow, it will surely be worth it.

If, at the moment, you not ready to commit to a "course" but are looking for a quicker source of options to consider, you may want to try Sheridan's online **Idea Generator**. Through a brief questionnaire you are presented with some program options that may be suitable for your career preferences.

### How We Make (or Don't Make) Career Decisions

Making good educational and occupational choices is an important part of achieving career satisfaction. Unfortunately, too few people base their decisions on the most relevant factors: their own interests, personality type, abilities, and values. Below is a list of just *some* of the various ways that people end up in their current work roles, based on research by Bruce Cassie, a researcher from the University of Toronto. You'll note that many (though not all) of them could be fairly categorized as accidental, or "it just kinda happened that way"!

Cassie found that people end up doing the work they do because of one or more of the following reasons. They:

- Followed the family... “I am doing what my mom/dad did.”
- Augmented a hobby... “I am a veterinarian because I always loved animals as a kid.”
- Selected what they’re good at... “I was always good at working with cars so I decided to become a mechanic.”
- Followed the crowd... “all my friends went into hairdressing, so I did, too.”
- Followed a systematic approach... “I took some career assessments, evaluated my work experiences to date, and reflected on my school marks...these led me to select a career in retail.”
- Shifted from part-time to full-time... “I got a part-time job at an art gallery while I was in school, and when a full-time opportunity came up, I decided to take it.”
- Worked as a necessity... “I just took the first job that came along so I could support my family.”
- Followed their dreams... “I always dreamt of helping people get out of poverty.”
- Overcame obstacles... “I became paralyzed halfway through my veterinary degree, so I switched majors and decided to pursue social work instead.”
- Followed the allure of cash... “My uncle told me that tool and die makers make a lot of money, so I decided to do that.”

Do some of these sound like you, your family members, or people you know?

## Optional Exercise: Your Career Decision Making History

Note: All the activities within this MicroCourse are denoted as being either “core” (we recommend everyone do these) or “optional” (we suggest you do these based on your own perceived benefit). The MicroCourse takes most people 6-10 hours to complete, and up to six hours longer if you choose to do some or all of the optional exercises as well.

Make a list of the jobs you’ve had and the education programs you’ve enrolled in. How did you end up in these jobs/programs? Do any of the reasons listed above hold true for you? Overall, would you say you make deliberate or circumstantial choices about your education and jobs? How do you hope to make future career-related decisions? We hope that going through this MicroCourse can be a new start for you in terms of making wise education and career choices!

## COURSE OVERVIEW

Gone are the days when we trained once for a career and then did that work for a lifetime. Career planning and re-training are now life-long processes for many of us. Career decisions can be complex, but this MicroCourse is designed to give you the tools and information you need to work through that process as effectively as possible.

Each one of the modules within the MicroCourse reflects one of the steps in career planning. The overall goal is to determine career options (and therefore educational programs) that best reflect your unique style and attributes, rather than ending up in something for one or more of the above reasons and then trying to change yourself to suit the career.

The MicroCourse begins with self-assessment since, thinking of your career as a journey, it is difficult to figure out where to go if you don't clearly know where you are starting from. Here is what each module covers:

### Module 1: Assess Yourself

**Where Am I At Now?** This module involves self-assessment in order to increase your level of self-awareness. Here you'll get answers to questions such as "Who am I?" and "What contribution can I make to the work world?" Through a variety of exercises, you'll consider your interests, personality type, abilities, and values.

### Module 2: Generate Possibilities

**Where Might I Go?** In this module, you will brainstorm possibilities around education and work based on what you discovered about yourself in Module 1.

### Module 3: Research Options

**What are the Destinations Like?** This module presents a list of resources that will help you gain the information you need about different occupations and educational options. These resources will help you further research and explore the options you generated in the previous module.

### Module 4: Evaluate Alternatives, Set Goals

**Which is the Right One for Me?** It is now time to prioritize and make a decision based on the research you did in Module 3. You will be guided through the career decision-making process.


### Module 5: Plan Education

**How Do I Get There?** This module shows you how to set up a plan that will help you meet the goal(s) you set in Module 4.

**Program link:** throughout the MicroCourse you will find boxes like this explaining the link between the career planning module or exercise and success at Sheridan.

## Web Site Links

The MicroCourse modules make reference to various web sites. The URLs (web site addresses) for these sites were accurate and functioning at time of publication but it is possible that they may have subsequently changed.

Rather than retyping the URL, if you are reading the modules on a computer with internet access, you can click the  (computer mouse) icon shown beside each URL. Doing so will take you to the specific section of our Career Planning QuickTips page that contains the most up-to-date link to that particular web site, or a similar one.

## A Final Word Before You Start

Last but not least, before we move forward with the good stuff, please understand that this MicroCourse is not intended to be a replacement for professional guidance and career and education advice. While Sheridan developed this content to help you make effective choices about your career and education, we have done so in the context of providing information and resources; the decisions you make are ultimately your responsibility and you must consider them carefully and seriously.