

WELCOME TO MODULE 3: RESEARCH OPTIONS

The goal of Module 2 was to explore possibilities and broaden the scope of career ideas you might consider. The purpose of this module is the opposite. Now it is time to narrow down your choices; to refine your list to options that are both suitable for you and realistic in terms of the world of work.

The only way to do this effectively is to gather information. You need to know as much as possible about each career option in order to make decisions about them. Information, about yourself (Module 1), and about careers (this module) gives you the power to effectively and objectively evaluate (next module) your career alternatives.

There are times in any program when the going gets tough. What gets you through is confidence that the program is taking you to a goal you want to achieve. Being clear on the career outcomes to a program will help you maintain this confidence.

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Core Exercise: Narrow Possibilities & Research Options

If you did not already do so during the last module, use the career information web sites listed in Module 2 to do some initial screening of your possibilities which will narrow down that list of ideas to options that appear to be both interesting and potentially doable. It is those options you will now research in detail in this exercise.

On the one hand, the shorter the list the less time you will need to carry out your research. But on the other hand you don't want to throw ideas away too quickly. It is better to err on the side of caution, even if it means a longer research assignment.

The keys to effective and useful career research are knowing what information is important for you to find, and where to look for it. Below is a sample list of the kinds of things you might want to explore for each type of work:

- What is this occupation about/what does it incorporate? ? What types of activities are carried out?
- Is specific education or training necessary/an asset? What types of skills and/or knowledge are required?
- What is the future outlook in this field?
- Are there opportunities for advancement?
- What is a typical schedule? What does a typical day look like? Is there any allowance for flexibility?
- What is a typical starting salary? What about intangible satisfactions like variety, physical activity, independence, and so on.

Be honest with yourself when you're answering that last question. It is easy to be swayed by easy opportunity, money, or other factors that will not necessarily lead to job satisfaction.


You may duplicate the Career Research Worksheet on the back page as a form to organize the information you collect on each career option. Or you may wish to develop your own system, either in print or on a computer. However you do it, you will likely find that having consistent categories will make your research more efficient, and greatly assist you in comparing and evaluating alternatives in the next module.

 Click orange mouse for live web link.

There are lots of ways to find answers to these questions. The first and most obvious source is web sites, particularly those with Canadian content. Some of these were used to generate and screen possibilities in the last module. Now you will use them to explore further.

National Occupational Classification (NOC)

Canada's career dictionary, with basic details on 500 occupational groups covering an index of 40,000+ job titles.

 <http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca>


Career Cruising

Detailed profiles on 500+ careers, which includes both factual details and multimedia interviews with people who do each career.

 www.careercruising.com

OCCinfo

Over 500 occupational profiles which you can look up by occupational title, by NOC code or based on industrial sectors.

 <http://alis.alberta.ca/occinfo/>

Canadian Occupational Projection System

Analyzes and projects long-term national labour market demand, including projections for expansion, retirements, emigration and compares expected numbers of job openings with numbers of job seekers.

 <http://www23.hrsdc.gc.ca/w.2lc.4m.2@-eng.jsp>


O*Net

USA's counterpart to the NOC. It has some career clusters and occupations the NOC doesn't (and vice-versa)

 <http://www.onetonline.org/>


Working in Canada

This government site brings together a variety of labour market information sources to produce a report on labour market conditions, salary, outlook and requirements based on the occupation and geographic area you specify.

 www.workingincanada.gc.ca

Professional Associations

Professional Association offices and websites also often offer comprehensive written materials. For example, the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada provides a well-written guide to the profession. Similarly, the Canadian Association of Social Workers profiles the many types of work that are done in that field in Canada.

 www.canadiancareers.com/sector.html

New & Additional Website Addresses!

Over time web URLs can change, so you can also connect with these and more great resources on the **Research Options** page of Sheridan's Career Planning QuickTips:

 <http://careerquicktips.sheridancollege.ca>

Using Search Engines

Even with all the recommended websites above, there may be some occupations you could not find, or some questions you could not answer. A little patience and resourcefulness will go a long way in getting you answers to your questions. Websites like Google can be very useful for locating career information but always be conscious of the information source. Is it Canadian? Is it unbiased? Is it related to any commercial interest or cause?

Don't forget about consulting a "live search engine"... otherwise known as the Reference Librarian at your local public or school library.

When Are You Ready for Next Module?

The goal of this module is to gather enough information that you can make effective comparisons and choices in the next module.

You may feel like there is always more information to be found but at some point you need to move to the next step. Try not to prolong this. Remember, you can always return to gather more information if/when you need to.

Optional Exercise: Information Interviews

Research gives you objective facts but the subjective impressions of actual workers completes the picture: An information interview is when you question someone about the work they do; You may do this in person (ideal) or by phone. To begin with, you will need to locate people you wish to interview. Be prepared to do some email or telephone work to make it happen. Not everyone will agree to see you or speak with you. Sometimes you will feel "screened" by a secretary. Don't get discouraged. When

making inquiries, make it clear and simple why you are calling, and that you are looking for information, not for a job. Remember, most people have a natural desire to be looked up to and to help others. Appeal to this desire. Be respectful of their time and treat it like a business meeting. Here are some possible questions to ask

About what they do

- What daily routines do you follow?
- What are your responsibilities?
- What product/service do you provide?
- What equipment do you use?
- What types of people do you deal with?

About why they do it

- Why did you choose this kind of work?
- What is most important in your work?
- How does someone know if this would be the right kind of work for them?

About getting into that kind of work

- What education or training do I need?
- Where is the best place to get it?
- What experience is important?
- Where does the company hire from?

About advancement and opportunities

- What path did you take to this position?
- What kind of opportunities for advancement are there?
- How do you see the future outlook for this kind of work? This type of business?
- What other related jobs are there?

Once you have built up some rapport

- What do you enjoy doing most? Why?
- What would you rather not do?
- What kind or income range to people in this kind of work find themselves in?
- What would you change if you could plan your career all over? Why?

CAREER RESEARCH WORKSHEET

NOC # _____ Occupation _____

What do you do in this kind of work?

Some considerations:

- duties/tasks
- projects
- responsibilities

How is this kind of work done?

Some considerations:

- working conditions
- typical day/routine
- risks
- activity level

Who does this kind of work?

Some considerations:

- abilities required
- soft skills
- personality traits
- education/training to get started

Why do people do this kind of work?

Some considerations:

- income and benefits
- intangible satisfactions
- social orientation
- independence

Where can you go with this kind of work?

Some considerations:

- future outlook
- advancement potential
- lateral career moves
- options within industry

YOU MAY MAKE COPIES OF THIS FORM FOR YOUR OWN USE.