

WELCOME TO MODULE 2: GENERATE POSSIBILITIES

Having completed the self-assessment module, you should understand a lot more about your interests, personality, abilities, and values and be able to answer the question “where am I at?” In this module, you will address the next question: “where might I go?” It will help you generate ideas and develop a list of possible career goals that you will subsequently narrow down into options to consider more seriously.

While it is natural to have some possibilities in mind already, keep in mind that there are many possible options within the world of work. In fact, according to Canada’s dictionary of occupations, there are over 40,000 different job titles! With this many options, there are probably some you’ve never thought of before, or didn’t even know existed. Make sure to leave lots of time to work through this module – you may be surprised what you end up with.

Brainstorming Ground Rules

Your main task now is to brainstorm possibilities. Brainstorming is a popular and well-known way to problem solve. It can help you think up solutions to any type of challenge you’re experiencing. In this module, however, it has just one purpose: to help you generate as many career ideas as possible!

While it may seem odd for there to be “rules” attached to an open activity like brainstorming, the following guidelines will be helpful:

- While you might be tempted to begin re-searching options you’ve already thought of, or even to make a decision, the key word here is ‘broaden’...at this stage, you are not narrowing down options, you are actually thinking of as many options as

possible! Make it your mission in this module to expand your horizons.

- Censorship is a ‘no-no’. If you’re not writing down at least a few wild ideas, you are probably passing judgment on your ideas too soon. No idea is bad or wrong. Throw your analytical thinking out the window – at least for a while – and be outrageous!
- Think quantity. It doesn’t matter a bit if 99% of your ideas will never be carried out. On the other hand, that seemingly outrageous idea might just be the one that takes you somewhere.
- Try some brainstorming techniques if you find yourself getting stuck. Simply Google ‘brainstorming techniques’ and you will get endless ideas on how to spark your creativity (there are even brainstorming apps for smartphones!). A few creative ideas follow the core exercise below. Refer to these if you’re still feeling stuck after completing the core exercise.

Now that you know all about brainstorming, you’re ready to begin. The exercise below will take you through the process.

Core Exercise: Brainstorming Work Options

First, write down any occupations you have already been considering. These are worth making a note of so they don’t get forgotten or lost. Next, talk with friends, relatives, neighbours, and anyone else who knows you well enough to offer a useful opinion. Let them know you are brainstorming ‘what you want to be when you grow up’ and ask them for ideas. You know yourself best of all, but it is still worthwhile to gather opinions from others. You are not compelled to follow-through on them but they might provide useful starting points, or (perhaps) good options!

 Click orange mouse for live web link.

As you go through this exercise, add your own ideas (they may be specific occupations or just broad career fields) to the Possibilities List on the back page. Don't censor, analyze, or worry about how realistic they are... add anything to the list that is (a) interesting, and (b) even potentially doable.

National Occupational Classification (NOC)

The NOC is Canada's career dictionary. It defines and classifies occupations, sorting them by type & skill level into groups of related jobs.

 <http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/>

Each occupation group has a 4 digit code. By understanding the numbering system (see box at right) you can use the NOC to generate possibilities:

- Choose one or more of NOC categories (look for the Occupational Structure option in the left-hand column of the NOC web page) then click on any occupational groups that catch your interest to find out more about main duties and requirements.
- Look up any specific job titles you (or your family/friends/neighbours) might have in mind. You can do this using an alphabetical index or by browsing the categories.
- After reading about Main Duties and Requirements, always scroll down to the bottom of the page to see related careers in the Classified Elsewhere section.
- Whenever you look up an occupational group click on "View All Job Titles" to see the variations within that group!

Advice: Resist the temptation to prematurely screen out occupations based on your perception of what they involve, or what education they require. Look them up, see where they lead, then make choices based on the facts.

NOC Numbering System

Each occupational group has a 4-digit code.

1st digit indicates occupation category:

- 1 - Business, Finance & Administration
- 2 - Natural and Applied Sciences & Related
- 3 - Health
- 4 - Education, Law and Social, Community and Government Services
- 5 - Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport
- 6 - Sales & Services
- 7 - Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators & Related
- 8 - Natural Resources, Agriculture & Related Production
- 9 - Processing, Manufacturing & Utilities
- 0 - Management

2nd digit indicates skill level:

- 1 - professional: usually requires university degree
- 2 or 3 - paraprofessional or technical: usually requires college or apprenticeship
- 4 or 5 - usually requires secondary school and/or 1+ years of on-the-job training
- 6 - usually on-the-job training; no formal education requirement, although some may be required or recommended

(for management "0" occupations, second digit indicates type using the 9 categories)

3rd & 4th digits are used to sort into related occupational groups.



NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL
CLASSIFICATION

 Click orange mouse for live web link.

Career Cruising

Career Cruising is another Canadian career information website. It profiles almost 600 occupations with detailed information on duties, conditions, requirements, career progression, and even includes multimedia interviews with people who actually do that type of work.

 www.careercruising.com

[Career Cruising is accessible by subscription only. If you are a current or past Sheridan staff/full or part time student can access it using your 9-digit ID number. If you have a card for any Halton or Peel library, you can get immediate access by clicking on the icon above, clicking Career Cruising, and selecting the appropriate entry pathway. Public and separate schools in Halton and Peel also subscribe; contact your Guidance Department for access info.]

You can use Career Cruising to generate possibilities in several ways:

- Click on the *Careers* button near the top of the web page and then select Search by Cluster (or by School Subject) and choose whichever categories/subjects strike your interest to see a list of related occupations.
- You can also look up specific occupations using the index. Whether using this method or browsing through categories, once you get to an occupational profile always try clicking on the *Related Careers* box to see more possible occupations.
- The *Assessments* button will lead you to a careers quiz called Career Matchmaker. Once you complete the first set of 39 questions a list of possibilities will appear. However, you will also see the option to answer more questions to improve the accuracy of your results. This is very important: answer all 116 questions to get the most useful suggestions.

As with the NOC exercise, transfer to your Possibilities List anything that appears interesting and potentially doable.

Advice: At this point your goal is just to generate ideas, not to make a firm commitment to proceed with anything. They are just ideas at this stage, and you are better to have too many than too few so try not to censor or prejudge them. The next module will explain how to research and narrow down.

Career Cruising Categories

Career Clusters:

Architecture & Construction
 Arts & Culture
 Business & Finance
 Computers & Telecom
 Education & Social Services
 Fashion & Design
 Law & Government
 Medical & Health
 Natural Resources & Transportation
 Science & Engineering
 Skilled Trades
 Service Industry
 Sports & Recreation

School Subjects:

Arts & Music	Science
Business	Skilled Trades
Computers	Math
English	Physical Education
Family Studies & Home Economics	
Languages	Social Sciences

If, after using the NOC and Career Cruising, you are still wanting more ideas, the next page lists several more career information web sites to browse.

 Click orange mouse for live web link.


Ontario Job Futures

This is another site where you can browse by broad category (e.g., business, health, science) and explore a range of options within that career cluster.

 www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket/ojf/

OCCinfo

Over 500 occupational profiles which you can look up by occupational title, by NOC code based on industrial sectors. This is run by the Alberta Learning Information Service but most info is still applicable to Ontarians.

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

O*Net

The American counterpart to the NOC. Many ways to search and browse careers.

 www.onetonline.org

Want even *more* ideas?

Still feeling stuck? Here are a few creative brainstorming techniques that might help:

- Look back to what you learned about yourself in Module 1 (i.e., your interests, your personality type, and your abilities). What kinds of ideas did these assessments and exercises generate?
- Take a workshop or go to a seminar where you'll meet and have an opportunity to chat with new people.
- Listen to music and daydream.
- Play the 'what if' game with yourself (what if I had no pants to wear to work tomorrow; what if pineapple was the only food available at the grocery store...there are endless questions to get you thinking differently and humorously).

- Start a scrapbook or vision board.
- Open up a magazine or newspaper to get you thinking about something new; go somewhere you've never been before, even if it's close to home.

The possibilities for stimulating your thinking are endless.

Managing Your Possibilities List

The Possibilities List is a place to keep all your career ideas, including those that emerge during the process. As you learn more about those ideas using the NOC:

- some may end of getting discarded from the list but at least you will do so based on factual information;
- some will be good enough to transfer to your Options List (next module), which are things to consider more seriously;
- a few may not have enough info to decide either way and require further exploration.

Brainstorming can take time. Be patient with yourself if you don't come up with a lot of ideas initially. You'll probably find that some days you have more ideas than others. Allow lots of time before moving to the next module.

