



CAREER EXPLORATION

EXPLORATION

Before committing to a career goal, it is helpful for college students to expose themselves to as many different experiences as possible. They need to engage in activities that will allow them to explore a wide variety of career options. Students should take time to learn more about themselves, meet new people, try new things, and study the world around them. They need to find out what types of career paths are possible and be open to new, foreign, and unfamiliar experiences and ideas.

RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS

It is very important that you thoroughly examine your career options. Effectively investigating or researching a particular career involves gathering relevant data about the realities of the field and the required training and skills. Gaining in-depth knowledge about various occupations is critical to your success as a professional. The best sources of information related to careers are printed materials, on-line data, people in the field, and your own firsthand personal experience.

By using the resources you have available to you to research and explore your career options, you can enter the job market well prepared. Moreover, you will develop a great sense of confidence and focus that will empower you as you venture forward in pursuit of your career.

PRINTED MATERIAL

A wide range of books and other printed material are available addressing such topics as career choice, the job market, and information on specific careers. This kind of published information is generally accessible through school and public libraries and career resource centers. Additional data can be obtained from company reports, corporate literature, industrial directories, chambers of commerce, professional organizations, and government agencies.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Whether you are researching a company or industry or gathering specific career data, an increasing amount of information is available on-line. Through various search engines, a computer user can access specific information very quickly by entering key words, titles, or topics. There are websites devoted to particular career sectors or industries that offer detailed information. There are on-line directories and databases that organize career information into categories and provide job-specific data.

Occupational Outlook Handbook	www.bls.gov/ooh
My Plan	www.myplan.com
Career Overview	www.careeroverview.com
My Majors	www.mymajors.com
Career One Stop	www.careeronestop.org
The Career Project	www.thecareerproject.org
Career Ship	www.mappingyourfuture.org
Career Profiles	www.careerprofiles.info
How to Become Any Career	www.becomeopedia.com

PEOPLE IN THE FIELD

Identify key players or prominent figures in your particular field of interest. You may meet these people through career fairs, conventions, conferences, professional meetings, or your teachers, counselors and advisors. An effective way to find out about a career is to talk with people who are actually working in that career. This can be accomplished through any number of methods by which you can meet and interact with professionals in your field, including informational interviews (or informational discussions), networking, mentorships, or job shadowing. Personal interaction with people in the field provides you the opportunity to gather real world insight, professional advice, and firsthand observations.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Perhaps the best way to learn what a career is actually like is to experience it personally. You can obtain this firsthand experience, or subjective exposure to a particular career, through a variety of relatively risk-free arrangements. Take a course related to your field of interest. Join a club or organization related to your field of interest. Do volunteer work in your field of interest. Get a part-time job in your field of interest. Get an internship in your field of interest. By “getting your feet wet” or “getting your hands dirty” you can easily determine if you are a good fit for the career path you are considering.

INFORMATION CHECKLIST

- Books, publications, printed materials, articles, library resources
- US Department of Labor website, database, directories
- Internet resources, websites, on-line databases, on-line directories
- Classes, coursework
- Extracurricular activities, campus projects
- Clubs, organizations, societies, associations
- Community projects
- Informational interviews, discussions with people in the field
- Networking activity
- Mentoring activity
- Job shadowing activity
- Volunteer experience
- Part time job, seasonable employment
- Internship

