

Guide to Career Planning.

"...a career isn't just one thing you pick; it is something you create through many choices and changes."

Cathy Campbell, author of Career Crafting

We hope you find the following guide helpful to plan ahead and navigate the many choices and changes along your career planning journey.

1. Reflect: Know yourself

With insights and self-awareness, comes a sense of agency and focus on what career and education options might be best for you. The Student Success Centre offers individual career counselling and a range of career planning programs, webinars, career assessments and reflection activities to help clarify and deepen your self-understanding.

Here are some recommended supports to help you get started:

+ Career Planning Essentials + Individual Career Counselling

Start with registering for the Career Planning Essentials program and combine with 1-1 Career Counselling.

Career Planning Essentials – a comprehensive on-line self-assessment and career planning program that is designed to help you build more clarity and explore career and education options. The program guides you through a series of self-assessment activities to help you gain more self-awareness of your values, interests, personal strengths, and skills.

To register, go to oscarplumcmaster.ca – Student Success Centre – Events. You will find the event listed on the first Monday of each month and registration stays open all month.

1-1 meetings with a career counsellor - a collaborative and confidential space to discuss your unique background and experiences and address your career and education questions or concerns. Meet with a Career Counsellor as you work through Career Planning Essentials program and you will be well on your way to navigating your career and education decisions with more clarity and confidence.

To meet with a Career Counsellor, go to oscarplumcmaster.ca – Student Success Centre – appointments – Career Counselling. Appointments are available both in person and virtually through zoom meetings.



+ Career Assessments and Career Activities

Here are just some of the additional supports we have to help you reflect and build more self-clarity on what is best for you.

Here are some activities you can try now:

- [Digital Challenge Cards](#) – This activity is designed to help you prioritize and focus on what matters most to you. You can start now and follow up with a career counsellor for further guidance
- [Values Reflection Activity](#) – This will help you consider what you really want in a career
- [Pondering my Life](#) – The questions in this activity will help you ponder and discover new insights.

Here are some additional career assessments you can speak with a Career Counsellor about:

- [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator \(MBTI\)](#) – personality assessment
- [Strong Interest Inventory](#) – Interest career assessment
- [SkillScan](#) – skills self-assessment sort
- [One-Life Narrative Storyteller](#) – reflect on your stories to develop a career statement

2. Explore Your Career and Education Options

Learn more about your options through active exploration and investigation. Be careful of getting overly focused on one career idea and missing out on exploring a full range of meaningful career or further education options.

+Career Information Sites & Careers by Majors

- [Career Cruising](#) – a Canadian source of career and education options.
- [Alis](#) – Occupational and labour market information
- [U of M](#) – Occupational info and associated resources
- [O*Net online](#) – American comprehensive database of occupations and labour market info.
- [What can I do with a major in](#) – helpful site to explore occupations, industries and strategies
- [Careers by Majors](#) – helpful site to explore occupations, sample job titles, employment areas, professional associations.

+LinkedIn & Job Posting Sites



- LinkedIn is an effective tool to explore and learn more about career pathways and job titles. You can expand your contacts by joining McMaster's Alumni groups. Search for people with similar degrees, or search by occupations and learn from others' education or experiential pathways.
- Job postings found through general or industry specific job posting sites can help you understand specific requirements for a job. Explore by using keywords or specific job titles and pay attention to job titles, companies, skills and competencies, and education required or considered an asset.

+Talk with People in the occupations or industry

Speaking with people in the career field, industry or occupation you are interested in or curious about is another great way to get further clarity. This can be done informally through being open and curious to learn about other's career and education pathways. This can also be approached through intentionally reaching out to find people in the career area you are exploring – you may have heard this called “informational interviews” .

To help you find people to talk with about their career and career pathways, here are some resources to consider:

- Professional Associations – look for directories or mentorship programs
- McMaster's LinkedIn site- use the Alumni section to search for people that might have graduated from your program, in an occupation you are curious about, or working for an organization in your field you are considering.
- Supports through SSC's experiential learning team- ask about Career Conversations and mentorship opportunities – experiential@mcmaster.ca

+Exploration Tips

When exploring and researching, try to stay open to learning about the careers and education paths and don't let the uncertainties or questions stop you.

After you have explored and researched options,

- Narrow down your ideas based on your self-assessment and research on the occupations. Perhaps a list of 3 – 5 occupations that seem to interest you on some level.
- Develop a list of questions you have about each occupation, career field or education path to help direct your next steps.
- Create an action plan that includes specific steps and timelines to help you move forward in your career planning.
- Try not to force a decision too early but put some tentative plans in place to test out your ideas
- Meet with a career counsellor to help guide you and strategize with you on your next steps. Book an appointment on oscarplumcmaster.ca – Student Success Centre – Appointments.



- Considering building new experiences and developing skills through paid and unpaid work.
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3. Connect to Opportunities & Develop Yourself

Continue to learn about yourself and build experiences and skills through paid and unpaid work and through intentional development of your skills and competencies.

+ Resources to help you:

- Check out the programs and services on the [Experience Building](#) page of SSC website.
 - McMaster's oscarplumcmaster.ca -Student Success Centre - connects you with paid and unpaid opportunities:
 - Summer, part-time, final-year and post-degree jobs
 - Volunteer and on-the-job learning opportunities (Career Treks)
 - Career Fairs and Volunteer Fairs
 - Student-work program offers on-campus jobs during school year and summer – look on Mosaic under the Student Opportunities section. Most positions are posted in first week in August for part-time and first week in March for summer.
 - Get involved on campus through clubs and services at McMaster Student Union
 - Job search coaching to help you find employment or volunteer opportunities. Book your appointment on [OSCARplumcmaster.ca](https://oscarplumcmaster.ca) – Appointments – Job Search Coaching
 - Consider self-directed learning through [LinkedinLearning](#) (Mac students have free access).
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A career isn't something you find — it's something you develop and manage over time.

We encourage you to embrace the attitudes of flexibility, optimism, persistence and willingness to try new things as you take active steps to

1. Reflect on your interests and identify your personal skills.
2. Explore your career and education options.
3. Connect to opportunities and build experiences
4. Develop yourself and continue to learn.

Career and Self-Development has been identified by employers as core competencies. It's important for new graduates to be able to :



"Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization."

Source: <https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined>

Still not sure where to start?

- Book an appointment for your 1-1 meeting with a career counsellor through [oscarplusmcmaster.ca](https://oscarplus.mcmaster.ca) - Student Success Centre – Appointments.
- Drop in to Gilmour Hall 110 Tuesday or Thursdays 1:30 – 4pm to talk with a career development professional.

