

GUIDE TO CAREER PLANNING

The Student Success Centre can help you navigate your career. A career isn't something you find — it's something you develop over time. We hope you find the following guide helpful as you explore and discover your career path.

1. KNOW YOURSELF

To know what your career options are or what education paths to take, reflecting on your skills, interests, personal strengths, priorities and experiences can help you understand what is best for you. Here are some resources to help you:

Career Planning Essentials

This is a comprehensive online career planning program that is designed to help you build more clarity and a sense of career and education direction. There are five modules with self-assessment activities and resources to help you explore your options and make decisions. The free program is supported by a career counsellor to guide you.

Get flexible, self-paced access through registration on [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Events. There will be a registration listing posted in the first week of each month.

Digital Challenge Cards

A unique card sort that allows you to reflect on your priorities and think about what issues or challenges have meaning and purpose for you. [Learn more about Digital Challenge Cards on our website.](#)

TypeFocus

Personality, interest and values assessments that will help you identify your natural strengths and preferences. Then, explore occupations based on the results of the assessments. An individual debrief with a career counsellor is recommended. [Click here to access TypeFocus.](#)

To access the following assessments, please refer to [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Events > Career Assessments.

SkillScan Drive Report (free, full cost subsidized)

A self-directed skills assessment tool that features a comprehensive profile of your transferrable skills and preferences. It provides you with detailed information about your strengths and suggested career and educational options for exploring the best options. An individual debrief with a career counsellor is recommended. [Review a sample report.](#)

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (\$20 subsidized fee)

A personality assessment that provides insight into your natural preferences and strengths. An individual debrief with a career counsellor is required. [Watch a video on the MBTI.](#)



Strong Interest Inventory (\$10 subsidized fee)

An interest assessment that provides a detailed report on your interest themes and offers occupational suggestions. An individual debrief with a career counsellor is required. [Watch a short video on the Strong Interest Inventory.](#)

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.

Here are some resources and tips to help you learn more about occupations and expand your ideas:

- [Career Cruising](#): A Canadian source of career and education options.
- [Alis](#): Occupational and labour market information.
- [O*Net Online](#): A comprehensive American database of occupations and labour market info.
- You can also refer to [careers by major sites](#) to help you get more ideas.
- [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 can help you understand specific requirements for a job. A general site to start with is [indeed.com](#). Some other job boards include [OSCARplus](#), [Magnet](#) and [Charity Village](#). Search using keywords and pay attention to job titles, companies, skills and competencies, and education required or considered an asset.
- Some effective resources for exploring education options include:
 - [universitystudy.ca](#) — for graduate level options
 - [Canlearn.ca](#) — for all post-secondary education options
 - [ontariocolleges.ca](#) — under "program type," search for graduate certificates
 - [Continuing education departments](#) of any university offer certificates

When exploring and researching using the above resources, 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,

- Develop a list of three to five occupations that seem to interest you on some level (don't worry about the "how" just yet).
- Develop a list of questions you have about each occupation, career field or education path to help with what's next.
- Create an action plan that includes specific actions and timelines to help you move forward in your career planning.
- Book an appointment on [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Appointments > Careers to meet (by phone or video meeting) with an SSC career counsellor to get support.



3. CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

Connecting with people in the career field, industry or occupation you are interested in or curious about is another great way to get further clarity. Here are some resources to help you:

- [Alumni and Partners Advisor Network](#) is a database with thousands of alumni who have indicated they are available for career conversations. Register, search, develop a list of questions and then connect.
- Professional associations and LinkedIn are great sources to help you connect with professionals in a career field or industry.
- The Student Success Centre offers support to help you have those career conversations. Explore resources and services on [our website](#).

After you have been able to connect with people,

- Evaluate what you have learned so far in your career planning process.
- Ask yourself new questions and re-evaluate your action plan.
- Considering building new experiences and developing skills through paid and unpaid work.
- Try not to force a decision too early, but put some tentative plans in place to test out your ideas.

4. DEVELOP YOURSELF

Continue to learn about yourself and build experiences and skills through paid and unpaid work and through self-directed career management. Here are some resources and tips to help you:

- Check out the programs and services on our [Experience Building page of our website](#).
- [OSCARplus](#) 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
- Get involved on campus through [McMaster Students Union \(MSU\)](#) clubs and services.
- Job search coaching to help you find employment or volunteer opportunities. Book your appointment on [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Appointments > Careers.
- Consider self-directed learning through [LinkedInLearning](#) (Mac students have free access).

Virtual drop-ins are available Tuesday–Thurs from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. with career counsellors for brief online chats. [Access the virtual drop-ins.](#)

