



Module: Planning a Career Path

This module covers skills for creating a personal career plan, including exploring the skills or training needed to achieve career aspirations, and developing strategies to set short- and long-term goals.

About CanWork BC

CanWork BC aims to make it easier for youth with disabilities ages to 15 to 30 years old to find and keep employment. There are a series of tools and resources for youth, employers, service providers, educators, and caregivers.

CanAssist at the University of Victoria, with the support of the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, wrote the Provincial Employment Strategy for Youth with Disabilities (ESYD). This strategy informed the tools and resources.

The Youth Tool

The CanWork BC youth tool is available as an interactive online platform at portal.canworkbc.ca and through PDF workbooks such as this one. There are five dimensions of content available.

For the full PDF workbook content and accompanying facilitator guides, as well as other CanWork BC tools and resources, go to canworkbc.ca.

Introduction

This module has three sections to help you build your understanding of employment navigation. You'll explore:

- Identifying the skills, experience, and training needed for your career.
- How to build the right skills to meet career requirements.
- Researching career options to choose the best path.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect employment navigation to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

Section 1: Exploring Career Requirements

Knowing exactly what's needed for your career allows you to focus on building the right skills. Researching different career options helps you find the best path for you. Understanding the requirements helps you take the right steps and stay on track.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Identifying the skills, experience, and training needed for your career.
- How to build the right skills to meet career requirements.
- Researching career options to choose the best path.

By the end of this section, you'll have a clear understanding of what's required for your career and how to work toward achieving it.

Engage and Explore

Researching Career Requirements

To begin, you need to figure out the exact job you want. Once you know the career path you're aiming for, you can look at the main things required for that job, like skills, training, and experience. Here's how you can find those requirements:

- **Look at job listings**

Start by checking job descriptions for the role you want. Read several listings to spot the common skills, qualifications, and any required education or certifications that come up regularly, as having these can help you stand out.

- **Talk to people doing similar work**

Reach out to people already doing the kind of work you are interested in. You can have quick chats (also known as informational interviews), attend networking events, or job shadow someone for a day to see what skills are important. Check out these resources for informational interviews and job shadowing.

- **Use online resources**

You can check out professional organizations in your field for helpful training or certifications. You can also use the Government of Canada Job Profiles search tool to learn about the skills and requirements for different jobs:

- jobbank.gc.ca/career-planning/search-job-profile

Explore Ways to Get Experience

There are many ways to gain the experience you need. Consider taking online courses, volunteering, getting an internship, or starting with an entry-level job. These steps can help you build the necessary qualifications for your dream job.

Skills for Success

Let's look at Skills for Success, which help you succeed in today's fast-changing world. These skills are useful for everyone, whether you're finding a job, taking on new responsibilities at work, changing careers, or growing personally.



1. Communication

Your ability to clearly give and receive information through talking, listening, or writing. For example, sharing ideas or listening to instructions.

2. Creativity and innovation

Your ability to think of new ideas and find better ways to do things. For example, coming up with a new solution for a work challenge.

3. Problem solving

Your ability to find solutions and make decisions when faced with challenges. For example, fixing a technical issue or solving a work problem.

4. Reading

Your ability to understand information in written form, like emails or reports. For example, reading and following instructions at work.

5. Digital skills

Your ability to use technology to manage information and solve problems. For example, using software to organize data or work tasks.

6. Collaboration

Your ability to work well with others and contribute to a team. For example, supporting teammates to finish a project.

7. Adaptability

Your ability to adjust when things change, stay focused, and keep moving forward. For example, adjusting plans to meet new deadlines.

8. Writing

Your ability to share information clearly through writing, whether in emails or reports. For example, writing a project update or filling out forms.

9. Numeracy

Your ability to understand and work with numbers in everyday tasks. For example, managing a budget or calculating expenses.

Learn More

Use Employment and Development Canada's Skills for Success tool to learn more about these skills:

- canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/tools.html

Make it Personal

Career Requirements Plan

Exploring what's needed for the job you want will help you plan your next steps. Let's start by picking a job that interests you and find out what education, skills, and experience are required for that job. You can look at job listings, company websites, or ask people who do similar work. Write your answers on paper, in a notes app, or another digital format that works for you.

Once you've written down the requirements, you will know what is expected for that role. In the next section, you'll compare these

requirements with your qualifications to identify any gaps. For now, focus on how to gather the career requirements from different sources to get a full picture of what's needed.

Job title *(Write the job you're interested in)*

Education requirements *(List any degrees, certifications, or courses needed for this job)*

Skills needed *(Write the key skills required for the job, like communication, problem-solving, etc.)*

Experience required *(List the experience needed, such as years in the field, specific jobs, or tasks)*

Other qualifications *(Any other requirements, like technical skills or special certifications)*

Section 2: Mapping a Career Pathway

Mapping your career pathway is important because it helps you understand where you want your career to go and how to get there. By creating a plan and identifying skill gaps, you can focus on the steps needed to reach your goals.

In this section, you'll:

- Compare your skills, training, and experience with the requirements of your ideal job.
- Identify the gaps between what you can do now and what you need to learn.
- Create a plan to close these gaps and reach your career goals.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of what skills you need to develop and a practical plan to achieve your career goals.

Engage and Explore

Checking Your Qualifications

Before you start planning your career, take a moment to assess your skills, experience, and education. You can see what areas need improvement by comparing what you have with what the job requires. Here's how to review each part:

- **Skills**

Think about the skills needed for the job. Are you good at communication, problem-solving, or using certain tools? Compare your current skills with what the job requires to see if there's anything you need to improve.

- *For example, if you want to become a project manager but need to learn how to use project management tools, you could take a course to build that skill.*

- **Experience**

Look at your work or volunteer experience. Do you have relevant experience for the job you're aiming for? Compare your experience with the job's requirements. If there's a gap, think about how you can gain experience.

- *For example, if you want to become a teacher but don't have classroom experience, volunteering as a teaching assistant or tutoring students could help.*

- **Education**

Check your qualifications, such as degrees or certificates. Does the job require specific education or training? Compare your qualifications with the job's educational requirements to see if you have what you need or where you could grow your skills.

- *For example, if you want to work in a skilled trade such as carpentry or auto mechanics, you may need your high school diploma to further your training.*

Ways to Close the Gaps

Now that you know what you have and what's missing, look at these helpful ways to close the gap and set yourself up for success:

- **Education and training**

Online and in-person courses can help you learn new skills. For example:

- Coursera - [coursera.org](https://www.coursera.org)
- edX - [edx.org](https://www.edx.org)
- LinkedIn Learning - learning.linkedin.com
 - *For example, if you want to work in digital marketing, you can take online courses to learn about search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and analytics.*

- **Experience**

Get practical experience by looking for internships, volunteer work, or starting in entry-level roles. Don't worry if your first jobs aren't directly related to your dream job. Every experience can teach you valuable skills.

- **Certifications**

Some careers need special certifications. Earning these can show employers that you have the knowledge required for the job and are dedicated to your work.

- *For example, if you're interested in IT, certifications like CompTIA A+ or Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) can make you more attractive to employers.*

- **Portfolio building**

If you like to work in a creative field, having a portfolio of your work is important. It shows your skills and helps you stand out.

- *For example, a graphic designer can build a portfolio by including examples of their best work, which they can share on a personal website.*

- **Networking**

Connecting with people can help you learn about job opportunities and understand the skills needed for your career. Attend events, join groups, and connect with people to stay updated.

- *For example, joining a local business group can help you find job opportunities and access helpful career resources.*

Look for Support

Mapping a career pathway can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to do it alone. Looking for support from others can help you stay motivated and on track.

- **Mentors**

A mentor is someone with more experience who can advise and help you work through challenges. You can ask someone at your job or someone who you met at a networking event.

- **Employment service centres**

Many employment service centres offer free or low-cost support for job seekers. To find local services, try searching online by typing “employment services near me” or “career centres in [your area]” into a search engine.

- **Peers**

Peers are people on a similar career path to you. They can offer support and inspire you along the way. You can ask people at your work who have been there longer than you. Or you can ask your friends who are working in different jobs.

Make it Personal

Career Pathway Plan

Let’s create your Career Pathway Plan by comparing your current skills, experience, and education with the requirements for your desired job. This will help you identify any gaps and create steps to address them.

Use this plan to guide you as you set small, achievable actions to move closer to your dream job.

Instructions:

1. Choose the job you want.
2. Write down your current skills, experience, and education.

3. Find out the skills, experience, and education required for the job.
4. Use the table below to compare your current qualifications with the job requirements.
5. Identify what's missing and decide what actions you can take to address the gap.
6. You can write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

Current skills and qualifications: <i>(Write your current skills and qualifications)</i>	Required skills and qualifications: <i>(Write the skills and qualifications needed for the job)</i>

What's missing:

(List any skills, qualifications, or experience that you need to work on)

Actions to close the gap:

(Once you've listed what's missing, write some actions you can take to close the gap)

Section 3: Identifying Career Goals

Setting clear and realistic career goals is important for staying focused and heading in the direction you want to go. It helps you stay on track, measure your progress, and guides your growth whether you are just starting out or growing in your career.

In this section, we'll cover:

- Why setting realistic career goals is important.
- How to break down your goals into manageable steps.
- How to create a goal plan to gain the skills and experience for your desired career.

By the end of this section, you'll have a better understanding of how to set clear, realistic goals and take the steps necessary to reach them.

Engage and Explore

Why Set Career Goals?

Setting career goals helps you stay focused and measure your progress. It provides direction, making it easier to prioritize what's important. Goals also give you something to celebrate as you accomplish each step in your career journey.

How to Set Realistic Goals

Setting clear, realistic, and measurable career goals is the first step toward reaching your dream career. These goals help you understand where you are and where you want to go. Here's how you can set meaningful goals:

- **Be specific**

Define exactly what you want to achieve. For example, instead of saying, "I want a job," say, "I want to become a graphic designer within the next year."

- **Make them measurable**

Ensure you can track your progress. For example, aim to complete a training program, gain work experience, or build a portfolio.

- **Keep them achievable**

Set challenging yet realistic goals based on your current situation and available resources. Avoid overly ambitious goals that can lead to discouragement.

- **Set a timeline**

Give your goals a deadline. Having a timeline helps you stay on track and motivated.

- **Stay flexible**

Things can change. It's okay to adjust your goals if new opportunities come up or if you face challenges.

Set Clear Career Goals

Now that you know where you're starting and where you want to go, it's time to set clear, specific, and realistic goals.

- **Short-term goals**

These are things you can accomplish in the next six months to a year. Examples include completing a relevant course, attending workshops, or gaining a certain level of experience.

- **Long-term goals**

These take three to five years or more to achieve. Examples include landing your first role in your desired career or becoming an expert in a specialized area of work.

Breaking Down Your Career Goals

Once you've set your career goals, it's time to break them into smaller, manageable steps. For example:

- If your goal is to complete a training program, you can identify smaller tasks such as researching programs, enrolling, and completing each module.
- If your goal is to gain work experience, you can identify smaller tasks such as updating your resume, applying for internships, and practicing for interviews.

Make it Personal

Goal Setting Worksheet

In the previous section, you learned how to identify the gaps between your current skills and your dream job. It's time to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals to fill those gaps. This approach is called setting SMART goals.

Answer the reflective questions for each step and write down your goal plan. Feel free to write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you. Use the examples provided to help shape your responses. Once you've completed the worksheet, keep your goal plan accessible to guide you as you work towards closing the gaps and getting closer to your dream job!

1. Identify a goal: Choose a specific career goal you want to reach.

- **Reflective question:** What is one clear and specific career goal you want to achieve?
- **Example:** *Become a graphic designer.*



2. Make it specific: Clearly define what you want to achieve.

- **Reflective question:** What exactly do you want to accomplish? What skills or tasks will you focus on?
- **Example:** *I want to learn Adobe Photoshop to become a graphic designer.*

3. Make it measurable: Set a way to track your progress.

- **Reflective question:** How will you know when you've made progress? What steps will you take to track your growth?
- **Example:** *Complete an online Adobe Photoshop course and design at least five graphics by the end of six months.*

4. Make it achievable: Ensure your goal is **possible** and **realistic** based on your current situation and available resources.

- **Reflective question:** Is this goal achievable for you? What resources will you need?
- **Example:** *I will spend three hours per week learning Photoshop and creating designs.*

5. Make it relevant: Make sure your goal fits with your career plans.

- **Reflective question:** Does this goal align with your long-term career goals? How will it help you get to your dream job?
- **Example:** *Learning Photoshop will help me land a graphic design job.*

6. Set a timeline: Set a time limit for your goal.

- **Reflective question:** When do you want to achieve this goal? What's a **realistic** timeframe?
- **Example:** *I will complete my portfolio and start applying for jobs by the end of the year.*



Reflect and Connect

Great work! We've covered a lot in this module including:

- Identify the skills, training, and experience needed for your ideal career.
- Create a personal career plan to meet the requirements for your chosen career.
- Set clear, achievable goals to help you gain the skills and experience you need.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

What specific skills, training, or certifications do you need to achieve your desired career goal?

What are the key steps you need to take to close the gaps between the skills you have and the skills you need to move from your current position to your desired career?

What specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals can you set to work towards your desired career?

What challenges might you face and how can you overcome them?

Keep Going

There is so much more to learn! Access the full CanWork BC content and learn more about the program at **canworkbc.ca**.

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