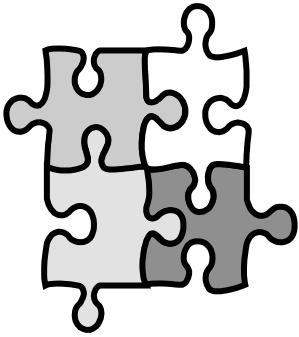


Career Planning Guide



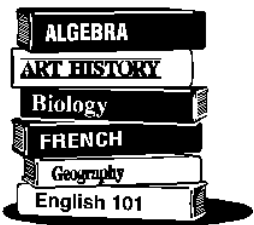
What is career planning?

Career planning and decision making is an on-going life long process that takes time, energy and commitment. It involves developing an awareness of your skills, abilities, values, strengths, interests and learning about the various types of occupations that exist and their requirements.

Where do I begin?

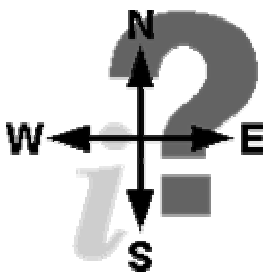
Start by considering the following questions:

- What do I want and need?
- Do I know what my strengths are academically?
- What are some possible career directions I could take?
- How does selecting a major/academic program impact transfer?
- How can I gain the skills and experience necessary to get hired?



Does MCC offer career planning assistance?

Yes! Career Center professionals are available to guide students in selecting an academic program; choosing potential career paths, and preparing for co-op/internships, full-time jobs, and transferring to a 4 year college or university. Numerous career resources are available to assist students with the career planning and discovery process.



Visit the Career Center and meet with a Career Counselor who will assist you with the available career decision resources. If you are unsure or undecided about your career and academic program get connected to the Career Center early in your academic career.

CAREER COUNSELING & HOW IT CAN HELP

Meeting with a Career Counselor can assist you with the process of career planning and decision making. Here are some examples of when a Career Counselor may be helpful:

- "I am undecided about a career and I'm not sure which academic program to select."
- "I have so many interests that it's difficult for me to narrow down my options to just one."
- "I like courses in philosophy, but I don't know what kinds of careers it will lead to."
- "I'm an engineering science major, but I'm not really interested in the courses I am taking."
- "I like writing a lot and am very out-going, what kinds of careers fit with these characteristics?"
- "I am unsure about salaries and employment outlook for my selected academic program."
- "I'm really into acting and music but my family wants me to pursue another career/academic program."
- "I don't really know what kind of job I want, but I know I want to transfer after my Associate's degree."
- "I really want to become a teacher, but my GPA is a 2.0, and I'm not sure I will be able to transfer."
- "I know salary shouldn't be the main factor in deciding on a career, but I'm concerned about finances."
- "Most of my friends seem to be passionate about a career, I don't really enjoy school as much."
- "I just completed an internship and now I'm unsure about pursuing that as a career."
- "How can I get information on a career, transferring, and job search strategies?"
- "I'm not sure what job titles are connected with my academic program."

CAREER PLANNING STRATEGIES

Where are you in the career planning process? Below is a list of selected strategies to assist you in getting started. Select those activities that are most relevant for you and begin taking action early!

Self Assessment

This step in the career development process involves gathering information about yourself to assist you in making a decision about a career. Here, you develop an understanding of who you are and become more aware of your values, interests, abilities, aptitudes, personal traits, and lifestyle, and the interrelationship between self and careers. The following list provides a list of activities to enhance your self assessment:

- Visit the Career Center to explore what career matches you
- Complete the FOCUS computerized career assessment: www.focuscareer.com/register/monroecc.cfm and discuss the results with a Career Center Counselor
- Take a career planning course at Monroe Community College:
 - CDL 100: Career Development and Planning, 1 credit
 - CDL 101: Career and Life Planning for Returning Adult Students, 2 credits
 - CDL 110: Career and Life Planning for Undeclared Students, 2 credits
- Set up an appointment in the Career Center to meet with a counselor to discuss your ideas
- Ask friends, family, instructors/professors what they see as your strengths
- Think about the skills and values reflected in activities and jobs you have previously enjoyed
- Participate in campus clubs/activities to further involve your skills and abilities
- Attend workshops and presentations relevant to your career exploration
- Take courses that interest you while fulfilling your academic goals; peruse the MCC catalog

Academic and Career Options

This step allows students to investigate the world of work in greater depth, narrow a general career direction into a specific one through an informed decision making process, and or selected program of study. Strategies may include:

- Visit the Career Center to begin researching careers and majors/academic programs in the Career Library; access career related books, journals, web-sites, etc.
- Explore our Career Profiles (career information sheets on 76 different academic programs/majors)
- Investigate labor market information via the NYS Department of Labor: www.labor.state.ny.us
- Pick up a copy of the Transfer Planning Guide, 2+2 Planning Guide, and Scholarships Brochure to start thinking about continuing your education at a four year college/university
- Conduct informational interviews with employers in your field(s) of interest
- Job shadowing: spend a day on the job with a professional in a career you are considering
- Make an appointment to meet with a Counselor in the Career Center to discuss career/transfer plans
- Attend Career Center events/monthly Career Forums to learn about various career opportunities
- Choose course electives to compliment your career and transfer goals
- Consider studying abroad in a foreign country for a semester
- Discuss career and transfer options with faculty members to get their input
- Establish a strong GPA (grade point average) for transfer admission and scholarships

Practical Experience and Job Search/Transfer College Preparation

You can evaluate occupational choices and gain practical experience by exploring the following options:

- Visit the Career Center to gather information on a Co-op/Internship: a hands-on learning experience related to your career interest area
- Investigate volunteer opportunities and participate in career related on-campus clubs/activities
- Connect to "Job Connection," MCC's online listing of regional jobs for students/alumni
- Attend annual on-campus Job/Career Fairs and Transfer College Fairs
- Participate in MCC's Transfer Advisor-In-Residence Program (meeting with college representatives)
- Pick up Career Center guides on resumes, interviewing, cover letters, job search, etc.
- Pick up transfer college catalogs, applications and scholarship information in the Career Library
- Meet with a Counselor in the Career Center to discuss course selection/registration for transfer
- Submit your resume for our 48 hour Resume Critique Service
- Attend related workshops, conferences, seminars regarding your career or transfer plans
- Work in part-time positions/summer jobs to acquire transferable skills and experiences
- Establish connections with those instructors/supervisors you seek recommendations from

RESEARCHING A CAREER

As you begin your career journey you will need to learn more about specific types of careers, job responsibilities, training and education requirements, career tracks, salary and wages, basic skills needed, challenges, etc. The following are a list of resources that provide you with reliable and detailed career planning information, some with advice from professionals in the field.



The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) www.bls.gov/oco

A nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years, the Handbook describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations. The OOH is compiled by the US Dept. of Labor.

America's Career Info Net: www.acinet.org

Smart career decisions start here! Find wages and employment trends, occupational requirements, state by state labor market conditions, millions of employer contacts nationwide, and the most extensive career resource library online including a database of 360 career videos.

The Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com/cte ("click on" Career Planning 101)

Look up over 200 occupational profiles with information on career facts and figures, "a day in the life of" that career, educational requirements, associated careers, etc. Utilize this website to help you explore college majors.

NYS Department of Labor: www.labor.state.ny.us ("click on" Labor Market Information)

Labor market information (LMI) tells us about the economy, job market, businesses and the workforce. LMI includes employment and unemployment data, wage data, employment projections, career info, and a variety of other information designed to help understand labor market conditions. This information is designed to help individuals make informed choices by providing a better understanding of a local area's economic picture

Utilize the Resources in the Career Center's Career Library!

The Career Library includes a collection of career planning books, periodicals, and other resources with information on current career outlooks, salaries, educational requirements, and other occupational information. These resources are available to help you explore careers, including those occupations requiring bachelor's and graduate degrees. We have an extensive collection of career information files (Chronicle Guidance Publications Career Briefs) and Career Profile's on every academic program here at MCC , including the following:

Accounting
Advertising & Public Relations
Air Conditioning Technology
Anthropology
Architecture
Art
Atmospheric Science/Meteorology
Automotive
Biology
Biotechnology
Business Administration
Chemical Technology
Chemistry
Chiropractic
Construction Technology
Communications/Broadcasting
Computer Information Systems
Computer Science
Computer Technology
Court Reporting
Criminal Justice
Dental Assisting
Dental Hygiene
Early Childhood Education
Education

Electrical Engineering Technology
Electronic Publishing
EMT & Paramedic
Engineering
English
Environmental Science
Fashion Buying & Merchandising
Financial Services
Fire Protection Technology
Food Service Management
Foreign Languages
Forestry
Geo-science/Geology/Geography
Golf Course Management
Graphic Arts & Printing
Health Information Technology
Health-Care Therapists
History & Political Science
Hotel Technology
Human Services
Interior Design
International Business
Landscape Architecture
Law & Federal Government
Machine Trades: Tooling/Machining

Manufacturing Technology
Marketing
Massage Therapy
Mathematics
Mechanical Technology
Medical
Medical Transcription
Music
Nursing
Office Technology
Optical Systems Technology
Packaging Science
Paralegal
Pharmacy
Philosophy
Photography & Television
Physical Education/Health
Psychology & Counseling
Public Administration
Radiologic Technologist
Retail Business Management
Small Business Management
Sociology & Social Work
Speech Pathology & Audiology
Travel & Tourism
Veterinary Science

INFORMATIONAL/INSPIRATIONAL INTERVIEW

Want to know what a career is really like? Interview with someone who has first-hand experience. One of the best sources for gathering information about what's happening in an occupation or an industry is to talk to people working in the field. This process is called *informational* or *research interviewing*. An informational interview is an interview that you initiate - you ask the questions. The purpose is to obtain information about a career, not to get a job. An *inspirational interview* is geared toward individuals who are still searching for a career path and their passion.

Benefits of Interviewing

- Explore careers and clarify your career goal
- Discover employment opportunities
- Expand your professional network
- Find ways to prepare for a career
- Access the most up-to-date career information
- Identify your professional strengths/weaknesses

Steps for Interviewing

Identify the Occupation or Industry You Wish to Learn About:

Assess your own interests, abilities, values, and skills, and evaluate labor conditions and trends to identify the best fields to research.

Prepare for the Interview: Read all you can about the field prior to the interview. Decide what information you would like to obtain about the occupation/industry. Prepare a list of questions to have answered.

Identify People to Interview: Start with lists of people you already know: friends, relatives, fellow students, present or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, etc. Professional organizations, the yellow pages, organizational directories, and the Internet are also good resources. You may also call an employer and ask for the name of the person by job title.

Arrange the Interview: Contact the person to set up an interview: by telephone, by a letter followed by a telephone call, or by having someone who knows the person make the appointment for you. Ask for a convenient time, approximately 15-20 minutes, to conduct the interview.

Conduct the Interview: Dress appropriately, arrive on time, be polite and professional. Refer to your list of prepared questions; stay on track, but allow for spontaneous discussion. Before leaving, ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful to you and ask permission to use your contact's name when contacting these new contacts.

Follow Up: Immediately following the interview, record the information gathered. Be sure to send a thank-you note to your contact within one week of the interview.

Questions to Ask During Your Interview

- What do you do as a _____?
- How did you prepare for this career?
- What educational preparation do you feel would be the best for this career?
- What is a typical day like for you?
- What do you like best about your job?
- What entry-level jobs are available in this field?
- What other career areas are related to your work?
- How does your position fit within the field?
- What are the rewards/challenges of your work?
- What are the major qualifications for success in this particular occupation?
- What career paths are generally available?
- What is the profile of the person most recently hired at my level?
- What is the average starting salary?
- What kinds of experiences, paid employment, internships, or volunteer, do you most strongly recommend?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with?
- What are some of the best things about the decisions you've made in your career? How did you do it?
- How does your job affect your general lifestyle?
- What are some of the current issues and trends in the field?
- What steps would you recommend that I take to prepare to enter this field?
- What are the most effective strategies for seeking a position in this field?
- What types of employers hire people in this field? Where are they located?
- What are the professional associations in this field?
- Can you suggest anyone else I could contact for additional information?
- Were you ever unsure of what to do career wise?
- Were there any outside pressures telling you to be something or do something else?
- When you were growing up, did you have any interests that you built into your work?
- When did you realize what you wanted to do?
- What obstacles have you overcome to get to where you are today?
- What has been your key to achieving the level of where you are today?
- How do you balance personal and professional life?
- If you were a college graduate now and had to do it all over again, what would you do different? What would you do the same?
- Is there anything I should be asking that I've forgotten?