

Exploring career options

Do you...

Want a career that fits your interests and income requirements?

Wonder how to assess your interests and translate them into meaningful work?

Feel confused over what you “want to do” versus what you “should do”?

Risks to consider in not exploring your career options

Missing out on key opportunities while in college

Getting stuck in a field outside of your interests “for the money”

Explore your options—there are many

Work on your career plan with a step-by-step approach. This ensures that you’ve thought about the possibilities and set your course of action.

STEP 1

Take a look at what you’ve done so far, what you might like to do, then determine your true interests.

- What have you done that you loved?
- What would you do if money was not a factor?
- What working environment suits you?

STEP 2

Learn more about the careers that match your interests and skills.

Explore the industries involved for each and dig deeper into the specifics by networking and talking to people in the fields that interest you. Also consider doing an internship or a summer job while you’re still in school to get a feel for what it’s like to work in that industry. Finally, don’t rule out the possibility of being your own boss. More and more people follow their own path in today’s working world and you may be well suited to entrepreneurship.

STEP 3

Create a career plan.

Once you’ve completed your research, create a list of short- and long-term career goals. Keep in mind, your goals

may change. High-demand jobs vary over time; therefore, consider developing your skills in multiple areas. That way, you’ll develop a flexible skill set to meet future demands.

STEP 4

Determine the skills needed for the career you want to pursue.

Things to consider:

- Is further education required?
- Is specific training needed?
- Where will you obtain the education/training?

STEP 5

Consider the costs of getting the education/training vs. income potential.

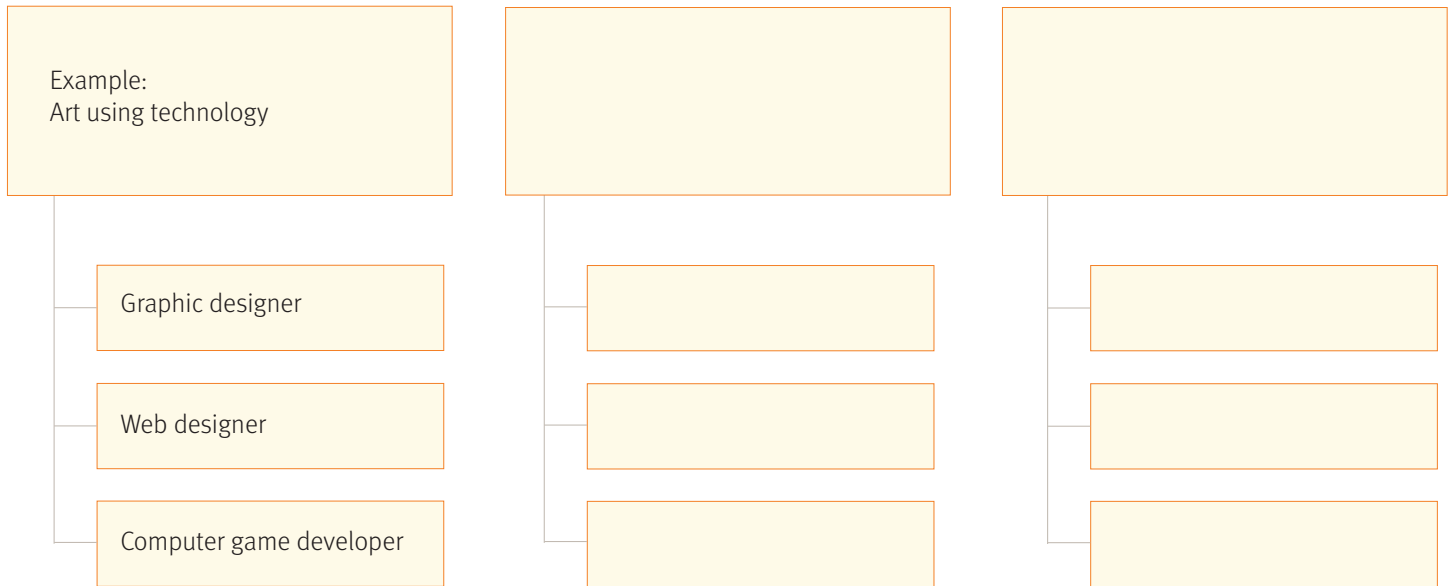
- How much will the education/training cost?
- How will you pay for it?
- How long will it take to complete?
- Are scholarships available?
- Will student loans be needed and how much is sensible to borrow?
- What is the average starting salary in your chosen field?
- Will your income be enough to pay your student loans when you finish?

Visit ECMC’s Student Loan Calculator at www.ecmc.org to determine if your income will support your student loan payments.

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My career path worksheet

Fill in the diagram by putting your interests in the large boxes and jobs that relate to those interests in the small boxes below.



Fill in the blanks for the sentences below.

I would be happy if I could _____ every day.

I would be unhappy if I had to _____ every day.

To help get you started, visit the following resources and career assessment websites:

- www.bls.gov/oco—Occupational outlook handbook with over 1500 jobs descriptions and their likely pay scale
- www.sba.gov—the official website for the U.S. Small Business Administration, dedicated to providing support to small businesses across the nation
- www.careerpath.com—Associated with one of the larger job search websites, CareerBuilder®. It has numerous career exploration quizzes
- www.collegeboard.org—Has many career exploration exercises and also provides a focus on what educational requirements are needed to achieve career goals
- www.onetonline.org—The U.S. Department of Labor’s interactive database of occupational information

ABOUT ECMC

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