



CONCORDIA
UNIVERSITY
OF **EDMONTON**

Career Planning: A Parent and Family Guide





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Introduction

This guide provides tips and information to help you support your child in their career exploration. Information on career planning, resources and services available and how to best help your child develop the confidence and acquire the necessary information to make an informed career choice, is provided. One main factor in making a successful career decision is to reduce any anxiety that your child may experience when making a career decision. This guide will help you support your child during the transition into post-secondary education and toward a gainful career.

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1. You Have Great Influence

Making a career choice can be overwhelming.

Parents, peers and teachers have tremendous influence on a child's life choices, including career decisions. As a parent, there are many resources and supports available to your child today that may not have been available to you at their age. You can be a key support for your child during their transition to university and this guide can help you do just that.

Your child may have started researching career options and visiting websites and post-secondary institutions in an attempt to determine a suitable education path toward a career they want. How can you help? What resources are available? What if your child does not know which career to pursue? What questions might you ask?

Often, the career planning process is done backward: students research education options before pursuing self-discovery, conducting career research and creating an action plan.

2. The Career Planning Process

Career Planning is by no means a linear process. Rather, it is a cycle that consists of the following main elements:



Although this image shows the career planning steps as a cycle, often the process is less neat and tidy looking. Conducting career research, for example, can bring about new self-awareness which in turn may result in researching other options. Or, plans may change due to a variety of circumstances, leading to the need for new career related research and goal setting. In reality, career development can look a lot like this:





Ultimately, with strong support, your child can find their way toward a career path that suits them.

3. How You Can Help

Key support that you can offer your child:

- Listen to your child
- Help your child find the necessary resources and information for career exploration
- Encourage your child to take the steps needed to connect with others who can help them
- Be open to new ideas
- Remember this is your child's journey and decision
- Know that the world of work is changing rapidly and new occupations are continually being created
- Encourage your child to learn as much as possible about themselves: their values, strengths, abilities, likes and dislikes, etc.
- Enjoy the journey

More specifically, the following recommendations may help your child decide on a career path:

1. **Talk** with your child about which courses they are most interested in. Your child may not know their preferences until they have taken courses in a variety of subject areas.
2. **Encourage** your child to speak with their high school teachers and guidance counsellor, or, if they are already a student at Concordia, their professors and Career Services staff. Career Services at Concordia also supports prospective CUE students.
3. **Encourage your child to connect** with Concordia's Career Services office. Career Services offers a wide variety of resources and support services for prospective students, students and graduates including:
 - a. Career Advising and Career Interest/Aptitude Assessments
 - b. Labour Market Information
 - c. Job search strategies



- d. Resume and Cover Letter Writing
 - e. Interview Preparation, including Mock Interviews
 - f. Online Job, Volunteer and Internship Postings
 - g. Career Investigation/Information Interview Coaching
 - h. Connecting students to professionals in the field
 - i. Career and Volunteer Fairs
4. **Attend** a Concordia Open House or Information Nights Events
- Career research can be daunting. Attending a Concordia Open House or Information Night event may lead you to feel overwhelmed by the amount of information and resources available. Here are some tips for successfully navigating a Concordia open house event:
1. Prepare for your visit:
 - a. Visit the Concordia website and learn as much as you can before attending the event. Doing so will help to ensure that your time on campus will target any remaining questions or need for information.
 - b. Write down questions you have and bring them with you.
 - c. Read the event webpage on Concordia's website to:
 - i. Discover the activities that will be available during Open House and decide which ones you want to participate in.
 - ii. Discover who will be available during Open House to provide you with information (e.g. Admissions Advisors, Registration Advisors, Faculty representatives, Residence, Athletics, Career Services, Financial Aid, etc.) and decide who you would like to talk with during your visit.
 2. During the Event:
 - a. Execute your plan of attack (i.e. campus activities you want to participate in, questions you want answered, representatives you want to speak to and resources you want to gather, etc.)
 - b. Tour campus: guided tours are scheduled regularly.
 - c. Visit the display booths and gather materials that interest you.
 - d. Participate in other available activities that interest you.
 - e. Speak with alumni.
 - f. Apply to Concordia if you have decided to do so. Advisors are available to help you with this.
 3. After the Event:
 - a. Review the information and material that you have gathered and determine if there are additional questions that you want answered or information that you need. Contact Concordia to follow up, if needed.
5. **Schedule** a tour of Concordia's campus and/or encourage your child to participate in the Student for a Day program.
- Contact Concordia's Recruitment team to set up these on campus experiences:



- Student for a Day: <http://concordia.ab.ca/future-students/student-for-a-day/>
- Book a Tour: <http://concordia.ab.ca/future-students/book-a-tour/>

Concordia Recruitment can be contacted directly by email (recruitment@concordia.ab.ca) or phone (780-479-9220).

4. The Career Decision Matrix

In an attempt to remove the emotion from the career planning decision and objectify the decision, consider using a decision matrix.

A decision matrix is a decision making tool that compares choices and places your child's values and factors of a suitable career in a format that can help him/her make the decision. Below is a sample career decision matrix:

Decision Matrix

Created by Date

Summary of Decision

	CRITERIA						Results		
	Criterion 1	Criterion 2					RAW SCORE	WEIGHTED SCORE	RANK
OPTIONS									
Option 1							0	0	
Option 2							0	0	
Option 3							0	0	
Option 4							0	0	

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Consider creating a matrix like this using your child's own decision making factors. Contact Career Services for support and guidance in this process if needed.



5. What Employers are looking for

Critical thinking, public speaking and writing skills are among the top three skills employers are wanting in new hires. Other skills are¹:

- ✓ Communication Skills
- ✓ Customer Service
- ✓ Organizational Skills
- ✓ Computer skills
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Building Effective Relationships
- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Multi-Tasking
- ✓ Policy analysis
- ✓ Supervisory skills/leadership
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Teamwork

Might your child benefit from acquiring these skills or gaining experience in these areas? Encourage them to gain skills and experience through activities both in and out of Concordia. There are many student clubs and activities on campus that your child can participate in. Also, consider opportunities outside of Concordia, such as volunteering, community engagement and event activities and employment.

6. Graduate School Considerations

Is your child considering graduate school? If so, visit the CUE Career Services site for links to resources about graduate school: <http://concordia.ab.ca/student-services/career-services/resources-links/graduate-studies-resources/>

7. Networking for Career Exploration

Approximately 70%-80% of employment opportunities are filled by networking. Consider using your own network to reach out to professionals whom your child may benefit from connecting with and make introductions as your child is comfortable. Career exploration activities such as job shadowing and information interviews, are a valuable step in the career planning process. Encourage your child to meet with professionals who are doing the work they are thinking of pursuing and ask questions about the occupation.

¹ Source: Workopolis Survey, 2014



Also, consider offering to be a networking contact for other students who are doing career investigations/information interviews or seeking job shadowing opportunities.

8. Key Facts

Did you know?

- 80% of Canadian employers value experiential learning from graduate hires. So, encourage your child to pursue internships, practicums or work related experiences that relate to their chosen field².
- Workers with an Arts degree earn on average \$65,000/year³.
- New research shows that the average earnings of social sciences bachelor's graduates start at around \$40,000 immediately after graduation but within 13 years almost double to just under \$80,000 – similar to average earnings for math and natural science graduates at the same point in their careers⁴.
- 55% of leaders in Canada hold a Liberal Arts degree⁵.
- More than 80% of employers that hire recruits with international and intercultural experiences say these employees enhance their company's competitiveness⁶.
- Top 15 ways employers look for new hires⁷:
 1. Organization's internship program
 2. Organization's Co-op program
 3. On-campus recruiting
 4. Career/job fairs
 5. Faculty contacts
 6. Employee referrals
 7. Student organizations/clubs
 8. Internet job postings (campus website)
 9. Internet job postings (company website)
 10. Job postings to career offices (printed)
 11. Resumes from career offices

² Source: Leger Marketing employer survey for Universities Canada, 2014.

³ Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

⁴ Source: Ross Finnie, "How much do university graduates earn?", Education Policy Research Initiative, 2014.

⁵ Source: British Council, Educational Pathways of Leaders: an international comparison, 2015.

⁶ Sources: Leger Marketing employer survey for Universities Canada, 2014; and Canadian Bureau for International Education, A World of Learning: Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education 2014.

⁷ Source: UCSD Career Services Center <http://career.ucsd.edu>, March 23, 2017



12. Recruitment advertising (print)
13. Internet job postings (commercial website)
14. Internet resume data bases
15. Career/job fairs (online)

9. Career Development Resources

Resources in Alberta:

- i. Alberta Learning Information Services (ALIS) Parents: How to Help Your Teen With Career Planning: <https://alis.alberta.ca/plan-your-career/additional-resources/for-parents/parents-how-to-help-your-teen-with-career-planning/>
- ii. Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) Employment, Training and Career Services Directory: <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/6633.html>
- iii. ALIS Career Planning Resources: <http://alis.alberta.ca/ce/cp/cpt/planning-resources.html>
- iv. ALIS CAREERInsight Online Career Planning Tool: <https://careerinsite.alberta.ca/careerinsite.aspx>
- v. ALIS Career Services Near You: <http://alis.alberta.ca/ce/cp/cs/abcareer.html>
- vi. ALIS Career Events: <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/services-near-you/6149.html>
- vii. Career Cruising⁸: <https://public.careercruising.com/en/>

Free Online Career Planning Resources (at time of publication):

- viii. [123test](#) – Various psychological tests:
- ix. [The MAPP Career Assessment](#)
- x. [The Keirsey Temperament Sorter \(KTS-II\)](#)
- xi. [Life Values Inventory](#)
- xii. [Service Canada – Labour Market Information](#)
- xiii. TypeFocus – Personality Assessment that links to suitable career options for each personality type. Contact Career Services for the access code for free access to this site (for prospective and current CUE students and graduates only).

⁸ Your child may have access to Career Cruising already through their High School. It can also be accessed with an L-Pass through the Edmonton Public Library (EPL). Current Concordia can use their CUE ID card to access this EPL resource.





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