



Workshop 8

High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

Student Summary

This workshop will seek to provide you with the following:

- A framework for high school course selection to match chosen career paths and university requirements. Students will be asked to bring their high school course schedules and offerings from high school with them.
- Guidance on high school course selection, identifying high school course schedules using university students as facilitators to provide groups of students with similar career aspirations support.

At the end of this workshop you will take with you:

1. Student handout outlining a high school course selection framework.
2. A written outline of high school course schedule specific to students' schools until end of high school.



Workshop 8 High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

Introduction

If you are in this workshop you are wondering how your high school course selections can impact your future career and how they can prepare you or assist in making your decisions.

This workshop will seek to provide you with the following information:

- An understanding of the importance of high school relating to university, college and other forms of education.
- How to prepare for your chosen career path and the educational requirements.
- How to research the education, skills, certifications or other steps required to prepare.
- Who can help you along the way.

At the end you will take with you:

1. Student handout outlining a high school course selection framework and how to make your choices relevant to your goals.
2. A written outline of high school course schedule specific to your needs until the end of high school.

Setting the Context

Activity

Quick review of some key terms.

Review the High Five Messages

OH1 High Five Messages

HO1 Choosing and Getting There

A **career is a lifetime journey** of building and making good use of your skills, knowledge and experiences towards a chosen goal, path or preferred future.

Building your career **is a process**. Often, you will take a road that you didn't always plan on, but it is always something you prepare for.

Choices start early, and **everything plays a role** in the life we choose, the skills we develop and how we prepare for success along with the goals we set.

Skills are something we develop **through our entire lives**, educational path, and career path. They are the **tools we use to succeed**.



Workshop 8

High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

Choosing is challenging, and finding an enjoyable and meaningful career that fits is not an easy decision. Skills and competencies can help to make it easier but choice is what it is all about. As we go through life we make choices—the best ones are made when we are aware of ourself, have sufficient information and take the time to think. We do that by talking to people we trust, looking at ourselves, and keeping in tune with what is going on in the world.

Choices involve:

Awareness of who we are and what is important to us.

Begin with self-knowledge: Career/life planning is very personal and it **begins with self-knowledge**—getting to know yourself and who you are—what your interests, skills, personal style and values are. We start the process here to make sure that the career/life activities you engage in will suit who you are and will make you happy.

Involve people that you know or trust: Involve those people you trust and who can provide you with insight and understanding regarding your choices. These could be friends who give you perspective, counsellors from your school, and mentors such as employers, people in the field you are interested in, your parents, and the people who know you. These people or allies can give you perspective and provide a sounding board for your ideas and choices.

Information and research: Finally, it is about the information you have to make your decision and choice. Remember, a choice is not final! Everything can change.

- Use a method to research a career, education and to make a choice.
- Don't do it alone.
- Take your time.
- Be as certain as you can be.
- Know that change is constant and that getting to a career(s) is a journey/path, not a straight line from point A to B.
- Set goals and regularly review them.
- Evaluate and adapt according to you, and your environment.

We all make choices, some are big and some are small, but we have to think about knowing ourselves, what we want and where we want to go. Then we have to get the information and research our choices. Finally, we have to involve the people we know and trust to support us, give us insight and honest feedback. They won't make the choice for us, but they can help us make the right one!

Remember – about 60% of students change their majors at least once!



Workshop 8 High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

Interactive Activity

What are your favourite things?

- What do you enjoy at work, school and home?
- What are you good at?
- What courses do you like?
- What activities, sports or hobbies do you like?
- Have you volunteered? What volunteer experiences have you enjoyed?
- What do your friends say you are best at? (try to express these as skills if you can)
- Is there a famous person you are interested in? What they do and how did they get there?
- What careers or fields are you interested in?
- What kind of education, training, skills and certification are needed to be successful. (from what you know)

OH3 Youth Profile Nasir

We are all skilled in different areas, have ideas about what we want to do and how we make our choices for the next step. Think about Nasir and his profile and answer those questions.

Key Facts

- A university graduate earns about 75% more than a high school grad.
- A Census Bureau report shows that a bachelor's degree can be worth as much as \$329,000 in extra lifetime earnings.
- About 60% of students change their majors at least once!
- 65% of North American jobs will require a one- or two-year technical certificate or diploma for their chosen career.

University Calendars

High school is an important step in your career and educational planning. It helps you make decisions about your path and prepares you for your next steps.

Here are some key facts:

BC universities turned away 2,106 otherwise qualified students last fall 2003 due to a lack of space—a 22% increase in "turnaways" since 2001 (from this report for SFU)

<http://www.sfu.ca/analytical-studies/AppsAnalysis/BC12AppsAnalysisFall2003.pdf>

The University of Washington is also turning away students that qualify due to space.



Workshop 8 High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

http://www.heraldnet.com/stories/04/06/25/loc_college001.cfm

The University of California turns away 8,700 eligible freshmen due to budget and space limits.

<http://www.mindfully.org/Reform/2004/8700-Denied-UC21apr04.htm>

It is becoming more and more competitive and ever more important to be able to distinguish yourself. Penn State, for example, can base up to two-thirds of admission criteria on extracurricular and personal information such as volunteering, etc. *Source:* Penn state Web site.

University calendars are important to understand. They will set the standards by which your applications will be judged. You should keep in mind that the requirements listed are often the minimum requirements. Today, competition is getting more intense and you should definitely check with the university, educational institution or program you would like to get into to find out what you should have to really compete for limited spaces.

Check out the handouts provided:

OH5 Sample Department Program Admission Requirements – University of Alberta

HO2 – Understanding a Course Calendar

High School Choices

The best way to think about high school is as a place where you can explore and find out what you are good and what you like.

High school can help you prepare to succeed at university, college, vocational training and employment if you take advantage of what it has to offer.

Thinking about specific jobs can help you focus, but when preparing for university you should think about the **Fields** these jobs are in or **Areas** of employment. If you think along this bigger line you can prepare for change and continue to explore options. We have included information about clusters and about the NOC (National Occupation Codes) so that you can prepare for general fields. Specific jobs and careers fall under a cluster and a NOC code. These can help you plan for course selection, skill development, as well as explore future growth. NOC codes are applicable within Canada; clusters are often referenced in the USA, however are very similar.

Check out the cluster summary in your package for this workshop and the Web site for NOC codes. Search them; it is interesting what you can find out!

HO3 – Course Planner

HO4 – Sample NOC Summary

HO5 Cluster/NOC areas (9 of them)



Workshop 8 High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

HO6 – Research Forms

HO7 – Goal Forms

What are your Research Resources?

Here are some of the valuable resources that you have available to research your choices and make the right decisions.

Guidance Counsellor – Interview your school counsellor for information and career planning tools.

Post-secondary Academic Advisor – These individuals within the post-secondary institutions offer current information about programs, transferability, start dates and entrance requirements. Prepare questions that are important to you!

Career Consultant or Career or Employment Centres in your area – Wealth of information regarding institutions, labour market trends, occupational information, financing (check with HRDC).

College Fairs and Open Houses – Visit and get a real feel for the atmosphere and resources by taking a tour of the institution. Take notes, the guide could offer a lot of valuable material in a hurry (check the Career Week Web site: <http://www.canadacareerweek.com/ccw/nav.cfm?l=e>).

Visit in Person, Independently – If you are able, visit on a busy school day, take your time to check out the gym, cafeteria, bookstore, library and dormitories. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and look over the whole campus. Think about parking, resources in the nearby community, as well as public transportation.

Calendars and Viewbooks – These marketing and information packages can give you information about programs, selectivity as well as community resources, many are available online!

Family – Talk to family members about the experiences they had at their post-secondary institution.

Telephone Book/Community Directory – Have a look at the information specific to your community.

Graduate Profiles, Placement Surveys – Statistics about labour market placement of graduates. Read carefully, and get assistance from an advisor in interpreting them.

Prior Graduates – Interview graduates of the school or the program to get a feel for the quality of their experience, as well as the response from the employment community.

Drop-out Rate, Loan Default Rate – If students are prone to drop out of a program, or are often unable to repay loans, that may be a red flag for you.

Employers – The best source for future employability information, interview about the programs that they prefer, and which graduates they recruit, a great contact for after you graduate!

Student Resources/Services Office – Get information about resources for students such as events, organizations and groups that you may want to join. Make sure to ask about Student Programs.



Workshop 8 High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

Campus newspapers or radio – Take a moment to read or listen to the media of the institution, it may give you some valuable info.

The Web – The Web is a great resource and we have listed some Web sites for you to check out in the resource section from Canada and the world.

NOC site for research: <http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/generic/nocsearch.asp>

There are further resources for salaries, job profiles, and labour market trends and information in your resource guide. Check it out!

Small Group Activity

Explore your choices according to the clusters you are interested in with the support of the facilitators. When you do this on your own you should think from your goal backwards. So what is the career, what is the level of education or experience required right before that, then what is required to get in or prepare for that step, repeat until you are back at high school and know the skills, courses and experience you will have to have to prepare for the next step.

Some of the questions you can ask yourself are:

- What are the courses required to prepare you for the highest level of education required for your career or area of interest?
- What types of skills do you need to have to succeed or get an advantage at each step?

Once you have done your research on the career profile and required education and skills. Look at what you are good at, what you enjoy and what you are planning on taking. Ask yourself:

- Are you taking the right courses to prepare now? Were there any courses that you didn't think you would have to take?
- Were there any you wanted to take or thought you should that you don't have to?
- Are there courses that you haven't taken that you may have to take to get ready?
- Are there any courses you have to take that you don't like or aren't good at?

Partner discussions

Talk to people about your choices, get their input and perspective. Friends, family, teachers and people you can trust can be a great resource and help us make decisions. The networks we establish are vital to our success both now and in the future. Practice developing networks, be curious, ask questions, accept feedback, and be thoughtful (think about things). Get prepared and involved in school activities, volunteer, find practicum placements, and try anything else that will help you get a better picture of your chosen career. This will help you to be certain about your choices. Remember, your education is one of the most expensive investments you will make. Preparing for your choices is very important, as is being



Workshop 8

High School Courses - Prepare and Explore

prepared for change and your own growth that will happen over the upcoming years that you spend completing your education and training.

Workshop Closing

Some of the things to consider in your next steps:

- What are your strengths in school?
- Do these relate to the courses that will prepare you for success in your chosen path?
- Are you taking the courses you need?
- Do you like the courses that you need to take?
- What are you going to do to prepare for your education or your next step in your career plan in the next 30 days, the next 3 months?
- Who can you get involved to support you?

Remember knowing yourself is critical to your success and knowing where you are going can help you prepare for your journey!