

Researching Education and Training Programs

Choose the Right Program

Many different schools, colleges, and universities offer similar programs. You need to decide which program best meets your personal and career goals. Use this tip sheet to help you research education and training programs appropriate for your dream job.

Follow the steps below to help you find programs and schools that will:

- Offer you the certificate, diploma or degree your dream job employers prefer
- Suit your personal needs and goals
- Provide the learning experience you want

1. Find Out The Education And Training Required For Your Dream Job

Choosing the education or training program that's right for you is easier if you have a clear idea of your education and dream job goals.

If you haven't done so already, complete the Dream Job Matrix worksheet to identify the types of education or training you'll need to secure your dream job.

2. Identify Acceptable Programs for Your Dream Job

Before you choose a program, you need to make sure it will provide you with the credentials you need to get your dream job once you graduate.

How do you know which programs are acceptable?

- Contact the licensing or certifying organization for the occupation you're interested in, if one exists.
- Talk to people doing the EnviroCareer you want to do to and ask them about:
 - Less formal ways of entering the EnviroCareer and/or obtaining education/training
 - Which training routes are most respected by employers
 - Possible ways to combine training and experience

Where can you look for available programs?

- Search CCHREI's Education Compendium (at www.cchrei.ca/compendium/default.asp.) for appropriate programs. Refer to education and training directories found in your school, public library or on the Internet, such as:
 - www.schoolfinder.com, one of Canada's most complete listing of post-secondary institutions.
 - **Spectrum**, a series of four regional directories: *Western Spectrum*, *Ontario Spectrum*, *Quebec Spectrum*, and *Atlantic Spectrum*.
 - **Directory of Canadian Universities**, a one-volume directory produced every two years.
 - **Co-operative Education Programs in Canada**, an annual directory that provides information about co-operative education programs and where they're offered. These educational programs place students in work positions where they are monitored, supervised, and evaluated. Students are paid for the work they perform and spend ample study time working on the job.
- Also check directories focusing on distance education/correspondence programs if you prefer to study in your community such as:
 - *Canadian University Distance Education Directory*
 - *Learning At Home: Distance Education Courses in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba*
 - *Open College Training Opportunities*

3. Decide What Type of Learning Experience Is Right for You

Before you choose an education or training program, you need to decide what type of learning experience is right for you.

How do you know what type of learning experience you want?

- Develop a list of your personal requirements for education or training programs by asking yourself:
 - Would you prefer to attend a school with a large campus and student population or a small one?
 - What type of schools would you prefer to attend: a university, college, technical school, etc?
 - Would you prefer to attend a program within your community, city, province or territory, or in another country?
 - Are student services like Aboriginal Students' Associations, tutors, and counsellors important to you?
 - Is having a wide selection of social and sports programs important to you?
- Compare your answers to the information you collect in Step 4 for each of the acceptable programs you listed in Step 2.

4. Select the Programs You'll Apply To

You can't get everything you need from one program. You're going to have to choose what's most important to you, and then go for it! Investigate further the programs you identified in Step 2 and see how they measure up to your personal requirements. You'll want to apply to the programs that meet both your dream job's requirements and your personal requirements.

How do you find out if a program offers what you want?

- Find out what each program requires and offers, such as:
 - Entrance requirements
 - Length of program
 - Learning environment (e.g., classroom work, labs or field work)
 - Tuition and book costs
 - Level of competition for admission
 - Delivery options (e.g., distance education, in-class, etc.)
 - Accreditation (e.g., degree, diploma or certificate)
- Find out what each school is like, including:
 - Size of campus and student population
 - Type of institution
 - Location
 - Student resources offered
 - Social and athletic programs available
 - Services that connect you with other Aboriginal students

Where can you find information about what a program and school offers?

- Use the directories, videos, booklets, and pamphlets you'll find in school counselling offices and libraries.
- Phone or write to admission offices and ask for a copy of a program's calendar and for an information package. Keep in mind that you may have to pay for a calendar and even apply for admission to a program.
- Contact the school's Registrar's Office and ask them questions.
- Check out schools in person. Open houses and information sessions usually take place every spring. They're a great way to experience a school's learning environment.
- Information about local education and training programs is usually available in counselling offices, career centres, and libraries as well as directly from the institutions offering the programs.

There's loads of information out there, but it's up to you to find it! If you get stuck, ask a librarian for help. Don't forget that the Internet is a great research tool for finding information about education or training programs.