Connecting Coursework with Your Interests

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**Introduction**

Strengthening your ability to find detailed, reliable information about your interests is an invaluable aspect of lifelong learning. In this assignment, you learn how to conduct independent research about topics, organizations and occupational fields that are related to the aspects of this course that are most interesting to you.

**Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of this activity, you will be able to:*

* Develop strategies for conducting self-directed research to generate new understandings of interests.
* Identify possibilities for further study or career exploration related to these interests.
* Establish a preliminary network in areas of interest.

**Step 1: Focus**

Focus your research by identifying one or two areas in this course you are curious about and would like to know more about.

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Browse your class notes, the syllabus, and readings to inspire you. Brainstorm a list of organizations and [occupational fields](https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Structure/Hierarchy?objectid=%2Fd0IGA6qD8JPRfoj5UCjpg%3D%3D) you see as related to these areas. By clicking on these fields, you will see lists of occupations in each area.

**Step 2: Research**

Career Centre has resources on how to effectively [research occupation(s)](https://careers.yorku.ca/student_topic/conduct-occupational-research) of interest. If you would like some assistance conducting this type of research, you can drop by the [Career Lounge](https://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/services-events/dropby) in 202 McLaughlin College to talk with a Peer Career Educator.

Add to your list of related organizations and occupations by exploring the Industry Research, Occupational Research, and Find Employers tabs on the [York University Libraries' Career Research Resources guide](https://researchguides.library.yorku.ca/c.php?g=679511&p=4790370).

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Watch the [video titled Industry News Articles](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vN-EFY6hNlk) to learn more about how to search for industry news articles. The[**Tips for Conducting General Interest Research**](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/envisionyu/chapter/tips-for-conducting-general-interest-research/) activity can be a useful resource for identifying organizations and trends that impact them.

**Step 3: Review**

Review the list of organizations and occupational fields you’ve created and select two or three of each that you see as being most connected to your interests, skills, and aspirations.

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**Step 4: Web Search**

## **Part A**

Conduct a web search for websites of organizations on your shortlist and look for their mission statement, purpose, or mandate. The About Us section is usually a good place to start.

Browse through each site to better understand the organizations’ primary activities, clients, and priorities. If available, explore the Careers or Jobs section of their websites to get a sense of what people do there, the company culture, and what skills and/or knowledge they value.

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## **Part B**

Conduct a web search on the two or three occupations and job titles you’ve listed to see what you find. Search the [National Occupational Classification](https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Home/Welcome/f4edbb2b41d847a8b3f892fbe4b06c1b?GoCTemplateCulture=en-CA) (NOC) for job titles and descriptions that are close to your areas of interest, the [tip sheet for using the NOC](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/envisionyu/chapter/tips-for-using-the-national-occupational-index-noc/) can help you do this.

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**Step 5: Reflection**

What information about the organizations, what they do, and the types of occupations they hire align most with your interests for further study or career exploration?

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What similarities are there amongst your shortlisted choices?

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What skills and qualifications did you find necessary for the occupation(s) that interested you most? How could you acquire these?

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How do these align with the [self-assessment exercises](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/envisionyu/chapter/reflecting-on-your-interests-and-values/) you have completed? What doesn’t “fit” and what does that suggest about the limitations of the assessment or your own interests, values etc.?

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**Step 6: Summary of Your Research**

In what ways does this exercise impact your perspective on how relevant this course is to your future?

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What more would you want to know about these organizations or occupations before deciding if they might be worth pursuing further in university or the workplace? Where could you find that information or ask someone to help guide you in your search?

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If you are interested in exploring further study in an area related to what you uncovered in this exercise, check out: [How to choose the post-graduate program that's right for you](https://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/thinking-about-grad-school-or-further-education) tab on the Career Centre website for inspiration.