

At UOIT's Career Centre, we strive to ensure we respond quickly to students' needs but, unfortunately, it is not always possible for us to see students right away during busy times of the academic year. Below are some common student questions about career development, along with some resources you can use and steps you can take to begin to answer them before your career counselling appointment.

## WHAT CAN I DO WITH A DEGREE IN...?

If you are struggling to connect your academic program to potential career opportunities, remember that employers hire PEOPLE, not degrees. As such, while your program will give you great subject-specific knowledge and skills, you will also develop lots of skills that can be useful in a variety of contexts, limited only by your imagination and interest. Take some time to reflect on work, volunteering, academic or extracurricular experiences you have had that might give you some clues as to the right direction for you. To get you started, check out our program tip sheets at [uoit.ca/careertools](http://uoit.ca/careertools)

## SHOULD I PURSUE FURTHER EDUCATION?

Many students want to know if they need further schooling to be able to enter the job market in their area of interest. Further education makes sense if you enjoy the academic environment or if you know that you need additional credentials to be employed in your field. If you are unsure if you need further training or credentials for the career you want, start your research by accessing **Career Cruising** through the **Exclusive Career Resources section of the Student Portal** under the "Career Tools" tab. Once you are on Career Cruising, click on the "Learn about Careers" tab to go to the occupational information section, where you will find an "Education" section that describes the training you will need for entry-level and more senior positions in that field along with links to educational institutions across Canada offering that training. A search for your desired occupation on [indeed.ca](http://indeed.ca) can help you pin this down even further by showing you the academic and other qualifications actual employers are currently seeking in potential employees.

Many students without a concrete career goal decide to go on for further schooling in the hopes that their career path will become clear to them by the end of their post-graduate education. Further schooling may give you additional clarity on your future career path, but many students find that they still experience career confusion at the end of their additional training. Take the time at all stages of your academics to conduct self-reflection and occupational exploration in order to develop and fine-tune your career plan, connecting each step you are taking to the work-life you envision for yourself in the future.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM ON THE RIGHT ACADEMIC/CAREER PATH?

Even if you are enjoying your classes and feeling motivated in your studies, it is natural to have questions about whether you are on the right academic or career path. Setting a concrete long-term career goal that you are excited about will help you focus your efforts and give you a sense of direction for each of the smaller steps you take along the way.

**Self-Reflection** - In order to set a career goal that makes sense for you, take some time to reflect on your work preferences and strengths. When you envision yourself in your ideal future career, what does it look like? Are you in an office, a lab, or outdoors? Are you wearing a suit, a uniform, or casual clothes? Are you working directly with customers, patients or clients, or are you mostly on your own? The answers to these questions could provide valuable clues about the workplace that would be best for you. Your career counsellor may recommend some assessments that can assist you in this self-reflection process and help you identify the skills, values, preferences and interests that will shape your career goal.

**Informational Interviews** - Informational interviews allow you to get the inside scoop on potential career paths from individuals working in the field, including advice on the best academic path to achieve your career goal. For information on how to set up and conduct informational interviews, find the Informational Interview resource at [uoit.ca/careertools](http://uoit.ca/careertools)

## I AM NOT DOING AS WELL IN MY COURSES AS I EXPECTED. AM I IN THE WRONG PROGRAM?

Many students worry that they are in the wrong program if they do not perform as well as expected in their first year. However, the transition to university is a big change that can be tough for many students; there is a good chance that your performance will improve once you get your bearings and get to know the supports available to you in addition to the Career Centre, including:

- **Student Learning Centre (uoit.ca/studentlearning)** for academic support, including study skills and time management help as well as subject-specific assistance
- **Student Accessibility Services (uoit.ca/studentaccessibility)** for students needing support or accommodation related to their disabilities
- **Student Experience Centre (uoit.ca/studentexperience)** for programs supporting first-year students, first-generation university students, mature students, transfer students, indigenous students and international students

If you have made use of the supports available above and continue to perform poorly in your classes or can't find the motivation to study, it could be that your program is not the best fit for you. See below regarding making a program switch.

## WHAT IF I AM THINKING OF SWITCHING PROGRAMS OR MAKING CHANGES TO MY ACADEMIC PLAN?

If you are thinking of switching to a different program or considering choosing a specialization, minor or double major, check out the Academic Planning tip sheet (under tip sheets at [uoit.ca/careertools](http://uoit.ca/careertools)) for issues to consider before you make your decision.

## HOW CAN I GET SOME HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE?

Practical experience will not only give you the qualifications you need to be competitive in the job market, but can also help you better understand your own interests, skills, personality and work values so that you can be confident that your career goal is the right fit for you. Below are some resources you can use if you are wondering how you can get some hands-on experience:

- **Experiential Learning** – Each faculty at UOIT offers opportunities to eligible upper-year students to gain hands-on experience through a practicum, internship or co-op placement. Check out the “Experiential Learning” link on your faculty’s website to learn more.
- **Volunteering** – If you have little or no work experience, volunteering is a great way to get your foot in the door, allowing you to develop your skills through hands-on experience, learn more about your interests and make valuable contacts to add to your network for potential paid work opportunities down the road. For more information, visit [uoit.ca/careertools](http://uoit.ca/careertools)
- **Get Involved** – Check out your faculty’s web page for information on clubs and organizations which offer experiential learning and professional opportunities for their members. See also [your-sa.ca](http://your-sa.ca) for information about other clubs offered by the Student Association. Check out [uoit.ca/getinvolved](http://uoit.ca/getinvolved) for information about the **Student Involvement Record**.

## WHAT IF I AM FEELING OVERWHELMED AND ANXIOUS ABOUT MY FUTURE CAREER?

Uncertainty about your career path can be very uncomfortable, and it is common to feel overwhelmed when you are trying to plan out the steps on your own. Thinking clearly about your future can be even more challenging if you are feeling stressed or anxious, or if you are feeling pressure from family or friends to make a decision quickly or to go in a direction that doesn't feel right for you. In addition to the support you will receive from your career counsellor, take advantage of the following resources, which are free to all UOIT students:

- **UOIT Student LifeLine** ([studentlifeline@uoit.ca](mailto:studentlifeline@uoit.ca); 905.721.3392) for on-campus mental health assistance and referrals
- **Oshawa Psychological and Counselling Services** ([oshawapsychologist.com](http://oshawapsychologist.com)) for assessment and personal counselling services
- **Aspiria Student Assistance** ([aspiria.ca](http://aspiria.ca) 1.877.234.5327) or Good2Talk Post-Secondary Student Helpline ([good2talk.ca](http://good2talk.ca); 1-866-925-5454) for 24/7 mental health support