

exploring careers



An early planning guide for Nebraska students and parents

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Want to find the **right fit** for college?

INSIDE

Career fields

Skills
you'll need

Courses
to take

Activities
to pursue

Finding the right fit...

By doing some career research and planning now, you'll be prepared to find the college and career that are the right fit for you. Exploring Careers will help you get started.

Check out this career diagram.

It shows (1) basic skills you'll need for any type of career, (2) six broad career fields, and (3) 16 career "clusters" or areas within each field. The rest of the publication highlights skills you'll need for each career area along with recommended coursework and activities.

Ask a parent or other adult to review this publication with you – and talk to your guidance counselor about career assessment tools at your school.

For additional help with college and career planning, visit EducationQuest.org, KnowHow2GONebraska.org, and NebraskaCareerConnections.org.

- 1 Essential Knowledge and Skills** lists skills common to all careers.
- 2 Career Fields** represent broad groupings of careers.
- 3 Career Clusters** group careers with similar skills and common themes.

CAREER INFORMATION



Environmental and Agricultural Systems

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

This type of career involves the production, distribution and development of agricultural products and resources. Examples of occupations include farm equipment manager, landscape architect, and veterinary assistant.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - communicating your needs and observations to others, and documenting your work.
- Problem solving** - identifying and describing agricultural problems, and planning and implementing creative solutions.
- Technology** - identifying, selecting and using technology to improve production.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Agribusiness Management
- Animal Science
- Food Science
- Horticulture and Floriculture
- Nursery / Landscape Design

Activities you should pursue:

- FFA – agricultural education
- SkillsUSA – a partnership to build a skilled workforce
- DECA – an association of marketing students
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)



Which college will be the best fit for you?

Nebraska has nearly 60 four-year colleges, community colleges and trade schools. Before you start considering which school you want to attend, think about your interests, skills and talents. This will help you identify certain fields you might like to pursue. Then you can research colleges that will be the right fit for you.

To get started, answer these questions:

- **What do you like to do?** Do you enjoy outdoor activities? Do you like to draw? What topics interest you - history? photography? computers?
- **What are your talents?** Do you excel in math or English? Are you a good artist? Are you good at fixing or building things?
- **How do you envision your future?** How much money do you want to make? What kind of work schedule do you want? Where do you want to live?

Your answers will direct you to high school and college courses and clubs that will help you develop your strengths and lead you to a future career.

Communication and Information Systems

Arts, A/V Technology and Communication

In this type of career, you might be involved in visual arts, performing arts, design, journalism, and the entertainment industry. Occupations may include film and video editor, graphic designer, and interpreter/translator.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - effectively using language skills to communicate through printed pieces, video and the Web.
- Problem solving** - finding unique ways to appeal to the target audience while meeting project objectives.
- Technology** - using new technologies to create engaging materials. Possessing knowledge of computer programs, video and audio equipment, and other art materials.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Art and Computer Aided Design
- Debate, Speech and Drama
- English, Creative Writing and Journalism
- Multimedia / Video Production

Activities you should pursue:

- Web Site Development
- School Plays or Musicals
- Debate, Speech Team or Drama Club
- Yearbook Staff / Photography
- Choir and Band
- A/V Club

Information Technology (IT)

Careers in this area involve the design, development and support of computer software and integration of technology systems. Occupations might include computer software engineer, computer programmer, and computer and office machine repairer.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - helping customers using cutting-edge technology.
- Problem solving** - planning, creating and testing new technologies using industry standards.
- Technical** - identifying and comparing IT products and trends using knowledge of hardware, software and systems.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Computer Applications, Graphics and Programming
- Journalism
- Math
- Multimedia / Video Production
- Web Page Design

Activities you should pursue:

- Web Site Development
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)



Health Sciences

Health Science

In this career area, you may be involved in patient care, diagnostic services, health information, and medical research. Occupations could include dental hygienist, pharmacist, and registered nurse.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

Communication - using verbal and writing skills to communicate patient care – and demonstrating empathy for patients.

Problem solving - analyzing the health care needs of patients and working with other health care providers to identify problems and solutions.

Technology - understanding and applying safety rules in the work place, and using medical equipment needed for patient care.

Courses to take in high school and college:

Accounting
Advanced Biology and Chemistry
Anatomy and Physiology
Child Development
Health and Wellness

Activities you should pursue:

Athletics
FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America)
Medical Explorers
Science Club

Setting up a Career "Interview"

Parents... help your student find two or three people in your community who work in occupations your student is considering. Set up a half-hour appointment with each person to conduct an "information interview." Have your student ask questions about:

- what the person does at work every day
- what he or she likes and dislikes about the work
- how much training is required
- what the future of the occupation may be

Source: Kuder, Inc.: Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child with the Career-Planning Process



Industrial, Manufacturing and Engineering Systems

Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

This career area involves the movement of people, materials and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail, and water. Occupations include airline pilots, mechanics and technicians, and storage and transportation managers.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

Communication - using basic communication skills to express ideas and interpret information.

Problem solving - using a structured problem-solving process to improve performance and business functions.

Technical - assessing the impact technology has on costs, performance and operations.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Automotive Repair and Diesel Mechanics
- Computer Aided Drafting
- Industrial Technology and Welding
- Math and Science

Activities you should pursue:

- DECA – association of marketing students
- FFA – agricultural education
- SkillsUSA – a partnership to build a skilled workforce
- Math Club
- Math Counts

Architecture and Construction

This type of career involves designing, constructing and maintaining buildings. Examples of occupations include architect, cost estimator, and heating and cooling system mechanic.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

Communication - using verbal and visual cues on the jobsite to communicate with coworkers.

Problem solving - adjusting designs, plans and construction schedules to respond to unexpected events and weather conditions.

Technical - using architect's plans and manufacturer's illustrations to visualize the proposed work.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Computer Aided Drafting
- Construction and Industrial Technology
- Computer Applications
- Drafting
- Math and Science

Activities you should pursue:

- SkillsUSA – a partnership to build a skilled workforce
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- Math Club
- Math Counts



Manufacturing

Careers in this area may involve processing raw materials into finished products. Examples of occupations include industrial production managers, tool and die makers, and welders.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - understanding and communicating technical terminology and information.
- Problem solving** - solving manufacturing problems using innovative and creative solutions.
- Technical** - using manufacturing assembling processes that include joining, fastening and bonding.

Courses to take in high school and college:

Automotive Mechanics
Cabinetmaking, Electronics and Welding
Computer Applications and Programming
Industrial Technologies and Manufacturing
Math

Activities you should pursue:

- DECA – association of marketing students
- Math Club
- FFA – agricultural education
- Science Club
- SkillsUSA – a partnership to build a skilled workforce

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

This type of career may involve scientific research and technical services including laboratory testing. Examples of occupations include civil engineer, electronic engineer, and medical scientist.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - using verbal, written and multimedia skills to communicate to a select audience.
- Problem solving** - using project management skills to assess the progress of a plan, process or project.
- Technical** - understanding and using technology to accomplish goals in your area of work.

Courses to take in high school and college:

Biology, Chemistry and Earth Science
Engineering and Industrial Technology
Math
World Language

Activities you should pursue:

- Math Club
- Math Student Competitions
- Science Club
- Science Fairs



Human Services and Resources

Law, Public Safety and Security

In this type of career, you may be involved in law, public safety, protective services, and homeland security. Occupations include police officer, lawyer and probation officer.



Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - communicating with a wide variety of people, and diffusing conflicts using verbal and written communication.
- Problem solving** - analyzing ideas and evaluating solutions to problems using logic and sound reasoning.
- Technical** - using tools and technologies to complete the job.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- American Government
- American History
- English / Writing
- Health and Physical Fitness
- Computer Science
- Human Development
- World Language

Activities you should pursue:

- Athletics
- Student Council
- Boys & Girls State
- FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
- 4-H
- Debate Team
- Mock Trial
- Driver's Education
- Jr. ROTC

Human Services

In this type of career, you may work with clients to help them improve their quality of life. Occupations include mental health counselor, personal and home care aid, and social and human services assistant.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - using effective verbal and written communication skills to deliver services to a wide range of clients.
- Problem solving** - understanding community issues and identifying solutions to individual and social problems.
- Technical** - identifying, selecting and using cost-effective resources to deliver services to the community.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Consumer Education
- Human Development
- Parenting
- Personal Finance
- Psychology and Sociology

Activities you should pursue:

- FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
- Peer Mediation
- Mentor or Tutor

Government and Public Administration

In this type of career, you may be employed in government positions at the local, state or federal levels. Occupations include legislator, social and community service manager, and urban and regional planner.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- **Communication** - using communication and negotiation skills to stimulate the flow of information and ideas.
- Knowledge of a second language might be helpful.
- **Problem solving** - assessing government activities, programs and organizations to best meet the needs of society.
- **Technical** - using financial and informational resources to accomplish public goals.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Business Law
- English, Speech and Debate
- Government and Political Science
- World Language
- Math

Activities you should pursue:

- Debate Team, Speech Team and Mock Trial
- Jr. ROTC
- Student Council

Education and Training

This type of career field involves using a variety of learning styles and tools to make complex concepts more understandable. Examples of occupations include school administrators, teachers and teacher assistants.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- **Communication** - customizing verbal and written communication skills to educate students.
- **Problem solving** - using scientific thinking and conflict management skills to solve education-related issues.
- **Technical** - applying teaching strategies and technology to enhance education.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- English, Writing and Speech
- Human Development
- Psychology and Sociology
- World Language

Activities you should pursue:

- 4-H Junior Leader
- Athletics
- Student Council
- FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
- Future Teachers
- Peer Mediation
- Mentor or Tutor



Business, Marketing and Management

Marketing, Sales and Service

This career field involves marketing products and services to appeal to the public and create sales. Occupations include property and real estate manager, sales manager, and hairstylist and cosmetologist.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - using verbal and written communication to create marketing materials and to evaluate sales and marketing information.
- Problem solving** - creating marketing strategies that promote services and increase sales.
- Technical** - using systems and tools to evaluate and distribute marketing information.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Art and Graphic Design
- Accounting, Economics and Management
- Advertising and Marketing
- World Language

Activities you should pursue:

- Class Fundraisers and Concession Management
- DECA - an association of marketing students
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- School Newspaper / Yearbook
- Student Government

Business, Management and Administration

This type of career involves working with business functions essential to efficient and productive business operations. Occupations include accountant, auditor, management analyst, and receptionist.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

- Communication** - using verbal and written skills to create and interpret information.
- Problem solving** - analyzing and evaluating issues that relate to business development.
- Technical** - using technology to manage customer relationships.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Economics, Accounting and Personal Finance
- Business Law
- Computer Applications
- Marketing and Management
- Statistics

Activities you should pursue:

- DECA - an association of marketing students
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- Mock Trial
- Speech Team or Debate Team
- Student Council



Hospitality and Tourism

This type of career involves the operation of restaurants, lodging, attractions, recreation events, and travel-related services. Occupations include chefs, head cooks, recreation workers, and travel agents.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

Communication - using verbal and written communication skills to promote hospitality and tourism products and services.

Problem solving - implementing relevant customer suggestions to improve products and services.

Technical - using technology and customer service skills to ensure guest satisfaction.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Accounting, Economics and Marketing
- Computer Applications
- Construction and Design
- Culinary Arts, Food and Nutrition
- Personal Finance

Activities you should pursue:

- DECA - an association of marketing students
- FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)
- 4-H Food Projects
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- World Language Club

Finance

In this career, you may be involved in financial planning, banking, insurance, and business financial management. Occupations include financial analyst, claims adjuster or examiner, and loan officer.

Skills and Abilities you'll need:

Communication - using verbal and written communication to explain financial situations and options.

Problem solving - using math skills to solve personal and corporate finance issues.

Technical - using financial tools to explain and maintain financial resources.

Courses to take in high school and college:

- Economics, Accounting and Personal Finance
- Business Law
- Computer Applications
- International Business
- Marketing and Management
- Mathematics and Statistics

Activities you should pursue:

- 4-H
- Competitive Business Events
- DECA - an association of marketing students
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- Local Investment Club





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Sources:

NebraskaCareerConnections.org
CareerClusters.org

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