

Education Paths

There are many paths leading to a career. For example:

MENTORSHIP: A career-information relationship between a student and a person employed in the career area in which the student is interested. The student learns about the workplace and the career area through participation in non-paid activities directed by the mentor. Mentoring is usually longer in duration and intensity and more complex than a job-shadowing experience.

JOB SHADOWING: A short-term, non-paid career experience planned so that students learn about the workplace by observing individuals at work in a job that relates to the student's interests, aptitudes, and abilities.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION: Earn and learn through cooperative education. Career and technical classroom instruction is combined with paid employment directly related to classroom learning. Student instruction and employment experiences are planned and supervised by the school and the employer so that each contributes to the student's career objective and employability.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS WITHIN HIGH SCHOOLS: These programs provide a jump-start for careers. They provide employment training in a huge array of occupations by mixing work-based experience and classroom instruction. Students can earn state licensure and certifications for careers as varied as a cosmetologist, certified Internet Web site designer, heat pump installation technician, certified nursing assistant, and Microsoft certified database administrator.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING STRAIGHT OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL: Entry-level jobs require training at the place of employment for career advancement or even to stay at the same level. Earning potential, however, will be limited unless the employee is particularly competent or creative.

APPRENTICESHIPS: Earn and learn! This path prepares students for specific careers by combining related instruction with on-the-job supervision by experienced professionals. There are over 300 registered occupations offering apprenticeships in Virginia, from electricians and plumbers to law enforcement agents and chefs.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS WITHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: Virginia's 23 community colleges provide three alternatives: advanced technical training for certifications in a wide array of fields; tech prep, a four-year continuous program (combines two years of high school and two years after high school graduation); and preparation for a four-year college. Averaging less than \$2,000 per year, community college is a fraction of the cost of state universities.

PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS: High-speed, high-dollar courses can prepare students for careers such as network engineering, real estate sales, and culinary arts. These private technical and vocational schools offer intensive, short-term training.

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES: A high school diploma, a high grade-point average (GPA) and SAT score are the keys to getting into the more popular institutions.

The college program chosen should be related to the student's career interests. A four-year bachelor's degree is a prerequisite for graduate-level studies. This degree will lay the foundation for a variety of career paths and is usually the basic requirement for entering the professional world. Academics are usually supplemented by social and sporting events, especially at residential schools. In-state tuition is less expensive than out-of-state, and state schools are generally less expensive than private schools. Visit www.vacareerview.org.

GRADUATE SCHOOL: Start saving because graduate school can be expensive. Usually, a higher level of education means a higher level of income. Doctors, lawyers, and professors, plus many Wall Street-types, have master's or doctoral degrees. Admittance to a program usually involves analysis of undergraduate transcripts, some standardized placement tests plus letters of recommendation and personal statements. If this path isn't carefully planned, the student may lack some of the criteria for entering graduate school.

MILITARY: The armed forces employ more than combat personnel. There are thousands of careers available within the army, marines, navy, air force, and coast guard—from meteorologists and dentists to engineers and entertainers. Best of all, the 10,000 courses offered are free.

NOTE TO PARENTS: Ensure that your child meets with a guidance counselor or other career specialist to choose a curriculum that reflects your child's aptitudes, abilities, and career interests. We spend most of our lives making a living. That's why it's important to help your child make the best possible career choices. A lot of wasted time, money, and frustration can be avoided by thinking things through from the very beginning.

That means right now!

Test-driving a career

Whenever possible, seek career experiences related to your interests. There are different types of career experiences—shadowing, mentoring, cooperative education, internships and apprenticeships. On-the-job experience can be the ultimate reality check. Also, talk to college-age students and to people in careers in which you are interested. Ask such questions as:

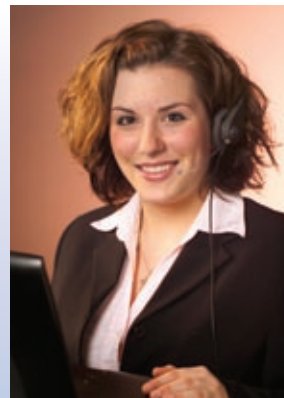
- What is it really like as an apprentice or as a student at a community college or university?
- How did you choose your major?
- Did you take the right courses in high school?
- How much does it cost to continue your education?
- What do you like about your chosen career?
- How did you choose your career?
- Did your education relate to your ultimate career choice?

What is a career path?

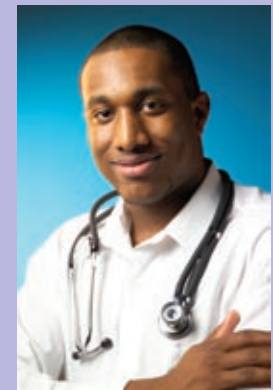
Even if your parents are the third generation in your family to be a mechanic or a lawyer, you are your own person. Equally, if your dad says, is a computer technician and you really and truly are a chip off the old block, then perhaps a career in technology might be right for you. One thing's for sure, every industry—even at the entry level—is becoming increasingly high-tech.

- Start figuring out what you want to do.
- Are there occupations that match your interests?
- Will there be any job openings in 10–12 years?

Understanding the array of career paths is the first step to understanding what's out there. If you don't know what a "harbor pilot" or an "actuary" or a "materials scientist" does, you're automatically limiting your career options.



Which career clusters interest *you*?



Careers related to agriculture and environmental management



Careers related to banking, investment, insurance, and financial planning services



Careers related to developing and supporting multimedia hardware, software and systems integration



Careers related to designing, constructing, managing, and maintaining industrial and commercial facilities, housing, bridges, and roads



Careers related to legislative, administrative, and regulatory services at the federal, state, and local levels



Careers related to judicial, legal, fire, and other protective services



Careers related to writing, performing, and the visual arts, advertising, and TV broadcast, digital, print, and recording media



Careers related to research, diagnosis, treatments, and environmental services



Careers related to processing materials into intermediate or final products



Careers related to human resources, accounting, management, administration, information processing, and other services.



Careers related to convention and tourism, recreation, food, lodging, and other services



Careers related to wholesaling, retailing, product management, marketing, and distribution of merchandise



Careers related to education, training, and learning support services



Careers related to human services, including social and other community services



Careers related to physical and related science, engineering and technical services



Careers related to the equipment and infrastructure needed to move people and materials by air, rail, road, water or pipeline

Top 20 Fastest-Growing Occupations in Virginia

Occupation	2002 Employment	Projected 2012 Employment	2002-2012 Percentage Change	Average Annual Openings	Preferred Education Level
Network Systems Analysts	5,507	9,308	69%	531	4-year Degree
Medical Assistants	7,206	12,146	69%	525	CTE/Certification
Database Administrators	4,911	7,864	60%	324	4-year Degree
Physical Therapist Aides	916	1,456	59%	63	CTE/Certification
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	1,169	1,847	58%	71	2-year Degree
Physical Therapy Assistants	1,229	1,918	56%	81	2-year Degree
Personal Financial Advisors	2,072	3,220	55%	176	4-year Degree
Software Engineers, Applications	24,293	37,650	55%	1,398	4-year Degree
Health Information Technicians	3,353	5,127	53%	193	2-Year Degree
Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	2,075	3,165	53%	135	2- or 4-Year Degree
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	5,196	7,880	52%	357	CTE/Certification
Software Engineers, Systems Software	18,660	28,293	52%	1,094	4-year Degree
Home Health Aides	9,238	13,966	51%	497	CTE/Certification
Dental Hygienists	3,922	5,897	50%	215	2-Year Degree
Network and Systems Administrators	12,274	18,451	50%	610	4-Year Degree
Environmental Engineers	1,606	2,402	50%	138	Master's Degree
Dental Assistants	7,404	11,061	49%	535	CTE/Certification
Computer and Information Systems Managers	10,215	15,099	48%	591	4-Year Degree
Residential Advisors	1,310	1,913	46%	60	2- or 4-Year Degree
Management Analysts	30,973	45,216	46%	1,436	4-Year Degree

* Based on specific occupations with the largest percent increase in employment from 2002-2012
 ** The National average percent change for all occupations is 15%. Virginia's average percentage for all occupations is 18.5% Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia's Electronic Labor Market Access

Note to Parents: Helping Special Needs Students Plan for the Future

If you have a special needs child, it's particularly important to help him or her plan for life after high school. Take time to meet with your child's special education teacher to develop a transition plan. Development of a written transition plan for students with special needs should begin by the age of 14 and be completed by the age of 16. The transition plan is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account his or her strengths, preferences, and interests. Elements of the transition plan include instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Plan for the future

Use this handy guide to begin the important process of planning for the future. Keep it in a special place to review and update regularly. Start by answering the following questions:

What are your favorite courses?

What extracurricular activities do you enjoy most?

What do you like to do with family or friends?

Which of your special skills are most valuable to you? Why?

What achievements make you most proud?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

What are your favorite hobbies and interests?

What do you like to do with your free time?

What courses do you need to take in high school and beyond?

Use the following form to write down classes, career preparation programs, and activities that will support your educational and occupational choices. Check with your school counselor to make sure the classes selected meet state and local graduation requirements.

9th Grade

Career interest activities (school organizations, employment, etc.):

11th Grade

Career interest activities (school organizations, employment, etc.):

Beyond High School Options to consider for my career goal (see [Education Paths](#) on previous page.)

Name of Agency, Contact or School:

10th Grade

Career interest activities (school organizations, employment, etc.):

12th Grade

Career interest activities (school organizations, employment, etc.):

Phone number or Website for more information:
