

How to Prepare an Effective Career Investigation Report

A career investigation report can be a component of the student selection process in some post-secondary programs. Your Career Investigation report should contain information that would convince a selection committee that you have researched the occupation you hope to study.

The following guide offers suggestions to help you complete an effective Career Investigation.

Learn About the Program

- Visit the Student Recruitment Office and speak with a Prospective Student Advisor. Phone ahead of time, as you may need to make an appointment..
- Arrange to be a *student for a day* .
- Many programs schedule Information Sessions between October and March to provide you with information on admission requirements for the specific program, application procedures, and course content details. Contact the Student Recruitment Office to obtain dates, times, and locations of these sessions or visit the web site.
- Learn about the program curriculum, pre-requisites, job futures and what to expect as a student at that particular PSI.
- Attend Open House, if the school has one. These events give you a first-hand look at the schools' learning environment and allow you talk to students, faculty and alumni for a personal perspective.
- Read about the program on the website or in the many resource materials available from your high school counsellor or from your local career centre
- Browse through the View Books or the Prospective Students webpage to access information on graduate employment statistics, starting salaries, program and course information, application procedures, Graduate Skills Profiles and more.

Learn About the Occupation

- Scan the Classified Ads and Careers sections in the newspaper to observe the demand for employment in your chosen career field and to determine job requirements and pay levels.
- Look through the Yellow Pages to discover what companies might employ people in the occupation you are considering and contact them as part of your research.
- Visit ALIS website www.alis.alberta.ca for information on employment trends, salary information, and occupational descriptions.
- If possible, find part-time employment or volunteer your services to gain experience in the occupation. Talk to someone already working in the occupation that interests you. Contact employers, unions or professional associations, counsellors, teachers, family members, and friends about the occupational research you are conducting. Below is a list of questions you might want to ask.
 1. What is a typical workday like? What does the employee really do?
 2. What does s/he like or dislike about the job?
 3. What skills/abilities are needed/beneficial?
 4. What education and training is required?
 5. What are the starting, average, and maximum salaries in this occupation?
 6. Are there opportunities for promotion?
 7. What are the working conditions?
 8. Where are jobs most likely to be located?
 9. What are the normal hours of work?
 10. Is the job typically full-time, part-time, seasonal or contract?
 11. What is the future outlook for this career?
 12. How stable is employment in this occupation?

Personal Background and Qualifications

Using the following points as a guideline, describe how your personal background will enable you to be a success in this occupation. List anything that makes you suitable.

- Courses in school in which you excelled
- Additional training or courses completed related to this occupation
- Volunteer or work experience
- Interests or activities that demonstrate skills and abilities that are relevant to the program and occupation you are considering
- Personal qualities

Guidelines to Writing Your Career Investigation

Check to see if the program you are researching has **Program Specific Career Investigation** requirements for the report, and if so, follow the requested format. For other career investigations use the **Standard Career Investigation Report** provided above.

- Organize your information using headings. E.g. Program Information, Industry Research, Autobiographical Information.
- Include dates you met with people or attended information sessions, names of occupational contacts and the companies where they work.
- List web or paper resources you utilized in your research.
- Report on the information you gathered through personal contact or other methods of research.
- Check for spelling or grammatical errors.
- Ensure the information is relevant and easy to read.

The Career Investigation is a summary of the information you have gathered as a result of doing your research. You need to demonstrate that you have a good understanding of your chosen career and of program you are applying to and that you would be a qualified applicant. **Remember to start the application process early**, as it can take some time to adequately prepare an effective career investigation.

Useful Website for Career Research:

Alberta Occupational Profiles

<http://www.alis.alberta.ca>

Job Futures – Compare Occupations

http://jobfutures.ca/pls/jf-ea/noc_search.home

National Occupational Classification

<http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/generic/welcome.shtml>

WageInfo

<http://www.alis.alberta.ca/wageinfo/Content/RequestAction.asp?format=html&aspAction=GetWageHomePage&Page=Home>