

Get Ready for Your Career

# Facilitator's Guide



Center on  
transition  
innovations  
 **VCU**

# Table of Contents

---

Introduction .....	3
Course Overview .....	4
Course at a Glance .....	5
Course Implementation .....	8
Moving Forward .....	14

## Acknowledgements

The VCU Center on Transition Innovations would like to thank the Virginia Department of Education for their support and contributions to this guide. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted.

For further information about the Center on Transition Innovations, please visit our website at [CenterOnTransition.org](http://CenterOnTransition.org).

# Introduction

---

An important component of post-school career success is career planning while in school. Career planning is the process of uncovering strengths, preferences, interests, and needs; exploring career pathways; establishing career goals; and developing plans to gain the education and experiences needed to reach those goals. Early career planning and preparation are key to helping students select careers that match their skills, interests, and strengths.

The *Get Ready for Your Career Facilitator's Guide* and [Get Ready for Your Career](#) online course are tools that educators and service providers can use to help students set and achieve their career goals. By guiding students through the career planning process to help identify careers that match interests, this course sets students up with the knowledge and the tools needed to find the career that's right for them.

## Purpose of the Guide

The *Get Ready for Your Career Facilitator's Guide* is a resource for secondary educators, school counselors, service agencies, and families supporting students with disabilities in the career planning process. This guide is a companion resource for the free, online course [Get Ready for Your Career](#) which was developed by the VCU [Center on Transition Innovations](#). It guides the use of course information in small-group or whole-class instructional settings to help students successfully transition to a postsecondary career.

# Course Overview

---

[Get Ready for Your Career](#) is a free series of online lessons, each focusing on a different aspect in the career planning process. These online lessons contain video presentations and resources that can be used to equip students and others with the knowledge and skills for the transition to their future careers. Topics include self-determination, increasing knowledge of self and careers, utilizing support networks to assist with identifying a career goal, and developing action steps to prepare for employment.

## Audience

Students, grades 8 and higher, who are interested in exploring interests and preparing for their career.

Educators, school counselors, service providers, and family members interested in utilizing the course content to equip students in gaining information to successfully navigate the career preparation process.

## Course Outcomes

The goal of this course is to provide students with the information and resources to plan and prepare for their careers. After this course, students will know how to make an informed choice about the career development options available to them as they create their desired career path through exploring, researching, planning, and goal setting.

### Course Objectives

This online class is designed to empower students with disabilities to:

- Utilize the information gathered through the various transition assessment activities to make informed career decisions.
- Communicate strengths, preferences, interests, and needs as they relate to setting a career goal.
- Explore career clusters.
- Identify one to two career clusters of interest.
- Investigate the required postsecondary level of education for career interests.
- Research three career pathways to identify responsibilities, skill requirements, wages, and job outlook.
- Set career goals.
- Understand the importance of an Academic and Career Plan.
- Develop a plan of action to meet their career goals.
- Identify the supports needed to reach career goals and to be successful in the workplace.

# Course at a Glance

---

[Get Ready for Your Career](#) contains four lessons with video presentations, resources, and portfolio activities. The Course at a Glance provides an overview of these lessons. For each lesson, you will find a lesson title, videos with their length, potential discussion questions, and a brief description of each portfolio activity. Use this information when planning how to pace the course for students. The total time for all videos is 55 minutes and 50 seconds.

<b>Introduction</b>	<p><b>Video</b></p> <p>Welcome to the Course (2 min, 45 sec)</p> <p><b>Questions</b></p> <p>What careers have you thought about?</p> <p>What do you think the purpose of a job is versus the purpose of a career?</p>
<b>Lesson One: Finding a Career Begins with You!</b>	<p><b>Videos</b></p> <p>Self-Determination (4 min, 57 sec)</p> <p>Getting to Know Yourself (7 min, 43 sec)</p> <p><b>Total:</b> 12 min, 40 sec</p> <p><b>Questions</b></p> <p>Why is goal setting important in the early stages of your academic and career development?</p> <p>What are some formal and informal ways of identifying your career preferences?</p> <p><b>Portfolio Activity</b></p> <p><b>Finding a Career Begins with You</b></p> <p>This activity will help students identify strengths, preferences, interests, and needs.</p>

---

**Lesson Two:  
Explore and  
Research**

**Videos**

Career Exploration (4 min, 38 sec)

Work-Based Learning (5 min, 16 sec)

**Total:** 9 min, 54 sec

**Questions**

Of the different types of ways to explore careers mentioned in the videos, which ones are you most interested in trying?

Have you tried any of these before? And, if so, which ones?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Explore and Research Careers**

This activity will help students answer the question: “what career do I want to have in the future?” The following activities will help students identify their top career clusters, pathways for those clusters, and career choices that are best.

---

**Lesson Three:  
Explore Paths, Set  
Goals, and Plan**

**Videos**

Explore Paths (9 min, 13 sec)

Develop Career Goals and Plan (7 min, 48 sec)

**Total:** 17 min, 01 sec

**Questions**

How do you establish short-term, medium-range, and long-term career plans?

Why is it important to establish multiple ranged plans in the career development process?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Explore Paths, Set Goals, and Plan**

This activity will provide students with an opportunity to explore the career pathways that interest them. They will also have the chance to explore career options within the various education and training paths. This information will help students develop their career goals.

---

---

**Lesson Four:  
Prepare for  
Success**

**Videos**

Prepare and Take Action (4 min, 11 sec)

Identify Your Support Network (5 min, 41 sec)

**Total:** 9 min, 52 sec

**Questions**

In addition to setting goals, and having a plan to achieve those goals, many people help you along the way. Why is it important to have a strong support network?

Who can be considered a part of your personal network?

Who can be considered a part of your professional network?

**Portfolio Activity**

**Career Success Action Plan**

This activity will help students create a career action plan. This will help students identify the steps they will need to take and a timeline to follow for every step in their journey to career success.

---

**Next Steps  
and Tips**

**Videos**

Top 10 Tips for Career Planning (3 min, 38 sec)

---

# Course Implementation

---

This section provides specific guidance to facilitators on how to implement [Get Ready for Your Career](#) in small-group or whole class instructional settings. These guidelines will assist with planning by identifying information, activities, and decisions that need to occur before, during, and after the course to ensure that all course objectives are met. Decisions about how to administer the course content should be based on the needs of the students and the desire to support decisions that students make about postsecondary employment.

## Before Course Implementation

Planning and preparation are key to successfully implementing the course in a group setting. Before the course begins, there are several factors to consider. Facilitators are strongly encouraged to complete the following steps before the start date of the course.

### Become Familiar with the Course

Thoroughly review the course content. Take the course from a student's perspective by viewing the videos and completing the supplemental activities. Determine if any extra resources are needed for each lesson based on the needs of the students.

**NOTE:** This course takes educators and other stakeholders approximately 10 hours to complete the videos and review the resources. Educators who want to use these hours as a professional development activity for recertification will need prior approval from their school division. Each division is responsible for designating the actual number of points that an educator can earn for participation. Vocational rehabilitation counselors may earn 10 Continuing Education Credits (CRCs) after completing all course requirements and passing all lesson quizzes.

### Determine Delivery Format

Facilitators can implement this course in small or large groups in a variety of ways:

**Direct Instruction:** Facilitator explicitly presents course content.

**Hybrid:** Facilitator develops interactions between online and face-to-face learning.

**Peer-to-Peer:** Facilitator provides reinforcement and support as students complete the course with a partner.

**Student-Directed:** Facilitator provides support as students work at their own pace.



## Determine Facilitator

The decision on which format to use for [Get Ready for Your Career](#) will greatly depend on the personnel assigned to implement the course. Suggestions for facilitators could include resource teachers, school counselors, education coaches, or designated transition personnel. Service providers and family members may also serve as facilitators.

Consider facilitators' prior knowledge of transition planning for students with disabilities and the ability to commit time for planning and instruction when choosing a facilitator. The role of facilitator could be assigned to one or several persons over the length of the course, as staffing allows.

The role of a facilitator is to assist a group of students in increasing their knowledge of specific content objectives. A good facilitator manages the process of learning and creates an active environment within a group dynamic.

### Facilitator Responsibilities

- Clarify content information
- Facilitate group discussions
- Develop collaborative learning opportunities
- Provide content reinforcement and student support
- Inform students' case managers of transition assessment data
- Identify students' strengths, interests, needs, and preferences related to postsecondary employment and other career development topics
- Track student progress
- Provide feedback on activities
- Assist students in developing a portfolio

## Determine Schedule and Location

In addition to identifying appropriate staff to serve as the course facilitator, when and where the course may be offered will be critical to successful implementation. Suggestions for location include a resource class within a school, a community center (if offered as an extracurricular activity), or home.

Consideration may be given to offering the course as part of a regularly scheduled counseling session, as part of a study skills course, or as a supplement to any other course content. The course may also be offered during "study hall" if the option for delivery is as a student-directed, self-paced course. The time of day will depend on students' instructional schedules and the availability of staff.

## Determine Pacing

This online course contains four lessons with two video presentations, resources, and a portfolio assignment for each lesson. Facilitators are encouraged to pace this course appropriately depending on the class and student needs. It is recommended that 30 - 60 minutes be allotted for each lesson per week to allow students time to master lesson objectives. The length of time for each lesson will depend on whether students can complete portfolio activities during the meeting session or as homework.

### Direct Instruction or Hybrid Formats

If using direct instruction or hybrid formats, it may be wise to divide lessons with several videos to allow time for group discussion. Other options are to chunk the course by offering the first two lessons during one session, (for example, per quarter or semester) and the second two lessons at a different time. This may allow facilitators to ensure students have the foundational knowledge as they begin to consider careers prior to graduating from high school.

### Peer-to-Peer or Student-Directed Format

If the decision is made to use the peer-to-peer or student-directed format, a start and end date should still be established. The facilitator will need to schedule times for consultation and periodic monitoring to answer questions, check for understanding, and ensure students are on track for completion. These check-in sessions should also be an opportunity to determine if support is needed for the portfolio assignments.

## Gather Assessment Data

Facilitators may choose to develop a pre- and post-assessment for each lesson to gauge students' progress. Discussion, portfolio activities, and information that is gathered also provide pertinent assessment data that can be used to plan for a student's life after high school. Consider using the videos to develop 4-5 assessment questions to determine mastery of content per module. Review and modify the quiz at the end of each lesson.

## Develop Lessons

Begin by determining the purpose, intent, and expectations for course completion. In addition to a pre-assessment, facilitators are encouraged to have a “warm-up” activity related to the lesson to prepare students for instruction. These could include one of the discussion questions, poll questions, or other interactive strategies to engage students. Facilitators will also want to determine an effective grading system for assignments provided in this course.

Facilitators are also encouraged to use strategies such as role play, games, and other activities to enhance course content and accommodate different learning styles. Consider inviting guest speakers, such as local businesses in career areas of the students’ interests or vocational rehabilitation counselors, to further engage students during group discussions. This course is an ideal supplement to career readiness curricula and work-based learning activities.

## Check Technology

Check to make sure the technology, materials, and resources to view videos and complete the portfolio activities are available in the location where the course will be offered. Although there is no required textbook, the course facilitator and/or students will need a computer with (preferably high-speed) internet access and a sound card with speakers to listen to the video presentations. It is wise to have paper copies of Fascinating Facts and Portfolio Activities as a backup in the event of any issues accessing digital formats.

## During Course Implementation

As with any instruction, it is important to set the tone for success by building on students’ prior knowledge, interests, and strengths. Begin by having students register for the [Get Ready for Your Career](#). Then review the syllabus for the course and share the purpose and expectations for completing the course. Have the students watch the introductory video. Then proceed through the remaining lessons based on the established format and pacing. Do a technology check at the beginning of each session to ensure that students can view videos.



### Assess

If the decision is made to develop pre- and post-assessments for each lesson, administer the assessment at the beginning of each session, then use a warm-up activity and/or brief review of previous lessons, as time permits, to prepare students for new content.



### Watch Videos

The course contains a total of 10 videos to assist students with the career exploration process. Each video is captioned, and a transcript is provided.



## Discuss Topic

After completing the video presentations within each lesson, encourage students to take part in whole-class or small-group discussions. Group discussions are a beneficial component of any course in that they allow for further dialogue and assessment of knowledge of a topic. A list of potential discussion questions can be found in the [Course at a Glance](#).



## Review Fascinating Facts

Each lesson contains a Fascinating Facts document. The Fascinating Facts offers a snapshot of pertinent information relating to individual [Get Ready for Your Career](#) lessons. Facilitators can use these as study guides to review individual lessons or for a review of the entire course. Another idea is to compile these one-pagers in a binder as a reference for career preparation. Students may refer to them as a quick resource when engaging in career development activities. Facilitators may also use the Fascinating Facts during IEP/transition planning meetings to inform and support discussions related to career exploration and planning.



## Supplement Lesson with Expanding Knowledge Activities

Each lesson contains Expanding Knowledge activities. This section provides additional activities and resources for students desiring to expand their knowledge about a given topic. Facilitators may use Expanding Knowledge activities as homework assignments, have students select one or two for a special project, or employ them as strategies to engage family members in the career planning discussion. The recommended tasks listed for each lesson could be used as coordinating activities to support career exploration and postsecondary goals in the IEP. Expanding Knowledge provides the opportunity to further explore individual areas of interest and helps students in their decision-making process.



## Complete Portfolio Activity

Each lesson has a portfolio activity. These activities allow students to immediately use the knowledge and skills they have learned. Create a portfolio by compiling lesson activities and course resources. This portfolio provides an organized way to archive the course materials for future reference. By the end of the course, students will have a visual representation of their strengths, preferences, interests, and needs, as well as their plans for the future.



## Assess

If the decision is made to develop pre- and post-assessments for each lesson, conclude each lesson with the post-test to check for mastery of the material.

## After Course Implementation



### Review Completed Portfolios

Facilitators should also allot time to review each student's portfolio. Check for formatting, accuracy, and whether more instruction is needed. Students are encouraged to have both a digital and paper copy of their portfolio. Be sure that students can update their portfolios when needed.

Encourage students to share their portfolios, emphasizing strengths and interests, with school personnel, family members, appropriate agency providers, and any others who can support decisions made about employment and other postsecondary goals. This information is critical for planning students' next steps in life after high school.

### Other Items to Include in the Portfolio

In addition to course materials compiled in the portfolio, other items may be included. These items can include (but are not limited to):

- IEP
- Summary of Performance
- Age-appropriate transition assessments (such as employer evaluations)
- Resume
- High school transcript
- Letters of recommendation
- Award certificates
- Certifications (such as CPR, WISE, and Get Ready for Your Career)



### Evaluation

Be sure that students complete the course evaluation. Provide students the opportunity to share verbally and/or in writing what they gained from [Get Ready for Your Career](#). Preserve these testimonials for future course participants and to assess the effectiveness of the course.

Make sure that all students who have completed all components of the course receive a certificate of completion to add to their portfolios. Once the evaluation is completed, students will receive a link for a printable certificate of completion.

# Moving Forward

By following the recommendations in this guide, facilitators will provide students with the knowledge needed to make an informed decision on which careers are suited to their interests and abilities. The tools in this guide will prepare students, families, and other IEP team members to plan for a successful transition into the workforce.

## Additional Suggestions

Below are additional suggestions to help guide facilitators in increasing effective transition planning.

### Share course information

Share the information and resources from the course with families, colleagues, and others to increase their knowledge, skills, and ability to use effective transition planning practices.

### Help students and parents learn about viable career options and the career development process

Share information on the career development process and options available to students with disabilities early, beginning in middle school, for informed decision-making. Every student can be employed and achieve their personal and professional goals, and being well-informed is one of the first steps to success.

### Learn more about career planning

Visit the [Center on Transition Innovations](#) to learn about the most up-to-date resources and information on career planning for students with disabilities.

### Check out other CTI self-paced courses

[Get Ready for Your Career](#) is one course in a free series of online courses for students with disabilities offered by VCU's Center on Transition Innovations. [Get Ready for College](#) and [Get Ready for Independent Living](#) courses support effective practice and prepare students and families for a successful transition from school to adult life.