

Researching Occupations



An important step in preparing to enter the workforce or make a career change is to identify and understand the occupations (i.e. jobs or professions) that you will be targeting, as you approach your internship experience and post-graduation job search. Once you identify occupations of interest, you will need to research them. Learning about occupations can help you decide whether they are a good match for you. Conducting occupational research consists of gathering information and answering questions, such as:

- What type of work tasks would you do?
- Where would you work (type of organization)?
- What training or education is required?
- What is the job outlook?
- What is the salary range and advancement potential?
- Does this occupation fit with your interests, skills, values, work needs, and lifestyle preferences?

The following are some ways to begin researching occupations.

Identify Occupations of Interest from a Career Assessment

If you don't know how your interests connect to the world of work, consider taking a career assessment to learn which fields people who share your interests tend to work in.

- **Interest Profiler** (www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip): complete this free inventory on your own or with a Peer Career Coach to identify and research careers that match your interests.
- **iStartStrong** (<https://login.themyersbriggs.com>): New Alverno students complete this assessment in FSS 125 or ILA 200. If you have already taken it, login to review your results and explore occupations using the career fields and related occupations links on page 6; or visit www.onetonline.org and conduct an advanced search by Interests, then enter your two top themes from page 4. (Tip: select Job Zone 3-associate, 4-bachelors or 5-graduate level jobs.)
- **Strong Interest Inventory**: If you don't identify any interesting occupations using the previous assessments, schedule an appointment with a Career Coach to take and/or review your Strong Interest Inventory (a longer, more in-depth report of your iStartStrong results).

Research Specific Occupations Using Trusted Resources

Once you have identified specific occupations or groups of occupations (e.g. Art & Design, Community & Social Service, etc.), that you wish to learn more about, research them via trusted resources, such as:

- **Occupational Outlook Handbook** (www.bls.gov/ooh): find career information on the job duties, education and training, pay, and outlook for hundreds of occupations, from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- **O*NET Online** (www.onetonline.org): a free online database that contains information on hundreds of occupations, including state job outlook and salary data, from the U.S. Department of Labor.

- **Career Onestop (www.careeronestop.org)**: research occupations and explore career resources tailored to specific communities, such as members of the military and veterans, career changers, workers with disabilities, older workers, etc., made available by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Talk to Professionals in Occupations That Interest You

One of the best ways to learn about an occupation is to interview a working professional in the field, at their place of business. In this way, you can experience the work setting and learn whether your perception of the duties, challenges, required education and training, pay, and job outlook are accurate. Start doing informational interviews at the beginning of your college career. The knowledge you gain can assist you in selecting a major, minor, and appropriate coursework, as well as planning strategically for your internship(s). Resources that can help you identify professionals to interview include:

- **Ignite (www.alverno.edu/ignite)**: this networking platform allows Alverno students to connect with alumnae for career advice, and offers alumnae the opportunity to expand their professional network to include more Alverno Strong alums.
- **LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)**: search and connect with professionals around the world. Select “Participate in career advice platform” in your profile dashboard, for referrals to professionals who’ve offered to provide career advice. Join groups related to the industries you are exploring and then connect with individual members, regarding their experience.

Gain Some Experience

A great way to research an occupation or industry is to try it out. College students can try out an occupation by:

- **Searching for a part-time or summer job in the type of organization/industry that interests you.** Use sites like Handshake (<https://alverno.joinhandshake.com/login>), Milwaukee Jobs (www.milwaukeejobs.com), and Jobs That Help (www.jobsthathelp.com) to search for opportunities.
- **Doing volunteer work in a field of interest.** Search for opportunities on Handshake (<https://alverno.joinhandshake.com/login>) and the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County website (<https://volunteer.unitedwaygmwc.org>); or reach out to nonprofit organizations whose work and mission match your interests.
- **Doing an internship in a field of interest.** Schedule an appointment with a career coach via Handshake (<https://alverno.joinhandshake.com/login>) to get ideas of employers to target and learn about upcoming deadlines for established internship programs.