



# Find the Right Fit:

USING LABOUR MARKET  
INFORMATION TO EXPLORE  
EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING PATHWAYS

Find the Right Fit: Using Labour Market Information to Explore Education and Training Pathways

As labour market and employment requirements are subject to change, it is recommended that the reader verify the information in this guide before making any career decisions.

For questions or concerns about this publication contact [AskLMI@novascotia.ca](mailto:AskLMI@novascotia.ca).

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# INTRODUCTION

Choosing what to study can feel overwhelming—but you don't have to guess your way through it. Labour Market Information (LMI) gives you real facts about jobs, skills, and career opportunities. LMI is a helpful tool because it shows how your education choices can shape your future job opportunities. By understanding LMI, you can see how what you study affects whether you can find work, the types of jobs you'll be qualified for, your chances of finding a career you enjoy, and even how much you could earn. It gives you a clearer picture of how today's decisions connect to tomorrow's possibilities.

This guide will show you how to find and use LMI to explore options, compare programs, and plan your next steps. Whether you're considering college or university, or exploring skilled trades, LMI helps you connect your interests with real opportunities. Think of it as your roadmap—grounded in data, focused on your future, and designed to help you make choices that open doors.

## TALK ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS

Making decisions about which learning path to follow to reach your goals is not an easy one. There is a lot of information to sort through, and the process can be overwhelming. There are people who can help you work through the decision process.

### **School Counsellors:**

All public-school students can access a school counsellor that can help support you in life transitions and career development. School counsellors use their expertise to guide students to explore their interests, career goals, and plans. They can help advise you on opportunities within high school education to test drive careers and what courses to take as steps toward your future goals.

### **Nova Scotia Works School Liaisons (NSWSL):**

Public high schools across Nova Scotia are connected to a Nova Scotia Works School Liaison that helps support students and families with LMI and career pathways, helping you make informed decisions about future careers. School counsellors can refer students to NSWSL professionals.

### **Parents/mentors/teachers:**

Run your ideas by someone you trust. They may have unique or interesting perspectives, feedback, and guidance that you hadn't considered.

## UNDERSTANDING THE OPTIONS

When thinking about what to do after high school, many people consider college or university first. While this type of training is popular, it is not the best fit for everyone. There are many options available:

### Trade Certification

A **Journey person** is a skilled trades professional who has achieved a Certificate of Qualification in their trade. A high school diploma or equivalent is required to write the qualifying exam.

**Apprenticeship** is a training program leading to certification in the skilled trades. It involves two main parts: supervised on-the-job training and classroom technical training.

There are four pathways to certification: direct entry, youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship training, and trade qualifier.

**Direct entry** is taking a direct route to becoming an apprentice in a specific trade. You don't need a college certificate or diploma in the trade before starting. Instead, you find a job with an employer who's willing to train you as an apprentice, and then you register as an apprentice right away. It's a quicker way to begin your apprenticeship in a trade.

**Youth Apprenticeship** allows people ages 16 to 19 to register as apprentices and earn hours even if they are still attending high school.

**Pre-apprenticeship** training programs are trade programs that can be counted as credit when you begin an apprenticeship. You can do a pre-apprenticeship program without an employer but need an employer to become an apprentice.

A **Trade Qualifier** is someone with extensive hands-on experience in a trade. They record their experience and get two reference letters from experienced tradespeople. They can take the certification exam without going through an apprenticeship. This is especially important for trades without formal apprenticeship programs, as it's the only way to become certified.

Explore the [Skilled Trades Resource Centre](#) to learn more about working in the trades in Nova Scotia.

## College

In Nova Scotia, college typically refers to schools that grant non-degree certificates and diplomas. These programs tend to be focused on a specific field or occupation. Certificates are usually less than two-years in length while diplomas take two or more years and require a high school diploma or equivalent for admission. The [Nova Scotia Community College](#) and many [private career colleges](#) offer programs in Nova Scotia.

## University

Universities are schools that can grant degrees.

A **bachelor's degree** is an undergraduate degree awarded by universities upon completion of a specific course of study, typically requiring around four years of full-time study. It typically requires students to take a mix of general education courses and courses specific to their major or area of interest, indicating a broader and deeper understanding of a chosen field. A bachelor's degree can help you qualify for many jobs and is often needed for further education, like a master's degree. A high school diploma is typically required for admission into a bachelor's program.

A **master's degree** is a graduate-level degree that you earn after completing a bachelor's degree. It usually takes one to two years of additional study and involves more advanced coursework in a specific field. Some master's programs also require a thesis or a project.

A **doctorate** is the highest level of academic degree you can earn. It usually requires several years of study beyond a master's degree and involves original research in a specific field. Doctoral programs often include coursework, comprehensive exams, and a dissertation, which is a lengthy research project that contributes new knowledge to the field.

Visit [MyNSFuture](#) to learn more about Nova Scotia's universities.

### Consider education with an on-the-job learning option:

Lots of college and university programs let you learn by doing real work for an employer. These opportunities help you gain experience and feel more ready for a job. When you're choosing a program, check if it includes work experience. It can help you meet employers and make it easier to get hired later.

## **Military**

The Canadian Armed Forces has over 100 different jobs — from cooks to marine engineers to doctors. Because there are so many jobs, people in the military need many types of training and education.

The Forces gives you the training you need through special military schools and sometimes through college or university programs in Canada. The skills you learn in the military can also help you get jobs outside the Forces later.

If you qualify and get accepted, the Forces may help pay for your college or university. After you finish your education, they'll give you a job in the field you trained for.

To learn more, visit [www.forces.ca](http://www.forces.ca).

## **Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL)**

The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) offers free learning programs for adults across the province. There are more than 40 locations, and programs are run by partner organizations that support adult learners.

NSSAL is for adults in Nova Scotia who want to improve skills like reading, math, and computer use, or build skills needed for work. You can work toward an Adult High School Graduation Diploma, prepare for the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) test, or upgrade high school credits to get ready for college or university.

These programs are flexible and easy to follow. They help you gain the skills and knowledge you need to reach your education and job goals.

Learn more at <https://novascotia.ca/welcome-to-nssal/>

## Entrepreneurship

An **entrepreneur** is a person who starts their own business. They come up with an idea, plan, and work to earn money by selling a product or service. Entrepreneurs take risks and try to solve problems in new ways. Key traits of an entrepreneur are:

- Passion
- Resilience
- Strong sense of self
- Flexibility
- Vision

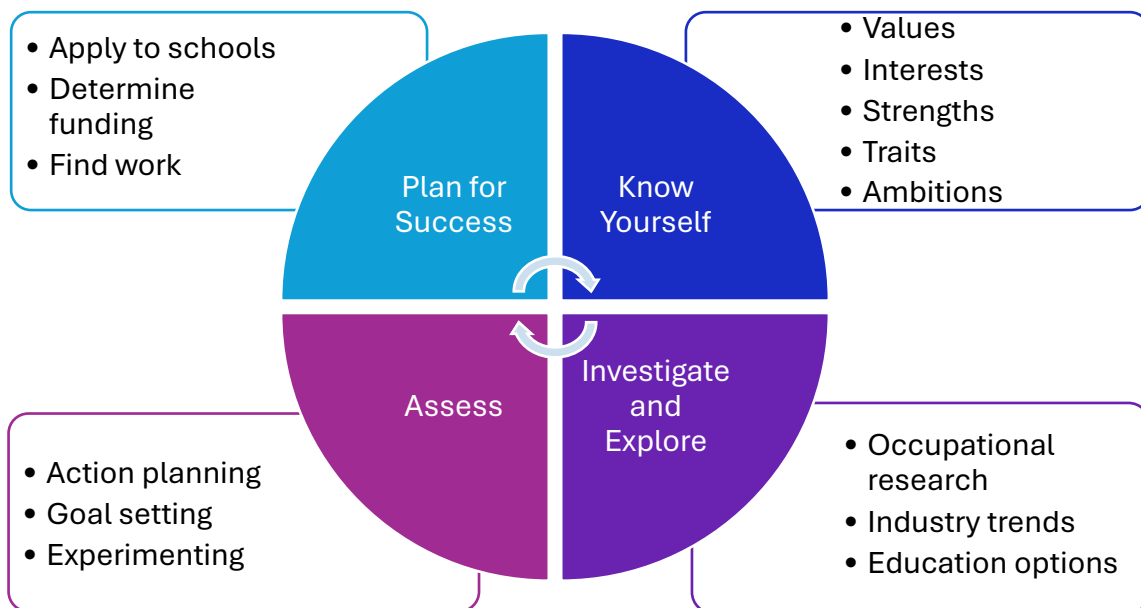
Resources to help you explore whether entrepreneurship is right for you include:

- BDC – [Entrepreneurial self-assessment](#)
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada – [Planning a Business](#)
- [Centre for Entrepreneurship Education & Development \(CEED\)](#)
- [Community Business Development Corporations](#)

# STEPS TO FINDING THE RIGHT FIT – THE CAREER LIFECYCLE

Choosing what to do after high school is an important part of planning your future. There are lots of choices, and there will even be jobs in the future that don't exist yet! So how do you prepare?

Career development isn't something you decide once. It's a journey. You keep learning about yourself, exploring different options, choosing a path, and then taking steps to make it happen.



[Making Career Choices | Nova Scotia Works | novascotiaworks.ca](https://novascotiaworks.ca)

## KNOW YOURSELF

Knowing yourself is the first step in planning your future. This means thinking about what you like to do, what you are good at, and what is important to you. You might enjoy helping people, fixing things, or being creative. You might be good at sports, math, or working with others. When you understand your interests, strengths, and values, it is easier to see what kinds of jobs might be a good fit. The more you learn about yourself, the easier it is to make choices about school and work.

[myBlueprint.ca](https://myBlueprint.ca) is a great place to start. All Nova Scotia students in Grades 4 to 12 can use this tool. It helps students explore careers, choose high school courses, and plan. Students can also learn about jobs, education and training options after high school, and find labour market information to support their career planning.

For those who do not have access to [myBlueprint.ca](https://myBlueprint.ca), the Job Bank offers several [career quizzes](#). Career quizzes and tests can help you choose, change, and develop your career. You can use them as a starting point in your journey to get to know yourself better and explore the wide range of career opportunities available to you.

## INVESTIGATE AND EXPLORE

### Experiment

Get creative — consider all the possible paths at this stage. There are many ways to grow your understanding about yourself. Participating in a variety of experiences can help you learn what you like, don't like, or find interesting and help you think of future possibilities. Your school counsellor and Nova Scotia Works School Liaison can help you identify beneficial experiences. There are many ways to try new things and learn more about potential pathways:

1. Participate in [Career Pathways programming](#) – these programs give you the opportunity to learn both inside the classroom and out in the community. These opportunities help you build essential skills and support informed decision making.
2. Join school organizations and clubs
3. Take a variety of elective courses to explore different subject areas

4. Play sports or participate in other extracurricular activities
5. Participate in Youth Outreach programs that provide the opportunity to engage in work-integrated learning, including pathways to the skilled trades. Find a list of programs available at [Trades Exploration](#).
6. Participate in youth entrepreneurship – for example: [Junior Achievement](#)
7. Volunteer or get a part-time or summer job - [Search - Volunteer and serve - Youth Digital Gateway - Canada.ca](#)
8. Job shadowing or informational interviews – these activities can help to increase your level of comfort with a training or education plan.
9. Talk to people who have done what you are thinking about – whether you find people who already have your dream job, or those who have followed the education pathway you are interested in, they will be able to provide useful first-hand information and advice if you ask for it.

Develop a wide range of options that align with what sets you apart and keep an open mind to careers that you haven't thought of before. Make sure to create a list as you go.

## **What is LMI and how does it support education decisions**

### **What is LMI?**

Labour Market Information (LMI) is information about jobs and the people who do them. It can include information on the education/training required, skills, job descriptions, costs to complete education, job flexibility, wages and salaries, current job openings, future job prospects, work locations, and work environment as well as traditional labour market statistics. For more information on the common terms used in labour market information visit the [LMI Glossary](#).

### **What can LMI tell you?**

LMI can help identify:

- What jobs are in demand or growing – which can help you select fields with better job prospects
- The skills, education or training required to work in that field
- Salaries and wages – will it meet your needs?
- Where training is offered
- Where you could work once you finish a training program

## Why is LMI useful when planning your future?

Your education choices can impact your career options. It can affect:

- Whether you can find a job
- The types of jobs available to you
- The chances of finding a job you enjoy
- How much more you earn

Using LMI when considering education choices can help you:

- Discover careers you may not have known about
- Compare different pathways (apprenticeship, college, university, or direct-to-work)
- Efficiently invest in your education – considering LMI decreases the chance of wasting time or money on training for declining fields
- Financial security – awareness of earning outcomes helps you invest in education pathways with stronger financial returns
- Program alignment – LMI can help you pick educational programs that are most likely to lead to employment
- Informed decision-making – you can select programs based on data about job availability, projected growth, and salary expectations – reducing guesswork and aligning with realistic personal and market needs

## LMI can help address myths

There are many myths about the labour market that can be answered through LMI.

Myths	Facts
There is only one “right” career path	Career paths are rarely linear. Most people change jobs several times, and interests often evolve with new experiences. LMI helps you see multiple pathways, not just one.
You must choose your career right after high school and stick with it forever	Many adults retrain or upskill throughout their lives. LMI can help you identify opportunities at <b>any</b> stage.
You won’t succeed without knowing exactly what you want to do	Exploration is part of career development. Trying different courses, programs, and experiences helps you discover what fits.

Myths	Facts
If a job is in demand now it will always be in demand	Labour market needs change. Using up-to-date LMI helps you plan for fields with long-term stability, not just short-term trends.
You need university to be successful	College diploma programs and apprenticeship are other choices that can lead to satisfying and well-paid employment.
Trades are a last resort	Skilled trades require strong technical, problem-solving, and math skills — and many trades offer high wages, benefits, and clear career progression.
Higher education guarantees a job	A credential helps, but employment also depends on skills, experience, and labour market demand. LMI helps align education decisions with real opportunities.
You will have to leave Nova Scotia to get a well-paid job	The 2025-2027 outlook estimates that 10,950 new jobs will be added in the next couple of years and another 29,250 openings created due to attrition. This means roughly 40,200 positions will be available in the coming years*
The only real opportunities are for those with technology training or professional degrees	Truck drivers, light duty cleaners, early childhood educators, and health-care workers are examples of jobs expected to be in high demand in the next few years. *
Follow your passion and the money will come	Passion is important, but research helps avoid dead ends
Only high-paying jobs are worth pursuing	Job satisfaction, work–life balance, stability, and alignment with your values are equally important. LMI helps weigh both earnings <b>and</b> quality of work.
LMI is boring numbers	LMI helps build a roadmap for your future

\*Source: Occupational Employment Outlook, NS; Service Canada, 2025-2027

## How LMI can help you explore options

Labour Market Information (LMI) helps you understand how different education and training choices connect to real job opportunities. When you're deciding what to study—or whether to study at all—LMI gives you facts that make your decisions clearer and more confident. Instead of guessing what programs lead to good jobs, LMI shows the link between your interests, training pathways, and real careers.

Here's how LMI supports exploration:

### 1. Understand what jobs are growing and potential career pathways

LMI shows which occupations are expected to have strong demand in the coming years. This helps you focus on programs that lead to stable jobs rather than training for fields with limited opportunities. LMI helps to answer questions like:

- *What jobs are expected to be in demand when I graduate?*
- *Are there careers that are growing in Nova Scotia or across Canada?*
- *Which jobs have the best long-term outlook?*
- *What industries are expanding or changing?*
- *How stable is this career over time?*

The table below provides resources that can support these questions:

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
Outlooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the Nova Scotia Works <a href="#">career profiles</a> under the <i>Outlook</i> tab. For help interpreting the profile check out <a href="#">Find the Right Fit: Career Profiles in Nova Scotia</a></li><li>• Job Bank <a href="#">Job Outlooks</a> for information across Canada</li><li>• Find trend information at <a href="https://lmi.novascotia.ca/occupations">https://lmi.novascotia.ca/occupations</a></li></ul>	learning about which fields and jobs are emerging and what skills will be most in demand.
Hiring Demand trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find information on job vacancy and job posting trends at <a href="#">Hiring Demand   Labour market Information</a></li></ul>	Identify roles employers are currently looking to fill
Industry Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Job Bank <a href="#">Sectoral Profiles</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Regional profiles</a> to identify top industries of employment in your region</li></ul>	Understand challenges and opportunities for key sectors in your region

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
LMI Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour Force Trends - <a href="https://lmi.novascotia.ca/statistics">https://lmi.novascotia.ca/statistics</a></li> </ul>	Identify trends in employment, industries, and job vacancies
Explore Occupations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Career profiles</a></li> <li><a href="#">Career Search - Let's Talk Science</a></li> <li><a href="#">myBlueprint.ca</a></li> </ul>	Explore options that you may not have considered

## 2. Compare education pathways

LMI highlights the education or certification needed for each occupation – whether the best route is a trade, college diploma, university degree, or direct-to-work experience. Knowing the pathways helps you choose the best option that fits your goals, learning style, and budget. LMI helps to answer questions like:

- *Do I need university, college, apprenticeship, or certification for this job?*
- *Are there multiple ways to get into this career?*
- *Which pathway is fastest? Which is most affordable?*
- *What education level do most people in this career have?*
- *Can I switch pathways later if I change my mind?*

The table below provides resources that can support these questions:

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
myBlueprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">myBlueprint</a> is a resource introduced to students as early as elementary school and may be used beyond graduation.</li> </ul>	Explore educational pathways and plan required courses
Education & Training requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search for a <a href="#">Career Profile</a> and visit the Education &amp; training tab for education and regulation requirements</li> </ul>	Identify pathways associated with a specific occupation
Explore Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search for an <a href="#">Area of Study</a> for an overview of program pathway options and potential outcomes</li> </ul>	Learn about areas of study, related programs, where to study, and potential career pathways

### 3. Explore program outcomes

Many students wonder, “If I take this program, what jobs can I actually get?” LMI shows what jobs recent graduates enter, how many find work in their field, and what skills employers look for. This helps you compare programs and choose one that leads to the kind of career you want. LMI helps answer questions like:

- *What kinds of jobs do graduates from this program actually get?*
- *How many graduates find work in their field?*
- *Do people with this credential earn enough for the lifestyle I want?*
- *Are there opportunities for advancement after this program?*
- *What skills will I come out of the program with?*

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
Potential Careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for an <a href="#">Area of Study</a> and choose the “working in the field” for careers associated with a Nova Scotia program.</li> <li>• <a href="#">School to Work Transition Tool - Job Bank</a> – national information on related careers</li> </ul>	Understand where people end up working after graduation
Job Openings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Job Search   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> – see who is hiring in Nova Scotia</li> <li>• <a href="#">Job Bank</a> – for jobs across Canada</li> </ul>	Understand the types of jobs employers are hiring for
Outlooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Nova Scotia Works <a href="#">career profiles</a> under the <i>Outlook</i> tab. For help interpreting the profile check out <a href="#">Find the Right Fit: Career Profiles in Nova Scotia</a></li> <li>• Job Bank <a href="#">Job Outlooks</a> for information across Canada</li> <li>• <a href="#">Occupations in Demand by Education Level   Labour market Information</a> – identify in demand occupations by their level of education and experience</li> </ul>	Learning about which fields and jobs are emerging and what skills will be most in demand.

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
Regional profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Regions   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> – learn about top industries of employment, careers with the most employees, employment trends, and who has hired.</li> </ul>	Understand regional hiring trends
Hiring Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hiring Demand   Labour market Information</a> – hiring demand trends, who has advertised job openings</li> <li>• <a href="#">Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (PDF)   Labour market Information</a></li> </ul>	Learn about current hiring trends

#### 4. Understand wages and earning potential

LMI provides wage ranges for different jobs across Nova Scotia and Canada. This helps you understand whether a field can support your financial goals and whether the cost of training is likely to pay off. LMI helps answer questions like:

- *How much can I expect to earn in this career?*
- *Will this career pay enough for the lifestyle I want?*
- *How long will it take to earn back the cost of my education?*
- *Do wages increase over time?*
- *Does education level (e.g. diploma vs. bachelor's) make a big difference in earnings?*
- *Are full-time jobs common in this field or is the work mostly part-time or seasonal?*

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
Education outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Labour market outcomes for college and university graduates</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Explore Education and Training   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> – provincial salary trend for areas of study</li> <li>• <a href="#">School to Work Transition Tool - Job Bank</a> – national salary trends for areas of study</li> <li>• <a href="#">Education and Training   Labour market Information</a> – income and unemployment impacts of education levels</li> </ul>	Explore outcomes by credential level and area of study – helps decide if it is worth investing in an education pathway to pursue a certain career

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
Occupational wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Careers   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> – provincial wage and income levels</li> <li>• <a href="#">Search wages - Job Bank</a> – wage information across Canada</li> </ul>	Helps decide which careers will meet your earnings expectations
Employment Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Careers   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> – under the outlook tab the job market insights provides employment type</li> </ul>	Is an occupation of interest likely to have full-time work

## 5. Learn where training is offered

LMI helps you find schools, apprenticeship opportunities, adult learning programs, and other training options that connect directly to the jobs you're interested in—saving time and helping you plan your next steps. It can help answer questions like:

- *Where can I study this in Nova Scotia?*
- *Is the program offered in-person, online, or both?*
- *Are there co-ops, placements, or apprenticeships included?*
- *Do I have to move, or can I stay in my community?*
- *Is financial support available at this school or training site?*

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
Programs related to an occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Careers   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> under the education and training tab</li> </ul>	Identify local programs connected to an occupation
Schools in a region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Regions   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> under the education and training tab</li> </ul>	Identify schools in your region
Programs for a field of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Explore Education and Training   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> – the section titled “Institutions offering this Program”</li> </ul>	Identify where to study a subject in Nova Scotia

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
School websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access school websites via <a href="#">Careers, Regions, or Explore Education and Training   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">MyNSFuture   Nova Scotia Universities and Colleges</a></li> </ul>	Provide program details like work placements, entrance requirements, online offerings
Short term training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Training Finder - Job Bank</a></li> </ul>	Gain in-demand skills with short-term training courses from recognized institutions across Canada
Skills upgrading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SkillsonlineNS - SkillsonlineNS</a> - free online courses</li> <li>• <a href="#">LinkedIn Learning Library Account Login   Formerly Lynda Library</a> - available through many library memberships</li> </ul>	Improve essential skills, upgrade high school credits, learn new skills

## 6. Explore skills needed for success

Each occupation includes LMI about technical skills, essential skills, and personal strengths. Knowing this helps you:

- decide whether the field fits your strengths and interests
- identify gaps you may want to work on
- prepare more effectively for training or employment

LMI can help answer questions like:

- *What technical skills do I need for this career?*
- *What personal or “soft” skills are important?*
- *Do I already have some of these skills?*
- *How can I start building these skills before I start training?*
- *Are these skills transferable to other jobs if I change careers later?*

Resource	Where to find this	How it can help
Skills related to an occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Careers   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> under the education and training tab</li> </ul>	Identify the skills employers require for an occupation
Skills related to an area of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Explore Education and Training   Nova Scotia Works   novascotiaworks.ca</a> find related marketable skills under the “working in this field” tab</li> </ul>	Identify the skills gained from an area of study
Skills in Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Skills   Labour market Information</a></li> </ul>	Understand the skills employers are looking for
Essential Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Welcome to the essential skills indicator! - Canada.ca</a></li> </ul>	Assess your essential skills
Skills Match	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">OaSIS - Skills Match search - Canada.ca</a></li> </ul>	Find similar occupations based on their skills profiles

## 7. Plan realistically for your future

By combining the information that you have gathered – job outlook, education requirements, earning potential, and potential programs – you can make decisions that match your goals and the realities of the labour market.

With all of this in mind, questions to consider are:

- *What will this career look like in 5–10 years?*
- *Will I be able to find work where I want to live?*
- *How much will school cost, and how will I pay for it?*
- *What are the steps I need to take to reach this goal?*
- *If this plan doesn’t work out, what’s my backup option?*

## Assess

Now that you have a range of choices to consider, it's time to begin comparing your possible pathways. To do this, continue to research each option and make notes as you learn more. As you learn more, you'll see how each option will excite you and challenge you in different ways. Hopefully, you can reach a point where you have an ideal choice in mind, and some alternate options.

### Things to consider

#### **Cost:**

Your training and education budget is an important consideration. Start saving early if you are looking at more expensive or lengthy programs at college or university. If lack of funds is an issue, don't forget to check out Nova Scotia's Student Assistance program at: [novascotia.ca/studentassistance](http://novascotia.ca/studentassistance).

#### **Location:**

Staying in your home community or moving elsewhere is a big decision related to training and education. Distance or online programs may provide flexibility to get you the skills you need without the added costs of travel or moving.

#### **Class Size:**

Are you comfortable in an environment with a lot of other learners like college or university, or do you prefer something smaller and more personal like an employers' business or community setting? You can visit potential educational institutions to get a feel for the environment and how you might fit within it. Many provide options like open houses, campus tours, or "test drive" options.

#### **Learning Options:**

University and college programs often focus on classroom-based learning, but many are now integrating hands-on learning opportunities like co-op, practicums, internships, clinical work, trades, or other hands-on experiences.

## **Timing and Commitment:**

Consider the program length and the time and cost commitment associated with the options you are considering. Ask yourself:

- Do you want to start earning an income within the next few months, this year, or in several years?
- Is this the right time to start multiple years of school?
- Will you be ready to jump into a job as soon as your program has completed or will you need more education afterwards?
- Should you consider part-time study while working?

## **Employment Opportunities:**

Back to the LMI. Make sure you know what you can expect after you finish your program and if the employment prospects are good, average, or limited in your field of study. You can prepare for any challenges you might have in finding satisfying employment by perfecting the skills employers are looking for and finding ways to set yourself apart from your peers through experience and personal qualities.

## Plan and Act

Once you have a goal or goals identified it is time to develop a plan to make your options a reality. By outlining both short-term and long-term steps you need to take, you can create a roadmap to achieving your career goals.

For example, if you are attending a 2-year business program, you will likely need to do more than just apply. You may also have to arrange for funding, find student housing, and improve your study skills before you start the program. Writing down all these steps will make your goals easier to reach.

Things to consider when making your plan include:

1. What are the entrance requirements for the program you would like to take? Head back to myBlueprint to plan your courses accordingly.
2. What are the deadlines for applying to school? What do you need to include in the application?
3. If you will need student housing, when do you apply?
4. How are you going to pay for school? Will you need to find a job? Do you have savings? If you have a RESP account, what is the process to redeem those funds? When do you need to apply for loans? For more on financing your education visit:

<https://novascotia.ca/studentassistance/Financing/>

## Conclusion

Planning your education and training pathway is a major step, but it becomes much easier when you have the right information and support. Labour Market Information (LMI) helps you understand how your interests connect to real opportunities and shows how different choices can shape your future. By taking the time to explore your options, learn about yourself, compare pathways, and ask questions, you can make confident decisions that reflect your goals and values.

Remember that career development is a journey—not a one-time decision. As you grow, your interests and opportunities may change, and that's okay. What matters most is staying curious, seeking experiences that help you learn, and using tools and supports available to you. With the right plan and the right information, you can move forward with clarity, confidence, and a clear sense of direction toward a future that fits you.