



Veteran's Career Planning Workbook: Crafting a customized plan for your campus-to-career transition

Step 1. Describe your strengths and aspirations

Your career journey starts with your aspirations, strengths and talents. Think through these questions:

- A. What career or job would you like to do even if you weren't paid to do it? In other words, what productive activities do you enjoy?

- B. Are there problems or issues that you find yourself thinking about even when you don't have to (for example, when you're driving or walking)?

- C. What have you been good at your whole life? What has seemed easy to you that didn't seem to be easy for others?

- D. What about the jobs you had in the military? What jobs or tasks did you like the most and the least? Why?



Step 2. Your Career Preferences: How do you like to work?

- A. Do you prefer to work indoors or outdoors? _____
- B. Do you prefer working with others or alone? _____
- C. Do you prefer to work slowly or quickly? _____
- D. Do you prefer routine tasks or changing tasks? _____
- E. Do you prefer to work with certainties or with unknowns? _____
- F. Do you prefer to follow directions or to solve problems yourself? _____
- G. Would you prefer to be a salaried employee, freelancing contractor, or a business owner? _____
- H. What salary range are you targeting? _____



Step 3. Narrow it down

Part I: You've now thought about your strengths, talents, and preferences. Given this, what are three possible careers you would most like to pursue at this time?

A. Career Possibility 1:

B. Career Possibility 2:

C. Career Possibility 3:

Part II: Do your three possible career choices match your career preferences from Step 2? For example, did you choose a career that's interesting but that probably will not have many job openings or job security? If so, you could end up with a lengthy job search. Are you ready for that? Take a moment to assess your choices and preferences and make sure they are aligned.



Step 4. Do some research

Homework: Look up your three career choices in the [Online Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) by entering each choice in the “Search” box in the upper-right corner of the website. Check out each career choice and take notes on the following questions

- What is the average rate of pay?
- What is the availability of positions in your area? If needed, are you willing to relocate? Can you telecommute?
- Is this field growing (are more people likely to be hired to do this work in 5 years?)
- Is there job security in this role? If not, is it a stepping stone to your future career?
- What is the career path for people in this role? Are you qualified now or do you need to work your way up? Do you need additional education?
- Do the typical conditions and environment of this position match your preferences?

Now, use your notes to assess each career choice:

A. Career Possibility 1: _____
This career will work for me because:

Things I’m worried about:

B. Career Possibility 2: _____
This career will work for me because:

Things I’m worried about:

C. Career Possibility 3: _____
This career will work for me because:

Things I’m worried about:

Step 5. It’s time to make a choice! Which career possibility seems like the best fit for you?



Step 6. Adjust, adapt, and accommodate

Veterans (and others) have a right to a job accommodation so they can perform their jobs effectively with a disability. An accommodation is a change that enables them to perform the main tasks of their job effectively with their disability. Accommodations can include changes in the work environment, equipment, or technology, or changes in how or where a job is done.

John's Story: John is recovering from a traumatic brain injury he got 2 years ago while serving in Afghanistan. His symptoms have improved, but he still has difficulty with short-term memory. John has always had an interest in computers and wants to pursue a career in IT. He found an app that gives him frequent reminders and a task tracking system. He has decided to target jobs that are a little more routine in nature when applying for his first job in this field.

Think through your accommodation needs or options by considering these questions:

- A. What are the 3–5 main (or essential) job tasks in your chosen career path?

- B. What environment is the job generally performed in?

- C. Could your disability impact any of these job tasks or environmental issues? If so, how?

- D. What accommodations might you need in this career? [Tool 7](#) of the Veterans Campus to Careers Toolkit and the [Job Accommodation Network](#) will give you more ideas for accommodation options.

- E. Do you have any concerns or questions about your accommodation needs?

Remember: You now have a general idea of your accommodation needs and options. But each workplace and job is different. You might need an accommodation in some workplaces, but not others. When applying for a job you do not have to tell the employer that you'll be using an accommodation. Also, your disability might change over time. So, your accommodation needs might also change.



Step 7. Make a plan

By thinking through your wishes and needs, you've taken a big step in your career journey. Now, you need a plan. Your plan could be long-term or short-term, depending on where you are now in your career goal and where you want to be. You'll consider what you have, what you need, and how your employment or veteran counselor can help.

- A. What skills did you acquire during service (certifications, skills, jobs you did while serving)? Note: To translate military jobs/skills into civilian terms, go to [Military.com Skills Translator](https://www.military.com/skills-translator).

- B. What paid civilian work experiences (prior to entering military service or while attending school) do you have?

- C. What non-paid work experiences (volunteering, being in a club/organization, taking a leadership role) do you have?

- D. Do you need any formal education (classes, degrees, certifications)?

- E. Do you need more work experience (internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, part-time or temporary work to get experience)?

- F. Do you need to connect and network (interviewing people in this career, joining clubs/organizations, participating in community events, etc.)?

- G. How can your Employment or Veteran Counselor be most helpful to you with this plan?