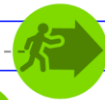


HELPING YOUR TEENAGER WITH CAREER PLANNING

Who am I?

Get to know your interests, skills and strengths. Who are you and what is important to you?



GO!

Put your plan into action.



Where do I want to go?

Research a number of occupations/careers and the training you need to get into these.



How do I get there?

Develop a career plan and set goals that will take you where you want to go.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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INTRODUCTION

As your teen moves through secondary school, their thoughts may naturally turn to considering their options for their future career. As a parent, you are well placed to offer support and advice as they begin to direct themselves towards their future goals.

In this guide you will find helpful information and resources to support you in supporting your child through the crucial decision-making processes that lie ahead.

From understanding what the role of a career coach entails, to where you and your teen can find further support, this guide helps answer many of the concerns your teen may have at this time. This guide aims to help you help your teen to:

- Find their career passion
- Understand the labour trends in today's world
- Consider the options available to them
- Discover their next step
- Where to go to find out more

WHAT IS CAREER COACHING?

Being a career coach for your teen means helping to guide your teen through the decision-making process and supporting them in reaching their goals.

The role of career coach requires a parent to help their teen to:

- ▶ Explore their interests and discover their passions
- ▶ Grow in experience by engaging in a range of career-related activities
- ▶ Set realistic career goals and support them in achieving those goals
- ▶ Connect with mentors and allies that will encourage them and assist them in making informed decisions
- ▶ Explore the range of educational and career options available to them
- ▶ Try on 'career hats' through volunteering and work experience
- ▶ Make the best possible decisions for their situation.



THE FOUR CRUCIAL PRINCIPLES

How do I become a good career coach for my teen?

As a parent, you are in a great position to help your teen already. To strengthen your position and provide the most effective coaching possible, there are a number of principles to stick to. In the following sections we will look at these four crucial principles that will help provide focus for your coaching efforts:

1. Stay Up-to-date
2. Communication is Key
3. Lead by Example
4. Seek Support

Principle 1: Stay Up-to-date

The working landscape of today changes so rapidly that it is often hard to keep up. To help your teen plot a successful career path will require some research on your part. Research will help you to identify trends in the workplace, growth industries, and new and emerging jobs. With this information, your teen will be best placed to make informed decisions.

Future job availability and the types of jobs available will depend on a number of factors, including:

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- Demand for goods and services
 - Demand for resources
 - Technology advances
 - Worker turnover

Changes to Australia's population will impact the future job market.

Projections from the Australian government suggest a growing demand for aged care, childcare, home based care, and education services. While construction, infrastructure investment, tourism and international education sector are expected to stay strong.¹

All jobs will be considerably impacted by ongoing advancements in technology, with adaptability and good communication skills being identified as becoming increasingly essential in ever-transforming work environments.

Where do I go to keep up-to-date?

There is a wealth of freely available resources available online with links to many of these listed in the resources section of this guide. It is also a good idea to keep informed of changing trends by regularly reading newspapers and magazines.

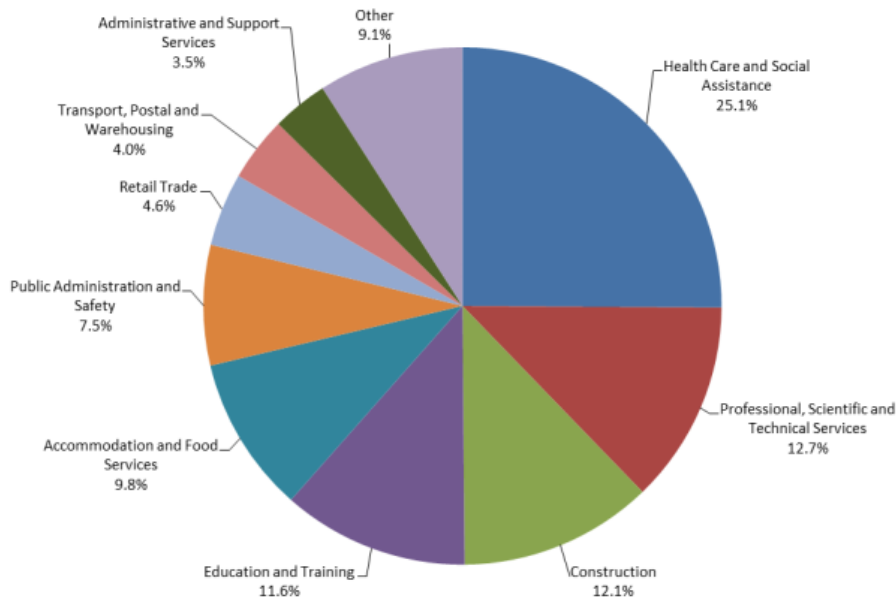
While it is important to keep up-to-date as best you can, don't fret! Today's teens have grown up in a world that changes rapidly and they are well used to adapting to the challenges this places on them. This is not about to change: experts have suggested that Australians will change employers 17 times across five different careers during their working life.² Though we

¹ "Employment Projections - Welcome to the Labour Market Information" 21 May. 2018, <http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmploymentProjections>. Accessed 12 Jul. 2018.

² McCrindle Research (2014) "Job mobility in Australia" using HILDA data. Available at: <https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blog/job-mobility-australia/>

cannot predict all the changes that lie ahead, ensuring your teen is informed will go a long way to help them reach their potential.

Share of projected employment growth by industry 2017 - 2022³



Principle 2: Communication is Key

Even though they are extremely adaptable, it is important to show your teen that you care about their future and are there to support them. The best way to do this is to listen and discuss their concerns with them. Here are some pointers to help kickstart the conversation with your teen:

³ "Employment Projections - Employment Projections - data.gov.au." 21 May. 2018, <https://data.gov.au/dataset/employment-projections/resource/561dcae7-5aaa-4ef3-8f83-32fe97984f62>. Accessed 2 Jul. 2018.

-
- **Ask questions:** Asking questions helps you understand your teen's interests and hopes for the future.
 - **Make time to talk:** There is always time. Whether on the drive to school, at the dinner table, or even between TV shows - be available!
 - **Use clippings:** Cutting interesting articles from newspapers and magazines is a great way to get a discussion started.
 - **Explore interests together:** Making time to share in your teen's interests can provide a good starting point for a career-related conversation.

Principle 3: Lead by Example

We mentioned already the importance of good communication, but it is worth repeating as talking and listening are essential. One of the best means of supporting your teen is to offer them the benefit of your experience and to model best practice for them.

You can do this in a number of ways, for example:

- Discuss with your teen positive experiences from your working life. Share with them the idea that we can derive fulfillment from our work. This will encourage your teen to approach career planning with optimism and enthusiasm.
- Demonstrate in your approach to life the advantages of discipline. Show by example that a life best-lived is a combination of work and fun.
- Encourage your teen to see their mistakes as an inevitable part of the learning process by embracing your own errors and using the knowledge gained to inform future decisions.

-
- Model the importance of lifelong learning by embracing new challenges in your own life. Developing new skills and sharpening old ones will be an essential part of succeeding in the workplace of the future.

Principle 4: Seek Support

The role of serving as career coach to your teen can be an extremely challenging one at times, but it is important to realise too that you do not have to do it all alone.

It is important to seek allies in all the forms available to make sure your teen is afforded the best possible support. Doing this will ensure they benefit from a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

Allies can come in many guises. From school teachers, sports coaches, guidance counselors, friends, family, and community and religious leaders, each can offer unique insights to help your teen in a number of possible ways. Allies can:

- Provide unique insights into your teen's strengths and weaknesses
- Make suggestions and give advice from their particular experiences and backgrounds
- Give guidance on further education and training opportunities
- Provide moral support in the face of challenges your teen may be experiencing
- Help source education and training scholarship and grant opportunities.

WHAT IS CAREER PLANNING?

Career planning is an ongoing and dynamic process. Life is filled with unforeseen twists and turns and planning should not be seen by your teen as making a commitment to an unalterable course of action.

Career planning should be seen as cyclical in nature and open to adjustment on an ongoing basis and in light of new information. Plans will need to be responsive to various external factors such as, for example, changing interests, family circumstances, and social and economic influences.

What does creating a career plan involve?

There are a number of things to consider in putting together a career plan:

- Identify interests, skills, and goals (**Know**)
- Explore the options (**Explore**)
- Decide on Preferences (**Plan**)
- Make it happen (**Go**)

As their career coach, your role here is to guide them through these steps and encourage them to prepare for unforeseen obstacles along their journey. Remind them too that no plan survives implementation unscathed. Help them to adapt and alter their plan as things change.

For career planning resources see the [Resources](#) section at this end of this guide.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Step 1: Identify Interests, Skills, and Goals - Know

In the first step of career planning, encourage your teen to reflect on their own interests, skills, and goals for the future. This will require them to consider their personality traits, their preferred lifestyle, their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their beliefs and values. Finding an occupation in line with these is more likely to lead to a meaningful and rewarding working life.

Be warned though it can be surprisingly difficult for an individual to objectively assess themselves accurately. Encourage your teen to discuss things with you and other allies that have been enlisted to help.

Another way to gather useful information is to complete various self-assessments available online. Please refer to the [Resources](#) at the end of his guide for links to some of these.

A good strategy to encourage personal reflection is to brainstorm with your teen. Encourage them to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and the possible careers that interest them. You can make suggestions and ask questions to help them in their understanding of themselves.

Personal Reflections: Question Prompts

What is your favourite subject at school?

What do you like to do in your free time?

What would you like to study at university?

What would your dream job be?

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

What would you like to get better at?

What careers would you like to find out more about?



Step 2: Explore the Options - Explore

During our teenage years friendships are extremely important. They can be a source of great support during what is often a difficult time. But teens can often be overly concerned about the opinion of others. This may mean they are vulnerable to peer pressure and base their decisions on the desire to fit in. They may also have a fixed self image that affects what careers they believe best suits them that is based on feedback they have received from others rather than how they feel about things themselves.

During this stage it is important to encourage your teen to consider the diverse range of options available to them. Encourage them to research and try out new experiences. This is certainly a time for experimentation.

To gain more information on possible education or career opportunities encourage your teen to:

- Read up on a wide range of careers and available educational courses and training opportunities
- Volunteer or gain work experience in diverse fields that interest them
- Participate in clubs or societies in areas that may be of interest
- Enrol in new courses or subjects at school, college, or online
- Talk to people who work in a field they are interested in

Step 3: Decide on Preferences - Plan

After identifying interests, skills, and goals and exploring the available options, it is time to help your teen decide on their preference/s.

Remember, making a choice at this stage does not have to mean making a final decision on a career that they will spend the rest of their lives working in. It just means they will decide on a general career direction.

Share experiences from your own working life with your teen. Think back to when you were a teen yourself and recall the hopes and fears you had then. How did you overcome those fears? How did you achieve your goals? How did your goals change over time? How did new opportunities open up during your working life? What would you have done differently? What were the best decisions you made?



To help your teen make these initial choices encourage them to review the information they have gathered during the previous two steps. As you discuss this with them, ask them to consider their options in light of what they know about themselves and what they hope to get out of their working life. Work with them to develop a list of pros and cons and use these to narrow down the options. Remind them that their decision can always be changed later.

Step 4: Make it Happen - Go

Now that your teen has made a choice and defined a goal you will need to help them identify which requirements they will need to meet to enter their chosen field. Depending on the nature of their choice, you may need to help them divide the requirements into separate more manageable goals. To do this, consider the following:

- Which institutions offer the training your teen needs?
- What entry requirements will your teen need to meet?
- What will they need to do to meet those requirements?
- What deadlines will need to be met?
- What funding is available to your teen and how is this applied for?

Things to do:

- Identify the areas where your teen may need help and devise a plan of action to support them
- Discuss with your teen how you can help them towards their goals and whether or not you are in a position to help financially
- Offer to go with them on open days and information sessions for moral support
- Be there to support them when things do not go according to plan
- Help to find alternatives if *Plan A* doesn't work out.

CAREER MAPPING

Creating a career map can help your teen in the decision-making process.

Like a vision board, a career map helps your teen visualise what their future might look like. Begin the process by asking them to imagine what they would like their life to be like 25 years into the future. Help them do this by asking some questions, for example:

- Where will you live?
- Would you like to be married?
- Would you like to have children?
- What will your life look like?
- What will you do in your free time?
- Will you work from home? In an office? Have your own company?

When they have decided on their *destination* they can begin to map the route to that destination. They will need to consider possible intermediary points along the way. You can encourage by referring to your own life journey with reference to the events that happened along the way. These events may be related to school, travel, jobs, volunteer work, relationships, achievements, awards, or anything else of relevance.



ENTERPRISE SKILLS

With such a rapid rate of change in the world of work, the development of enterprise skills that empower teens to navigate new challenges is essential. As it is not possible to predict the specific nature of the challenges our teens will face throughout the span of their working life, the following transferable skills, known as enterprise skills, will ensure they are best placed to adapt to the changing needs of an ever-evolving workplace. Enterprise skills differ from technical skills in that they are generic skills that are transferable across different jobs.



Skill 1: Problem solving

The ability to analyse the factors contributing to a problem, evaluate the best solution, and implement a plan are much sought after by employers. As it isn't always possible to foresee every scenario that may occur in the workplace, employers want to be confident an employee can adapt to and overcome challenges that arise.

Your teen may be asked to demonstrate their ability to think on their feet at the interview stage. Often, interviewers will ask a '*What would you do if...?*' question based on a hypothetical scenario. Help your teen prepare by posing similar questions in preparation.

Skill 2: Teamwork

To accomplish complex tasks your teen will need to be able to successfully work as part of a team and be able to show this to potential employers. Even for roles that encourage a large amount of self-reliance, your teen will at times need to engage with others. They should work to develop the necessary skills to do so effectively. Respect for others and the ability to listen, as well as talk, are key here.

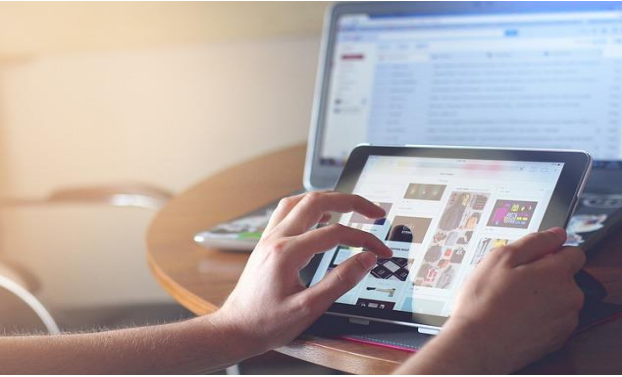
When helping to draft a cover letter or resume, encourage your teen to think of ways to demonstrate their ability to work well with others, whether in the workplace or through participation in group activities.

Skill 3: Communication skills

The ability to communicate effectively with others is one of the most common job requirements cited by employers. Communication skills are not limited just to speaking, but cover listening, written forms of communication, as well as non-verbal communication.

Help your teen recognise too that communication requires clarity and confidence. Give them feedback on how they communicate well and what they could do better. Time invested on improving your teen's ability to communicate effectively is time well spent.

Skill 4: Digital literacy



Digital literacy doesn't just refer to advanced technical skills such as coding and programming. Digital literacy refers to a range of skills and abilities that allow a person to use technology to communicate and find information.

While the degree of literacy required will vary from job to job, digital literacy is becoming increasingly important throughout various industries and demand for these skills is expected to increase.

While the demand for digital literacy skills is clear, according to the Foundation for Young Australians 27% of Australian 15 years olds demonstrate low proficiency in digital literacy.⁴ To succeed in the job markets of the future, teens will need to boost their digital literacy and, in turn, this will boost their career prospects.

Skill 5: Presentation skills

All the ideas in the world won't amount to much if a person is unable to present them well to others. Whether at the interview stage or performing the duties of the job, possessing good presentation skills will help your teen attain their goals. Especially when we consider a significant number of people profess to being afraid of public speaking, with studies reporting numbers as high as 70% of people being afraid of speaking in front of an audience.⁵

⁴ "Digital literacy - Foundation for Young Australians." 29 Jun. 2017, <https://www.fya.org.au/2017/06/29/digital-literacy-important-future-work/>. Accessed 4 Jul. 2018.

⁵ "Is Public Speaking Really More Feared Than Death?: Communication" 30 Apr. 2012, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08824096.2012.667772?src=recsys>. Accessed 4 Jul. 2018.

Skill 6: Critical thinking

Critical thinking refers to the ability to analyse information and make a reasoned judgment based on the objective processing of that information. It involves discriminating between sets of information and evaluating that information. This ability is in great demand by employers.

The scenarios that require critical-thinking will vary from job to job and so by helping to develop your teen's critical-thinking abilities you will help to provide them with skills that will serve them well as they move through their career. Critical-thinking skills are closely allied with some of the other skills on the list, problem-solving and creativity in particular.

Skill 7: Creativity

When we think of creativity we may think of romantic figures such as the painter or poet, but creativity is also much sought after in the workplace. The ability to think creatively is necessary to come up with new ideas and to offer fresh perspectives. It is essential to devising new strategies to solve workplace challenges.

While some of us appear to be more creative than others, creative thinking skills can be developed through practice. Whether developing 'hard' skills in specific areas such as design or copywriting, or taking a 'softer' approach by solving riddles or engaging in creative play, help your teen develop their creative side and you will help them succeed in their chosen career.

Skill 8: Flexibility

Flexibility corresponds to a willingness and ability to adapt to changes and it is no surprise this is such a highly valued trait by employers. A flexible worker is not afraid to step out of the narrow confines of their job description to embrace new tasks, demonstrating their capacity in the process.

Employers are more likely to promote and reward employees they feel will rise to new challenges.

As it is not possible to predict the changes that lie ahead, encourage your teen to approach their education, training, and work with an openness that allows them to adapt to the unexpected. The more diverse the experiences they have to draw from, the more flexible they can be in their approach to their work. Encourage them to try new things and develop a wide and varied skill set.

Skill 9: Collaboration

Collaboration has much in common with Teamwork mentioned earlier. However, there is enough of a distinction between the two for it to warrant a separate mention.

Teamwork requires individuals to work together to achieve a common goal under the direction of a leader, with each person maintaining their own individual accountability.

Collaboration, on the other hand, sees individuals in a self-managed group thinking and working together to achieve a collective goal. It places much more reliance on the interpersonal relationships due to the decreased importance of leader direction. It is a more intimate process. Encourage your teen to work with others where possible and, where they have difficulties with this, persuade them of the benefits of working towards overcoming those difficulties.



Skill 10: Financial literacy

Increasingly, the importance of instilling financial literacy skills in our young people is being recognised, both in school and in workplace training. Helping your teen develop money management skills can help them achieve their life goals, including their career goals. It will help them plan their finances for college, further training, and to become fully independent members of the workforce. Looking ahead, strong financial literacy skills will help secure a viable retirement with a comfortable standard of living for their old age.

You can help prepare your child for their future independence by involving them in the running of the household budget. Allow them to see electricity, water, and gas bills. Show them how you make car insurance payments and mortgage payments. Lift the veil of how family finances work so that their first experience of running a household is not when they leave home for the first time.

GOAL-SETTING

Planning for the future can be extremely daunting for the average teenager. At times, it can be difficult to plan for the weekend, nevermind a future that seems to be so distant. Helping your teen divide their plans for the future into a series of short, medium, and long term goals can make things much more manageable and set them up for success.

How do I help my teen set goals?

We are at our happiest when we are working and progressing towards our goals. Without the clear objectives that our goals offer us, our lives can become little more than a collection of random chaotic happenings. To help your teen understand how to best define their future goals, ensure they understand the acronym S.M.A.R.T.

S - Specific

Goals should be clearly defined in terms of what exactly your teen will be working to achieve. Whether this is to talk to three people regarding possible avenues of interest or to update their resume, goals must be as specific as possible. Larger goals, such as securing a place on a university course, may helpfully be broken down into a series of related goals such as achieving certain grades, attending an open day, completing an application etc.

M - Measurable

What the achievement of the goal will look like will need to be clearly defined too. The criteria for success may be easily defined in some cases, such as achieving that college place, for example. Other more abstract goals may

require a little more reflection to define exactly what success will look like. For this reason, it is important your teen makes their goals as concrete as possible.

A - Attainable

We need to be forces of positivity in the lives of our young people, but we must also help them to consider whether a goal is realistically attainable for them too. Goals should be made with reference to individual talents, work ethic, time availability, and money. There is no point making unrealistic lofty goals if the ability or willingness, or to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve those goals is not there.

R - Relevant

Goals should be relevant to the wider aspiration of creating the life your teen wants to live. Help your teen consider how each goal fits into the wider picture and reflect on whether or not each individual goal contributes to creating the type of life they want to live.

T - Timely

Setting a clear timeline can be a great way to keep your teen motivated on achieving their goals. Be careful though, life often throws the unexpected at us. Be sure to allow the flexibility to respond to unforeseen events in the goal-setting process.

What areas should goals be set in?

There are wide range of areas goals should be set in, including educational goals, skills training, research, and experience-related goals. Some places to start include:

-
- How many jobs to research over a given period of time
 - Where to volunteer and for how long
 - How many people will they talk to in relation to a job or a course
 - What are their target grades and how will they achieve them
 - What skills do they need and how will they develop them.



BUILDING A CAREER PORTFOLIO

What is a career portfolio and what should it contain?

A career portfolio serves as an ongoing record of your teen's accumulation of skills, experiences, and achievements. It provides a way for your teen to demonstrate their abilities to potential employers or training institutions.

Help your teen decide what to include in their portfolio and encourage them to update it regularly as they grow. Some things to consider recording in their career portfolio may include:

1. Education

- School transcripts
- Certificates, diplomas etc
- Course descriptions
- Apprenticeship details
- Special projects completed
- Workshops, seminars, conferences attended
- Assessments, reports etc
- Other training

2. Personal Qualities

- List of personal strengths
- Teamwork experience
- Hobbies
- Contributions to family life

-
- Sports and healthy lifestyle
 - Supporting friends
 - Extra-curricular engagement

3. Activities

- Volunteering
- Sports participation
- Leadership roles
- Public-speaking experience
- Project participation
- Organisation membership
- Travel
- Awards

4. Work Experience

- Resume
- Previous jobs or work experience with job descriptions
- References
- Professional qualifications (eg: First Aid Certificate etc.)
- Publications

Your career portfolio should include evidence in the form of certificates, photocopied documentation, printed materials, photographs etc.

The career portfolio should also contain a list of goals that have been set and document when those goals have been achieved too.

IN SUMMARY

To best support your teen in achieving their goals in life you must develop a clear understanding of the importance of your role as their career coach and prepare accordingly. This will involve staying up-to-date with labour trends, communicating well with your teen, leading by example, and seeking outside support in the form of mentors and allies.

You will also need to support your teen in devising a coherent career plan to help ensure their success. Assist them in researching the wide array of possibilities open to them and help them narrow down their choices. When this is done, help them identify the skills they will need to develop, and the qualifications they will need to acquire.

It is important too to encourage and guide your teen in setting achievable goals and to continue to update and refine those goals over time. One of the biggest difficulties teens face when entering the world of work is the lack of experience they offer when compared to older workers. To help offset this disadvantage, be sure to assist them in compiling their career portfolio to demonstrate all they have to offer.

Following the advice outlined here will help ensure your teen is off to the best possible start in what will hopefully be a long and rewarding career.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Labour Market Information Portal](#) - a wealth of information from the Australian Government's Department of Jobs and Small Businesses including detailed projections of employment growth over a wide range of industries and occupations.
- [Job Outlook](#) - another site from the Australian Government with a range of career-related resources, including a career quiz, advice on further training, and information on further education and job opportunities.
- [Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Information Service](#) - a very useful site for your teen to explore the career and training opportunities open to them. The Career Interest Explorer tool on this website is particularly useful. The 5 minute quiz helps match personal interests and skills to relevant training and job opportunities.
- [Job Jumpstart](#) - Helpful tips and ideas about jobs and careers 'in the one spot.' A very helpful website from the Australian Government containing a wide variety of information on everything from how to succeed at interviews to filing taxes.
- **Your School Careers Website** – This has the above links and information on Post School Options; as well as, a "Student Secure Area" for your child to create an account and log in to do planning and activities such as:
 - An Interest and Personality Test
 - Job or Career Exploration
 - Career Action Plan
 - Resume and Cover Letters
 - Digital PortfolioAnd much more.