



# STEM CAREERS: MAKE A PLAN!

## STEP 1: Investigating Fields and Careers of Interest

With so many options out there, how do you know which field or career might be the best fit for you? Know that this is just a starting point and chances are your interests will grow over time the more you learn about what you want to do and what you don't want to do. Both perspectives are valuable! Explore different STEM Careers here and proceed to the questions, <https://www.bestcolleges.com/careers/stem/>. Feel free to repeat this exercise for different fields to compare and contrast your options!

Which STEM field(s) are you most interested in?

What is it that interests you about this field?

What is the anticipated growth in this field over time?

What is the median salary?

Often the more you study in a field and/or grow your experience in that field, the more career options open up for you. Are there careers in this field you would be interested in pursuing? List the careers in the table below based on the degree achieved to gauge your growth in the field over time.

Degree	Jobs of interest
Associate's	
Bachelor's	
Master's	
Doctorate	

## STEP 2: Career Preparation

The Ohio Department of Higher Education has compiled an interactive map that shows Ohio's public universities and their branch campuses, community colleges, Ohio Technical Centers (OTC), and independent colleges and universities. Check it out here and then proceed to the questions: <https://www.ohiohighered.org/campuses/map>. Opening the map to the full-screen version allows you to filter by type of institution.

*Pro Tip! If the institution you are interested in has a branch location near you, consider starting there. Tuition may be less expensive and reduced housing costs may help you save your money for your longer-term plans.*

Which institution(s) are you most interested in?

Does the institution offer majors in your STEM field(s) of interested? (Make sure you are looking at the page for the institution's main campus and use the Academic Catalog link to explore.)

Is there a branch location near you that you might consider?

What are the full-time, in-state tuition costs?

	Main Campus	Branch Campus
In-state Tuition Cost (Full Time)		
Books and Supplies		
On-campus Room and Board		
Total Cost		

### STEP 3: Networking, Planning, and Applying

You've been thinking about what you are interested in and the pathway to get you there, but what other pieces of information and planning might help you succeed? We suggest three steps: Networking, Planning, and Applying.

**Networking** is important for you as a high schooler in terms of friends who know other friends, or adults that have connections to help you succeed. Networking grows increasingly important as you develop your career for the same reasons. Knowing people in your field for mentorship, advice, and connections can be very valuable!

Talk to friends, family members, teachers, and guidance counselors about your field(s) of interest. Might they know of others in this field who might be willing to talk to you about career preparation, pathway and goals? Aim to find at least two connections and jot down their names and contact information here. (If you can't find direct contacts to connect with, explore the Day in the Life video series to learn more about jobs of interest.)

Think of at least three questions you would ask these contacts about their career and note them here.

Are you ready to reach out to these individuals? Go for it! Most professionals really enjoy talking about their career and are happy to offer advice to students interested in the same. Take notes from these conversations just as you would in a class that way you can refer back to them if needed. Perhaps your contact would be willing to connect again at some point in the future? Be sure to ask!

**Planning** – and here we mean financial planning. Attending college or pursuing a technical degree can be costly and most people get financial assistance of some sort to help them along this journey. To explore financial aid options, grants, scholarships and more, we encourage you to visit: <https://www.ohiohighered.org/students/pay-for-college> as well as your institution’s Financial Aid Office website for more tailored information.

Think about your willingness to work on- or off-campus while you pursue a degree. What jobs might be of interest to you? Can you think of student employment opportunities that relate to your degree or field of interest? Note them here.

Financial planning for college is most often a family conversation or one that your guidance counselor can assist with. Starting these conversations early can help you identify the most scholarship or grant opportunities. Note, Every Little Bit Helps! Research and write down 3-5 financial aid options—and their timelines—that you will explore.

**Applying** is a Big, Exciting Step! Even if you are not ready at this moment to apply to your institution’s program, it’s good to familiarize yourself with the process, especially Application Deadlines. Talking to the Admissions Office is important, and perhaps you are able to visit your preferred institutions in advance to really get a feel for the campus and the people and the program.

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Congratulations, you did it! You are taking steps towards your future STEM Career! Revisit this plan as often as you need to think through these important questions that will help your career pathway evolve over time.