

Departmental Directive For Career Development Across The Lifespan

June 2001



Education, Culture and Employment

A Message from the Minister



Career choices determine how we spend the majority of our lives and the contributions we make to our families, communities and society. In order to make these choices, we need a strong foundation of learning, self-awareness, work search and transition skills. Career development acts as this foundation.

Career development is the ongoing process of balancing roles and managing transitions throughout one's life. It is about work, education, volunteering, community activities and relationships. It provides the context in which people can attach meaning and relevance to their learning and experiences.

Schools, Aurora College, and career centres all have a role to play in supporting students and clients with their individual career development. Because career development is a partnership and takes place throughout an individual's lifespan, a broad plan is required to define the scope, nature and process for providing quality services.

The purpose of this Directive is to provide a roadmap for supporting the development of healthy, self-reliant citizens. It is a first step, however, not the last. By working with other agencies, communities and organizations, we can ensure that all northerners have access to quality career development programs and services.

The NWT is uniquely positioned to create an innovative system of career development that is grounded in social, community and economic realities. Education levels are rising and the non-renewable resource and service sectors are generating hundreds of jobs. The future looks positive. Let us keep it that way by making sure all northerners have the education and skills to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jake Ootes".

Jake Ootes
Minister of Education, Culture & Employment

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INTRODUCTION

Career development is the life-long process of managing learning and work. The objective of quality career development education, programs and services is to provide people with the tools, resources and opportunities to be self-directed in their work/life through contributions that bring personal meaning and satisfaction to themselves and their community. Contributions can take many forms – both paid and unpaid – and all are important to a healthy, functioning northern society and economy.

It is imperative that northern children, youth and adults have the skills and knowledge to take advantage and thrive in a new and changing world. Quality career development education, programs and services play a critical role in helping northerners do this.

A departmental directive for career development is important to ensure access and coherence of the delivery system in schools, Aurora College, and career centres. At the same time, a career development directive serves as a critical support to success in a number of other government and department initiatives.

In ***Towards a Better Tomorrow***, the current government calls for “self-reliant individuals, families and communities, working with governments, toward improving social well-being.” This is a key priority in the GNWT business plan. ***People: Our Focus for the Future***, the department’s strategic plan, emphasizes the need for career development in schools, career centres, college programs and community partnerships. ***The Review of Secondary Education in the NWT*** (ECE, 1998), ***Getting In, Staying In, Getting Out*** (ECE, 1998), ***NWT Labour Force Development Plan*** (ECE, 1997), and ***The NWT Economic Strategy*** (2000) all quote career development education, programs and services as a critical component in achieving student success, economic and labour force development.

The ***Directive for Career Development Across the Lifespan*** sets out broad strategic direction to achieve these results. At the same time, it establishes a clear framework for setting priorities and making decisions and defines roles and responsibilities among partners.

RATIONALE

The role of career development has transformed in recent years as technology, shifting demographics, and the global economy have changed the ways in which we live, work and learn. This new world has broadened perceptions of what is needed to prepare children, youth and adults for their futures.

In the past, preparation for the work world focused on vocational counselling. Through interest and aptitude testing people were “matched” to occupations that lasted a lifetime. Today, career development deals with the whole person. Work and life are not seen as separate and the emphasis is on skill and attitude development, balancing life-roles, and a commitment to ongoing learning. Career planning has changed from a single event to a continuous and daily process.

In the early years, the aim of career development is to help students build a positive self-image, acquire basic skills such as decision-making, and foster openness to change. Later on, career development helps young people develop plans for the future through self-exploration and opportunity awareness. The overriding goal is to encourage youth to think broadly about career options – to focus on what they want to **do**, now and in the future, as opposed to what they want to **be**.

Workers will manage multiple career changes over the course of their working lives. Career development with an adult population may focus on similar themes as young people, but recognizes transition and career management skills are essential for adults to make successful entry, exit and re-entry transitions. Additionally, lifelong learning has become a basic work survival skill as prerequisites for the labour force increase and shift constantly.

For career development to be effective, it must begin in the early years and continue throughout life. A comprehensive approach that spans the continuum of the school, post-secondary, and labour market systems is essential if northerners are to become effective and responsible decision makers in a world of change and opportunity.

VISION STATEMENTS

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will make career development education, programs, and services available to school-aged children, youth and adults as a core strategy in achieving the Departmental mission.

- Career education will be an integral component of curricula within the K-12 system and offer ongoing opportunities for students to establish the relationship between what they are learning and their career development.
- Career, academic and personal support will be coordinated and available to students attending Aurora College. Supports include counselling, instruction, and information dissemination to facilitate student success.
- Quality, standardized career programs and services will be made available through all career centres including career and education planning, labour market information and delivery of training and income support programs.

Career education, programs and services will be coordinated and continuous amongst NWT schools, Aurora College and career centres so that children, youth and adults can access the appropriate service according to their needs over their learning and working lives.

An accessible, coordinated system of career development will ensure children, youth and adults:

- have the foundations for lifelong career development including the skills to engage in effective and intentional life/work decision making;
- are able to make smooth transitions from one life-role to another and can manage the complexities of assuming several roles concurrently;
- know when, where and how to access career development, education, and training programs and services throughout their learning and working lives.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to establish a framework for a comprehensive, coherent and accessible delivery system which ensures that children, youth and adults, at whatever stage of development or transition, have access to career development information, programs, services and supports. The result will be northerners able to manage their learning and work and make contributions that are meaningful to themselves, their families, and their communities.

PRINCIPLES

A comprehensive, coherent and accessible system of career development in the Northwest Territories is one that:

- recognizes the potential in all children, adults, elders and communities to be healthy, self-reliant and self-directed;
- recognizes the value in all learning and work;
- is an integrated component of the current educational and labour market systems rather than an ancillary service;
- builds on the strengths and capabilities of northerners;
- is culturally appropriate;
- meets the evolving learning needs of children, adults and communities;
- recognizes that individuals are best positioned to make meaningful choices about their futures; and
- has strong commitment by all partners.

SCOPE

Programming

Career development is a learning endeavour. It occurs throughout the lifespan and helps people manage their chosen life-roles. Career development education, programs and services will provide all northern people opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become self-directed and self-reliant with respect to learning and work.

The scope of Northern models will be created which reflect the uniqueness of NWT learners and build on the strengths of existing curricula and activities. Broad competency areas include skill development in self-management, learning and work exploration, and life/work building.

Learning outcomes of career development initiatives across the lifespan will, at a minimum, address the following major areas:

- Readiness and motivation for future planning
- Self-knowledge
- Work readiness
- Awareness of opportunities
- Ability to plan and make decisions
- Ability to seek work opportunities
- Management of career/life transitions and the unexpected
- Ability to balance life/work roles.

These are further defined in Appendix "B". The areas are interrelated. They fit together much like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. They are not necessarily delivered in a sequential manner, particularly with adults, but together comprise the areas in which an individual may need support. Collectively they represent the skills, knowledge and abilities essential for effective career development.

Delivery

Career development will be made available to all children, youth and adults as an integral part of education, programs and services offered through:

- Elementary and Secondary Schools;
- Aurora College;
- Career Centres.

While each of the three organizations plays a different role in the delivery of a comprehensive career development system, mandates are complementary and connected. It is the role of the three organizations and the Department to make these connections explicit as well as build linkages to ensure that resources are maximized and access to career development services is seamless.

It is recognized that Aboriginal and non-government organizations, as well as employers, play a critical role in the career development of northerners. In addition to establishing strong linkages between schools, Aurora College, and career centres, the three organizations will strive to strengthen partnerships with other labour market interest groups.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Career development does not happen in isolation. It requires the cooperative effort of many partners in order to ensure a comprehensive continuum of programs, services and supports are in place to meet the many and varied needs of those requiring services. While the Department, Aurora College, schools and career centres all have mutual responsibilities in achieving accessible and coherent career development in the Northwest Territories, they each have specific roles for which they are accountable. They must also ensure that parents, employers, Aboriginal organizations and community groups are fully informed and involved.

The Department Of Education, Culture And Employment

The mission of the Department is "to invest in and provide for the development of the people of the Northwest Territories enabling them to reach their full potential, to lead fulfilled lives and to contribute to a strong and prosperous society." The provision of career development education, programs and services is a core strategy in the achievement of the Departmental mission. The Department will provide strong leadership and coordination in implementing this Directive.

In the area of career development, the key role of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is to provide the necessary supports in order that the curricula, programs and services of the schools, Aurora College and career centres are coherent and continuous.

This includes:

- Developing policy, programming and evaluation support.
- Establishment of practitioner and program standards.
- Providing training and expertise to practitioners and educators, including the Career Development Certificate Program.
- Ensuring access for northerners to northern career and labour market information for effective planning.
- Providing funding for programs and services.

Elementary and Secondary Schools

Career development occupies a pivotal role in schools. It links the needs of students to the community and it provides a bridge between the individual's current and past activities to his or her future.

Schools are responsible for creating and supporting a career development climate including infusion throughout curricula. This undertaking will require the commitment of all educators regardless of subject area. It needs the active involvement of School Boards, District Education Authorities and District Education Councils, administration, and teachers.

In the area of career development, the key role of the K-12 system is to provide the foundation for lifelong career development as an integral component of the overall basic education of young people.

This foundation includes:

- A career development culture in the classroom where teachers help students connect to and value work of all kinds and experience a range of work choices, both traditional and contemporary.
- A developmental, progressive, "made-in-the north" framework with clearly identified learning outcomes from kindergarten to grade 12.
- Exposure of students to a variety of experiences to acquire skills and explore abilities and interests.
- Providing students and staff with access to high quality career, labour market, and financial information both print and electronic.
- Building strong partnerships with families, communities, and employers to strengthen support for student choices and future success.
- Ensuring students have the skills, knowledge and attitudes to successfully make transitions from the school system to further education and/or work.

Aurora College

Aurora College plays a significant role in providing continuity of access to career development programs and services. An assumption is often made that adults returning to school are doing so with clear and directed career/education plans. While true for some, there are other adult students who have chosen programs in non-intentional ways. Adult learners are often no more clear about their futures than secondary students. In addition, the transition from college to work seeking and/or the workplace is a critical transition requiring skills and supports. For many, the transition back into formal learning also requires support.

In the area of career development, the key role of Aurora College is to provide personal and academic supports, opportunities for skill building and work search and transition skills to enhance student success.

This includes:

- Providing access to personal and academic supports which are essential for student success.
- Offering students opportunities to develop a career/educational plan and supports for implementation.
- Providing students and staff with access to timely, quality career, educational and labour market information.
- Creating partnerships with schools and career centres so students have access to educational and financial assistance information and work/training opportunities.
- Ensuring students have direct access or referral to work search, financial planning, transitional and life skills development.
- Providing programs which respond to the needs of employers and students to develop skills needed in the labour market.
- Supporting the career exploration and skill development of students through strong linkages with the employer community.
- Establishing and maintaining a responsive system of prior learning and recognition.

Career Centres and Canada-NWT Service Centre

The regional career centres and Canada-NWT Service Centre in Yellowknife are the key delivery system for out-of-school youth and adults. The centres work with a wide range of community partners including the education system, business and industry, aboriginal groups and community leaders in support of developing individuals, local economies and communities.

In the area of career development, the key role of the Career Centres and Canada-NWT Service Centre is to provide information, programs, and services which help clients become more self-reliant in managing learning, work search and work as well as life transitions.

This includes:

- Helping clients clarify their learning and support needs.
- Delivering information sessions on programs and services.
- Establishing comprehensive libraries which include career development tools and self-help resources.
- Providing access to, and coaching in, the use of print and electronic career and labour market information.
- Offering individual or group career counselling and problem solving.
- Providing workshops on: career planning, work search/work creation, resume writing, interview techniques, educational planning, managing transitions and building life/work balance.
- Referring clients to community resources when issues are outside the scope of career development practices.
- Building and supporting relationships with career development educators and practitioners to share resources, ideas and expertise.
- Establishing and nurturing community partnerships so clients can move easily among social, labour market and economic programs to benefit from, employment and economic opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to apply this Directive, the following will be undertaken:

- Schools, Aurora College and career centres will form a partnership to plan implementation. This will reduce unnecessary duplication of programs and services, contribute to the sharing of resources and best practices, and the development and sustainability of a coherent delivery system.
- Each organization will develop a framework for the implementation of a comprehensive career development system, including scope, activities, learning, outcomes, delivery methods, and timelines.
- Each organization will establish methods to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its career development delivery system.
- Each organization will establish as part of its existing accountability framework, monitoring of the coordination and continuity of programs and services it delivers. As part of completion of these accountability frameworks each organization will report on collaboration with the other two organizations, and the practical linkages, which are established to build and sustain a coherent delivery system.
- The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the ***“Departmental Directive For Career Development Across The Lifespan”***.

OUTCOMES

The provision of this directive reflects a long term departmental commitment to strengthen career development activities in support of northerners. Regular public reporting of results of actions by each of the key organizations and agencies will be carried out.

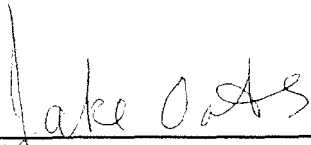
The effective implementation of a coherent career development system will:

- ensure northern people are prepared to make, and act on, positive decisions about their futures;
- contribute broadly to economic and community development; and
- improve the efficiency and accountability of the educational and labour market systems.

Specific indicators that will help to measure the success of the Directive may include:

- increased number of individuals with personal career and education plans;
- more participation in programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels;
- higher number of post-secondary graduates;
- reduced dependency on income support;
- increased student/client satisfaction;
- increased labour force participation;
- lower unemployment rates, particularly for youth.

Approvals:


Minister
Department of Education,
Culture and Employment

JUN 27 2001
Date


Deputy Minister
Department of Education,
Culture and Employment

June 26/01
Date

APPENDIX "A"

DEFINITIONS

Career

A career is the integration of an individual's work, community, education, family and volunteer roles. Careers are unique to each person and are dynamic, unfolding throughout life.

Career Counselling

Career counselling is a process in which trained practitioners work with individuals or groups to assist them in making and implementing personal career decisions and adjustments.

The process includes a planned progression of client-centered experiences to help individuals acquire attitudes, knowledge and skills related to life/career decision-making, planning, pathing, or other career-related issues or conflicts.

Career Education

Career education is the curricula and programs which provide information and experiences that help students make meaningful career and education decisions. It facilitates adaptability in students and helps them make meaningful linkages between general education and work-life roles.

Job

A job is a paid position with a specific set of tasks carried out in a particular environment with a particular employer.

An example of a job is – Grade 4 teacher at Joseph Burr Tyrell Elementary School in Ft. Smith, NT.

Occupation

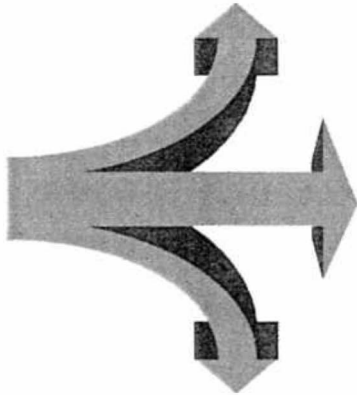
An occupation is a group of similar jobs found in different industries or organizations. An example of an occupation is – Teacher. There are primary teachers, secondary school teachers, and university teachers.

Work

Work is a set of goal-directed activities that result in outcomes valued by the individual working or by society. Work can be paid or unpaid.

APPENDIX "B"

MAKING MEANING: A CAREER DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF LEARNING NEEDS AND OUTCOMES



- *Readiness and Motivation for Future Planning*
- *Knows Self*
- *Aware of Opportunities*
- *Ready for Work*
- *Able to Make Decisions and Plans*
- *Able to Seek Out/Create Work Opportunities*
- *Manages Career Transitions and the Unexpected*
- *Able to Balance Life/Work Roles*

Readiness and Motivation for Future Planning

- Can identify positive contributions and productive choices individuals make to their families and communities.
- Sees self as capable of contributing to community and society.
- Able to recognize past accomplishments.
- Able to set personal goals and believes in own capacity to achieve them.
- Able to identify strategies to overcome personal barriers to work and learning.

Knows Self

- Able to identify and appreciate own values, interests, beliefs, attitudes and personal characteristics.
- Able to identify and appreciate own strengths (abilities, skills, knowledge, gifts, imagination and creativity).
- Understands the connection between personal qualities, work/learning/leisure experiences, achievements, opportunities and career building.
- Understands the cultural context in which life/work planning takes place.
- Identifies and appreciates external assets (personal relationships, networks, finances and resources).

Aware of Opportunities

- Gathers a range of information (from people, mentors, electronic/print media and community/organizational resources) and effectively uses it to identify opportunities for learning, working and making positive community contributions.
- Able to assess the personal uses/limitations of labour market information by applying critical thinking and reflection.
- Recognizes that labour market information comes in various forms and from various places, e.g., the newspaper, coffee shop, Internet and community events.
- Understands the significance of socio-cultural factors, gender issues and stereotyping/bias on work roles and opportunity.
- Able to identify a range of opportunities for community service, volunteering, traditional pursuits, technical and academic training, apprenticeship, work and entrepreneurship.
- Sees the connection between attitudes, knowledge, skills, education/training, experience and opportunities.
- Recognizes requirements (skills, knowledge, attitudes, education and experience) for various work/life roles.

Ready For Work

- Demonstrates positive work attitudes and behaviours.
- Can identify and practice skills, knowledge and attitudes required for range of work options (including self-employment; combining traditional/non-traditional; wage and non-wage economy).
- Demonstrates attitudes, practical skills and work skills necessary to obtain and maintain selected work options.
- Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills for working with others.
- Demonstrates skills, knowledge and attitudes to overcome barriers to selected work options and work/life path (both barriers created by self and those created by others/circumstances).
- Sees oneself as skilful (self-confidence).
- Can identify gaps in skills, knowledge and experience needed to pursue selected work and learning options.

Able to Make Decisions and Plans

- Can apply effective decision-making strategies that incorporate an awareness of what is personally important of work and productive choice options that exist.
- Identifies internal (personal) and external (environmental) conditions that may affect decision-making.
- Can identify short and long term consequences of decisions on self and others.
- Able to evaluate/assess available opportunities and to choose option(s) that best support achievement of goals.

Able to Seek Out/Create Work Opportunities

- Draws on personal characteristics, passions, strengths, resources and experience to seek out opportunities.
- Identifies and accesses people, networks, resources and services that can assist in seeking out and creating opportunities.
- Accesses information related to specific employers and self-employment opportunities.
- Identifies specific work opportunities that fit with goals and work/life path.
- Produces effective support tools (such as resumes, applications, cover letters, employment proposals and business plans) to help in the pursuit of work opportunities.
- Prepares for and participates in successful work interviews, self-marketing or business plan presentations.

Manages Career Transitions And The Unexpected

- Recognizes changes in priorities, goals and work activities as a normal part of a person's career development.
- Anticipates, prepares for and copes effectively with work and employment transitions.
- Identifies personal learning needs and manages life-long learning.
- Anticipates and builds support networks for managing change (e.g., relocation, need for new skills/knowledge/attitudes) that may occur throughout one's work/life.
- Builds and makes use of a network of contacts and supports and acts as a support to others.
- Identifies skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable change from one kind of role to another.
- Applies skills, knowledge and attitudes that are needed to undertake personal economic decisions (e.g., financial planning) and actions with confidence and competence.
- Demonstrates a capacity to be self-reliant.

Able To Balance Life/Work Roles

- Recognizes the links between work, physical and mental health, family, friends, community, learning, happiness, and changes in priorities over the life span.
- Can identify factors (such as status, family, culture, values, work choices and work habits) that may affect personal life style and happiness.
- Recognizes ways in which work-related skills, knowledge and attitudes can be acquired through a range of traditional, community and leisure activities.
- Demonstrates the ability to balance the demands of work, family, friends, community responsibilities and leisure interests.
- Identifies and participates in activities that help maintain good physical and mental health.
- Recognizes and manages the stress factors that affect life and happiness.
- Assesses choices and sets priorities based on values, personal meaning and the achievement of balance of life/work roles.