How Adult Directions can help you

Section 1: Before using Adult Directions

- What is Adult Directions?
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- Can Adult Directions help me to identify my transferable skills?

What is Adult Directions?

Adult Directions is a careers guidance program that provides you with career ideas and information, and lets you explore your own career options.

Adult Directions uses a common sense approach to suggest suitable careers: based on your career level and your likes and dislikes. If you like the features that make up a career then it is likely to be a suitable career option. If there are features of the career you don’t like then it is less likely to be suggested to you as a suitable career path.

In addition, Adult Directions can take your transferable skills into account when it suggests careers for you, so that you can assess how far the skills you currently have match those required by a career.

Adult Directions is not a psychometric test. It is not designed to assess whether your personality is suitable for a particular career or whether you are able to do a particular career.

Why should I use Adult Directions?

Some good reasons to use Adult Directions:

- It will help you find careers that suit your interests and skills.
- It may suggest careers that you have never thought of.
- You can easily keep track of your transferable skills.
- It can provide a good starting point to a discussion with an adviser.
- Careers will be suggested that suit the career level you have achieved or are aiming to achieve.
- You can look at other careers you’re interested in to see whether they suit you.
- You can easily see why careers have / have not been suggested.
- You get access to detailed and accurate information about careers.

Do I need to be good at using a computer to use Adult Directions?

You need to be able to use the mouse to move the pointer round the screen and click buttons on the screen. You need to be able to use the keyboard to enter your name and other details. That’s it.

How long will it take to use Adult Directions?

It depends on how long you spend answering the questions and exploring the career information. A typical session lasts around 45 minutes.
I’ve used one of these programs before. Is there any point doing it again?

It depends whether your likes and dislikes or career level aspirations have changed since the last time. If they have, then the list of careers suggested could be very different.

If your likes and dislikes haven’t changed, you may still find it useful to look at up-to-date careers information.

However, if you just want to look at careers information rather than being matched to careers you may find it easier to use Careerscape Online, our careers database product.

Ask your adviser for more information.

I know how to answer the questions to get the right careers on the list so what’s the point?

Adult Directions doesn’t tell you what career to do. It doesn’t recommend or prescribe careers. It suggests careers that might be suitable based on the answers you give, so it works best when you are honest with yourself when answering.

If you don’t like any of the careers suggested then of course you are free to ignore them.

Do the careers suggested really make sense?

“My friend used it and the program told him to be a funeral director!”

One of the best things about matching programs like Adult Directions is that they can suggest weird and wonderful careers. Try to keep an open mind about what might come up on your list.

Remember you are not being told what to do. The program is simply saying ‘These are some careers that may be suitable.’

The careers are analysed by experts using a system that has been developed over 35 years. Improvements are made to the program each year as well as the careers information being researched to make sure it’s up-to-date and accurate. The careers suggested are valid based on your answers to the questions.

However, there is a limit to what Adult Directions can take into account when suggesting suitable careers. For example, it doesn’t know:

• If you live in the city or countryside.
• Whether you want to work in a small or large organisation.
• Whether there are some careers that you just don’t like the thought of.

Using Adult Directions should be seen as the starting point for finding a suitable career - only a discussion with an expert such as an adviser, and further research, will give you all the information you need to decide properly.

Can Adult Directions help me to identify my transferable skills?

Yes, you can answer questions on how you would rate your skills, on the levels of unskilled, some skill, skilled or highly skilled.

You can then:

• View your skills profile against careers you are interested in (My Careers)
• See your ‘Highly Skilled’ and ‘Skilled’ rated top skills (Career Plan)
• Identify ‘Skills to Improve’, based on the skills profile of your chosen ‘Top Careers’ (Career Plan)

Section 2: Using Adult Directions

• My Steps
• About Me
• My Careers
• Uni Search
• Career Plan
• Information
• CV Builder
• WorkTrack

My Steps

When you start using Adult Directions, you select a route through the program based on your requirements.

The My Steps tab shows you where you are when you are working through one of the options from the front screen. For example, ‘I want to find careers based on what I’m good at.’ For more information on these options see the Quick Tour.

About Me

Manage your user data in the About Me tab. Here you can answer/review your responses to:

• Career levels
• Likes & Dislikes
Career Levels

Choose one or more career levels. You should choose the career level/s that you are aiming to achieve. Careers will be suggested that suit the level that you select.

Use Review Level if you need to change the levels you selected initially. You may wish to compare the different types of suggested careers shown in the list when you select different levels.

Likes & Dislikes

These are questions about your likes and dislikes relating to careers. Think carefully about your answer to each question, as your answers will be the main factor used to suggest suitable careers.

If you don’t understand what a question means, click on the ‘i’ button to read the supporting notes for each question.

After you have answered the first 50, you will be taken to your Suggested List.

Review Likes & Dislikes allows you to review your responses. You can see a summary of how you have answered the questions - how many you like, how many you dislike and so on. You can change your answers here.

You can also promote responses that you like very much to Key features. This very much increases their weighting in the matching process, so that careers in which they appear stand a much better chance of being suggested as suitable.

This is useful if you have many career suggestions of a similar match category, and you need to distinguish the best matches.

More Likes & Dislikes provides further questions to help you refine your career suggestions. There are 117 questions altogether.

Skills

These are questions to identify your transferable skills.

If you don’t understand what a question means, click on the ‘i’ button to read the supporting notes for each question.

After you have answered the skills, you will be able to view skills information for all careers in the My Careers tab career lists, and select the skills icons next to careers to compare the skills profiles for the careers with your own skills profile.

Review Skills allows you to review your responses. You can see a summary of how you have answered the skills, where you are highly skilled, less well skilled and so on, and you can also change your answers here.

Health

Consider if any of the health issues affect you in day-to-day life. If you don’t understand what an issue means, click on the ‘i’ button to read the supporting notes for each question.

Select any of the issues that affect you, and Adult Directions will take them into account in the matching process.

This is done in two different ways:

Type one - the program will let you know if there could be an issue doing a career if you have a certain health condition. If this is the case, you will see a warning in the Suitable for you? section of the career details.

Type two - very rarely you could be prevented legally from doing a certain career because of your health condition. In this case, there will be a warning in the Suitable for you? section of the career details and you will not be matched to the career. There are very few careers where this is the case.

If none of the issues are relevant to you, select I don’t have any of these health issues.

Study & Training

Use this option to provide information about your study and training plans.

Choose ‘yes’ if you’d like to follow the study and training route. Choose ‘no’ if the option doesn’t appeal to you, or you wouldn’t be able to follow this route. Your responses will not affect the list of career suggestions, but you will see how your preference matches what is needed for a career.

Once you have entered study and training preferences, check the Suitable for you? section of careers to see the most typical study and training routes, and compare how you responded.

My Careers

View the careers list in A-Z or Suggested List order.

Click on a photo to view multi-media for a career (can include photographs, video and real lives – dependent on Careerscape licence).

If you have answered the likes and dislikes, you can click on the likes and dislikes match icon to the right of the career to see the likes and dislikes profile for the career, and how it relates to your responses. You can also change your responses here.
If you have answered the skills, you can also view the skills profile using the skills match icon.

A-Z List

Here you can view any career from a list of over 700. You can search for a specific career title, or you can filter your career list by:

- Type of Work
- Working Hours
- Average Salary

Suggested List

This is one of the most powerful features of Adult Directions.

Once you have answered the likes and dislikes, you can view detailed information on the careers that Adult Directions suggests for you.

Careers are listed in order of suitability based on your answers. To print the list of careers use the ‘Print’ button under the Adult Directions logo.

For each career a match icon, with a star rating, shows you how good the match is to your responses. You can click on the match icons next to careers to view the likes and dislikes for each career and compare with your own likes and dislikes profile.

Compare Careers

You can compare up to three careers, by using the Add to Compare button next to a career.

Once you have chosen the careers you wish to compare, select the Compare Careers button.

Add to Plan

You can add careers to your Top Careers in your Career Plan by using the Add to Plan button next to a career.

This then allows you in the Career Plan, under Skills to Improve, to check if there are any skills you would need to improve on in order to do the career, and to set yourself goals for achieving this.

Career Details

The information in Adult Directions is updated each year. Many careers have photos so you can see the work environment and some of the tasks involved.

Career details can include:

About This Career

- Photos
- Introduction

- Work Activities
- Personal Qualities and Skills
- Pay and Opportunities
- Entry Routes and Training
- Qualifications
- Adult Opportunities
- Further Information

Suitable for you?

The Suitable for you? section will give you comments about:

- How suitable the career is (e.g. “This career is worth thinking seriously about. There is a very good match with your answers”).
- Whether the career level(s) you have chosen is (are) OK for this career.
- How your likes and dislikes relate to the most important/important/other features of the career
- Your skill responses in relation to the career
- Your study and training options.

Real Lives

Includes details of a day in the life of a person in the career, alongside responses to questions such as: “Are there many opportunities to enter this career?” and “What advice would you give to someone interested in your career?”

Careerscape license needed.

Uni Search

Search for university-level courses by choosing course keywords and/or regions and/or institutions. Careerscape licence needed.

Career Plan

The Career Plan contains a printable report summarising the following:

- Your own top career ideas
- Your top 10 career suggestions
- Your top skills
- Skills you may wish to improve
- Your goals

To get the best use out of the Career Plan, you need to start by answering the Likes and Dislikes questions, and then the Skills questions.
Top Careers

You can add careers you are interested in to your Top Careers using the Add to Plan button next to the career in the career list, or from within the career title.

You can assign goals by selecting Add Goal from the dropdown ‘V’. These will display on screen, and will be included in your print out.

If you have answered your Likes and Dislikes questions, you can also see your top 10 suggested careers.

Other Favourites

You can add information articles you are interested in to your Career Plan using the Add to Plan button next to the article in the list from the Information tab, or from within the information article.

If you have a Careerscape license you can also add Courses and Institutions from the Uni Search tab.

You can assign goals by selecting Add Goal from the dropdown ‘V’. These will display on screen, and will be included in your print out.

Top Skills

If you have answered your skills questions, you can view your Highly Skilled and Skilled rated skills.

Skills to Improve

In order to make use of this section, you need to have:
• answered your skills questions
• added careers to your Top Careers section of the Career plan.

Use the Skills Check to review your personal skills profile against the skills profiles of the careers you have added to the Top Careers in your action plan.

If there are skills you want to improve on, you can add these to the Skills to Improve section of your Career Plan.

You can assign goals by selecting Add Goal from the dropdown ‘V’. These will display on screen, and will be included in your print out.

My Notes

Here, you can view Notes you’ve created as you’ve worked your way through the program.

We recommend that you print out your Action Plan and discuss it with your adviser.

Information

Use the Information tab to research a wide range of topics relating to employment and training issues.

CV Builder

Follow the step-by-step instructions to create a CV. Don’t forget to print or download your CV as this will not be saved within Adult Directions.

WorkTrack

Create a personal profile to discover jobs that match your relevant skills and experiences. You can also search for live job vacancies.

Section 3: After using Adult Directions

• Career suggestions
• Career details
• Career level
• Likes and dislikes
• Skills
• Health
• Your own career ideas
• Find the career you are interested in
• Further discussion and research

Now that you have completed Adult Directions, you will have a Career Plan and perhaps some particular careers that interest you. So what do you do next?

Remember that Adult Directions cannot tell you what career you should do. It can only give you ideas and new suggestions. There are more careers open to you than are available on the program, and there are many more factors that people take into account when choosing careers. Therefore, how you use your experience of Adult Directions and the suggested career list is important.

The following notes are intended to help you understand your results and to get more out of them. It is most helpful to talk through your results with an adviser. They will be asking you similar questions to the ones in this guide.

Career suggestions

What do you think of your career list - are you surprised? interested? disappointed? pleased?
Remember that all the careers have been suggested because of your answers to the likes and dislikes questions. This does not mean that you have to accept
them. Your feelings are more important than decisions made by Adult Directions, but you can use the list to build up ideas.

Can you see any pattern to the careers in the list, for example a number of careers from the same work area? If so, it might be worth researching this whole work area because there may be other careers not in the program that might interest you.

Have you got a lot or a few Good or Very Good matches - why might this be?

Are any of the careers of real interest to you? Highlight these on your printout. These are worth researching further. Think about why they might have been selected before you look at the career details.

Are any of the careers of no interest to you? You can cross these out on your printout, but before you do, look at the career details. Knowing why you do not want to do a career can be useful in decision making.

Career details

It is very important to go further than your career suggestions list and to look at the individual career details. This is where you find out why the career has been selected. Knowing this will help you when comparing the selected careers and when finding out about new careers in further research.

Look at one particular career and think about the following questions:

Does the short Introduction to the career interest you? Does it make you want to find out more about the career?

Review your likes and dislikes in the Suitable for you? section. The Most Important Features, Important Features and Other Features make up the analysis or profile of the career. They show how your responses have been used to assess the career’s suitability for you.

If the career is a Good or Very Good Match, your answers will be mostly Like Very Much, Like and Does Not Matter. Are any of these answers more important to you? If so, this might give the career a higher priority than others on your list.

If Adult Directions cannot find enough Good Match careers, you will have some Fair Matches and possibly Questionable Matches at the bottom of your list. These contain answers which do not fit the Good Match pattern.

Have you got any Dislike or Dislike Very Much answers in the career? These will have more effect in the Most Important Features and Important Features than in the Other Features. If you are interested in the career it is important that you rethinking your answers to these. Can you change your answer to Does Not Matter or Like? Can you really put up with disliking a main part of your career? Do you know enough about the career and the features to decide?

If the career is a Good or Very Good Match for your skills, you will most likely have one or more of the essential skills for the career. You will need to have answered at least ‘I have some skill’ to a career’s essential skills for the career to be suitable for your skills. A career can still be suitable if you do not have some of the desirable skills.

All these questions point to further research to help decide whether the career really is suitable for you.

Once you have considered these questions for the careers on your list, you might make some further decisions about each career:

- Keep the career as a serious idea - but with further research needed.
- Keep the career as a possible idea - do further research to answer the questions above so you can decide whether to keep the career or reject it.
- Reject the career.

Career level

These are the four levels you can choose from:

1. Professional or managerial careers often needing a higher education qualification such as a degree.
2. Careers usually needing further education qualifications and/or formal training.
3. Semi-skilled and skilled careers, usually with on-the-job training and/or training at college. These may need some qualifications or relevant work experience.
4. Unskilled and semi-skilled careers, requiring little formal training. Many of these do not usually need qualifications.

Think about which level(s) you chose. Is it related to where you are now or where you want to be? You may want to rethink your level now you’ve seen your career list.

Do you feel that you would like to progress further than the careers in your list? Have you changed your attitude to doing more education or training in the light of the careers listed? Then change your level to one higher or add a higher level to your existing one.

Have you got careers listed which you think need too much education or training for you? Then change your career level to one lower or add a lower level to your existing one.

Maybe you entered level 4 and you have found that all the careers which interest you are difficult to get into. Change to level 3 to see if there are any related careers that would provide a route in.

Changing your career level can give you a better insight into which careers might be open to you now, and
what more education or training might lead to.

Likes and dislikes

Did you understand the likes and dislikes? If not, did you read the notes for a more detailed explanation? If there is an adviser available they may be able to help.

You can always go back and change your answers to the likes and dislikes.

Have you answered in terms of what you can do now instead of what you would like to do? This may lead to a disappointing career list as it may not give you new career ideas.

Have you got a lot of Like Very Much or Like answers? If so, think about which ones are more important to you. This will help you to decide between careers if you have a lot of Good matches.

Have you got a lot of Dislike Very Much or Dislike answers? Think carefully about these – they may have resulted in a lot of Questionable matches on your career list. Do you really dislike them, or do you not understand or mind what it is?

Is there anything you have not been asked about that is important to you in choosing a career? List these. Remember these when you look at your career list - check them against any career you are looking at.

Reviewing or changing your responses can give you a better insight into your pattern of answers and how this has affected your list of careers.

Skills

Did you understand the skill? If not, did you read the notes for a more detailed explanation? If there is an adviser available they may be able to help.

You can always go back and change your answers to the skills.

Have you been honest with yourself about your level of skill?

Health

If you selected one or more health factors, Adult Directions will have provided a warning comment in the Suitable for you? section of a career if there is an issue doing the career with this health condition.

In very rare cases, Adult Directions may have excluded a career from the list of suggestions – if you could be legally prevented from doing a certain career because of your health condition. If you have any specific questions about the health issues raised by Adult Directions, you should talk about them with an adviser.

Study and Training

Have you responded 'No' to any of the relevant training routes?

How attractive will the career have to be to make you reconsider this?

You will need to research the career to find out what the training requirements will be. This may make a difference to how you feel about it. Start by looking at the Entry Routes and Training section: Do you meet any special entry requirements?

Your own career ideas

You may have some career ideas of your own which have not turned up on your selected careers list. It is important that you look at these careers to see why they have not appeared. The 'A-Z List' on the 'My Careers' tab will let you do this.

Also remember that there is a cut-off point for the suggested careers list so there may be other suitable careers to look at in Adult Directions.

Find the career you are interested in

Is it the right career level? If not, is it below or above your chosen level? If below, are you still interested in the career? If above, are you willing to do further training to get to this level? This may depend on how you feel about the career as a whole.

Is it a Good match? It may be that you have so many Good matches in your Suggested List that this one was at the end of the Good matches and so did not get included. Ask yourself the same questions as with selected careers to decide whether you want to include this career in your own career list. Do the same if the career is a Fair or Questionable match.

If it is a Questionable or Poor match, think carefully about why you liked the career in the first place. Did you really know what it was about?

While you are in this option you may like to do some browsing through other careers. Try looking at some careers which are related to the ones on your career list. For example, if Hotel Receptionist has been selected for you, try to see if any other hotel careers might be of interest.

You can just scroll through the full list and pick out careers of interest. But always remember to ask the questions about each career. It may sound interesting but will it suit your interests and skills?

You can also filter your career list by types of work, working hours and average salary.
Further discussion and research

The careers suggested by Adult Directions are not recommendations, only suggestions.

Throughout this guide it is stressed that to learn from Adult Directions you need to experiment with your answers and to do further research. This is important to enable you to make your own decisions about careers. Although you can work through these questions yourself, you may find it of more help to talk through your ideas with an adviser.

Ask whether it is possible to book an interview. You may like to do this after you have had time to think about your Adult Directions results. Most careers information centres have a careers library to help you with researching careers.

Ask for help in how to find the information you want. You can use this to get further addresses or contacts for visits.

We hope you enjoyed using Adult Directions and wish you luck with your future.