

How the world of work works

Industry:
Transport, postal
and warehousing



Industry:
Electricity, gas, water
and waste services



Occupation:
Accountant



Industry:
Manufacturing



Industry:
Financial and
insurance services



Industry:
Healthcare and
social assistance



Education
Services
Australia

 myfuture
Shape your future

From an early age, we learn about jobs and the working world through our families. Research in the United Kingdom shows that even young children know something of jobs and professions. However, there is a danger that exposure to a limited set of familiar roles – through family, friends and the media – may lead to tunnel vision and restrict social mobility. Knowledge about a wide range of work roles is important to opening up our career aspirations. But the world of work is complicated. To gain any real insights we need to understand the complexities of activities, occupations and industries, and how they intersect.

As Australia's National Career Information Service, myfuture's core aim is to raise awareness of the world of work and introduce people to a variety of occupations and industries and the many ways that these can be combined. myfuture can be deployed as a tool by influencers – parents, teachers and career practitioners – to support discovery about the world of work. It can also be used by students as a platform for self-guided learning about the operations of industries and occupations.

The world of work and occupations

Discovery of the 'world of work' is one of the key elements of career development. It can also be referred to as 'opportunity awareness' or 'occupational discovery'. It investigates how workers engage with organisations and structures, and how they exchange their labour for capital. Although the concept of occupations is generally understood, at a deeper level it is quite a complex idea. Each individual experience of an occupation will vary according to the context and industry in which it exists.

Untangling occupations and activity

Occupations are constructed groupings of skills, capabilities and knowledges. It is difficult to discuss a specific occupation in a generic way without making it either humdrum or hard to follow. For this reason, occupations are usually described within a particular setting and context. In myfuture, the occupational profiles are enriched by case studies and videos of occupations in specific settings. These contextualised examples provide specific examples of activities linked to an occupation, and show that activities may vary significantly within the same occupation.

In occupational science, activities are defined as engagements or tasks that people in specific occupations have to do. The work context will shape the scope of activities. Consider that an electrician may work on sea or land. A ship's electrician may spend much of their time working on the finer points of waterproofing whereas an electrician in building and construction may focus on collaborating with other tradespeople, and amending specifications as plans change. Because of the differences in their working environment, the two electricians are called on to use their electrical training in different ways.

New occupations?

Recent myfuture research into the future of work has shown that the majority of 'new' occupations can be regarded as new contexts for old occupations, or new activities that fit within the boundaries of an existing occupation. The exceptions to this rule are those occupations that engage with new technologies. An electrician working on drone technology, for example, may be considered to have a new occupation – one which requires a high level of electrical engineering knowledge combined with mechanical engineering.

It should also be noted that a new way of engaging with the world can give rise to new occupations. For example, with advances in knowledge about genes, the role of 'genetic counsellor' has emerged.

Different types of job title



Postal Delivery Officer:

Some titles describe job activities



Faculty Head:

Some titles describe level of seniority



Building and Construction Manager:

Some titles describe both

Defining features of activities, job title, occupation and industry

Career, profession, calling, purpose, vocation, position, occupation, role, job title – these are all terms we use to understand what we do in employment. Many people use these terms interchangeably, but when it comes to career planning, it is important to understand the difference between them. The four key terms used by myfuture are *activities, job titles, occupations* and *industries*.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagements or tasks that people in specific occupations have to do
Job title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not standardised – chosen by individual employer Specific to a role Reflects seniority and responsibilities Refers to an occupation within a specific industry There can be different job titles for the same occupation, even within the same industry
Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A neutral, standardised term Gives a general idea about work A group of skills, capabilities or knowledge, within a particular setting and context Can be at different levels of seniority The same occupations can be found in many different industries
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What your work is part of, where you work Provides a specific set of products or type of services There are many different occupations in any industry

Using myfuture to explore ways of classifying structures

A framework that defines and links the variables (such as *occupation/industry/job title*) can provide a useful starting point in career discussions and lead to a more comprehensive, holistic understanding of the world of work. Resources on myfuture can be used as part of this discussion.

- Explore common tasks, skills and capabilities in the **Occupations** section.
- Explore the profiles in the **Industries** section.
- Explore activities and individual stories in the **Case studies** section.

	Job title	Occupation	Industry	Example
	Graduate Structural Engineer	Civil Engineering Professional	Construction	Read myfuture case study 'Graduate structural engineer in the workplace'
	Pavement and Geotechnical Engineer	Civil Engineering Professional	Transport, postal and warehousing	Read myfuture case study 'On the road (and pavement) with Kate'

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