



Shape your future

myfuture's *My career profile*



Education
Services
Australia

'What interests me?' 'Is this career in line with my values?'

'Does it make the most of my skills?' 'Will I enjoy it?'

These are all questions young people ask themselves as they embark on making the first of many career choices with very little experience beyond the classroom. Career influencers including parents and carers, teachers involved in career education and career counsellors need to support young people in developing self-awareness and an understanding of the world of work. Some may have had specific, strongly held career aspirations since childhood, others may be drawn to certain subjects, and others still may have no idea where to start actioning the steps after school.

myfuture's career exploration tool, *My career profile*, is designed to help students explore career pathways and develop self-knowledge for career decision making. Specifically, it enables them to become more self-aware through nine activities. The activities ask students to think about what matters to them, what skills they enjoy, their interests, and the school subjects they might like to continue. The tool generates personalised results as well as some suggested occupations. *My career profile* suggests users learn more about any of over 350 occupations, so it is likely to include a great number that students may not have considered.

For each suggested occupation, myfuture provides information on what educational attainment level is required (drawing on national data sources) as well as the relevant fields of study. It also provides links to courses based on real pathways that students have taken. myfuture also shares each occupation's average salary and hours, and how saturated the job market is. By getting students to spend time focusing on their motivations and interests, *My career profile* allows them to take a more informed and considered approach to their future.

Using the career exploration tool

My career profile offers students nine activities to encourage them to discover more about themselves. These activities relate to the following areas: interests, skills, educational and training level aspirations, study preferences, work conditions, values, current career knowledge, entrepreneurial disposition and their ideal job. The activities are designed to help students develop self-awareness in relation to their motivations, personal preferences and career development. The activities can be completed in one or multiple sittings. *My career profile* encourages students to complete all the activities and revisit them regularly as their interests, values and career knowledge change. It aims to help students become aware of their own interests and abilities, the career opportunities that exist, and how they can reach them and move between careers in the future.

Students can view and explore their results in an **exportable PDF** that can be printed or shared via email with teachers, career practitioners or parents to engage them in conversation. If students **export their PDF summaries** each time the activities are completed, they can also track any changes over time.

It's important to recognise that the list of occupations generated by *My career profile* is not a prediction of the students' future careers, but more suggestions for them to explore as they browse the myfuture website.

The Interests and Skills activities are both based on an educational psychology informed psychometric test - Dr James Athanasou's Career Interest Test (CIT). Both activities explore career interests through seven categories: scientific, creative, people contact, business, office, outdoor and practical. Both activities have a strong influence on the suggested occupations generated by *My career profile*.

The Interests activity has questions related to work and study areas and job-related skills (see Figure 1 for example questions). The Skills activity also has questions related to job-related skills. Note that some of the questions require knowledge about the world of work and younger students may need support. To find out more about jobs, study areas and activities that they are unfamiliar with, students should be encouraged to explore ancillary material on the myfuture website - such as articles and career bullseyes - as well as elsewhere.

Figure 1

Agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Engineering
Chemistry	<input type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Electronics
Photography	<input type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Botany
Give Advice About Jobs	<input type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Act in a Play
Prepare Tax Returns	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Own a Shop
Supervise Others	<input type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Help Families with Problems
Physical Education	<input type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Medicine
Music	<input type="radio"/>	or	<input type="radio"/>	Woodwork

Each answer within the interests and skills areas creates a pattern of responses (Figure 2), which is then used to predict the student’s potential career interests by revealing their preferences or dislikes for each of the seven categories. Once each activity is completed, students can explore their results (Figure 3) before looking at their suggested occupations. Education Services Australia (ESA) has mapped Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation (ANZSCO) Unit Groups of occupations to the Career Interest Test categories.

Figure 2

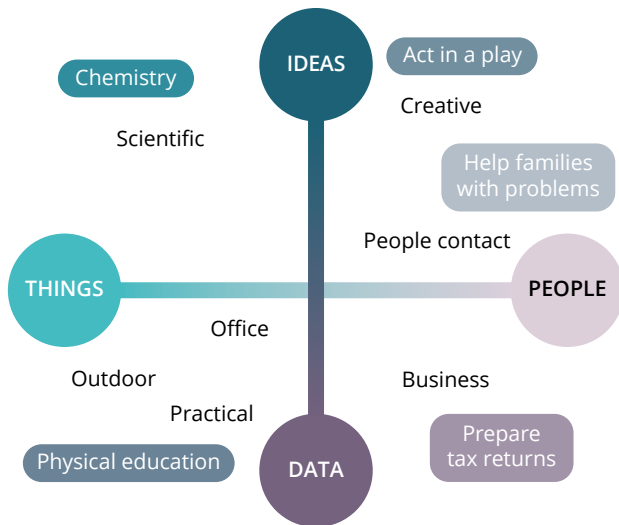
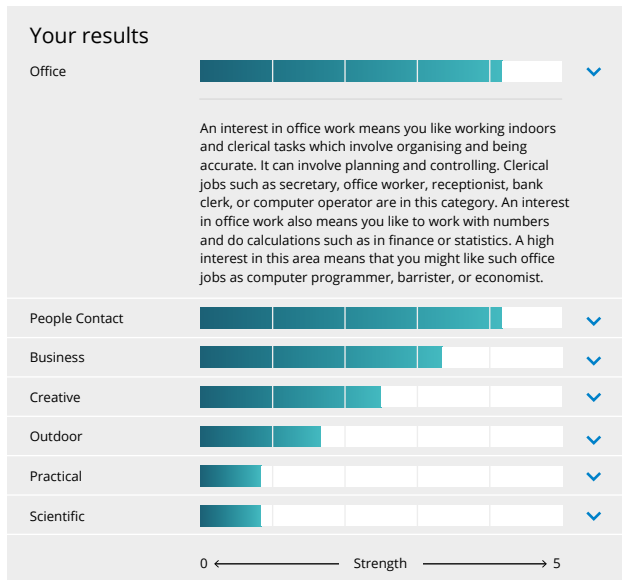


Figure 3



How the Career Interest Test has evolved over time

The Career Interest Test was designed by Dr James Athanasou from the University of Sydney in 2006, based on the Australian work context. It originally constituted 63 questions: 21 concerning jobs (e.g. *Would you prefer Agriculture or Engineering?*), 21 concerning study areas (e.g. *Are you interested in studying music or woodwork?*) and 21 concerning activities (e.g. *Give advice about jobs or Act in a play*). However, a number of teachers suggested that the original version was too long to complete within class time.

In a research project commissioned by ESA and conducted by the University of Southern Queensland’s Professor Peter McIlveen, nearly 200,000 anonymised myfuture student records were analysed, for five different age groups. The findings of that initial research informed further research and development that produced a shorter version Career Interest Test. This new 21-item version was adopted for use in myfuture. The psychometric properties of the 21-CIT were published as peer-reviewed research (Bartlett, Perera, McIlveen, 2015).

After condensing the test, the ESA team engaged in labour market research to link the categories to suggested occupations, further detailed in the myfuture *Insights* paper ‘Rethinking the link between study and the world of work’ located on the [myfuture Insights page](#). A critical part of that work was mapping the Career Interest Test activity categories to all 358 Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Unit Groups. This project brought in authentic Australian labour force data to underpin the suggestions in myfuture.

Conclusion

There are many factors at play when making career decisions. However, myfuture’s *My career profile* can be an important first step in helping students to become more self-aware and begin planning their career. The activities are quick to complete, and the validity of the psychometrically oriented activities has been widely established.

The 2019 [Australian National Career Education Strategy](#) suggests that career education activities should support the development of career self-awareness in order to support student’s future pathway choices. Through the activities in *My career profile*, career influencers can provide a reliable, relatable and accessible way of supporting young people to find out more about what their individual career journeys could hold.

Explore and download all myfuture *Insights* papers via the teacher and career practitioners and/or parents and carers pages at www.myfuture.edu.au

Got a question?
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Further reading

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