



Career Exploration

Primary Career Cluster:	General Career and Technical Education
Course Contact:	CTE.Standards@tn.gov
Course Code:	C25X07
Prerequisite:	None
Credit:	½ to 1
Grade Levels:	6-8
Graduation Requirements:	This course is meant to serve as an exploratory course to assist students in determining an appropriate elective focus. It does not fulfill any graduation requirements.
Program of Study Concentrator:	This course does not satisfy credit attainment for connector status, since it is not part of an approved program of study.
Program of Study and Sequence:	This course is encouraged as a pre-requisite for any and all high school CTE courses and programs of study, as well as academic and fine arts elective focuses.
Coordinating Work-Based Learning:	Teachers are encouraged to use embedded WBL activities such as informational interviewing, job shadowing, and career mentoring. For information, visit https://www.tn.gov/education/educators/career-and-technical-education/work-based-learning.html .
Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Credentials:	None
Teacher Endorsement(s):	001, 004, 006, 007, 009, 009, 010, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 033, 034, 035, 036, 037, 038, 039, 040, 041, 042, 043, 044, 045, 046, 047, 048, 049, 050, 051, 052, 054, 055, 056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 061, 062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 071, 072, 073, 077, 078, 079, 080, 081, 082, 099, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 147, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 220, 221, 230, 231, 240, 241, 250, 301, 310, 311, 400, 401, 402, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 434, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 439, 445, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 458, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 484, 485, 486, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 498, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 700, 701, 702, 703, 705, 706, 707, 710, 711, 720, 721, 722, 730, 740, 742, 750, 751, 760, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 780, 781
Required Teacher Certifications:	None
Required Teacher Training:	None
Teacher Resources:	https://www.tn.gov/education/educators/career-and-technical-education.html

Course Description

Career Exploration is a course designed to reinforce previous career awareness and strategically explore a wide range of career options through (a) engaging in self-reflection and intentional goal setting by using a career assessment tool; (b) analyzing academic strengths and progress; (c) researching postsecondary options and the requirements for various career sectors; and (d) identifying coursework, extracurricular activities, and experiences that can support career exploration. Upon completion of this course, proficient students will use their strengths and skills to set meaningful academic and career goals; articulate careers that align with their strengths and academic background or plans; and discover ways to explore various career options in their community. Students will also demonstrate soft skills (e.g., teamwork, self-advocacy, and effective communication), alongside technical skills (e.g., time management and goal creation), to practice critical skills needed in the workplace. It is recommended that *Career Exploration* occur in sequence after *Career Awareness* and prior to *Career Advising and Planning*.

Course Standards

1. Personal Assessment and Goal Development

- 1.1 Personal Profile: Summarize the results of a career assessment tool (such as, but not limited to, instruments determining interest and aptitudes, personality traits, learning styles, career choice alignments, personal values, etc.) to **develop a personal profile**. Ensure summaries cite specific textual evidence from the results, such as individual strengths and abilities, and compare and contrast results with prior knowledge or opinions. Throughout the course, continue to reference the results of the profile to connect individual strengths and interests with goal-setting, planning, and projects.
- 1.2 Career Pathway: With the support of a career assessment tool, engage in self-reflection to evaluate personal goals, skills, and interests to apply findings to **research a career pathway or career sector**.
- 1.3 Goals: **Create, monitor, and revise long-term (over two years), mid-term (one to two years), and short-term (less than one year) personal goals**, defining desired personal, education, career, and earning milestones. Define relevant key terms where appropriate. Evaluate factors that may influence these goals, including family responsibilities, individual values, and economic conditions.
- 1.4 Personal Toolkit: Compare information in personal profile and desired short-, mid-, and long-term goals and identify areas where support and development may be needed. Create and continue to build throughout the course a **personal toolkit of multiple available resources (physical and digital) to assist with educational achievement, personal growth and development, and career advancement**. Vet resources for the toolkit by assessing the extent to which each resource addresses a particular claim or recommendation for addressing a challenge or problem.

2. Academic Achievement

- 2.1 Academic Progress: Evaluate **current academic progress and how it aligns to future career goals**. Identify and articulate academic strengths and areas for improvement.
- 2.2 Self-Advocacy: Apply knowledge of personal academic strengths and weaknesses **to know when and how to ask for help**, when needed. Understand what resources are available to positively influence school performance. Identify strategies for improving educational achievement and performance.
- 2.3 Academic Strategies: Research and select appropriate **study habits, organizational strategies, stress reduction, and time management tactics to improve personal academic achievement and future career success**. Test hypotheses about appropriate strategies by following steps to techniques and tools precisely and provide updates (via methods such as oral reports, teacher-student check-in meetings, or personal reflection journals) about how the techniques did or did not improve achievement.
- 2.4 Independent and Cooperative Work Skills: Demonstrate the ability to work independently and cooperatively with peers, school leaders, and community partners when needed. **Show dependability, productivity, and initiative when completing individual and group projects**.

3. Education and Career Research

- 3.1 Transferable Skills: Identify a list of **skills that are transferable between different job sectors and careers**.
- 3.2 High Demand Careers: Using job sourcing and career exploration websites, research various jobs and career sectors. **Identify which occupations/industries are in high demand and/or are emerging in their fields**. Compare and contrast the information presented, including salary differences, education requirements, and potential challenges to overcome to enter the field.
- 3.3 Entrepreneurship: Understand the **role of entrepreneurship in the U.S. economy**. Research a well-known entrepreneur and prepare a report on his or her entrepreneurial characteristics and the problem the entrepreneurship sought to address.
- 3.4 Post-Secondary Education: Utilize online college access tools to research the differences among postsecondary options, including **trade or technical schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities**. **Include specific characteristics, such as location, public or private institution, on- or off-campus housing, and cost per credit hour**.
- 3.5 Academic Map: Create an **academic map or course of study for a specific career** and identify key elements necessary for success, such as the following:
 - a. Important knowledge, skills, and mindsets;
 - b. Required high school and postsecondary courses;
 - c. Average ACT scores;
 - d. Average GPAs; and

- e. Prerequisite courses for post-graduate degrees and post-graduate entrance exams.
- 3.6 Career Clusters and Pathways: **Differentiate between a career cluster and a career pathway** and understand the context in which each is important.
- 3.7 Career Technical Education (CTE): Demonstrate a **conceptual understanding of CTE content by articulating cross-content connections**. Identify various career opportunities within each cluster, and research estimated salaries and education ranges.
- 3.8 Career Exploration Assessment: Using a career aptitude assessment and career interest inventory, **reflect on personal interests and aptitudes and align them to Tennessee's available career clusters**. Identify which career clusters are academically or personally interesting, and if they are available in your high school.
- 3.9 Understanding the Impact of State Government Careers: **Research and analyze careers within at least one state government agency that aligns with personal career aptitude or interest inventory results**. Evaluate the agency's role in serving the public, identify required skills and education, and reflect on how a career in state government can contribute to community impact.

4. Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO)

- 4.1 Opportunities: Identify and **explore the recognized Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) in Tennessee** and which organizations are available in your middle school and high school:
 - a. DECA,
 - b. Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA),
 - c. Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA),
 - d. FFA,
 - e. Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA),
 - f. SkillsUSA, and
 - g. Technology Student Association (TSA).
- 4.2 Membership: Brainstorm and list the **potential benefits of CTSO membership**, including but not limited to career self-efficacy, college aspirations, community service, employability skills, leadership development, and academic motivation and engagement.
- 4.3 Interview: **Interview members of a particular CTSO**. Summarize and report on the basic responsibilities, organization, and future opportunities available to them.

Experiential Learning

- 5.1 Career Pathway: Investigate the **steps needed for participation in various career and educational opportunities**, such as entry-level employment, apprenticeships, community and technical colleges, industry credentials, and/or military service.
- 5.2 Team Task: Work in a team, with identified roles and responsibilities, to **develop an artifact specific to an interest-aligned CTE career cluster**.
- 5.3 Extracurricular Activities: Research the extracurricular activities available in middle school, their time requirements, and the **benefits of school involvement for long-term academic and career success**. Compare and contrast several activities.
- 5.4 Educational Profile: Create an **educational profile of an employee in an interest-aligned career**. Compare and contrast your personal knowledge with the information gathered from industry experts through interviews or media outlets.
- 5.5 Career Exploration Experience: Participate in a **career exploration experience via a career fair, guest speaker, industry tour, or similar experiential activity**. Compare new learnings with previously held notions on interest-aligned careers.