

FAQ'S - CAREER TIMELINE

1. On average, how long does it take after graduation to find a steady, stable job related to your career goals?

This is a difficult question to answer because the job market is not predictable. In addition to the efforts you make as a job seeker (to find employment), also consider the variety of external factors that can impact your success (both positively and negatively) in finding employment. For example, a volatile market/suffering economy, the number of other qualified new grads who are applying to similar opportunities, the timing of new opportunities becoming available, and being in the right place at the right time with the right connections.

Students who take the time to build their resume and their network over the course of their education (from first/second year until their graduating year), in addition to utilizing the services through the BCDO, are the ones who often secure full time opportunities before they even complete their studies, or more typically, they secure a full time position within 3 months of graduating.

For students who have done little to build their experience/resume and professional network, and who have not used the BCDO while in school, it sometimes takes a year or longer for them to find relevant full time employment. This is not to say that they aren't working during this time, but likely they are not working within their chosen field.

Also keep in mind that your career is something that will build and evolve over time. Your first career-related job after completing school is not likely the one you will stay in for the rest of your career, but it hopefully will provide you with an opportunity to build your skills/experience in an industry/profession/company that interests you, while helping you to continue building your professional network and opening up doors for you to try new things and get involved in projects that would not otherwise be presented to you.

2. Where else can I go for career advice/job search assistance if I take a couple of years off after school?

This question is difficult to answer without knowing your individual situation. It would depend on location, what type of career you are interested in and your current level of experience/education. There are a variety of organizations in the community that offer career guidance and job search assistance. Review <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/jobseekers/resourceCentres.html> to search locations within your area.

3. Should I accept the first job offer I receive out of school or hold out for one that is more aligned with my interests/career goals?

This is a personal decision that only you can make and it will depend on your individual circumstances such as current financial situation, expectations from family members, etc. Seek out opportunities that are a good fit with your education and work background that are of interest to you, while being realistic about your expectations. Keep an open mind when you are considering an offer and realize that you will not have a full understanding of a position until you are actually in the role. This means there may be opportunities to develop your skills (and industry networks) within a position that may not be apparent at first glance. It is also important to do your research on the company/position and ask questions during the recruitment process. Learning as much as you can about the position should help in your decision-making. Don't be afraid to ask questions in the interview - this is your opportunity to determine if the company/position is a good fit for you too.

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Ultimately, you will have to make a decision that feels right to you, based on the information you have collected. Trust your instincts, however, be sure to give every opportunity a fair chance before discounting it immediately. Remember, there is rarely a “perfect” job out there and as a recent grad, you will need to spend time developing your skills along the path to your career goal

4. What are some realistic expectations about moving up in a company while in your 20's? In terms of both position and pay.

This will depend on the type of job and industry/sector you work in, and will also depend on your skill set and the availability of opportunities in the company. In the private sector, it can be easier to advance more quickly as far as position and pay, but it can also be more competitive to do so. In the public sector, there is often a higher level of bureaucracy with many policies around promotion and pay increases, but often these organizations place preference on internal candidates which can open doors for those looking to advance from within the organization into different roles. In the not-for-profit sector, financial advancement can be challenging because these organizations are typically operating on government grants and corporate donations, but the opportunity to take on more advanced roles (and greater responsibility) can exist.

Assuming the opportunity for advancement exists, individuals in their 20's can move up in an organization in terms of both position and pay in relatively significant ways. With that said, an individual's ambition, drive, and motivation to succeed are only one part of this equation. There is something to be said about building experience over time and establishing oneself as knowledgeable and professional with the ability to appropriately manage themselves in advanced level roles. If you have this combination of attributes, then the opportunities are there.

5. How would taking a couple of years off after school impact my job prospects and starting my career?

This depends on what you mean by “taking a couple of years off”. If you plan on doing nothing in those two years then this can have a significant impact on your ability to secure relevant employment because you will be competing with new grads who have fresh, recent, and relevant experience (and who have a support network at their university to connect them to employers and jobs). Many new graduate recruitment opportunities require that candidates be fresh out of school (or at least out of school for no more than 1-2 years). By taking time “off” you potentially limit the number of opportunities that are available to you with your education and experience.

If, during the time off, you are pursuing other interests, this can actually add value to your resume. It is important while you “take time off” to stay connected with your network, continue to build your network, and stay involved in things that build and enhance your employable skills. You don't necessarily need to be doing this on a full time basis, but it should be something that is continued in order to keep your resume and your experiences fresh and evolving.

For more detail on how to approach this type of situation, I strongly encourage you to contact the BCDO to arrange an appointment to discuss your individual situation.