



Career Exploration

Primary Career Cluster:	CTE Interdisciplinary
Consultant:	Candi Norwood, (615) 532-6248, Candi.Norwood@tn.gov
Course Code(s):	6166
Prerequisite(s):	None
Credit:	½ - 1*
Grade Level:	8 – 9
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.
Programs 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 art elective focuses.
Aligned Student Organization(s):	None
Coordinating Work-Based Learning:	Teachers must comply with the requirements of the state board’s WBL Framework and the Department’s WBL Policy Guide and are encouraged to use embedded WBL activities to facilitate career exploration and skill development for students. For information, visit http://tn.gov/education/topic/work-based-learning .
Available Student Industry Certifications:	None
Dual Credit or Dual Enrollment Opportunities:	There are no statewide dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities for this course.
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,

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Required Teacher Certifications/Training:	None
Teacher Resources:	http://tn.gov/education/article/cte-cluster-middle-school-cte-coursework

Course Description

Career Exploration is an introductory course designed to assist students in (a) discovering their personal strengths and abilities, (b) understanding opportunities available to them in different career areas, and (c) practicing skills necessary to excel in the workforce and in postsecondary learning. Upon completion of this course, proficient students will know and exhibit soft skills (e.g. teamwork, creative thinking, and problem solving), as well as more technical skills (e.g. resume building and written communications) related to career exploration and experience. Students will also learn about and be exposed to existing CTE pathways and elective focus options within a high school setting and will learn how to successfully transition into a district recognized career academy or program of study.

Program of Study Application

This course is meant to serve as a middle school or freshman orientation course to available career and technical education (CTE) courses and programs of study and elective focus options. While not required, it is encouraged to be used, where needed, to orient students to available options, while also developing important 21st Century Skills noted by employers and postsecondary institutions alike as important for student success after high school.

This course can serve as a prerequisite for any CTE course and program of study; however, it is not a required part of any programs of study. Due to this, the course should not be counted toward CTE concentrator status.

Course Standards

Personal Assessment and Goal Development

- 1) Summarize the results of multiple available personal assessment tools (such as, but not limited to instruments determining: interests and aptitudes, personality traits, learning styles, career choice alignments, personal values, etc.) to develop a personal profile and reflect thoughtfully on the results. Ensure summaries cite specific textual evidence from the results and compare and contrast results with prior knowledge or opinions. Throughout the course, continue to refer back to the results of the profile to connect individual strengths and interests with goal setting, planning, and projects.

- 2) Write, monitor, and revise long-term (over 5 years), mid-term (1 - 5 years), and short-term (a year or less) personal goals, defining desired personal, education, career, and earning milestones in each set – working to learn and define relevant key terms where appropriate. Evaluate factors that may influence these goals, including family responsibilities and personal profile results, individual values, and economic conditions.
- 3) Comparing information in personal profile and desired short-, mid-, and long-term goals, identify areas where support and development may be needed and 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.

Academic Achievement

- 4) Using information about personal learning style and/or personality traits, research and select appropriate study habits, organizational strategies, stress reduction, and time management tactics to improve personal academic achievement and future career success. Test hypothesis about appropriate strategies by following steps to techniques and tools precisely and provide updates (via oral report, teacher-student check-in meetings, or personal reflection journal) about how the techniques did or did not improve achievement.
- 5) Conduct a research project, citing multiple sources, to analyze and describe how skills learned in school (including academic, technical, and “soft skills”) benefit an individual in postsecondary training, career, and society. Articulate importance of specific skills that will be focus of high school, including literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and problem solving.
- 6) Research and articulate, in an informative essay, the importance of honesty and integrity in academics and career by describing appropriate and non-appropriate practices in topics such as writing/plagiarism, internet security, identity theft, workplace ethics, and interpersonal relationships/bullying. Using case-studies or comparing and contrasting situational results, identify and practice (throughout the course) appropriate personal practices and strategies.
- 7) Demonstrate appropriate communication at various levels. Develop and practice active listening skills and effective oral and written communications, appropriate to task and audience, to overcome communication barriers. Demonstrate effective note-taking strategies to summarize main points and speaker/author meanings from multiple sources such as lectures, journals, websites, and/or textbooks/manuals. Address the class using a public-speaking activity.

Qualities for Success

- 8) Analyze and describe how interpersonal and leadership skills (such as respecting differences within groups, personal responsibility, and articulating a clear vision) are necessary to maintain quality relationships and success in postsecondary training and the workplace. Identify, develop, and practice specific skills through team projects in the course.
- 9) Research and demonstrate understanding of characteristics and tactics for handling difficult conversations, resolving conflict, and giving and receiving constructive criticism.

High School, Postsecondary, and Career Planning

- 10) Explore available course options for high school elective focus and/or CTE program of study using available resources (such as high school catalog, academy marketing materials, interviews with teachers and/or upperclassmen students, CollegeForTN.gov planning tools, etc.). Include information about potential early postsecondary (dual credit, dual enrollment, CLEP, AP, IB, Cambridge, etc.) and work-based learning (practicum course, internship, school-based enterprise, co-op, etc.) opportunities in addition to extracurricular opportunities (Career and Technical Student Organizations, sporting teams, service organizations, academy activities, fine arts organizations, etc.). Using results of personal profile and mid- and long-term personal goals, identify potential pathways to continue to explore throughout the course.
- 11) Explore available occupations and career fields using a variety of available sources, such as print, online, interviews with business representatives, job shadowing, tours, guest speakers, career fairs, videos, and simulated work activities/products. Compare results of research to available career opportunities in the local community or region using local job postings, newspapers, and local occupational outlook data. Select a few specific careers to continue to explore throughout the remainder of the course.
- 12) Develop a chart, table, or graphic to compare characteristics of chosen careers, such as alignment to personal interest and aptitude, education requirements, available positions, salaries, potential lifetime earnings, and employer benefits. Research and report (orally, digitally, or in an explanatory text) the requirements for admission to, and related costs of attending, a specific postsecondary institution and how attending that institution will support education, career, and earning goals.
- 13) Using results of personal profile, high school course option research, and career exploration research, update short-, mid-, and long-term goals in order to create both a four-year high school plan and a long-term (i.e. 10-year) career plan. Make a claim about why the chosen plans are appropriate, citing evidence from previous readings and projects to develop and support the claim. Create a profile on CollegeForTN.org (or district-approved alternative resource) and use it to assist in developing and finding supporting resources for plan development.

Experiential Learning*

- 14) Using personal profile and career plan goals, prepare customized career preparation materials or exercises for a specific occupation or industry, such as:
 - a. Resume
 - b. Cover letter(s)
 - c. Thank you notes (after interviews) to potential employers
 - d. List of transferable skills
 - e. Job application(s)
 - f. Mock interview or role-play exercise

- 15) In a team, research, identify, and apply the steps of the problem solving process (problem identification, brainstorming, evaluating, solution selection, monitoring and revising) in a contextualized situation to determine a solution to a work-related problem presented from a specific career cluster area. Write a proposal outlining and justifying your team's decision or solution.

- 16) Work in a team, with identified roles and responsibilities, to develop a content-area specific work product (such as designing a product or developing an advertisement). Create a flowchart or some type of graphic organizer to illustrate processes taken to accomplish the task. Execute the plan of the product by designing, organizing, creating, reflecting, maintaining, and updating processes and team member responsibilities as needed.
 - a. Demonstrate the ability to follow safety procedures proficiently as appropriate for the given subject matter.

- 17) Apply specific mathematics and numeracy concepts to real-world workplace scenarios and projects to demonstrate understanding and transferability of appropriate grade-level mathematics skills. For example:
 - a. Comparing and contrasting pay earned by different workers using algebraic thinking.
 - b. Ordering, measuring, and storing job supplies and materials using functions.
 - c. Determining interest on a loan by exploring a graph of the repayment terms.
 - d. Determining an appropriate quantity or cost of a project or set of items by comparing different functions and calculating accurately.

- 18) Apply communications and literacy skills to real-world workplace scenarios and projects to demonstrate understanding and transferability of appropriate grade-level communications skills. For example:
 - a. Research a particular historical figure important to a given field or occupation and craft an informative essay outlining his/her contribution.
 - b. Read a case-study about an ethical dilemma in a workplace (such as plagiarism) and craft an argumentative essay that develops and supports a claim about a potential solution to the challenge posed in the case-study.
 - c. Evaluate a piece of marketing material and analyze the publisher's purpose in using the language, structure, and symbols therein.

- d. Select and apply the correct communications tool/technology for a given workplace or academic situation (such as writing a memo relating to the ordering of supplies).
 - e. Develop and present a speech to a public audience (such as students in a particular program of study or a panel of industry guests) on a topic specific to a desired occupation or industry.
- 19) Participate in, and document, a service project that will be presented to the school and/or the community. Investigate a need in the community, conduct interviews, ask clarifying questions to determine specifics, create an innovative way to address the need, document research and proposed solution, and present proposal using effective oral and written communications skills.

** Experiential Learning should be customized to the needs of the students in a particular district and school. Mastery of all Experiential Learning standards are not required for the successful completion of the course. For example, 9th grade students may create and participate in job-search activities (standard 14), though it may not be appropriate for 8th graders. If this course is being used as a 9th grade career academy or freshman orientation course, specific academy or career cluster projects, in a project-based learning format, may be used to meet the objectives of orienting students to available CTE pathways (standards 15-19). If this course is being offered as a ½ credit course, the Experiential Learning standards are optional.*

Standards Alignment Notes

**References to other standards include:

- P21: Partnership for 21st Century Skills [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#)
 - Note: While not all standards are specifically aligned, teachers will find the framework helpful for setting expectations for student behavior in their classroom and practicing specific career readiness skills.

Materials and References

- CollegeForTN.org: <https://secure.collegefortn.org/>
- ACT College Readiness Guides: <http://www.act.org/standard/guides/act/>
- Tennessee *Drive to 55* Reports and Jobs Forecast Tools: <http://www.driveto55.org/reports/>
- Junior Achievement: Role of Common Core Standards in College and Career Readiness Education
<https://www.juniorachievement.org/documents/20009/35541/The+Roll+of+Common+Core+Standards.pdf/274c78bd-2dd4-407f-9050-78243ef836e9>
- National Association of State Directors of CTE
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/careerteched/files/CCTC_Standards_Formatted_7_13.pdf