

## Six Question Self-Assessment: How ready am I for an alternative career?

Select the answer option for the six questions below and review the answer key for more information.

1. Do I want to work in a different job from my original profession?

- a) Yes
- b) Maybe
- c) No

2. Am I interested in other jobs or industries?

- a) Yes
- b) Maybe
- c) No

3. Do I know about job opportunities in other fields?

- a) Yes
- b) Maybe
- c) No

4. Do I have skills and experience that can be transferable to other jobs?

- a) Yes
- b) Maybe
- c) No

5) Do I know what else I need in order to move into a new career?

- a) Yes
- b) Maybe
- c) No

6) Do I have help and support to move into a new career?

- a) Yes
- b) Maybe
- c) No

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## ANSWER KEY

### **1. Do I want to work in a different job from my original profession?**

Q1a) YES—Sounds like you have already thought about branching out and using your skills and experience in a different context. Depending on how advanced you are in your preparation and search, you may still find valuable information here on skills transfer, labour market research or available programs. Check out <https://www.workbc.ca> to learn more about jobs in British Columbia. But be sure to come back to read about experiences of other newcomers and resources available to you.

Q1b) MAYBE—Career change is seldom easy and you are not convinced that it's the best option for you. Perhaps you are reluctant to give up the status and prestige of your profession, or can't imagine yourself in another type of job. Nevertheless, if you are having lots of difficulties becoming certified or finding a position in your field, we encourage you to read some of the success stories of other newcomers here <http://issbc.org/programs/career-services/impact-success-stories/>.

Q1c) NO—Perhaps you are well on your way becoming certified or finding employment in your specific field. If it is a lengthy process, you could consider temporary employment in an alternative career. It will likely be more fulfilling than a survival job and the experience will be more valuable to you.

### **2. Am I interested in other jobs or industries?**

Q2a) YES—Being flexible and having a variety of interests will serve you well in your search for an alternative career. Eventually you will have to choose an area to focus on, so you can identify any skills you may need to develop or update. You can read about several alternative career options here: <http://pwp.vpl.ca/siic/alternative-careers>. But don't forget to come back to our IMPACT page to learn more about the paths other newcomers have taken.

Q2b) MAYBE—You might be interested but don't know enough about other jobs or industries to be sure. Talk to as many people as possible to get a better understanding of opportunities for someone with your specific talents. Build and use your network of technology professionals. You may find that other areas within the diverse technology sector offer exciting employment options. If a career in technology interests you, try to "cruise the path" to see your options in these animated flowcharts <http://issbc.org/programs/career-services/impact-newcomers/>

Q2c) NO—For many newcomers, exploring alternative careers is a necessity. Many have to, at least for a while, settle for low paying jobs. Take some time to search for jobs that can make use of some of your skills and aptitudes. You may be surprised to find alternative careers that are closely related to your original profession, or that allow you to develop your skills in other ways. Perhaps informational interviews with other professionals, or talking to professionals who have found fulfilling alternative careers will give you a glimpse of attractive possibilities.

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**3. Do I know about job opportunities in other fields?**

Q3a) YES— You are on the right track to finding an alternative career. You are probably already using the services of organizations like ISSofBC that offer employment programs, some of which connect you to employers. And you have started building your network through sites such as LinkedIn, and researched different types of jobs on job boards.

Q3b) MAYBE and c) NO—You are perhaps finding that you would like to get more information about job opportunities in other fields but don't know where to look. You can find information about different jobs by going online to look at job boards, company websites or online networking sites like LinkedIn.

Welcome BC's labour market info provides helpful information on other fields as you'll see at this link: <https://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-or-Study-in-B-C/Job-profiles-for-immigrants>. Employment counsellors at immigrant serving organizations can also help you. Talking to people is an excellent way to find out about job opportunities in other fields. So build your network and make sure to include people from different fields in your network. Attend a networking workshop and look at people's online profiles to get started.

**4. Do I have skills and experience that can be transferable to other jobs?**

Q4a) YES—That's great! Understanding how your skills can apply to other technology jobs is the first step. Now you will need to explain it and provide evidence to an employer in your application and during an interview for an alternative career. Impact resources can help.

Q4b) MAYBE and Q4c) NO—You have many different skills, some specific to your profession, but others that can be applied in other types of work. Skills that can be applied to other types of work are considered transferable. Examples of transferable skills include project or team leadership, researching and analyzing data, working in a sterile environment, creating software using different coding languages, presenting information, or convincing others. Research other jobs and consult an employment counsellor to find out what transferable skills you have, and what job opportunities exist for those transferable skills. You can look through job titles in the National Occupational Classification at this link:

<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/OccupationIndex.aspx>

**5) Do I know what else I need in order to move into a new career?**

Q5a) YES—Good job—you are developing an action plan to move towards a new alternative career. In your research you will have identified the knowledge or skill areas that you need to strengthen to move into your new career, and checked out what kind of certification, if any, is needed by employers. You have found online or face-to-face training opportunities that will help you fill any gaps and are accepted by B.C. technology employers.

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Q5b) **MAYBE**—Perhaps you have not identified a specific alternative career or maybe you are finding it difficult to find reliable sources to get the information you need. While it may feel awkward at first, in B.C., it is common practice to identify and approach people you have never met to get the information you need. You could request informational interviews with employers or contact other newcomers who have made the transition to alternative careers. You can meet such people at networking events of associations or professional groups and contact them through LinkedIn.

Q5c) **NO**—If you have not had much success in your search for an alternative career, you may want to contact an immigrant serving organization like ISSofBC. They have information and programs that can get you started. You might want to watch one of our webinars dedicated to work in particular technology subsectors to help you understand your options. Click this link to go to our webinar page: <http://issbc.org/programs/career-services/impact-newcomers/>

**6) Do I have help and support to move into a new career?**

Q6a) **YES**—Excellent. Finding and getting the support you need will ease your way into an alternative career. You will have already connected with organizations that offer services to newcomers like you. Perhaps you even have a mentor who works in the area of technology that you are targeting. Hopefully, your family and friends are providing you with encouragement in your journey.

Q6b) **MAYBE**—Researching alternative careers may seem daunting to you or perhaps you have other commitments and priorities that do not allow you to investigate other career options at this time. Hopefully, you have some time to build your network of professionals, which will be valuable to you no matter what type of work you do.

Q6c) **NO**—Perhaps your friends or family do not think an alternative career is a good option for you. Or maybe you are too busy to commit to learning about alternative careers. Immigrant-serving organizations with employment programs provide affordable or free online webinars or information evenings. Contact them to find out more.

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