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Career Colleges Stay On Top of Trends

June 04, 2008 By Thomas A. Hauck

Going to a career college can be a significant investment of both time and money. The goal? To get trained for a rewarding career. But how do you know you're training for a career field that is growing and will have opportunities in the future?

Luckily, the career and technical schools that you will find on EducationForCareers.com have the same concerns as you. They know that their success is measured by how many of their graduates are able to find good jobs in areas where there is growth and opportunity. If their graduates aren't getting jobs, then the reputation of the college will suffer. On the other hand, a high job placement rate means that the college is succeeding in its mission.

How do career schools decide what programs to offer? Mostly by studying trends and statistics. The best source for employment statistics is the U.S. government. The Labor Department has a division called the **Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)**. How convenient! The BLS publishes vast amounts of employment information and data on its website. It's free and available to anyone.

The BLS lists hundreds of occupations: medical assistant, truck driver, carpenter, accountant, cosmetologist, motorcycle repair, law enforcement, graphic design, and many more. For each job a description is provided, along with information about training and advancement opportunities.

There's also a section called "**Job Outlook.**" This section gives the BLS projection of the job's future potential. That's what career colleges want to know.

For example, here's what the BLS predicts for **dental assisting**:

"Employment is expected to increase much faster than average; job prospects are expected to be excellent.... Employment is expected to grow 29 percent from 2006 to 2016, which is [much faster than the average](#) for all occupations. In fact, dental assistants are expected to be among the fastest growing occupations over the 2006-16 projection period."^{*}

Sounds good! Career colleges use this type of information to help them plan their curricula. And, sure enough, many of the career schools on EducationForCareers.com offer programs in dental assisting because they are confident that their graduates will be able to find opportunities in that field.

Let's look at another example—**file clerks**. File clerks classify, store, retrieve, and update office information. In many small offices, they often have additional responsibilities, such as performing word processing, entering data, sorting mail, and operating copying or fax machines.

Does training to be a file clerk sound like a good idea? Here's what the BLS has to say about opportunities for file clerks:

"Rapid declines in employment are expected through 2016. Job prospects should be best for jobseekers who have general office skills and who are familiar with personal computers and other office machines.... Employment of file clerks is expected to [decline rapidly](#) by 41 percent between 2006 and 2016, largely due to productivity gains from office automation and the consolidation of clerical jobs."^{**}

The job outlook for file clerks is not encouraging, and career colleges recognize this. Chances are, the career college or technical training school that interests you will not offer a program in file clerking. If they trained students to be file clerks, their graduates would enter a job marketplace with few opportunities.

Career schools are not employment agencies, and cannot guarantee you a job. But when you choose a program at a reputable career college, you can be assured that the school has done its research and is offering educational programs that reflect the current job marketplace. And that's good to know!

^{*} Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition*, Dental Assistants, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos163.htm> (visited May 29, 2008).

^{**}Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition*, File Clerks, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos146.htm> (visited May 29, 2008).