**Project Proposal**

CareerCompass – A Holistic Career Path Recommender System and Educational Platform for Ages 15–25

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Contents

[1. Title 3](#_Toc199156514)

[2. Introduction 3](#_Toc199156515)

[3. Current Situation Leading to Problem Identification 4](#_Toc199156516)

[4. Proposed Technique to Solve the Current Problem 6](#_Toc199156517)

[5. Feasibility 11](#_Toc199156518)

[7. Deliverables 16](#_Toc199156519)

[8. Resources Required 17](#_Toc199156520)

[9. Expected Output and Outcome 18](#_Toc199156521)

[10. Time Plan for Implementation 19](#_Toc199156522)

[11. Limitations 20](#_Toc199156523)

[12. References 21](#_Toc199156524)

**1. Title**

CareerCompass: A Holistic Career Path Recommender System and Educational Platform

**2. Introduction**

Choosing a career is a pivotal moment for young people, a time of self-discovery amid a rapidly evolving job market driven by technologies like AI and renewable energy. Many feel overwhelmed, lacking personalized guidance that considers their grades, personality, interests, and experiences. Traditional counseling often focuses narrowly on academic performance, pushing students toward fields like medicine without accounting for traits like creativity or social passion. Online career advice is abundant but often generic, contradictory, or unrelatable, especially for underrepresented groups who rarely see inspiring role models.

*CareerCompass* is a Laravel-based web platform designed to address these challenges. It uses machine learning to analyze academic scores, RIASEC personality traits (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional), interests, skills, and experiences, delivering personalized career recommendations with ≥80% accuracy. The ML model is trained on 1000 synthetic profiles (via Python’s Faker library) and real-world data from Kaggle’s CareerVillage dataset and Google Forms surveys.

Beyond suggestions, *CareerCompass* offers practical tools: career roadmaps with steps like “learn Python for data science” and links to free courses on Coursera or Khan Academy; interactive quizzes to build skills like problem-solving; and AI-generated success stories showcasing diverse professionals to motivate users. A community forum fosters collaboration, letting users share ideas, ask questions, and connect with mentors. Downloadable PDF reports summarize career plans for sharing with advisors, while counselors access analytics dashboards to track trends, like popular careers.

Developed for academic purposes, *CareerCompass* will run locally, making it feasible for one developer to complete in three months. Its user-friendly, responsive design ensures accessibility across devices.

**3. Current Situation Leading to Problem Identification**

Young people face significant challenges when planning their careers. These hurdles often leave them feeling confused, unmotivated, or stuck, which can have long-term impacts on their happiness and success. Here are the main issues they encounter:

1. **Overemphasis on Academic Performance**

Most career counseling programs in schools focus heavily on grades, test scores, or GPA. For instance, a student with high marks in math might be steered toward engineering, even if they’re more interested in creative writing or community service. While academic performance is important, it doesn’t capture a person’s full potential. Traits like creativity, emotional intelligence, or leadership are often ignored, leading to career suggestions that don’t align with a student’s personality or passions. This mismatch can result in dissatisfaction or burnout later in life.

1. **Information Overload Online**

The internet is a treasure trove of career advice, but it’s also a mess. Students can find YouTube videos, Reddit threads, blogs, and LinkedIn posts about careers, but much of this information is conflicting, outdated, or too general. For example, one article might say “data science is the future,” while another warns it’s oversaturated. Sifting through this noise to find trustworthy, relevant advice is exhausting, especially for teenagers or young adults who may not know where to start.

1. **Lack of Personalized Guidance**

Many career assessment tools are overly simplistic. They might ask a few multiple-choice questions like “Do you like working with people?” and then suggest broad careers like “teacher” or “doctor.” These tools rarely dive into a person’s unique mix of skills, interests, personality, or life experiences. They also don’t use modern technology like machine learning to analyze complex data and provide precise, tailored recommendations, leaving users with generic or unhelpful suggestions.

1. **Few Relatable Role Models**

Inspiration matters, but many young people, especially from marginalized communities—such as low-income families, rural areas, or minority groups—struggle to find role models they can relate to. If a student doesn’t see people from similar backgrounds succeeding in fields like tech or medicine, those careers can feel like they’re meant for someone else. This lack of representation can sap motivation and make students doubt their potential.

1. **No Clear Path to Action**

Even when a tool suggests a career, it often stops there. Students are left wondering, “Okay, but how do I actually become a graphic designer or a nurse?” They need clear steps—like what skills to learn, what certifications to pursue, or where to find affordable training—but most platforms don’t provide this. Without a roadmap, career suggestions are just ideas, not plans.

These challenges create a gap between what young people need and what’s available. Poor career choices can lead to years of frustration, wasted time, or financial strain. CareerCompass aims to bridge this gap by offering a comprehensive platform that’s personalized, actionable, and motivating. It uses data-driven insights, practical resources, and a supportive community to help users navigate the complex world of career planning with confidence.

**4. Proposed Technique to Solve the Current Problem**

CareerCompass addresses these challenges with a thoughtful mix of technology and user-focused features. It’s designed to feel like a friendly guide, not just a tool, helping young people discover and pursue careers that fit them. Here’s how it works.

**4.1 Comprehensive User Profiles**

The journey starts with an interactive questionnaire that gets to know the user as a whole person. Unlike boring forms that feel like a chore, this one is engaging, with a progress bar to show how far along users are and pop-up tips to explain questions. The questionnaire covers five key areas:

* **Academic Performance**

Users enter their grades (e.g., percentage or GPA), favorite subjects (like biology or literature), and any achievements, such as science fair wins or debate club awards. This helps gauge their academic strengths and interests.

* **Personality Traits**

Using the RIASEC model, users answer questions to determine their vocational personality type. For example, “Do you enjoy fixing things?” points to a Realistic type, while “Do you love coming up with new ideas?” suggests an Artistic type. The questions are simple and relatable to avoid confusion.

* **Interests and Hobbies**

Users pick from a list of options like coding, music, sports, or environmental activism. They can also add custom interests, like “photography” or “volunteering at animal shelters,” to capture what excites them.

* **Skills**

The form includes questions to assess real-world abilities, like problem-solving (“How do you handle a tricky math puzzle?”), communication (“Are you comfortable speaking in front of a group?”), or leadership (“Have you ever led a team project?”). These go beyond grades to show practical strengths.

* **Experiences**

Users describe past experiences, such as part-time jobs (e.g., working at a café), volunteer work (e.g., helping at a community center), or extracurriculars (e.g., school newspaper editor). These highlights skills gained outside the classroom.

The questionnaire adapts based on answers—for example, if a user says they hate public speaking, it skips related follow-up questions. It uses checkboxes, sliders, and text fields to keep things quick and fun, reducing user fatigue.

**4.2 Machine Learning for Career Recommendations**

The core of CareerCompass is a machine learning model that analyzes user data to suggest careers that fit. Here’s how it’s set up.

* **Algorithm Choice**: The model uses Random Forest or XGBoost, both of which are excellent for handling diverse data types (numerical grades, categorical RIASEC types, text-based experiences). These algorithms are robust, meaning they can find patterns even in messy or incomplete data, and they’re widely used for recommendation systems.
* **Training Data**

To build a reliable model that achieves ≥80% accuracy, we’ll use

* + **Synthetic Data**: 1000 user profiles generated with Python’s Faker library. These profiles include realistic but fake data on grades, RIASEC traits, interests, and experiences. For example, a profile might describe a 17-year-old with strong math grades, an Investigative personality, and a hobby of coding. Synthetic data ensures we have enough profiles to train the model effectively, especially since real-world data can be hard to collect in large quantities.
  + **Real-World Data**: To make the model more practical, we’ll include data from Kaggle’s CareerVillage dataset, which contains thousands of career-related questions and answers from students and professionals. We’ll also collect Google Forms surveys from students or peers, asking about their academic performance, interests, and career goals. These real-world datasets add authenticity and help validate the model’s predictions.
* **Prediction Process**

When a user completes the questionnaire, their data is sent to the ML model. The model compares their profile to patterns in the training data and suggests 3–5 careers, each with a confidence score (e.g., “90% match for environmental scientist”). It also provides a short explanation, like “This career fits your strong science grades and passion for sustainability.”

* **Integration**

The ML model runs on FastAPI, a lightweight Python framework that’s fast and easy to use. FastAPI communicates with the Laravel backend through RESTful APIs, sending predictions to display on the user’s dashboard. This setup keeps the ML and web components separate, making the system easier to build and maintain.

**4.3 Educational and Motivational Tools**

CareerCompass goes beyond suggesting careers—it helps users take action and stay inspired.

* **Career Roadmaps**

Each career suggestion comes with a detailed plan. For example, if the model suggests “web developer,” the roadmap might list steps like “Learn HTML and CSS,” “Take a free JavaScript course on Codecademy,” and “Build a portfolio website.” Links to free resources, like Coursera, Khan Academy, or YouTube tutorials, make it easy to start learning.

* **Success Stories**

Using Hugging Face’s GPT-2, the platform generates 500 realistic stories about professionals succeeding in various careers. For instance, a story might describe a young woman from a small town who became a data analyst despite starting with no tech experience. Users can filter stories by career, education level, or background (e.g., “show stories about engineers from low-income families”). These stories make careers feel relatable and achievable.

* **Skill Quizzes**

Interactive quizzes test skills like critical thinking (solving logic puzzles), communication (e.g., writing a clear email), or teamwork (handling group conflicts). Each quiz is timed to keep it engaging, and users get instant feedback, like “You’re great at analyzing problems—try practicing creative brainstorming.” Results are saved to their profile, so they can track progress over time.

**4.4 Community and Support Features**

CareerCompass builds a sense of community to keep users motivated

* **Discussion Forum**

Users can post questions (“What’s it like to work in marketing?”), share experiences, or start discussions about career goals. Moderators (admins or counselors) ensure posts are respectful and helpful. The forum uses tags, like “tech careers” or “college advice,” to organize threads.

* **Mentorship Program**

Verified professionals or counselors can join the forum as mentors. For example, a nurse might answer questions about healthcare careers, sharing tips like “Volunteer at a hospital to gain experience.” Verification ensures mentors are credible.

* **PDF Reports**

Users can download a PDF summarizing their questionnaire answers, career recommendations, and action steps. Generated using jsPDF, these reports are great for sharing with parents, teachers, or counselors during career planning discussions.

**4.5 Technical Architecture**

The platform is built with tools that are reliable and developer-friendly.

* **Laravel**

This PHP framework handles the backend, managing user accounts, storing data, and rendering pages. Its Eloquent ORM simplifies database tasks, and php-open-source-saver/jwt-auth handles secure authentication.

* **FastAPI**

Runs the ML model and communicates with Laravel via APIs. It’s lightweight and perfect for small-scale ML projects.

* **MySQL**

Stores user profiles, questionnaire responses, success stories, quiz results, and forum posts in a structured database.

* **Frontend**

Bootstrap CSS creates a clean, modern, mobile-friendly interface. Laravel’s Blade templates make it easy to display dynamic content, like career suggestions or quiz scores.

This setup ensures CareerCompass is personalized, practical, and engaging, addressing the shortcomings of traditional career guidance tools.

# 5. Feasibility

**5.1 Technical Feasibility**

This project is realistic for one developer to complete in three months. Here’s why it’s technically doable:

* **Backend Development**

Laravel 11 is a powerful yet beginner-friendly framework. It comes with built-in tools like Eloquent ORM for managing the MySQL database and php-open-source-saver/jwt-auth for secure user authentication (e.g., signup, login, password reset). Features like the questionnaire and forum are standard web app components, so Laravel’s existing libraries will speed up development.

* **Machine Learning**

Python’s scikit-learn library makes it easy to build and train a Random Forest or XGBoost model. The Faker library generates 1000 synthetic profiles quickly, each with realistic data like grades or interests. Kaggle’s CareerVillage dataset and Google Forms surveys are freely available and don’t require complex preprocessing. FastAPI integrates the ML model with Laravel using simple REST APIs, which are straightforward to set up and test with tools like Postman.

* **Frontend Design**

Bootstrap CSS is easy to learn and creates a responsive, modern interface. Laravel’s Blade templates handle dynamic content, like displaying a user’s career recommendations or quiz results. This combination ensures the platform looks good and works well on phones, tablets, and computers.

* **Data for ML**

The 1000 synthetic profiles ensure enough data to train the model to ≥80% accuracy, especially since Random Forest and XGBoost handle diverse data well. Adding real-world data from Kaggle and Google Forms improves the model’s reliability without requiring heavy processing.

* **Analytics Visualizations**

Chart.js is a lightweight library that creates simple charts, like bar graphs showing which careers are most popular among users. It integrates easily with Laravel, making it ideal for the admin dashboard.

Since the project runs on a local host for academic purposes, there’s no need to worry about server setup, hosting costs, or scalability issues during development.

**5.2 Operational Feasibility**

CareerCompass is designed to be intuitive and accessible.

* **User-Friendly Interface**

The platform has clear navigation, with a homepage that guides users to the questionnaire, quizzes, or forum. A welcome tutorial walks first-time users through the process, and tooltips explain tricky questions (e.g., “What’s the RIASEC model?”). The questionnaire’s progress bar keeps users motivated to finish.

* **Accessibility Standards**

The platform follows WCAG 2.1 guidelines, ensuring it’s usable for people with disabilities. Features include screen reader compatibility, keyboard navigation, and high-contrast color themes for better visibility.

* **Cross-Device Compatibility**

The responsive design, built with Bootstrap CSS, works seamlessly on smartphones, tablets, and laptops, so users can access it wherever they are.

**5.3 Economic Feasibility**

The project is cost-effective because it relies on free, open-source tools.

* **Software**

Laravel, MySQL, Python, scikit-learn, Hugging Face Transformers, Faker, FastAPI, Bootstrap CSS, Chart.js, and jsPDF are all free to use.

* **Data Sources**

Synthetic data is generated with Faker at no cost. Kaggle’s CareerVillage dataset and Google Forms surveys are free and easy to collect (by sharing a survey link with peers or classmates).

* **Hosting**

Since this is an academic project, it’ll run on a local host, eliminating server costs.

The only investment is the developer’s time, which is manageable within a three-month timeline.

**5.4 Time Feasibility**

A single developer can complete CareerCompass in three months using an Agile development approach:

* **Sprints**

The project is divided into six two-week sprints, each focusing on specific tasks (e.g., building the questionnaire, training the ML model). This keeps development organized and on track.

* **Testing Strategy**

Laravel’s built-in testing tools handle unit tests for backend logic, like user authentication or data storage. Postman tests API connections between FastAPI and Laravel. Manual testing ensures the frontend (e.g., quizzes, forum) works as expected. User testing with peers will catch any usability issues.

* **Development Efficiency**

Laravel’s pre-built features, like authentication and database management, reduce coding time. Python’s ML libraries (scikit-learn, Faker) are fast for model training and data generation. Kaggle and Google Forms data are readily available, avoiding delays in data collection.

**6. Project Description**

CareerCompass is a web application that helps young people to discover and pursue careers that match their unique strengths, interests, and experiences. Built with Laravel for the backend and powered by a FastAPI-based ML model, it recommends personalized career paths based on academic performance, RIASEC personality traits, interests, skills, and real-world experiences. Beyond recommendations, it provides actionable tools like career roadmaps, skill-building quizzes, and AI-generated success stories. A community forum fosters collaboration with peers and mentors, and PDF reports summarize career plans. Counselors and educators get an admin dashboard to manage content and view analytics, such as which careers students are exploring.

The key features include.

* **User Accounts**

Users can sign up, log in, and manage profiles securely using Laravel php-open-source-saver/jwt. They can view past questionnaire answers, quiz results, or forum posts.

* **Interactive Questionnaire**

A multi-step form collects data on academics, personality, interests, skills, and experiences. It includes progress tracking, real-time validation (e.g., ensuring grades are valid numbers), and adaptive questions to keep it engaging.

* **Career Predictions**

The ML model suggests 3–5 careers with confidence scores and explanations (“Data analyst suits your strong math skills and Investigative personality”). Predictions are powered by a Random Forest or XGBoost model trained on synthetic and real-world data.

* **Educational Resources**

Career roadmaps outline steps like skills to learn, certifications to pursue, and links to free courses (Coursera, Khan Academy). Success stories (500 generated by GPT-2) inspire users and can be filtered by career or background.

* **Skill Quizzes**

Timed quizzes test abilities like problem-solving, communication, or creativity. Results are saved to profiles with feedback and tips (“Practice public speaking to boost your communication score”).

* **Community Forum**

Users can post questions, share experiences, or start discussions. Mentors (verified professionals or counselors) provide advice, and moderators ensure a safe, positive environment.

* **PDF Reports**

Downloadable summaries, created with jsPDF, include user profiles, career suggestions, and action plans, perfect for sharing with advisors.

* **Admin Dashboard**

Counselors can manage content (e.g., add quiz questions) and view analytics, like bar charts of popular careers or user demographics, using Chart.js.

The project focuses on these core features to stay achievable in three months. It will be developed and tested locally, making it ideal for an academic setting.

# 7. Deliverables

The project will produce the following

* **Web Application**: A fully functional Laravel-based platform running on a local host, including all core features (questionnaire, ML predictions, quizzes, forum, reports, admin dashboard).
* **Machine Learning Model**: A trained Random Forest or XGBoost model with ≥80% accuracy, using 1000 synthetic profiles (Faker) and real-world data (Kaggle CareerVillage, Google Forms).
* **Datasets**:

1000 synthetic user profiles covering grades, RIASEC traits, interests, and experiences.

500 AI-generated success stories using GPT-2, curated for diversity and relevance.

Real-world data from Kaggle’s CareerVillage dataset and Google Forms surveys for model validation.

* **Admin Dashboard**: Tools for counselors to manage content (e.g., edit success stories) and view analytics, such as charts showing career trends or user engagement.
* **PDF Reports**: Downloadable summaries for users, detailing their profile, career recommendations, and action steps.
* **Documentation**
  + **User Manual**: Guides for students (how to use the platform) and admins (how to manage content and analytics).
  + **Technical Documentation**: Explains the code structure, APIs, database schema, and ML pipeline.
  + **ML Evaluation Report**: Details model performance, including accuracy, precision, and recall metrics.
* **Evaluation Report**: Summarizes user testing feedback (from peers or sample users), performance benchmarks (e.g., page load times), and suggestions for future improvements.

# 8. Resources Required

**Software and Tools**

* **Backend**: Laravel 11 (PHP framework for user management, APIs, and page rendering), MySQL (database), FastAPI (ML service), php-open-source-saver/jwt-auth,
* **Frontend**: Tailwind CSS (responsive styling), Blade templates (dynamic pages), Chart.js (analytics visualizations), jsPDF (PDF report generation).
* **Machine Learning**: Python (programming), scikit-learn (model training), Hugging Face Transformers (GPT-2 for success stories), Faker (synthetic data generation).
* **Development Tools**: GitHub (version control), Postman (API testing), Visual Studio Code (coding environment).

**Hardware**

* A laptop with at least 8GB RAM and a modern processor, capable of coding, training ML models, and running a local server.

**Datasets**

* **Synthetic Data**: 1000 user profiles generated with Faker, including academic scores, RIASEC traits, interests, and experiences. This ensures enough data for the ML model to achieve ≥80% accuracy.
* **Real-World Data**: Kaggle’s CareerVillage dataset (career questions and answers) and Google Forms surveys (collected from students or peers) for added realism and model validation.
* **Success Stories**: 500 AI-generated stories using GPT-2, manually curated to ensure diversity (e.g., varied careers, backgrounds, and education levels).

# 9. Expected Output and Outcome

**Output**

* A fully functional Laravel web application running locally, with all core features implemented and tested.
* An ML model achieving ≥80% accuracy in career predictions, trained on 1000 synthetic profiles and real-world data from Kaggle and Google Forms.
* A user-friendly, responsive, and accessible interface with features like questionnaires, quizzes, forums, and PDF reports.
* Comprehensive documentation (user manual, technical guide, ML evaluation) and an evaluation report with user feedback and performance metrics.

**Outcome**

* **For Students**: Personalized career recommendations that boost confidence and clarity. Tools like roadmaps and quizzes provide clear steps to achieve their goals, while success stories inspire them to dream big.
* **For Counselors**: Analytics dashboards offer insights into student trends, like which careers are popular or which skills need support, helping them guide students more effectively.
* **Broader Impact**: Encourages self-awareness, skill development, and proactive career planning, especially for young people from diverse backgrounds.
* **Academic Value**: Showcases the integration of full-stack web development (Laravel) and machine learning (Python, FastAPI) in a practical, impactful project.

# 10. Time Plan for Implementation

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | Sprint Tasks | |  | | --- | |  |  |  | | --- | | **Deliverables** | |
| **1-2** | - Set up Laravel project, MySQL database, and FastAPI service.  - Generate 1000 synthetic profiles using Faker.  - Collect Kaggle Career Village dataset and Google Forms survey data.  - Design database schema for users, questionnaires, and content. | -Project setup  - Initial database  - 500-profile dataset  - Schema design |
| **3-4** | |  | | --- | |  |  |  | | --- | | - Implement user authentication (signup, login, password reset).  - Create interactive questionnaire module.  - Connect MySQL to store responses.  - Add form validation and progress tracking. | | - Secure login system  - multi-step questionnaire  - Data storage |
| **5-6** | - Train ML model (Random Forest or XGBoost) using synthetic and real-world data.  - Integrate FastAPI with Laravel using REST APIs.  - Test career prediction functionality. | - Trained model (≥80% accuracy)  - API integration  - Career suggestions |
| **7-8** | - Develop skill quizzes and community forum.  - Build admin dashboard.  - Use Chart.js for analytics (career popularity). | - Quizzes with feedback  - Moderated forum  - Admin analytics dashboard |
| **9-10** | - Generate 500 success stories using GPT-2.  - Build career roadmap pages with links to free courses.  - Implement PDF report generation with jsPDF. | - Success story library  - Resource pages  - Downloadable PDF reports |
| **11-12** | - Conduct user testing with sample users.  - Fix bugs and optimize performance (e.g., add caching).  - Write user manual, technical documentation, and ML evaluation report. | - Final app  - User feedback  - Complete documentation |

# 11. Limitations

* **Synthetic Data**

While 1000 synthetic profiles help achieve ≥80% accuracy, they may not capture all real-world complexities, like cultural or regional differences in career preferences. Future versions should incorporate more real user data to improve accuracy.

* **Time Constraints**

Three months is sufficient for core features but limits advanced additions like real-time chat, a dedicated mobile app, or complex ML models (neural networks). The focus is on delivering a solid, functional platform.

* **Model Accuracy**

The ML model’s performance depends on the quality and diversity of training data. If the synthetic or real-world data lacks variety, accuracy could dip below 80%, requiring additional tuning or data collection.

* **Local Development**

Testing on a local host is perfect for academic purposes but doesn’t simulate real-world conditions, like handling multiple users at once. This could hide performance issues that would appear in a live environment.

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