

A quick guide to

Career Planning



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There are likely to be many jobs that suit your skills, qualities, values, and interests, and which can begin to provide the variety of rewards you may be seeking. Knowing which option or route is best for you can be challenging.

Understanding yourself, identifying options and being aware of job opportunities can help you to develop an idea of what you would like from your career.

This guide will help you to start thinking about your career, researching your options and creating a plan. Throughout the guide there are actions you can undertake to help you explore and reflect on your ideas.

Any questions?

www.worc.ac.uk/careers

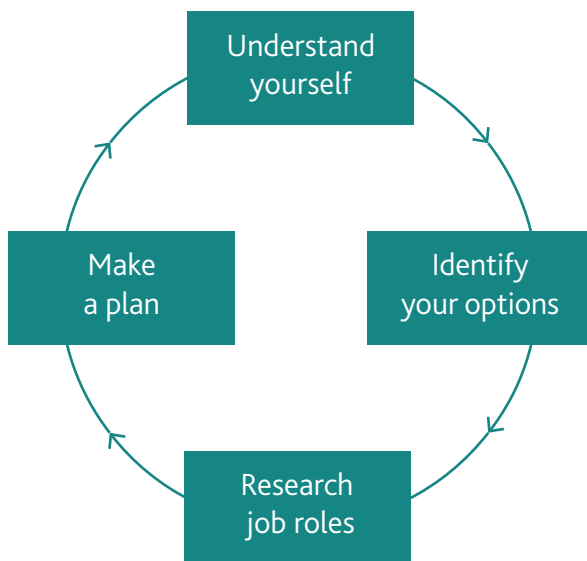
Send us a message on
myCareer

Have a go at the interactive career planner on **myCareer** to guide you step-by-step through your career decision making.

Where to start?

There is no right or wrong way to make career decisions and everyone's approach will be different.

The elements in the model below can help you to weigh up your options carefully, consider what you want, what you are suited to, the options open to you & what you need to get to where you want to be.



Which path is for me?

Traditionally, careers planning was thought of in terms of a very linear, straight path – you started a job, got promoted and stayed with the company until retirement. In today's ever changing jobs market it is less likely you will have this 'job for life' pathway. For most people different roles, employers and even careers are likely throughout their working lives, making their career path more of a squiggly route rather than a linear one!

'There's no such thing as a career path. It's crazy paving and you have to lay it yourself' (Dr Peter Hawkins, The Art of Building Windmills).

Flexibility, curiosity and chance opportunities

We cannot always anticipate the job market or whether a well thought out career decision will definitely work for us. Whilst plans are helpful, sometimes making the most of unexpected opportunities can lead us in different and exciting directions.

'Planned Happenstance' is the view that you can take advantage of your curiosity and unplanned events and turn these into opportunities to build a satisfying and fulfilling career.

Equip yourself to embrace change by:

- Following your curiosity & looking for new openings
- Being prepared for chance networking occasions
- Being open to ideas & opportunities

Dr Peter Hawkins summed this up well when he said; 'When the wind blows, some people build walls, others build windmills.' (The Art of Building Windmills).

Understand yourself

Even if you have no idea what you want to do in the future, you will have some idea of what you enjoy doing, and what you don't! Work through the following sections and reflect upon what you have done and what is important to you.

Skills & abilities

What are you particularly good at and what have you been praised for? What do you find it easiest to do? What skills do you think you have gained from work, volunteering or your course? (e.g. problem solving, teamwork, prioritising).

- You can explore the skills you have developed whilst studying for your degree by visiting Prospects and searching "What can I do with my degree?" Click on your degree subject and the 'Skills for your CV' section.
- You can review your skills and identify any you might want to improve or develop by taking the Skills Audit on **myCareer** or through the Skills Health Check on the National Careers Service website (<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk>).

Think about the subjects you have studied, and any work or volunteering you've been involved in and reflect on what you enjoyed the most? Have you considered jobs or careers previously that still hold some interest and is there anything you do in your spare time that you would like to be part of your career?

You may find the following career planner tools useful to help you explore jobs that match your interests and skills.

- The Prospects Career Planner explores what you want from a job. Your responses are compared with what professionals say their jobs involve: www.prospects.ac.uk/planner

Interests

How do you usually conduct yourself and react to situations? (E.g. Are you tactful, determined, energetic?) It is useful to be aware of these traits and how they relate to the workplace.

- Explore your personality type and preferences by using the Personality Aptitude Test available on Shortlist.Me
<https://go.shortlister.com/marketplace/worcesteruni>

Attributes

Values

Some decisions are really about determining what you value most. Think about what is important to you in terms of your principles, standards, and beliefs in the way you conduct your life and expect others to conduct theirs? (E.g. integrity, adventure, prestige).

- Determine your top values at:
www.mindtools.com/a5eygum/what-are-your-values

Action

Take some time to reflect on these four key areas and note down your top three for each.

	1	2	3
Skills & abilities			
Interests			
Attributes			
Values			

Priorities

Identifying what you want from work and what is important in terms of work and life satisfaction can help with career decisions. Here are some examples of priorities you may have:

The job

Autonomy
Career potential
Challenge
Creativity
Leadership
Learn
Prestige/title
Promotion
Responsibility
Travel
Variety

The organisation

Contribution to society
Culture
Image
Industry
Location(s)
Number of staff
Performance
Reputation
Size
Stability
Values

Work-life balance

Benefits
Commute time/cost
Flexible working
Hours
Salary
Travel requirements

Action

Circle or underline your priorities in the boxes above.

Action

Note down any other priorities that are important to you in the box below.

Identify your options

So far we have focused on exploring options with your skills and interests. In this section we are going to look at some additional approaches to help you explore your options further.

Options with your subject

Looking where graduates from your subject are working or studying can supply inspiration on the options open to you:

- Find alumni from your course and university through LinkedIn.
- “What do graduates do?” gives an overview of the destination of graduates from across the UK <https://luminat.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>
- Prospects’ “What can I do with my degree?” lists career ideas related to your degree subject.

Explore job sectors

The following provide information on types of jobs available within broad areas to help you narrow down careers that interest you:

- Prospects covers 25 sectors including: business & management; health & social care; teaching & education.
- targetjobs advises on gaining entry to graduate career sectors, and has information on: graduate jobs, schemes & work experience; applications & interviews; and training & development.

Action

Take a moment to think of three careers you would like to research further and why. Note down anything you need to consider or do.

1

2

3

Researching jobs and careers

Gathering information can help you to determine if a role is worth considering or not. Using a range of sources can help you to find out more about job roles.

Researching online job profiles

Below are some key websites you can use to expand your knowledge about what jobs involve and what skills, experience and qualifications employers look for in applicants for those roles:

- Prospects www.prospects.ac.uk search "job profiles"
- National Careers Service <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk> click on "Explore Careers"

Understanding your jobs market

The job market in your area may well have changed over the past few years due to a range of factors, some roles and sectors may have declined or relocated, whereas others may be expanding. Making sure you have up to date information about employment within your chosen career can help you with your job search. Using job and recruitment websites can help to give you a picture of which employers are recruiting in your local area or where you may need to relocate to.

The following websites can give you further information about employment and recruitment in your chosen field:

- <https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk>
- www.lmiforall.org.uk

Professional bodies

There are lots of organisations and bodies that link to specific career areas; you may already be aware of ones that are related to your course such as the British Psychological Society (BPS), The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) for Human Resources or the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS).

They work to promote their industry and often have information and advice about careers working within their employment sector.

Professional body websites may also advertise job vacancies and are a great source for finding out about updates and developments within their field.

The job profiles on the Prospects website have links to professional bodies and also professional publications.

Speak to others

Speaking to others can help you to find out more about careers, roles, employers, and job opportunities. Making contact may seem daunting at first, but it can enable you to gain some real insight into your career area. You may want to start with contacts you already have such as friends and family, and build up to approaching employers and professionals within your chosen field.

- Talking to professionals already in the role you would like to do can be a great way of gaining tips and advice on getting into the profession. Asking questions around how they got into their job, the best and worst parts of the role, and any advice they would offer graduates trying to get into the job can be quite insightful.
- If you have a LinkedIn account use the search facility to find people doing the job you are interested in. Send them a tailored 'connection request' asking them about their route into the profession and for any advice they would offer someone in your situation.
- Informational interviews - ask your network of contacts (family, friends, students, lecturers and other people you know) to see if they know anyone doing that particular job, and who they could arrange for you to speak with to find out more about their role.
- Attend employer presentations or workshops on campus, and visit local or national careers fairs. You'll discover more about job roles and how to improve your chances of securing work experience and jobs.

Getting experience

Experiencing a role first-hand will help you establish whether a job role is what you imagined it to be, and if you do decide to pursue it as a career, the experience will prove your commitment to future employers.

Follow up the contacts you made via networking at careers events or on professional networking sites like LinkedIn. Look them up to see what projects they are working on and ask them if they need any help.

Take advantage of any placements accessible through your course. The following have search facilities for placements and internships:

- www.prospects.ac.uk search "work experience"
- <https://targetjobs.co.uk> search "internships"
- <https://doit.life>

Worcester Students' Union hosts information on volunteering opportunities both within the Union and the local community:

www.worcsu.com/volunteer

You can search for national voluntary opportunities by postcode or causes that matter to you at:

<https://doit.life>

Make a plan

Think about the steps you now need to take to find out more or move forward with your plans.

Ideas to help you create your action plan

Gain further information on specific careers (e.g. contact professionals already in those roles or join LinkedIn groups).

Develop the skills that are required for the role, particularly those that you are less confident in.

Engage in work experience or voluntary work to see if the role is for you, as well as prove your commitment to future employers or course leaders.

Get a part time job.

Apply for further study, internships and/or jobs.

Work on your CV, cover letter, application and LinkedIn profile.

Prepare for interviews & assessment centres.

Top tips for your career planning

'Ask yourself what specific achievements you are proudest of, and what elements of everyday work bring you the greatest satisfaction. Many people find it difficult to examine themselves in this way so ask friends and family to remind you of tasks you've talked about with enthusiasm.'
(The Guardian)

'There are a number of things that students can do to make themselves attractive to employers. Gaining as much exposure to the workplace and practising professionally as possible is key.'
(The Independent)

'You will increase your chances of finding employment if you are willing to be flexible. Many big graduate recruiters have offices across the UK, and vacancies are more likely to be oversubscribed in the big cities... You should also consider applying to smaller businesses.'
(targetjobs)

'Entry level roles in so-called desirable industries – such as journalism or publishing – can be as hard and dull as in any other sector. Other industries, or less well-known companies, can provide just as much job satisfaction.'
(The Guardian)

'The more you understand your own criteria for job enjoyment or career success, the less likely you'll narrow your choices through discounting entire sectors.'
(The Guardian)

Action

Note down your ideas for career planning on the grid below.

Action	By when

The main points

1

There is not one approach to career planning and decision making, each person's journey will be different and may require flexibility to navigate changes, challenges, and opportunities along the way.

2

Having a plan can help you to focus your career ideas. Your plan may change and develop as you start to explore your ideas.

3

Research is key to making informed and balanced decisions about the options and opportunities available to you. Use the links and ideas in this guide to get started.

4

Interacting with employers can help you to build a better picture of what you would like from your career. Undertaking work experience, researching potential employers, and making contact via platforms such as LinkedIn can help you to find out more.

5

If you are unsure what to do or would like to discuss your options, you might want to consider speaking to a careers adviser. You can book a careers appointment via **myCareer**.

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If you have a question that isn't covered by this booklet or would like to talk through your ideas with a member of the Careers & Employability team, send us a message or book a careers appointment on **myCareer**.



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