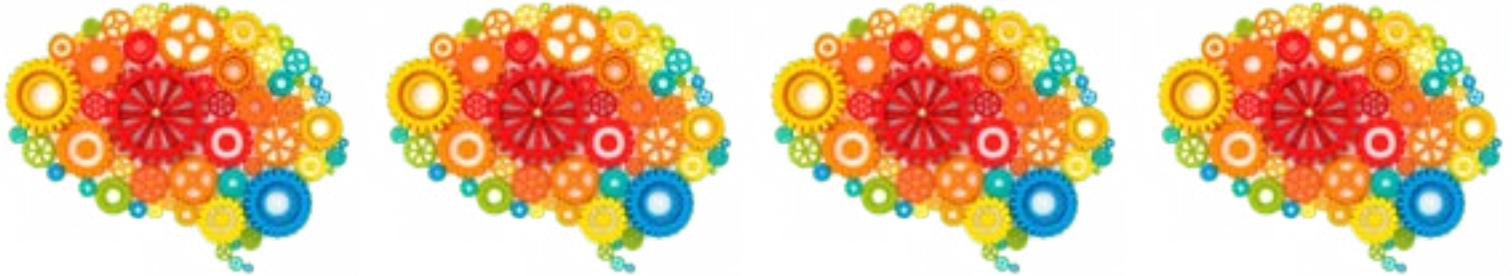




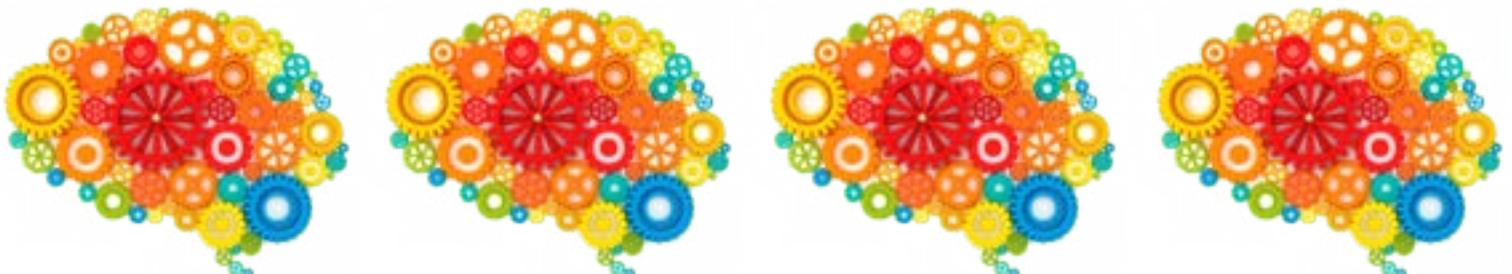
THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Careers Service



Career Ed

Workbook

Workbook completed by



How to use this workbook

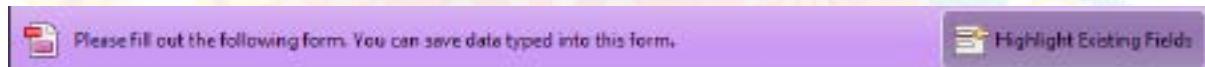
This workbook has been designed so that it can be completed on your computer and saved as you go along. In order to use the workbook in this way you will need to have Adobe Reader installed on your computer. This software is free and can be downloaded from Adobe (www.adobe.com/uk). At any stage you can print out the workbook and any text you have entered will be included.

Please follow the steps below.

- 1) Before you begin to fill in the workbook, we recommend saving it. Go to File > Save and choose a location.

N.B. Each time you add to the workbook you may be prompted to re-save.

- 2) The interactive fields should already be highlighted in purple, however, if they aren't click on "Highlight Existing Fields" on the bar just above the workbook. This will make the form fields much easier to identify.



The workbook is made up primarily of text fields and check boxes – look out for the pen symbol (✍) to indicate sections you should fill in.

- 3) Remember to save the document at regular intervals.



Before clicking on hyperlinks, ensure you save the workbook as your work may be lost.

If you would prefer, you can print the workbook and fill it out by hand.

If you are having any difficulty in using the workbook please see our trouble-shooter for help. If the answer you are looking for is not there then please e-mail careers@ed.ac.uk with your problem, and we will try to help you as soon as possible.

In line with the equal opportunities policies of the Careers Service and the University of Edinburgh, we are keen to ensure that all students can benefit from our services.

This workbook can be made available in alternative formats. Please contact the Careers Service or e-mail careers@ed.ac.uk.

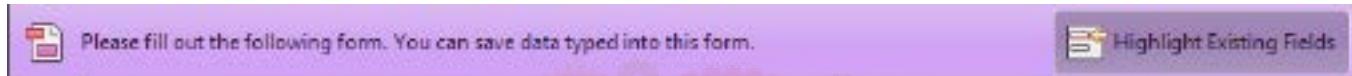
Troubleshooter

The document won't open

Make sure that you have Adobe Reader installed on your computer. The workbook is in PDF format and has been designed so that it can be filled in and saved as you go along using Adobe Reader which can be downloaded for free from the Adobe website.

I can't see where I'm meant to add my own text

If you look to the top of the workbook – and just below the toolbar – you should see a purple banner asking you to fill out the following form.



Ensure that the "Highlight Existing Fields" button is selected and as you work through the workbook the fields will be easier to identify.

Can I only fill in the workbook on a PC?

Yes. At the moment the workbook can only be filled in on a PC with at least Adobe Reader installed. You can view the workbook – with any text you have added - on other devices such as smart phones or tablets, however the interactive elements will be unavailable.

Section 1: Self Awareness

Getting Started

- 1.1 What did you want to be when you grew up?
- 1.2 How did you get where you are today?
- 1.3 How do you solve life's problems?
- 1.4 Where do you see yourself in the future?

Taking Stock

- 1.5 What do you value in a job?
- 1.6 Keep an occupational scrapbook
- 1.7 Analysing job vacancies
- 1.8 What sort of lifestyle appeals to you?
- 1.9 Graduate skills and attributes assessment
- 1.10 Thinking more deeply about skills
- 1.11 TARGETjobs Careers Report
- 1.12 Activity summary for Self-awareness

Section 2: Opportunity Awareness

- 2.1 Broad options – worked example

Employment

- 2.2 Expanding Connections map
- 2.3 Networking exercise – my contacts
- 2.4 Quick questions, initial reactions
- 2.5 Rate an employer after a visit – worked example
- 2.6 Reflections on a meeting with RSPB Policy Officer – worked example
- 2.7 Benefits of work shadowing and how to set it up
- 2.8 My top ten and why – worked example

Further study

- 2.9 Further study - overview
- 2.10 Different perspectives
- 2.11 Thoughts on further study – scaled questionnaire
- 2.12 Questions to ask – postgraduate courses
- 2.13 Compare courses – worked example
- 2.14 Funding brainstorm – worked example

Starting your own business

- 2.15 Starting your own business - overview
- 2.16 Dragon's Den questions
- 2.17 My business plan – first draft
- 2.18 Inspirational case studies

Volunteering

- 2.19 Volunteering – the benefits
- 2.20 Questions to ask
- 2.21 Voluntary work brainstorm
- 2.22 Volunteer Stories: a video clip activity

Time out

- 2.23 Time out - overview
- 2.24 Questions to ask
- 2.25 Top five time out activities
- 2.26 Time out destinations
- 2.27 Pinterest activity

Section 3: Decision Making

- 3.1 Comparing the pros and cons
- 3.2 Visualise the decision as already made
- 3.3 Questions to ask yourself
- 3.4 A 'mathematical' method of decision making
- 3.5 Identifying the barriers
- 3.6 Six thinking hats
- 3.7 The SWOT method of analysing options
- 3.8 Force Field Analysis
- 3.9 Evaluating your decisions

Section 4: Transitions

- 4.1 TARGETJobs Report
- 4.2 Visual art action planning
- 4.3 Assess a vacancy
- 4.4 Thirty second review



Section 1



1.1 What did you want to be when you grew up?

Write the story of what you wanted to be when you grew up. Talk about what attracted you to your childhood dream career and how that attraction may have changed over the years. Have you looked up to role models -- people working in your dream career who you wanted to emulate, people who inspire you? Who are/were they? Why did they inspire you?

OR...

Jot down quickly a list of all the things you 'wanted to be when you grew up. Can you remember where these ideas came from - books, films, family members, friends? What values, skills and personal attributes are associated with each job? Do any patterns emerge? If any of these jobs seem really unappealing to you now, why? What has changed?



1.2 How did you get where you are today?

Tell the story of how you chose your university course – undergraduate, Masters, PhD. What attracted you? Who were your influences? In what ways have your studies met or failed to meet your expectations?

Compose the story of the university career you wish you'd had if your current reality is different from what you'd imagined. What did you do in this fictional narrative that you wish you had done in reality? What's stopping you from implementing this fictional story? How can you reinvent your future based on this?

Now, think about what it would take to bring this story to life. How could you achieve your dream? How could you overcome the obstacles?

Adapted from Katherine Hansen Quintessential Careers: Plotting the Story of Your Ideal Career http://www.quintcareers.com/printable/story_of_ideal_career.html



1.3 How do you solve life's problems?

If you have moved through a 'crossroad' – selecting a university; maybe thought about leaving or changing your course; leaving a job or choosing not to take one - which road did you take and why? What has resulted from your chosen path?

If you are currently at a crossroad, what are the tensions you are caught up in? What can you do or who could help you begin to resolve these tensions? What have you learned from previous problem or dilemma solving experiences that could help you now?

Adapted from Katherine Hansen Quintessential Careers: Plotting the Story of Your Ideal Career http://www.quintcareers.com/printable/story_of_ideal_career.html



1.4 Where do you see yourself in the future?

Fantasy is an important part of any person's healthy development. Daydreams play a central role in career planning (Morgan and Skovholt, 1977).

Can you think of several times recently when you've had daydreams about your future? Did they have any occupational content? If so, list the occupations in the space below. Include occupational prospects from daydreams, no matter how fanciful they may seem. Your subconscious might be trying to tell you something important. Is this list very different from the list you generated for what you wanted to be when you grew up? Why or why not? What's changed for you?

adapted from Robert D. Lock *Taking Charge of Your Career Direction*

Morgan, J.I., & Skovholt, T.M. (1977). Using inner experience. Fantasy and daydreams in career counseling. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 5, 391-397



1.5 What do you value in a job?

I want to work with people

Most jobs involve some contact with people. Try to clarify **how** you want to work with them - teaching, caring, selling, managing, leading, organising, advising, nursing? All these activities, and many more, involve work with people, but differ in the type and amount of contact. What does 'I want to work with people' mean for you?



Thoughts...

I want a graduate job

Consider what exactly you mean by a graduate job. Is it:

- a job for which your degree is a requirement, for example teaching?
- a non-graduate job which graduates do in order to gain experience and break into a particular field such as publishing?
- for you, any job in which you need to use your brain and the skills you have developed while studying for your degree, one which will interest you, challenge you and give you responsibilities.

Or perhaps

- you are thinking of the status that a particular job will give you in society
- you are keen to use the expertise and knowledge you have gained through your degree study and plan to do something that is directly related.



Thoughts...

I want a job that will give me status and prestige

The concepts of status and prestige are probably impossible to measure objectively. As social values change, what is considered a "top" job by one generation may not be so highly regarded by the next – and vice versa. In your opinion, which jobs have a certain status and prestige in society?



Thoughts...

I want a job that will give me money

If a certain kind of lifestyle is important to you – and let's face it everyone would like to have some money - then this must be borne in mind when you are choosing a career. In some careers you will perhaps get there in the end after experience and promotion, or after building up a business. If you want a high salary at the start of your career then you are probably looking at jobs which are competitive, results orientated and pressurised.



Thoughts...

I want a management job

Most jobs involve some kind of management – managing your time, your workload, a project, prioritising tasks, planning ahead. If you want a job that is described as a management job then you are probably thinking in terms of a job which allows you to be responsible for the strategy in an organisation. You will want to make the policy which drives a team or an organisation. You will want to take decisions that shape the direction of the organisation. You will want to manage a budget perhaps. You will also want to be responsible for resources including people.

Are you a good communicator? Do you listen? Do you motivate people? Can you get the best out of people? Have you an analytical mind that can see the essence of a problem without being distracted by the detail? Are you able to make hard decisions in a 'buck stops here' situation?



Thoughts...

I want a job with prospects

A job with prospects may mean different things to different people but probably to all it will involve opportunity – to be promoted, to earn more money, to live where you want to live, to do more interesting things, to take on more responsibility, to travel, to become more powerful and influential, to be able to take decisions.

What kind of future do you want? Is it possible to see what kind of opportunity may come your way in the jobs you are considering? Will a job you are looking at give you the kind of experience which could take you down the path you would wish to go? Will these opportunities match what you have to offer?



Thoughts...

I want a creative job

Here are some creative tasks carried out in a range of jobs.

- Think of a new way of teaching the 3 times table to a group of reluctant 7 year olds
- Design the front page of a teen magazine
- Present to your superiors your ideas on how to improve police relations with a local school
- Produce a solution to the problem of bounce in a bridge
- Write scripts for a TV series
- Devise a way of introducing new shift patterns in a clothing factory
- Present difficult figures to line managers so they see the need for cutbacks in resourcing
- Choose next year's fashion line for a department store
- Devise a plan to solve the problem of traffic congestion outside a local primary school

This list demonstrates creativity across a range of sectors: local government, teaching, publishing, the police, engineering, the media, management/personnel, accountancy/finance, retail. Being creative does not necessarily mean being artistic.

What will satisfy your creative urges?

 Thoughts...

I want a job in Edinburgh (or a particular area)

Where you live is a central factor influencing your career decisions then at least you know where to start looking!

However there may be constraints. There will possibly be fewer jobs, less choice and, for certain opportunities, more competition. What you want may not even exist in the area you intend to live in, so you may have to broaden your scope both geographically, and in terms on the jobs you will consider. As always there is a balance to be struck.

You will need to be flexible in your choice of career and in the skills you have to offer.

 Thoughts...

I know what I don't want to do....

It can be useful to eliminate career areas and environments for which you are not suited.

If attention to detail is not one of your strengths, then the job of copy editor, where a keen eye for details is essential, may not be one for you. However, beware of dismissing jobs based on stereotypes. Do you really know what an accountant does, or what work in marketing

involves?

Make sure you eliminate jobs based on knowledge and understanding, not hearsay ‘I don’t want a routine/office/9-5 job’ often means ‘I don’t want a job which is quickly learned, unvaried and undemanding.’ ‘Office’ and ‘routine’ are not synonymous, however. Routine jobs are not necessarily office-based, and vice-versa. (And just how unpredictable do you want your working life to be?) Most jobs also have a base somewhere, often an office (though it could be a lab bench, a barrister’s chamber, a teacher’s desk etc.).

And how do you really feel about frequently working unsocial hours, or long stretches of unpaid overtime? Think about how you see your paid work fitting in with the rest your life.



Thoughts...

I want a job involving working abroad or travel

Do you want a job where you are based overseas or a UK job with the possibility of some overseas experience? Have you got a particular part of the world or country in mind? Have you investigated your right or eligibility to work in that country? Do you need or have the necessary foreign language skills. Before thinking about working abroad it could be useful to think about what sort of work you would like to do and then investigate the possibility/ chances of doing this kind of work outside of the UK.



Thoughts...

I don't want to use my degree subject

Many students who do ‘vocational’ degrees (e.g. Law, Social work, Engineering) worry about what employers might think if they decide they don’t want to pursue a career related to their subject. Stop worrying! Around 40% of graduate vacancies advertised by employers in the UK look for graduates of any discipline. These employers are still interested in the skills developed through your degree subject (e.g. research, analysis, presentation, team working etc) so don’t feel your degree isn’t worth much to these employers. You’d be wrong!



Thoughts...

I want to use my degree subject

You may be very keen to pursue jobs which directly relate to your degree. Try to identify the specific skills and knowledge which you have gained from your degree discipline. Do you have strong interests in particular aspects of your course or is there a project, dissertation or piece of work in which you have excelled? Would you miss working in these areas or applying your learning in some way? Are there clear vocational links between your degree and certain jobs?

 Thoughts...

I want a challenging job

How do you want to be challenged? Intellectually? Physically? To meet deadlines? To be a positive influence on others? Some thrive on the challenge of meeting tight deadlines, adding to market share in business, helping people to maximise their potential, adding to the body of knowledge in a particular subject area. What challenges do you want to meet?

 Thoughts...

I want an interesting job

What do you find interesting? What tasks have given you satisfaction in the past? Researching material for a group project? Using your expertise to advise others? Using negotiating skills to persuade others to your point of view? Developing ways to interest people in different things? Organising events and seeing them through to completion? What sort of activities must be part of a job to make it interesting to you?

 Thoughts...

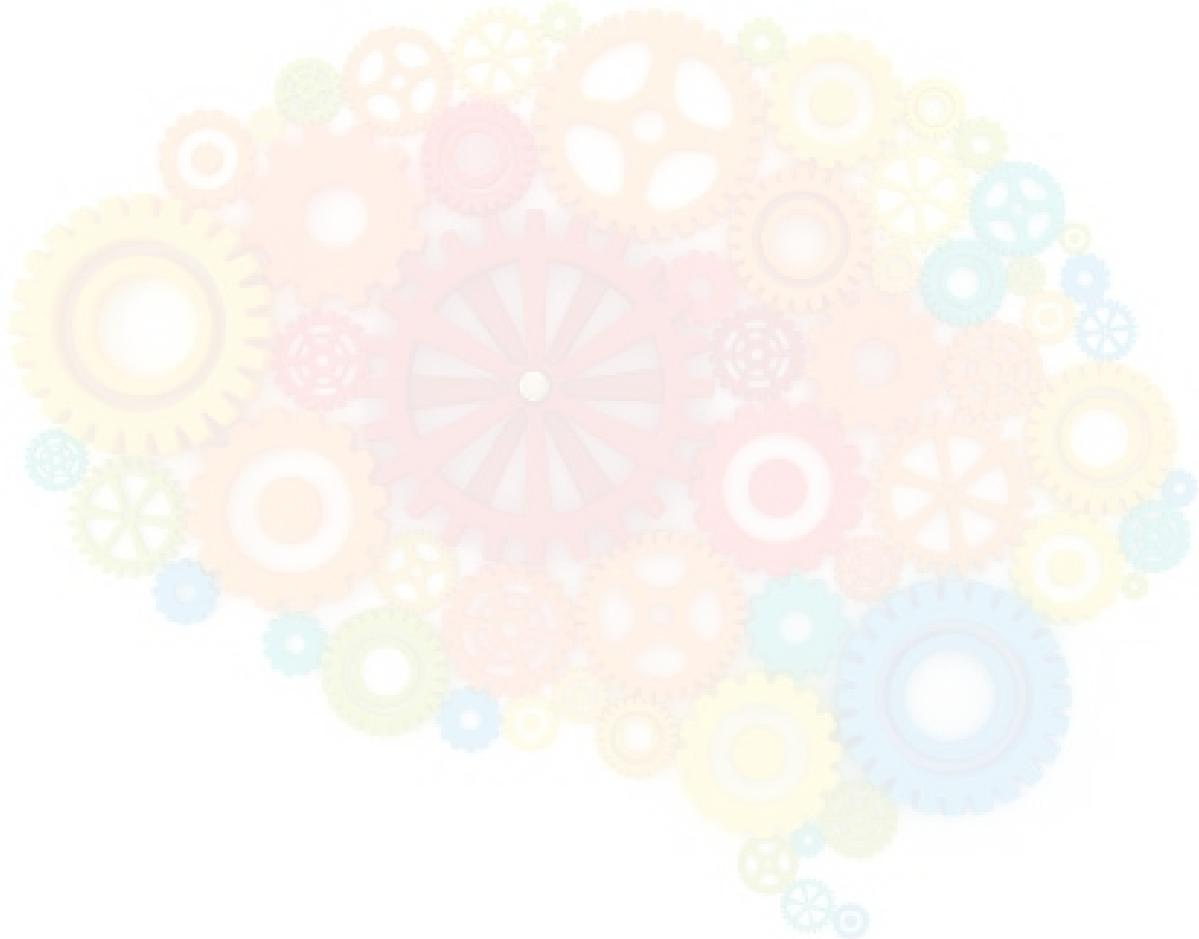
I want a job, which gives me qualifications and training

Perhaps you want to have a 'profession' (e.g. lawyer, accountant) that gives you recognition and possibly status? In some areas (law, accountancy) a professional qualification is essential but most jobs will encourage you to continue learning and developing through qualifications and/or training to allow you do your job more effectively and enhance your chances of progression.

 Thoughts...

1.6 Keep an occupational scrapbook

If thinking about your career seems like a boring or anxiety-inducing activity, creating an occupational scrapbook is one way of making career planning a more creative process. You could create a real-life scrapbook or see Activity 2.27 about 'Keeping a Pinterest scrapbook' and Activity 4.2 "Visual Art Action - Planning for Inspiration". Scrapbooks allow you freedom of expression to capture ideas and information that can turn into knowledge and understanding about your career plans. Scrapbook content could include vacancies, your skills, information about occupations, other people's career narratives – any material you feel will help you discover more about yourself and the world of work.



1.7 Analysing job vacancies

Look at the job descriptions below – what activities appeal or don't appeal to you? Why or why not? Does a particular job description appeal to you more than the others? Or are there various aspects of each that appeal to you?

Try to get beyond the face value of the description. Examples 1 and 2 both require 'excellent verbal communication skills' – but what does that actually mean for each of those jobs, one in research and one in sales?

Many jobs do not specify a particular degree. If you are a history graduate there are hundreds of jobs you could do. Which ones would you be happy, fulfilled or challenged doing? Browsing and analysing adverts can be a useful first step in building up a list of activities, responsibilities and other characteristics of jobs to help you sift through the thousands of opportunities out there.

Example 1.

The company is seeking a Research Assistant to help with environmental and sustainability data collection. You will be working closely with other companies, researching and collecting detailed information by telephone and email to extract information regarding sustainable management practices. Excellent writing and presentation skills are a must. The ability to work in a team, build relationships with a variety of stakeholders, excellent verbal communication skills and a commitment to sustainability issues are essential requirements for this job.

Example 2.

We are looking for ambitious and motivated graduates looking for a career in sales. The ideal candidate will be an outgoing and pro-active people person with excellent verbal communication skills. They will gain invaluable experience in sales and marketing through the promotion and sale of our company's product to a variety of international corporate customers.

Example 3.

We are looking for graduates who want to work in frontline service delivery in the charity sector and believe they can become future managers of those services. We are looking for people with the right motivations and attitude and will place a higher value on these attributes than experience. Applicants will strive to achieve better outcomes for service users, be willing to grow and be prepared to challenge as well as be challenged. They should have the drive to serve but also to lead to get the best out of people. Finally candidates should be creative, helping our charities compete and win new business by bringing fresh ideas and entrepreneurial energy.

Example 4.

Working directly to our video production manager, you will be part of the online content team of the Institute of Art and Ideas, working on producing high quality video content. You will be involved in the entire production cycle from pre-production to the final marketing of the finished products. All applicants will need a strong grasp of current affairs, culture, and the history of ideas, and have a good understanding of how to construct a gripping, newsworthy story. Experience with editing software (Final Cut Pro 7, Adobe Premiere) is highly advantageous, and a keen enthusiasm for and desire to work in media is a must!

1.8 What sort of lifestyle appeals to you?

 Determine how important the following lifestyle characteristics are in planning for your future after graduation. This activity also includes some factors which might constrain your choices.

Lifestyle Characteristics	Yes	No	Don't care/Not applicable	Haven't really thought about it but I might consider this now
I must have full time work				
I'd prefer part-time work combined with other activities				
Short term contracts are ok				
Permanent work is necessity for me				
I need to start developing my career straight away				
Work exists to fund my interests/ hobbies				
I like the freedom of not being tied to a full time job				
I want to gain experience doing lots of different things				
I want to do something that I am passionate about				
Where I live is important to me				
I really want the security of a steady income				
I want to travel and see a bit of the world				
Opportunities for lifelong learning are important to me				
Possible constraints on choice:				
I have health issues that will influence my choices				
What I want to do is a highly competitive field of work				
Lack of relevant experience might make it difficult to do what I want				
Further study could be the next step, but lack of funding is a worry				
I'm concerned about the potential lack of opportunities about where I live				
I have some ideas about what I want to do but am experiencing pressure from other people				
My family ties and responsibilities are a significant influence				

Is there anything missing from either the lifestyle characteristics or the potential constraints that you would like to add?



What are your next steps? Are there any assumptions that you need to check up on? For example, 'lack of potential opportunities where you live' – how can you find out where opportunities might and might not be? Or, as another example, if you are experiencing unwanted pressure from other people to make decisions, where can you get support?



1.9 Graduate skills and attributes assessment

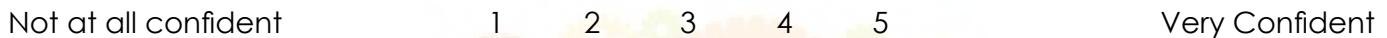
The skills below are all part of being an effective employee. How strong do you think you are in each of these?

1. Rate yourself by ticking the relevant option (1 = not at all confident I can do this; 5 = very confident I can do this) 2. Then choose three that you think you should particularly strengthen

Research and Enquiry Skills

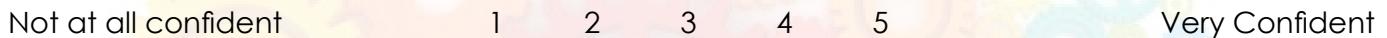
Analysing problems:

Ability to identify or diagnose a problem



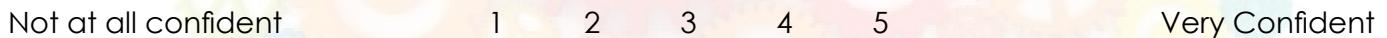
Finding solutions:

Ability to think of different ways of tackling problems and enacting them where appropriate.



Finding and evaluating information:

Able to identify and take opportunities to learn, through asking questions, or independent research. Critically assesses new information and knowledge



Networking:

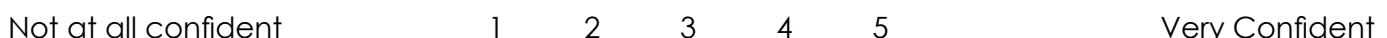
Able to identify and act upon opportunities to learn more about the industry, employer, or world of work for future graduate prospects.



Personal and Intellectual Autonomy

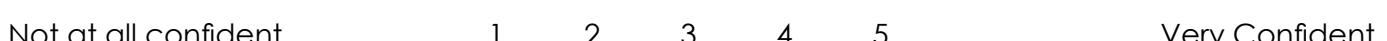
Using initiative:

Able to identify tasks / areas that need to be addressed, rather than waiting to be told.



Decision making:

Ability to make appropriate decisions about options on the basis of independent thought and critical analysis of information



Managing challenging situations or customers:

Able to use effective interpersonal skills, such as negotiation, persuasion and diplomacy to diffuse or resolve situations



Reflecting on learning experiences:

Ability to understand different learning styles and preferences and recognise which you tend to use in a work situation, reflecting on experiences in order to improve



Communication Skills

Written communication:

Ability to communicate with clarity, demonstrating and understanding of writing for different audiences and purposes, paying attention to detail with written work.



Seeks feedback:

Ability and motivation to actively seek feedback on performance, responding to it appropriately



Customer service:

Demonstrates a friendly, polite nature. Is willing to help, uses effective language and tone to communicate, acts an ambassador for the employer.



Listening effectively:

Ability to absorb new information, taking a genuine interest in the views of others, ensuring understanding is correct, employing techniques to help you listen better.



Oral communication:

Able to communicate with clarity, using effective tone and language in response to different audiences or situations



Personal Effectiveness

Planning and organising:

Ability to coordinate schedule of part-time work with study and other commitments. Can plan complex tasks and juggle different priorities. Able to work to deadlines with time to review work. Considers the impact of your time management on others.



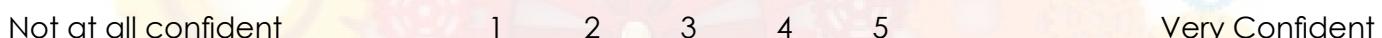
Resilience:

Able to adapt to changing work patterns and tasks, working equally effectively in busy and quiet periods. Motivated to do well and work to the best of your ability at all times.



Harnessing opportunities:

Able to identify or create opportunities to develop yourself or enhance your knowledge. Seizes opportunities when they are presented



Professionalism:

Able to be punctual and reliable. Understands the culture of the workplace and works within it.



Working collaboratively:

Able to draw out and build on the skills and experiences of others in the team. Able are you to adopt different roles in different teams.



1.10 Thinking more deeply about skills

Rather than being a single entity, skills like communication are often a collection of other skills and abilities. In one situation, such as supervising or managing staff, good communication skills might entail listening, persuading, negotiating and giving feedback. For a researcher writing, presentation, clarifying and summarising are important communication skills.

Think of a skill:

What other skills is it comprised of?:

In the Graduate Attributes exercise, you were asked to rate your skill on a relative numerical scale. Recruiters might ask you to do something similar – but they might also ask you to describe your level of competence.

1. Think of an example of when you had to solve a problem. What exact steps did you take?
2. What did you do well?
3. What do you think you could improve for next time?
4. What was the impact of your actions?
5. What steps could you take to improve this skill?

Using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) technique, give evidence from work, study, or personal interests that demonstrates your competence in this skill:

Situation - what was the context - be specific!

Task - outline the challenges/goals faced.

Action - describe nature and impact of your contribution.

Result - describe the outcome; summarise positively.

1.11 TARGETjobs Careers Report

Careers Report is an online personal and job exploration tool, helping you to investigate job ideas and to practise psychometric tests.

What it can help you to do:

- Identify what you want out of a job.
- Generate and evaluate job ideas and record them in an action plan.
- Gain practice and familiarity in graduate-level psychometric tests.

What it doesn't do:

- Tell you what you should do - choosing a job or career is a complex and personal process.
- Ensure success in tests with every employer - tests can be individual to an employer and vary in type and difficulty

Once you have completed Careers Report:

Discuss the results with one of our Careers Consultants. Research the occupational ideas through the TARGETjobs and Prospects websites. You will also find lots of useful information on our website www.ed.ac.uk/careers and in the Careers Service itself.

<http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-report>

1.12 Activity Summary

Based on new levels of self-awareness, use this table to capture the characteristics that are important and not important in deciding what you do in the future.

	Very important	Kind of important	Not important at all
Skills			
Attributes			
Values			
Lifestyle			

Thinking back to the results of your TARGETjobs careers report or Occupational Scrapbook (or other occupational research you've done), which jobs seem to interest you the most?

What thoughts do you have about your future direction after doing the **Taking stock (1.11-1.4)** activities?

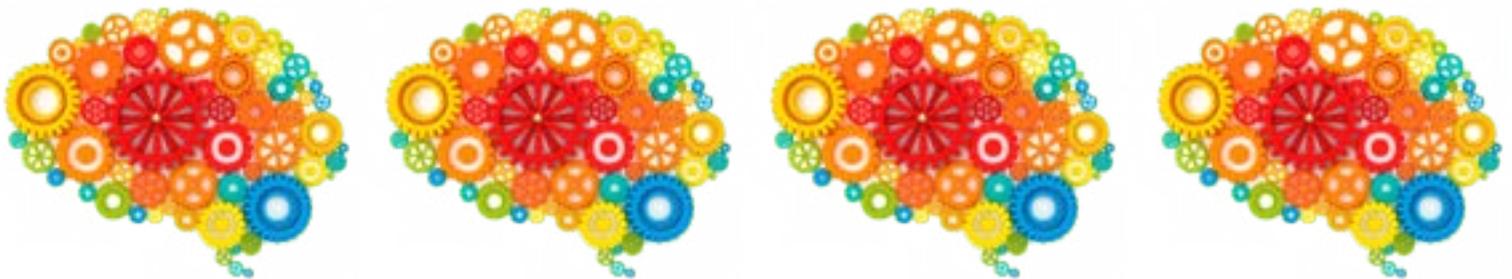
Long term:



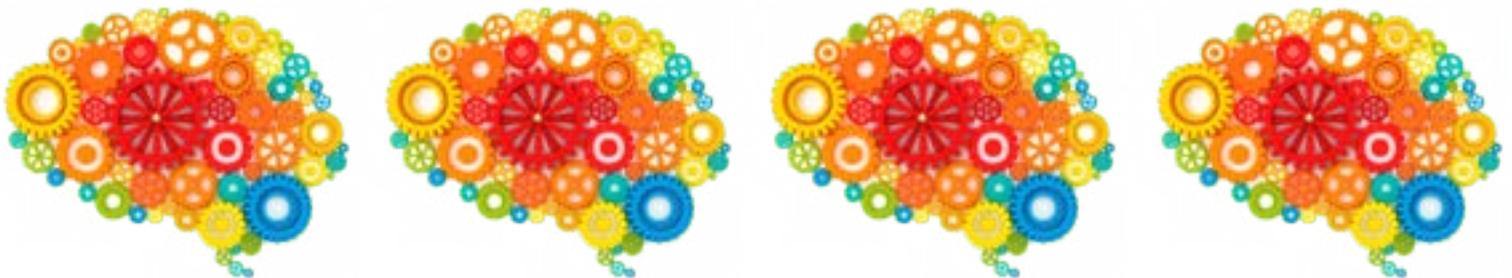
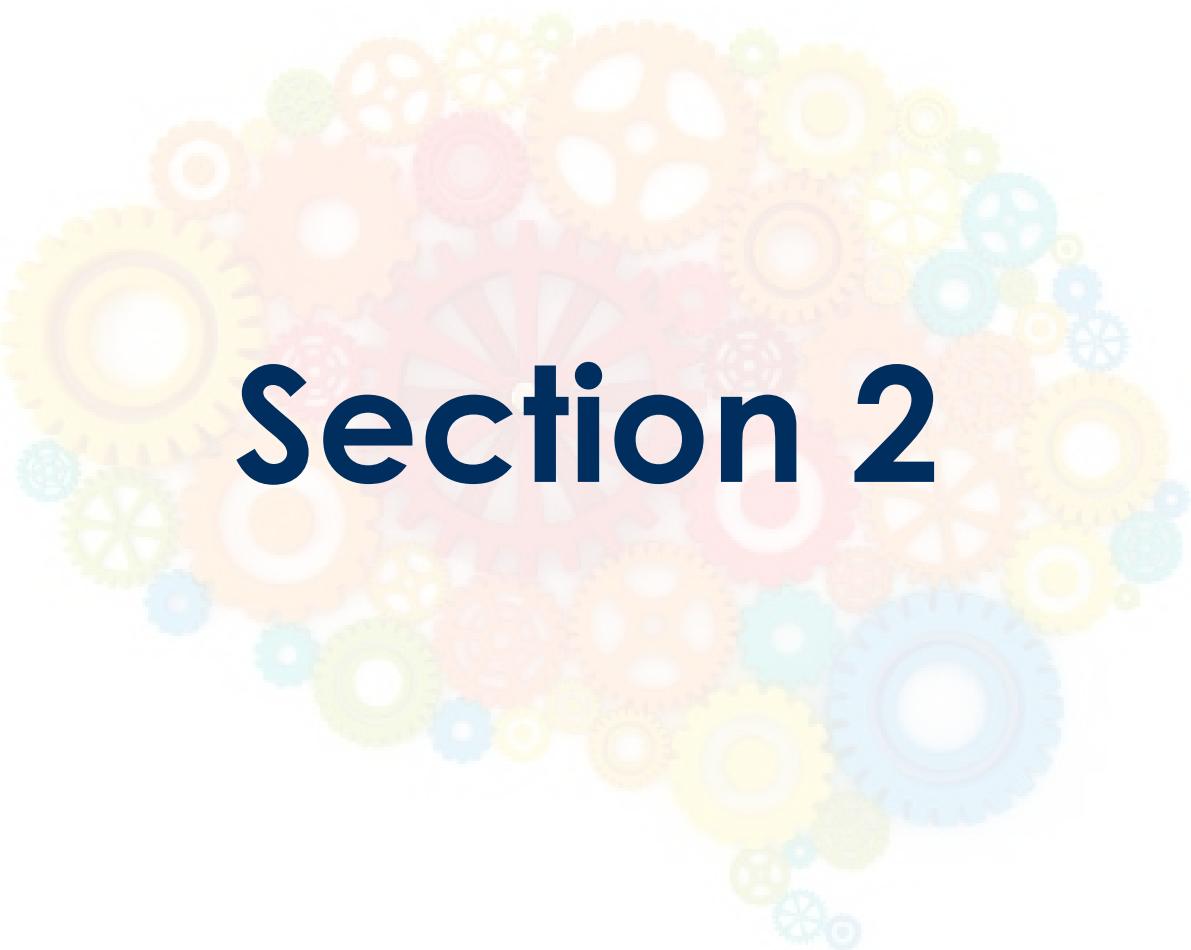
Medium term:

Short term:

Useful sources of information you've gathered:



Section 2



2.1 Broad options: initial reaction

At the top level, your broad options include employment, further study, starting your own business, volunteering, taking time out and combinations of these. At this early stage, consider your initial reaction to these and just get your thoughts down using the worked example below. The decision making section has much more about weighing up pros and cons and factors in your decision making.

Permanent employment

+ Pros (our suggestion: cash flow!) Your reaction?

- Cons (our suggestion: joining the rat race)

Your reaction?

Temporary employment

+ Pros (our suggestions: gaining relevant experience, first step)

Your reaction?

- Cons (our suggestion: potentially boring)

Your reaction?

Further academic study

+ Pros (our suggestions: strong interest, want to develop higher level research skills)

Your reaction?

- Cons (our suggestion: finding funding)

Your reaction?

Vocational training

+ Pros (our suggestion: may increase chances in competitive field)

Your reaction?

- Cons (our suggestion: length of time required)

Your reaction?

Start your own business

+ Pros (our suggestion: be your own boss)

Your reaction?

- Cons (our suggestion: lack of relevant experience)

Your reaction?

Voluntary work

+ Pros (our suggestions: helping others, gain experience)

Your reaction?

- Cons (our suggestion: cannot pay off debts)

Your reaction?

Time Out / Travelling

+ Pros (our suggestion: widen horizons)

Your reaction?

- Cons (our suggestion: postponing a decision)

Your reaction?

Reflection

Which of the options do you think you would prefer?

Which would you least prefer?

What would help you make a clearer choice?

Do you know how you will do this?

2.2 Expanding connections map

Start thinking about who you know and who they might know. Get curious. Ask people about their jobs. Who else can they put you in touch with? How could you expand your connection map... academic staff, professional bodies, people at the gym, at careers fairs, employer presentations, conferences, field project and placements...



2.3 Networking exercise – my contacts

Everyone has contacts – even if you think you don't. And everyone networks – it is a professional skill, essential for building relationships, getting advice and information and for making things happen faster/better, no matter what you want to do.

Search the Connect.ed database for Edinburgh alumni who are happy to give advice on how to get into a variety of careers. More information at: www.careerconnect.ed.ac.uk/networking-game

The art of networking is part of the proactive or creative approach to job hunting and career management. To help you learn more, the networking game can help you to experiment with, evaluate and learn various networking skills, strategies and techniques: www.ed.ac.uk/careers/networking-game

Who are your contacts?

Think about the people in your life who may be able to help. Think about it in two ways: people you know who either work in:

- 1) the career area you want to work in, or
- 2) the type of employer or organisations you are interested in.

If you can't think of anyone, try and think of someone who knows a lot of people or is in a lot of networks themselves and who may be able to put you in touch with someone who can help you.

What can you get from networking?

- Information – on the job market, sources of vacancies, ways in
- Advice – on your CV, your chances, useful things you could be doing
- Other contacts – which could lead to work shadowing/work experience, more contacts...
.a job

Try it... it really does work and remember; it's not cheesy, high-powered, bothering people or cheating. It's just connecting with people who are interested in the things you are and letting them know that.

It's **not** who you know, it's who knows you!

Write down the names of people under the following groups who may be able to help you

Friends (including their family members)	
Relatives (including their partners, extended family)	
Tutors/lecturers/visiting speakers	
Work colleagues (from part- time & vacation jobs)	

Social contacts/acquaintances (from sports, hobby and interest groups)	
People on LinkedIn groups	
People you met on placement / through volunteering / field work / year abroad	
Professional body networks	
Other	

2.4 Quick questions on your reaction to a job

As you find out about a type of job, use these questions to gauge your reaction to what you hear or read about it. Save your responses in a personal folder

Job title _____

Employer _____

You wake up tomorrow and you're doing that job. Does that idea fill you with joy....or fill you with dread?!

Would you be office-based? Travelling to different sites? Field-based? Driving a lot? Other?

What is your reaction to that?

Who do they work with every day?

Sound good? Why?

Or really bad....? Why?

What is it about their job that makes you want to do it?

What is about their job that makes you want to avoid it?

What have you learned about yourself in the process?

Do you want to explore this role more? If so, who or what could help you achieve that?

2.5 Rate an employer following a visit: worked example

You can find out about employers from their websites and from employer presentations and careers fairs but if you can arrange a visit or some work shadowing, you can find out a whole lot more. Use the worked example below as a template and save your responses in a personal folder.

Rate job and employer: Software Developer, Scram PLC (worked example)

Reason(s) for undertaking this activity

Wanted to have a visit to find out what I thought of job with employer

Knowledge/skills gained

Found out :

- courses in x, y, z at uni are really relevant for the job
- what they think will be major issues in their sector in next two years
- their developer teams have over ten people each
- big part of job here is doing presentations to non-tech staff

What was the impact of the activity?

rated job 8/10

rated employer 6/10

Reflection – why?!

Job good but not sure about doing presentations

Is this part of job anywhere or just with them? - need to find out so need to talk to a developer in another organisation or maybe through professional body eg ScotlandIS?

Employer felt like a massive organisation with big teams, think I'd prefer to work in smaller teams/smaller org.

2.6 Reflections on meeting with an RSPB Policy Officer: worked example

Having a structure to follow means you achieve much more from your research and information gathering and makes a meeting far more productive. Here's an idea of a structure you could adopt and adapt when you are finding out about job roles. Save your version into your personal folder.

Meeting Date - 01 March

Location - North Berwick RSPB Centre cafe

Attendees - me and Jenny Brown

Planned outcomes

- Find out about what she does on a day to day basis
- Get some tips about getting into this type of work
-

Supporting resources she told me about

Books / journals

Suggested I subscribe to xyz journal, find details of current research projects I could get familiar with

Web links

Told me about Countryside Jobs Service (CJS) - advertises vacancies in the countryside, conservation and environmental fields. <http://www.countryside-jobs.com>

People

Gave me contact details for her friend who is countryside ranger with John Muir Trust in East Lothian - jane.smith@gmail.com

Suggested I talk to policy officer with British Ecological Society – will send me details of a contact there

Reflection

Her policy role involves a lot of desk-based research and report-writing.

Think I'd prefer more practical fieldwork -

Maybe just in her policy role

Need to find out more about other policy roles and contact her friend to ask about what ranger work is like.

2.7 Benefits of workshadowing and how to set it up

Why do it?

Spending a bit of time in the work environment, even for a short while, can have three main benefits:

- It helps you understand a little better what it's like and whether it might be for you
- It helps to show an employer you are interested and motivated to work in that sector/that type of job
- You can even mention it in applications. You are not getting experience but you are gaining an insight and an awareness of the job and the sector.

Another big plus

By proactively arranging work shadowing and short visits, it gives you a "foot in the door", a first step, into an organisation. If you:

- ask intelligent questions around the job, the employer, the wider sector
- show your interest
- make contacts and stay in contact with them....

...you are creating an environment where you are more likely to hear about job opportunities and be in a good position to apply.

How to arrange it?

- use your Expanding Connections map
- use the career contacts on Connect.ed, the Careers Service E-mentoring database
- use professional bodies representing a sector you want to know more about. Find out who their members are and ask. You can find many of these on the Careers Service website in the section on Occupations
- use Yellow pages or www.yell.com for local business contacts

How to pitch your request

At this stage you are not asking for a job and you do need to make that clear.

- Say you are interested in a particular career or sector and are keen to find out more to find out if it's for you
- Show that you have done some research already but how helpful it would be for you to observe and talk to people actually doing this kind of work or working in this sector
- Manage their expectations by only asking for a day work shadowing or an afternoon visit and offering to be flexible about this. They are busy people!

2.8 My Top 10 jobs – and why: worked example

As you read, watch, talk, discover - and different job areas start appealing to you - get writing them down. Make a Top 10 list then have a think about why those jobs stand out. Do you need to know more? Think about what you could do to find out more and who you can ask. Here's a worked example to get started:

My top 10 jobs and why

What?

Conservation officer
Countryside ranger
Policy officer
Environmental consultant
Outdoor education instructor
Policy adviser
Sustainability adviser
Ecologist
Rural planner
Science communication

So what?

- Like sound of working outdoors and using my science
- Want to use my identification skills
- Like working with people and in environmental area
- Don't know much about some of these jobs and how much time is spent in field work

Now what?

- Want to spend at least half my time working outdoors
- Find out more detail about these jobs to compare them
- Try to find people doing these jobs to ask
- Have I got the right degree and experience?

Who/what can help next?

Information staff at Careers Service to find out more about these jobs

Professional body websites for these areas of work

Ask tutors...any contacts?

2.9 Further study: overview

There are many reasons why you may want to continue studying, but consider carefully how much another course will help you in your future career.

Good reasons for further study

- You love your subject, enjoy studying and can afford the time and money involved.
- You want to move into a career which requires a specific qualification such as social work, teaching or law.
- Your research has shown that in your chosen area of work, certain Masters courses are seen by employers as a requirement
- Likewise, conversion courses are valuable if your degree is unrelated to the area you wish to work in, eg IT, human resources and librarianship (although there may be routes into these areas without further study).
- If you are interested in an academic career, a PhD is almost always a requirement.

Not such good reasons

- To 'cancel out' a poor first degree result - some graduate schemes will still require a 2:1, regardless of further study undertaken.
- To give yourself more time to decide about your future. Some taught courses can be very intensive and leave little time for reflection or job-hunting, so you may graduate a second time with no clearer ideas about your future.

So...

- Do you need more time to think about your future? Consider alternatives such as short-term or voluntary work
- A higher degree does not always give you an edge over others in the market. Many employers are as interested in personal qualities as academic attainment, and might be wary of 'overqualified' candidates.
- Get the opinion of prospective employers and speak to your Careers Consultant before making any decisions. A postgraduate qualification does not guarantee a job!
- Most employers want to know you are intelligent, flexible and willing to learn. Many consider applicants from any degree discipline, and will provide the necessary training

Is a PhD for you?

- You must be self-motivated and sure that you will enjoy carrying out the research
- Some students feel isolated and unsupported, despite the exciting demands of original research. Conversely, in some areas of science students complain about not getting on with other members of the close-knit groups in which some of them work
- You must be interested in your topic and have enjoyed dissertation work in your undergraduate course. Check out the work, hours and lifestyle with current postgraduates. Think of a PhD as your first job. Select a supportive department and above all a helpful supervisor

Should you stay at The University of Edinburgh?

- Staying within the same department can be an attractive prospect. You know the staff and they know you well; you will probably be aware of their research interests (which may or may not match your own)
- Finance may be available for you to continue studying, as there is often additional funding for graduates who stay within the same institution.
- On the other hand, it is important to consider whether changing university might benefit you more in the long run.
- Making a change helps you to broaden your network of academic contacts, which may be crucial to getting a job later
- Change also allows you to give top priority to selecting the best supervisor for your area of interest when choosing your research topic

Getting help

Clarify your ideas by;

- discussing it with your Personal Tutor, course tutor, dissertation supervisor or other members of your school,
- consulting your Careers Consultant,
- looking at the resources for Postgraduate students on the Careers Service website,
- finding out relevant employers' attitudes to further study,
- attending talks on postgraduate study run in semesters 1 and 2.

2.10 Different perspectives

"Prepare for the unknown by studying how others in the past have coped with the unforeseeable and the unpredictable". George S Patton

Discussing further study from different viewpoints is a good way to build a bigger picture although you still have to make your own decision about whether to go for it!

Talk to students already doing postgraduate study and at different stages of their study. What were their reasons for doing further study? Where did they look for information? What helped them decide? With the benefit of hindsight, what do they know now that they wished they'd known when they were starting to look into further study?

Talk to academic staff. Where do they suggest you look for more information? What issues do they raise?

Contact professional bodies. What does their website say about education and training? Is there a prescribed or recommended route? How flexible are they?

Contact employers. How do they view further study? Is there a specific type or area of study they suggest? How open are they to a variety of qualifications? Would a Masters or a PhD be an advantage? How do they view applications from PhD graduates?

Record what you learn from their experience and advice and your response to it.

2.11 Thoughts on further study: scaled questionnaire

Thinking about further study? Study these questions and save your answers in your personal folder.

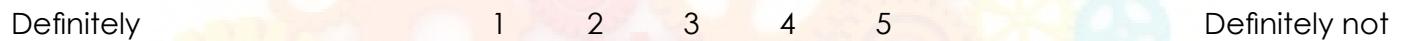
On a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 is “love it” and 5 is “hate it”, how much do you enjoy your subject and want to explore it in some depth?



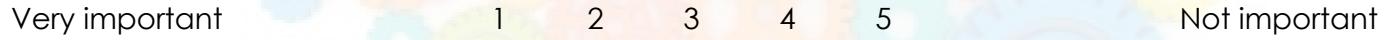
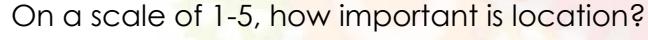
Do you want a career in academic research, industrial research or university teaching?



Would you like to shift your area of academic interest?



What and who might influence your choice of what you studied?



Where would you consider studying?



Are there any barriers stopping you studying what you want to do? If so, what are they?

How might you start to overcome or minimise these barriers?

2.12 Questions to ask a postgraduate course admissions tutor

Sometimes there is not a lot of detail on websites. Find out more by contacting the admissions tutor and asking questions. Here are some to get you started and you will have more of your own.

Keep track of the answers in your personal folder. Not only will they help you to decide whether a course is right for you, they will help you do much more informed course applications!

Course content

- Can you tell me more about the module content?
- Is there any field work?
- How is course assessed? Ongoing assessment? Exam?
- How much groupwork is involved?
- Links with employers, professional bodies, research organisations?
- Does course include any research or industry placement?
- Any opportunities for work-based dissertation?

Funding

- Are there any funded places? What is the criteria?
- Where have students managed to get funding before?
- Are there any PG scholarships? What is the criteria?

Prospects after the course

- What do graduates go on to do? (If they can't tell you, ask them to put you in touch with the institution's careers service)
- Any links with alumni?

About making an application

- What do you expect to see in my application?
- What will strengthen my chances of getting a place
- What will strengthen my chances of getting a funded place?

Support at the university

- I am dyslexic, what support is available?
- What help can I get with finding accommodation/part-time work while I study?
- What are the library/study facilities like?

2.13 Compare courses – worked example

If you are looking at several courses, try using this worked example to compare one against the other and save your responses in your personal folder. The Decision making section will help you take this process further and the information you gather now will really help you at the application stage!

Compare Masters in Environmental Protection - worked example

Reason(s) for undertaking this activity

Try and work out which is best course for me

Speak to course admissions tutor to find out more

Information/knowledge gained

Masters in EP at Chrysler University

- small uni, close PG support network, London, accommodation expensive
- has 3 funded places this year if apply early enough and am successful
- not much connection with industry, no external speakers
- only 20 places on course, last year most MSc grads went on to PhDs

Masters in EP at Toyota Uni

- no funded places, 25 places on course
- chance to do work based dissertation
- over half on course got jobs in consultancies and other industry roles, only 3 went to PhDs
- larger uni, Newcastle, cheaper to live there

What was the impact of the activity?

Chrysler - 6/10

Toyota - work placed dissertation! 8/10

Reflection

Chrysler - chance for funding but v competitive

Good support but expensive to stay there

Not convinced about job prospects after. Not keen to do a PhD

Toyota - funding an issue but cheaper place to live

Good links with industry and seems to have better destination results of people in consultancy jobs

2.14 Funding brainstorm – worked example

Try the what? so what? now what? activity to get the process started and save in your personal folder.

What?

Need to get funding to do a course

So what?

Need to find out:

- where to look for funding
- who to ask for help
- timescales and deadlines

Now what?

Where to look:

- institution websites
- learned societies
- where else...

Who to speak to:

- academic staff,
- course organiser
- Careers Service
- who else?

How long do I have?

- check deadlines
- set up priorities
- plan time to apply,
- what else?



2.14 Funding brainstorm

Try the what? so what? now what? activity to get the process started and save in your personal folder.

What?

So what?

Now what?



2.15 Starting your own business: overview

Planning and preparation

There can be many rewards from running your own business but there can also be many pitfalls. Minimise risk by doing some planning before you commit yourself to self-employment.

Generate ideas

What business will you start? Generating business ideas is an integral part of business start-up, for example, finding one that is more interesting and more motivating or adapting an idea to make it different to the competition. It's invaluable in business to spread the risk, encourage growth, prolong the life span of a product or service and adapt to a changing marketplace.

Personal audit

- Do you really want to do this?
- Are you able to run your own business?
- Do you have the skills? You will need not only the technical skills related to your product or service but also the financial skills to maintain control and selling skills to generate business. Business ownership requires real commitment.

Marketing plan

If you have no market you have no business. Product, price, place and promotion are the key components of marketing.

- Do you have a market for your idea?
- Do you know who your customers will be and are there lots of them?
- Will you be able to get more in the future?
- Who are your competitors and why should people use your product or service rather than theirs?

Financial backers will want evidence of this market but you need to convince yourself that self-employment is a better option than working for someone else. So, you will have to do market research, even have some advance orders.

Finance

- Is your idea financially viable?
- Will you be able to maintain a healthy cash flow?

Many good ideas don't make money. Only by drawing up a plan will you find out if yours makes financial sense. Financial backers will want a financial plan but even if you don't need an injection of cash, make sure you are not wasting your own time or money.

Minimise your overheads. Only buy essential equipment; consider leasing instead. Taking on a lease on premises can become a costly burden. Could you work from home or from a friend's premises? Make sure you are able to cover your living costs as well as your business ones. And finally... if you are going into business with a friend, getting a legal partnership drawn up by a lawyer is vital.

2.16 Dragons Den questions to ask yourself

Quiz yourself with these testing questions. Don't worry if you don't have answers to all of them just yet. It's a way to start thinking like a potential entrepreneur and highlight some of things you need to consider.

What business will you start?

Do you really want to do this? Why?

Do you have the technical & financial skills?

- If you don't, who might you work with?
- How would you work with them?

Do you have a market for your idea?

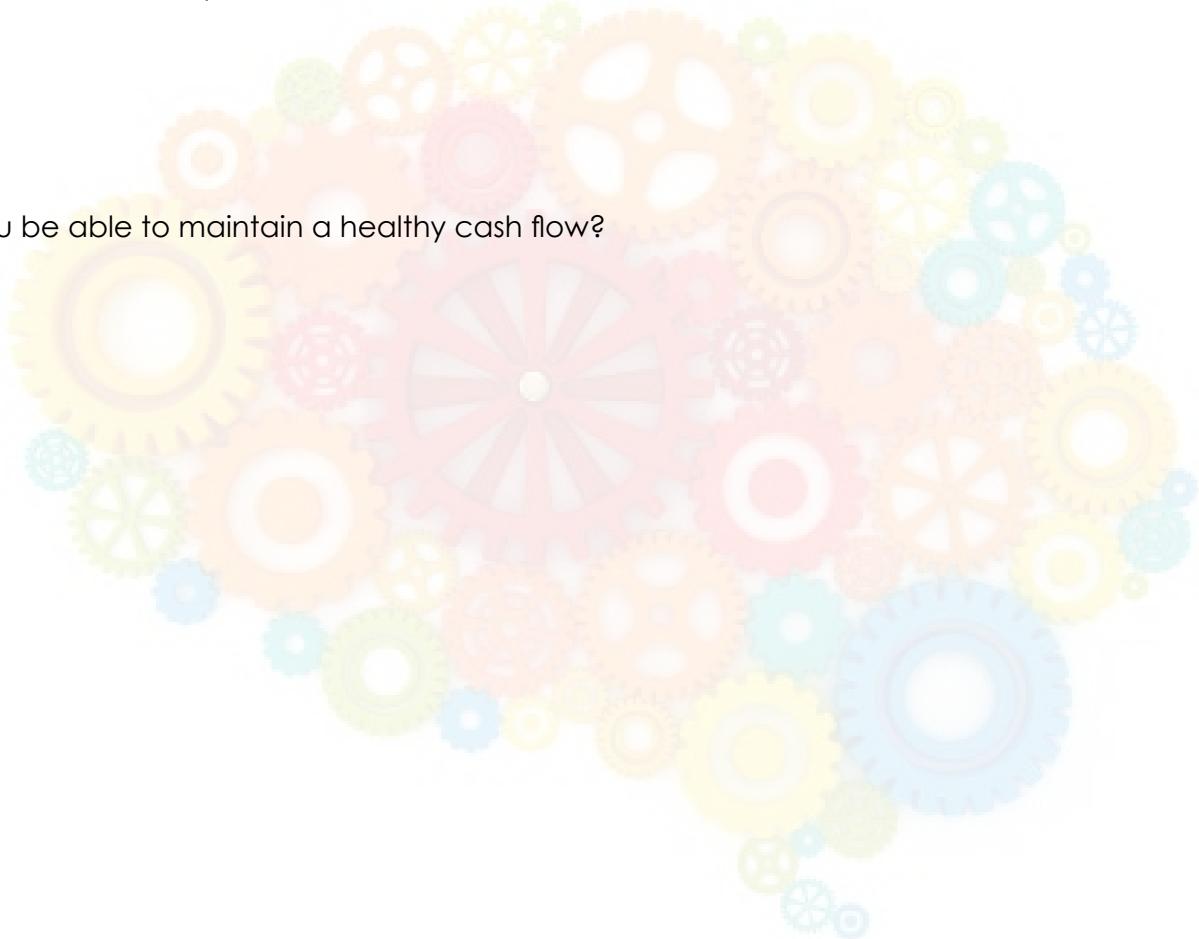
Do you know who your customers might be – and are there lots of them?

Will you be able to get more customers in the future? How?

Who are your competitors and why should people use your product or service rather than theirs?

Is your idea financially viable?

Will you be able to maintain a healthy cash flow?



2.17 Business plan first draft

A strong business plan is essential to starting-up, gaining support and success. Your business plan is a statement of interest. It should provide details of how you are going to develop your business, when you are going to do it, who is going to be involved, the potential market, and how you plan to manage it financially.

Your plan should ideally include:

- 1) An executive summary:** The overview - funders may well make judgements based on this section alone.
- 2) A short description of the business opportunity** - who you are (and what your track record is), what you plan to sell or offer, why and to whom.
- 3) Marketing and sales strategy** - why you think people will buy and how you plan to sell to them.
- 4) Your team/personnel** - your credentials and the team's skills
- 5) Operations:** Premises, facilities, IT
- 6) Financial forecasting:** translate the plan into figures.

Reflection questions

How can I start addressing these issues?

What could I put **so far** for each section?

Where are the gaping holes?!

Who can I talk to for help with this? LAUNCH.ed? Edinburgh Research and Innovation? Business Link?

2.18 Inspirational case studies

Have a look at the videoclips and case studies on icould.com and socialenterprise.org.uk to find out about people who have started their own businesses. Think about these questions and save your answers in your personal folder

- Who inspired you most?
- What was it that inspired you?
- What did you learn from their experience that will help you make the next step?
- What will you do now?

2.19 Benefits of volunteering

Why give your precious time? Here are a few convincing arguments...

Experience

You can gain valuable experience for an area that you would like a career in, for example teaching, ecological work, conservation, PR or social work. For some areas of work where paid work experience is hard to get, showing your interest and commitment through some degree of voluntary work can be very important. The same is true if you need experience to be considered for a vocational course. Volunteering also offers you the chance to test out certain career areas to see if they are something that you wish to pursue.

Learning new skills

These can include practical skills as well 'soft' skills such as communication, time management and problem solving. If you need to improve your English language skills, volunteering can be a great way to do it

Meeting new people and building your contacts

Volunteering allows you to meet people outwith your own social circle. It can be a chance to make friends, find out more about the community you live in outside of university. In these situations you will make new friends but you will also have the opportunity to network now and in the future.

Learning more about a cause

If there is a cause that you have a special affinity with, then through volunteering with a relevant organisation you can learn more about it.

Improving confidence and feeling of self-worth

Being an important part of a team or being highly valued by an individual you are working with can do wonders for your self-esteem

'Giving something back':

For some people volunteering is entirely altruistic

2.20 Questions to consider – get your answers down now

What talents and interests do I already have?

How can I volunteer in a way that taps into these?

Can I identify some skills I need to develop?

If so, what type of volunteering might help address this?

I am already interested in a career area - what skills & personal qualities are necessary?

How might I develop these through volunteering?

I am already interested in a career area, what voluntary work experience would be relevant?

How might I develop this?

How much time can I spare?

Save your answers in your personal folder. You can keep coming back to update it once you have developed your experience.

2.21 Voluntary work brainstorm!

Try the “What? So what? Now what? “approach

What?

What type of voluntary work would I enjoy?

- Outdoor activity?
- Supporting people with health or social care?
- Working with young people?
- What else?

So what?

What would I get out of it?

- Relevant experience?
- Develop relevant skills? If so, what skills?
- Meet interesting people and good contacts for the future?
- What else?

Now what?

How do I find it?

- Look at Careers Service website on volunteering
- Talk to EUSA local volunteering opportunities
- Speak to academic staff
- What else?

Save your answers in your personal folder.

2.14 Funding brainstorm

Try the what? so what? now what? activity to get the process started and save in your personal folder.

What?

So what?

Now what?



2.22 Volunteer stories: a videoclip activity

Look at the video clips on icould.com and the Volunteeredinburgh.org.uk and list your top five stories.

1.

2.

3.

4

5.

Whose story interested you the most? (or whose story could you identify most closely with?)

Why?

Did you identify any voluntary experience that would help you develop **experience** you need?

Did you identify any voluntary experience that would help you develop **skills** you need?

How might you find this voluntary work in a **location** that suits you?

How might you find this voluntary work at a **time** that suits you?

Any barriers stopping you developing this experience?

How might you overcome this?

Save your answers in your personal folder and keep coming back to update it once you have developed your experience.

2.23 Time out: overview

Why do it?

Many students and graduates take a gap year before, during or after time at university. There are many benefits but two stand out:

1. It's probably easier to take off for a long period of time now rather than later in your career when you may have financial and other commitments
2. Many employers will regard this experience favourably (providing you can prove how you have gained some good experience and developed skills useful to a work environment)

What can you gain from taking time out?

- insight into different careers, helping you decide on your own career path
- work-related skills such as team working, communication and problem solving
- chance to do something different; live abroad, give something back, earn some extra money

Weighing up the pros & cons

Pros

- Employers can be impressed with the initiative and independence shown by travelling abroad. Staying locally and doing something active can also be viewed favourably. Using a skills-based CV format may be the best way of demonstrating what you have learned.
- It is possible to combine travel and work. You may be lucky enough to get career-related work abroad. If not, you could focus on improving your language skills or do some voluntary work or work shadowing related to the area in which you hope to work.
- Deferring a job offer for a year is not always an option, though it is a possibility with some

companies. It seems like the ideal situation to be offered a job and yet be given the option to take it up in six months or a year.

- For those going on to further study, this is often an opportunity to make money to pay off a debt or save for the following year.
- Some postgraduate courses require that applicants be a certain age or have certain experience, so time off in the interim is a prerequisite. Perhaps some time working as a freelance journalist may help you to get a place on a postgraduate journalism course.
- It's fun!

Cons

- Those closest to you may not greet your decision with universal enthusiasm. Some of their critical comments might include:
 - "You're not facing up to the real world"
 - "Can't you just go on a holiday"
 - "After all the money we've spent on your education" "What is the point of putting it off?"
 - "The job scene will be worse when you get back".
- Even with online resources and dedicated job sites on the internet it is still harder to job hunt from afar.
- Unless you have made arrangements prior to leaving, securing a postgraduate course and the associated funding can also be difficult (but not impossible) to organise from a distance.
- It's dangerous to assume that all experienced travellers are better-rounded individuals than those who start a career after graduation.
- Can be expensive.
- Personal security may be an issue. No matter how little money you think you have, in some countries you will be very rich compared to the people around you.

credit: Trinity College Dublin Careers Service

Planning what happens at the end of your time out

- Before starting your period of "time out", think about what happens at the end.
- Timing of applications for jobs or postgraduate study may be important and if you mis-time your return you may have to wait several months before you can start your chosen job or course.

While you're away, keep up-to-date with the Careers Service latest job news, vacancies and events on MyCareerHub, Facebook and Twitter & sign up for RSS feeds.

As soon as you get back, visit the Careers Service either here or at another UK university for advice and up-to-date information.

2.24 Thinking about taking time out - question to ask yourself

Before you start packing your bags...think about these questions and save your answers in your personal folder. You can discuss it further with a Careers Consultant - sometimes it helps to talk it through...

Why do you want to take time out?

What do you want to gain from the experience?

Have you set out to gain something specific from the experience e.g. language, teaching, computer skills, learn about conservation of the environment?

Can you afford it financially?

Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages? How?

How much time are you taking out? A year is reasonable, but any longer could lead an employer or potential research supervisor to question your motives.

Have you considered:

- finances
- travel insurance
- work experience

- appropriate vaccinations
- travel and accommodation?

What will you do when you get back?

How would you keep informed about closing dates for jobs and/or postgraduate courses? You need a plan for when you get back.

2.25 Top 5 Time out activities

List your top 5 and why you like the idea – then think about what you'll do next to find out more. What's my top 5?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Why?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

What do I do now?

2.26 Top 5 Time out destinations

List your top 5 and why you like the idea – then think about what you'll do next to find out more.
What's my top 5?

1

2

3

4

5

Why?

1

2

3

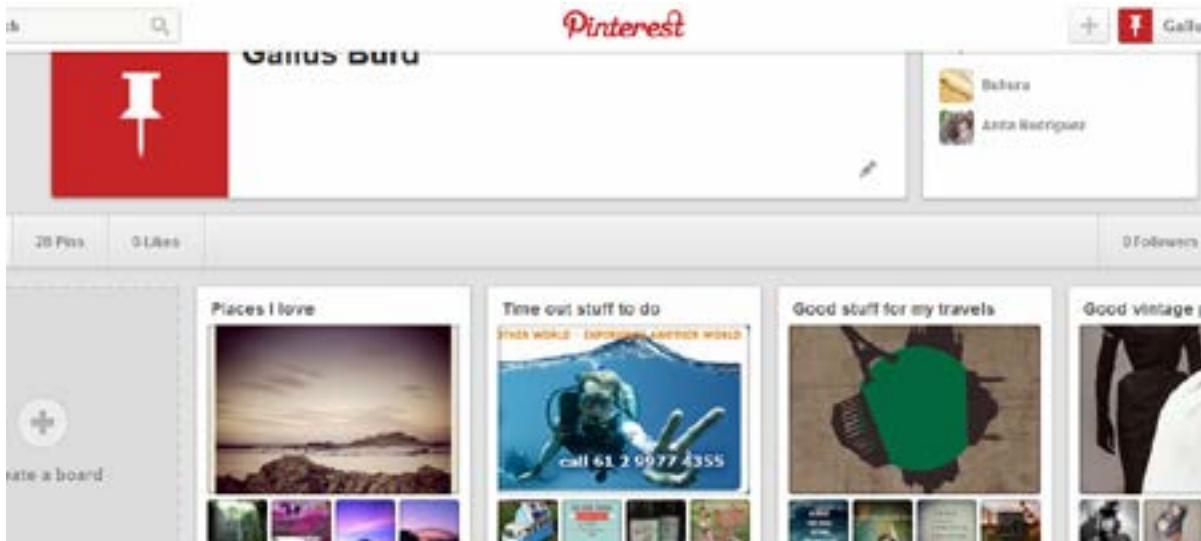
4

5

What do I do now?



2.27 Pinterest scrapbook activity

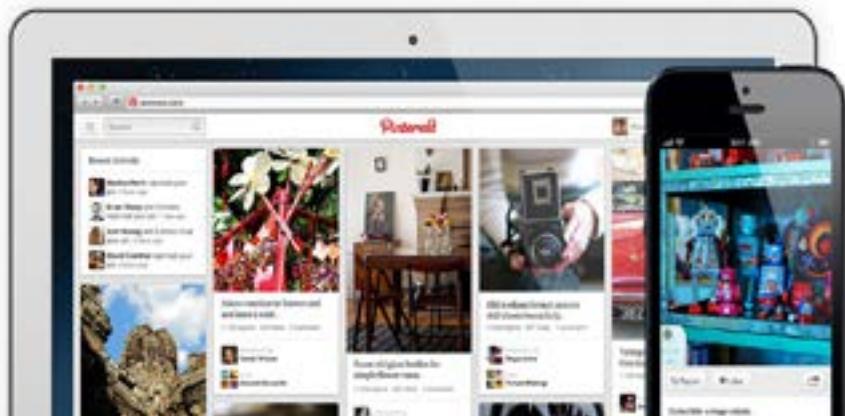


Use Pinterest to collect your ideas, images, possible destinations, activities, areas of interest.....to plan what you could do...and to keep a record.

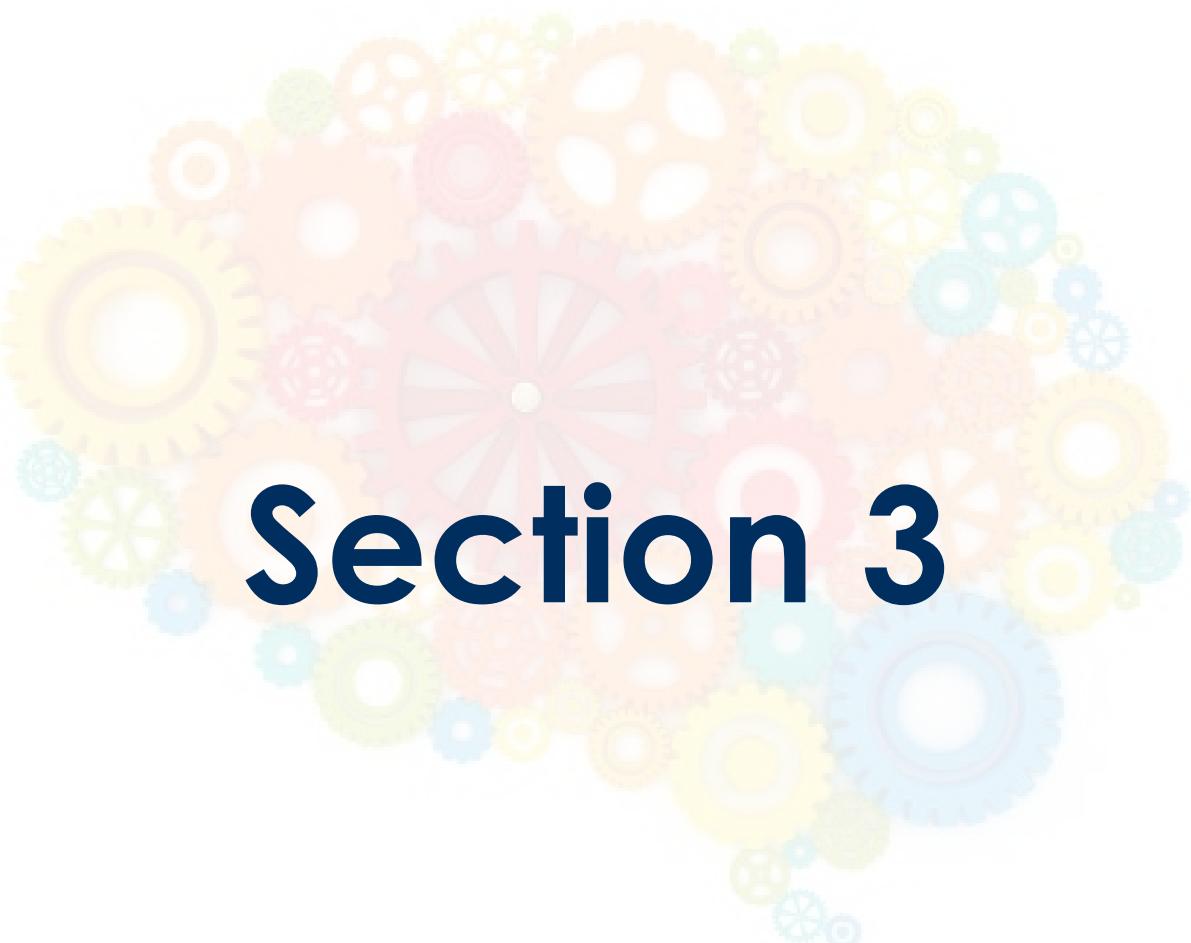
www.pinterest.com

Document your discoveries about your places, about your experiences...about yourself

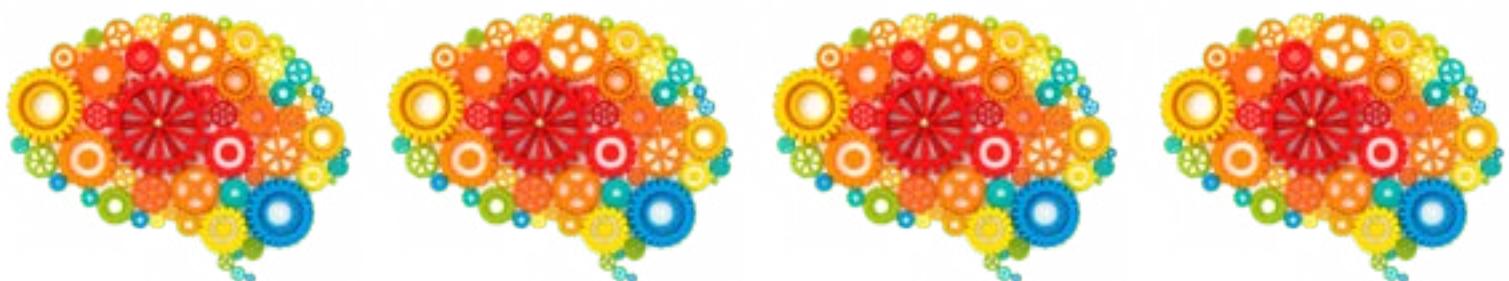
- Where did you go, what did you do?
- What was good, what was terrible, what was life-changing, what was a surprise?
- What do you know about yourself after your time out that you didn't know before?
- Has it influenced what you might do next, if so, how?



Before you start packing your suntan cream and flip-flops think about the pros and cons. The decision making section and activities will help you do this.



Section 3



3.1 Comparing the Pros and Cons

The 'pros and cons' approach to decision making involves identifying and weighing up the pros and cons for your options and then reviewing your position once you have the results.

Don't be surprised if, despite having identified many more 'cons' for one option, that you feel more inclined to choose that option. The importance of different pros and cons can vary enormously. You may also find that this process allows you to identify feelings that you have attached to certain options.

✍ Select career or work options that seem most promising for you at the moment. Make a list of the factors you consider could be FOR or AGAINST each option.

Option: Post-Graduate Course (e.g. marketing)	
For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire professional qualification• Develop relevant skills• Demonstrate commitment• Possibility of getting relevant work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No full-time course available locally• Lack of income• No guarantee of job at end of course• Cost of funding course

Option:

For	Against
	

Option:

For	Against
	

Option:

For	Against
	

3.2 Visualise the decision as already made

Are you good at convincing yourself of something? This activity is good for people with lots of imagination, or who want to have a go at a visualisation exercise.

If you are struggling to make a decision – try pretending you have made it. For a day or two your job is to act as if the decision is already taken and you will be going to Australia for a 12 month working holiday (for example!) Live it and feel it as if it is happening to you now.

Use the box below to write down how you feel now you have made the decision.



3.3 Questions to ask yourself

Often when we struggle with a decision we need a new way of looking at the problem. Sometimes all it takes is a friend, colleague or a careers adviser to ask you a question you hadn't thought of – which really helps you untangle your thoughts.

Here is a list of questions you can use as prompts – not all will be appropriate or relevant to your particular situation, but see if any help 'jog' your thoughts along.

- Is this the "right" conclusion?
- Why am I making these assumptions?
- Why do I think this is the "right" thing to do?
 - Is this really based on all the facts?
- What is my primary motive as I make this decision?
- What sacrifices will I need to make, and what benefits outweigh these sacrifices?
- Whose strong influence am I feeling upon my decision, and shall I allow that?
- What is the worst result my decision can bring, and can I accept that?
 - What safety net will I have if nothing goes as planned?
- When am I going to stop thinking about this decision and do something?
 - Am I asking the wrong question?
 - Am I missing something?
 - Is there a pattern?
- Who do I need to be in the future?
 - What if I'm wrong?
- Will today's easy option become tomorrow's dead end?
- What might happen if I stepped out of my comfort zone?
 - Is the answer that I want too simplistic?
 - What do I owe it to myself to attempt?
- Who can help me to look at this in a different way?
- Will this always be as important to me as it seems to be now?
 - Why don't I like the answer I've already got?
 - What aspects of myself have I yet to discover?
 - Is that just how I would like things to be?
 - What could I lose if I don't take the gamble?
- If I risk and lose, could I still gain something? Does that change the risk?
 - Am I trying to justify a decision I've already made?

3.4 A 'mathematical' method of decision making

Simply comparing the advantages and disadvantages of each option, doesn't take into account how strongly you feel about certain issues. Assigning a weighting which reflects your strength of feeling allows you to take this into account.

Job A - in next town, good pay, study for professional qualifications before possible promotion

Job B - some distance away, pay very good but promotion slow

In this example, pay is really important so gets a weighting of 4 while meeting people was less important.

Pay	x4
Chances of Promotion	x3
Near Home	x3
Meeting People	x1

Analysing the opportunities

The next step is to assess how well each of the opportunities addresses the factor you feel are important. In this example it uses a scale of +2 for very well, to -2 very little.

	Job A	Job B
Pay	+1	+2
Promotion	+1	-1
Near Home	-1	-2
Meeting People	+1	+1

Reaching a decision

Combining the assessment of how important different factors are, with how well each opportunity addresses each factor, allows us to come up with an indication of how suitable each opportunity is.

	Job A	Job B
Pay x4	$4 \times 1 = 4$	$4 \times 2 = 8$
Promotion x3	$3 \times 1 = 3$	$3 \times -1 = -3$
Near Home x3	$3 \times -1 = -3$	$3 \times -2 = -6$
Meeting People x1	$1 \times 1 = 1$	$1 \times 1 = 1$
TOTALS	5	0

Adding up the totals for each factor shows that Job A is more suitable than Job B.

Often we are making these judgments subconsciously, breaking the process down in this way makes it clearer how we are thinking and may help us reach decisions with confidence.

3.5 Identifying the barriers

If you are feeling stuck, it can help to analyse what might be holding you back. The following list is a set of common themes that emerge in discussions with careers advisers.

 Read the list of statements below. Mark yes for statements that seem relevant for you and no to those that do not seem particularly relevant.

	Yes	No
1. Nothing seems just right		
2. There are too many things I would like to do		
3. There are too many options		
4. I do not feel ready to make decisions		
5. It all seems so final		
6. How do I know if something will be right if I have not tried it?		
7. Just tell me what I should do		
8. I want time out to travel – not a career		
9. My parents/partner/f would not approve		
10. None of my flatmates are planning to do these kinds of jobs		
11. New graduates don't do the kind of things which interest me		
12. I have too many debts to be able to take on the full time vocational training I need		
13. My academic results are not good enough – no employer will be interested		
14. Nothing I want to do is available where I want to live		
15. I do not want to go to London – but there are no good jobs elsewhere		
16. I just want to use my languages		
17. I just want a good job		
18. I have no experience other than working in a pub – no employer will be interested.		

Now analyse your responses

- **Are you looking for the ‘perfect’ job?**? Give up – it only rarely exists – and then not forever. Both what you are looking for and the nature of the job will change over time. You will find you have to compromise on some things - this is not an exact science.
- **Are you afraid of making a decision?**? This may be the first time you have made a major decision on your own. Remember – most graduates could do a wide range of jobs well and be happy doing them. You are not necessarily making a choice for life – most of us will make several career changes throughout our working lives – if your first choice does not work out then you will have a better knowledge of what is important to you when you make the next choice.
- **Are you unwilling to compromise?** If you are focussed on one particular factor more than anything else, for example geographical location or using a particular skill like languages, then you may have to compromise on some other factors to help you get started. Alternatively, you may need to be prepared to make this factor achievable in the longer term by gaining relevant experience in the short term.
- **Are you concerned about what other people think?** Then you need to assess how important these influences are for you. Does it really matter that you do not want to do the same as your flatmates – you will not be flat sharing forever. More significant can be the influences of partners or parents – you need to be honest with yourself and with them about how important their views are.
- **Are you opting out?** If you plan to travel – make sure you know what your first steps will be when you return. It is unlikely you will wake up one morning in Nepal with sudden inspiration about what you want to do!
- **Are you lacking confidence?** Try to be realistic. Remember you will graduate from a well-respected university with a range of transferable academic skills and personal qualities

Activity 3.6 Six Thinking Hats

'Six Thinking Hats' is a tool that was developed by Edward de Bono. The idea behind it is that people tend to approach decisions in a manner that is comfortable and usual for them. This might mean that they fail to look at the problem from other perspectives, e.g. pessimists may be excessively defensive, and more emotional people may fail to look at decisions calmly and rationally.

This exercise asks you to put on a different 'Thinking Hat' and force yourself into thinking about something in a different way, ensuring that you use all approaches.

How to Use the Tool:

Each 'Thinking Hat' is a different style of thinking, these are explained below:



White Hat:

The White Hat is neutral and objective, with this thinking hat on you are concerned with facts and figures. Look at the information you have, and see what you can learn from it. Look for gaps in your knowledge, and either try to fill them or take account of them.



Red Hat:

'Wearing' the red hat, you look at problems using intuition, gut reaction, and emotion.



Black Hat:

The Black hat is careful and cautious, the 'devil's advocate hat'. Using black hat thinking, look at all the bad points of the decision. Look at it cautiously and defensively. Try to see why it might not work.



Yellow Hat:

The yellow hat helps you to think positively. It is the optimistic viewpoint that helps you to see all the benefits of the decision and the value in it.



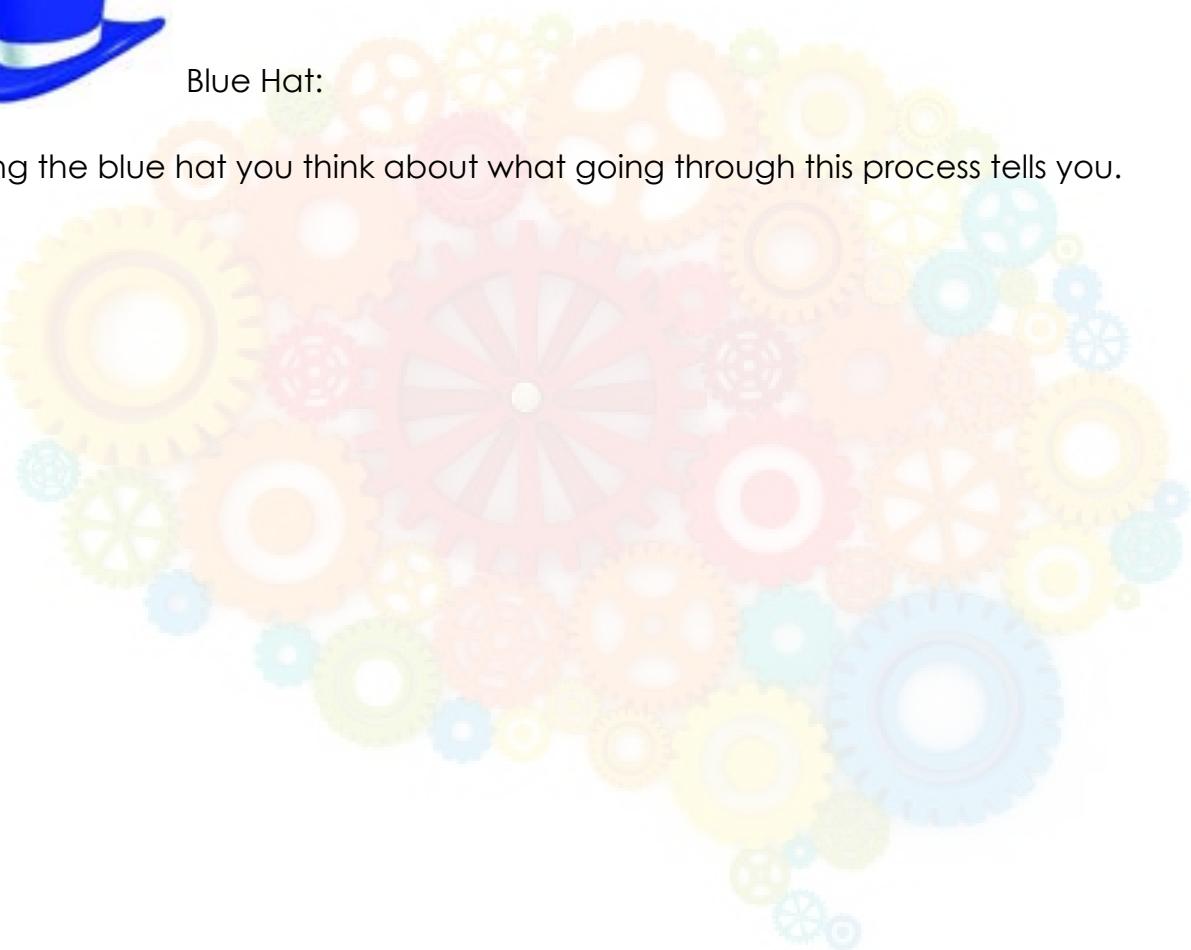
Green Hat:

The Green Hat stands for creativity and new ideas. This is where you can come up with creative solutions to a problem. It is a freewheeling way of thinking, in which you can have any ideas you like.



Blue Hat:

Wearing the blue hat you think about what going through this process tells you.



Remember that there is no right or wrong answer!

Have a go at applying this method to a decision you are trying to make:



WHITE HAT: neutral and objective

What do the facts and figures tell you? Do you need more information?



RED HAT: the emotional view

What is your gut instinct telling you?



BLACK HAT: careful and cautious, the “devil’s advocate” hat

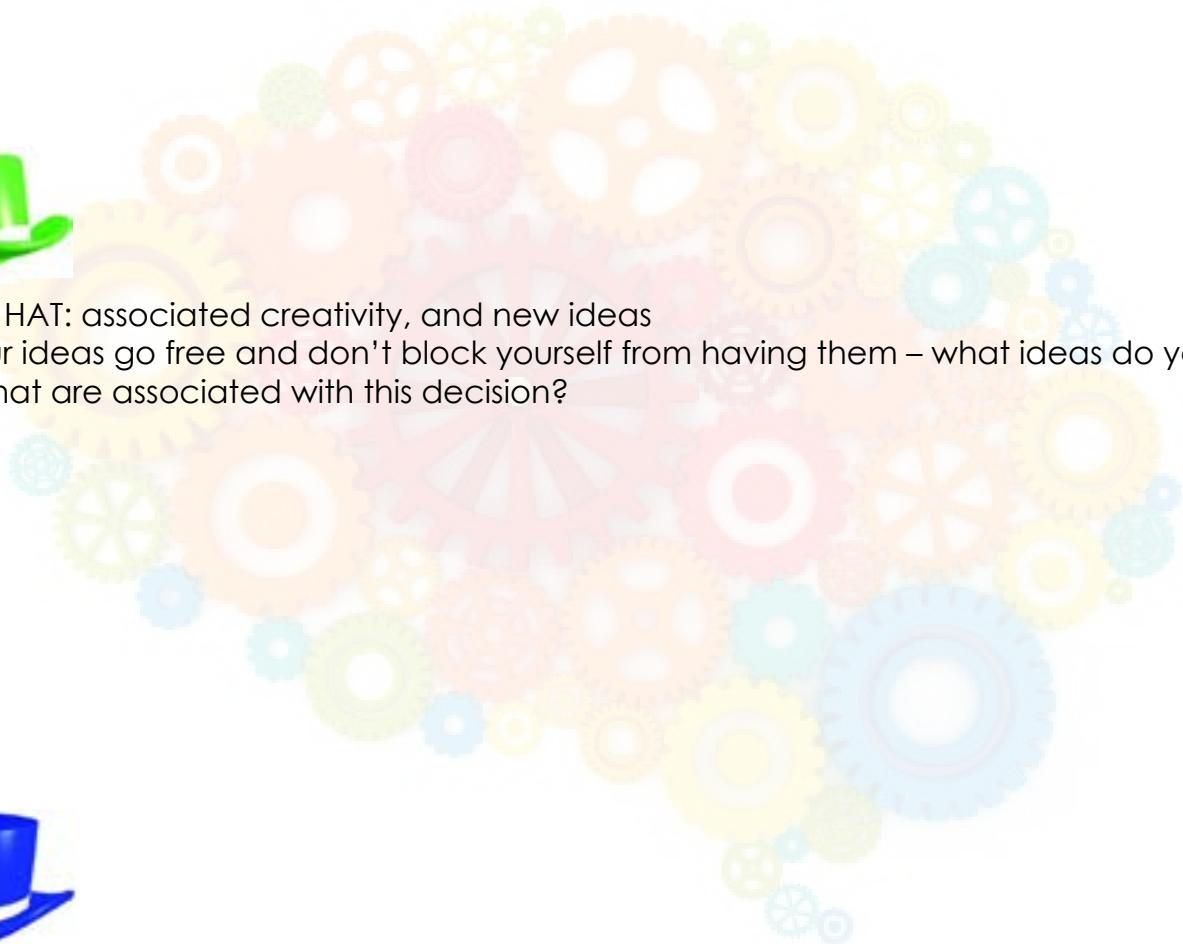
Think about everything that could go wrong with this decision.



YELLOW HAT: sunny and positive
Think about everything that could go right!



GREEN HAT: associated creativity, and new ideas
Let your ideas go free and don't block yourself from having them – what ideas do you have that are associated with this decision?



BLUE HAT: the evaluating hat
Evaluate the outcomes of wearing each hat, what does going through this process tell you?

3.7 The SWOT method of analysing options

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. For each option you are considering, you list your internal strengths and weaknesses related to that option, and the pros and cons (Opportunities and Threats) associated with each option.

Below is a worked example of a SWOT analysis of working for a Small/Medium-sized Enterprise (SME)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Like to use my initiative, this would be good▪ Tend to pick things up quickly▪ Friendly working environment▪ I am creative, can come up with ideas for growing the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ I tend to feel self-conscious and will be very aware of this as a new person in such a small, close-knit team
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Opportunity to get involved with different areas of work▪ More responsibility at an earlier stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Company may not survive an economic downturn▪ May have to work very long hours to meet deadlines▪ No structured training programme▪ Little chance of promotion – may have to change jobs to progress▪ Work may be 'small-scale'▪ Fewer 'benefits' such as pension scheme, fewer paid holidays etc

Complete your own SWOT analysis of your options.

Option 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Option 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

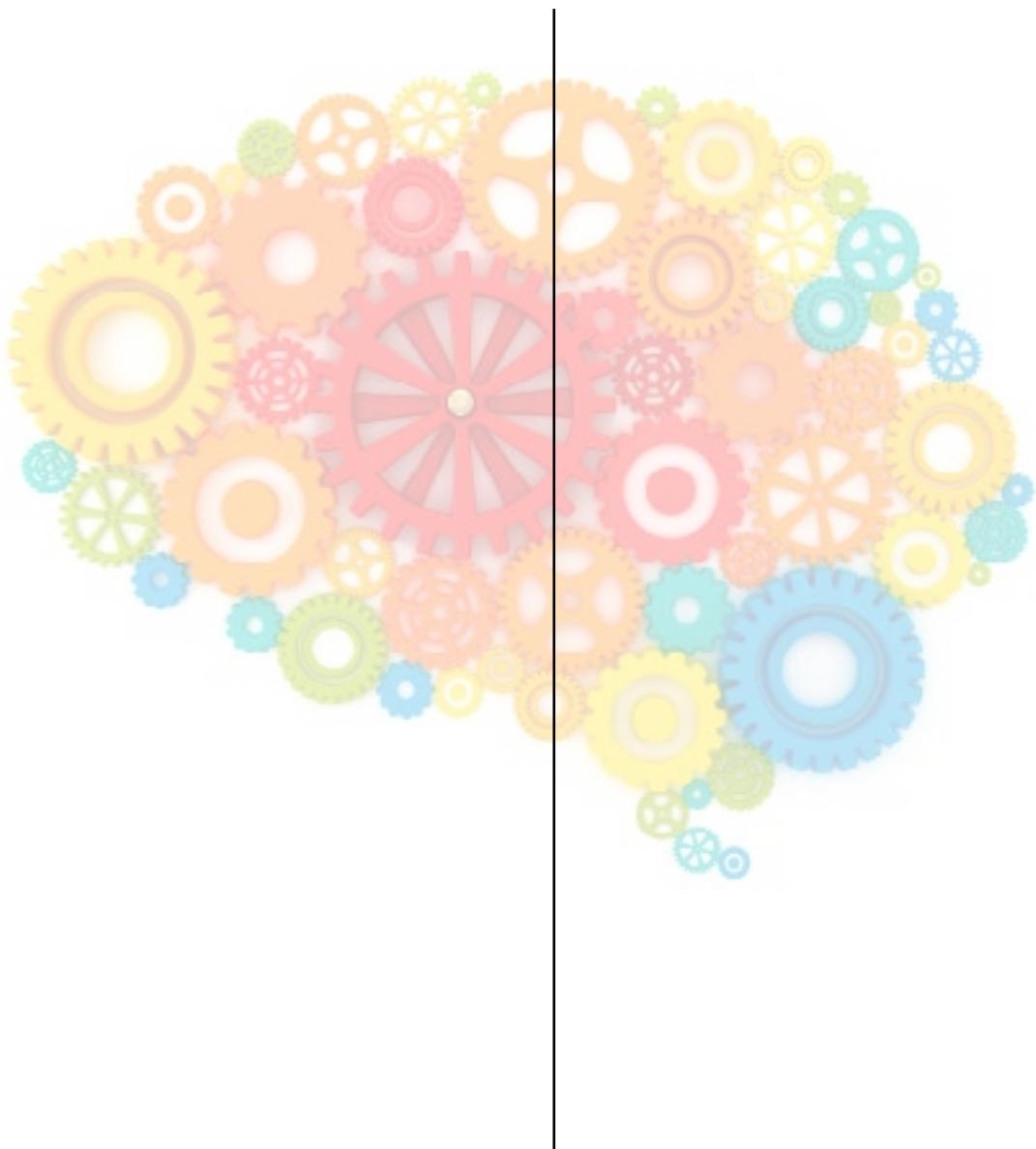
3.8 Force Field Analysis

Force Field Analysis is a useful tool for weighing up the pros and cons for a decision. To use the below diagram, type in your arguments for and against and then select a number to add “weight” to the argument. You can then total each side to help you to make a final decision.

If you wish to change the weight of an argument simply click on change button to reset.

For

Against



3.9 Evaluating your decisions

Use this set of questions to reflect on a decision you have made, and how 'good' a decision it was in hindsight. Feel free to add in any other questions you feel are relevant to you.

What was the decision you were facing?

Was it easy or difficult? If so, why?

What criteria did you take into account?

How did you approach the decision? Were there certain techniques you used?

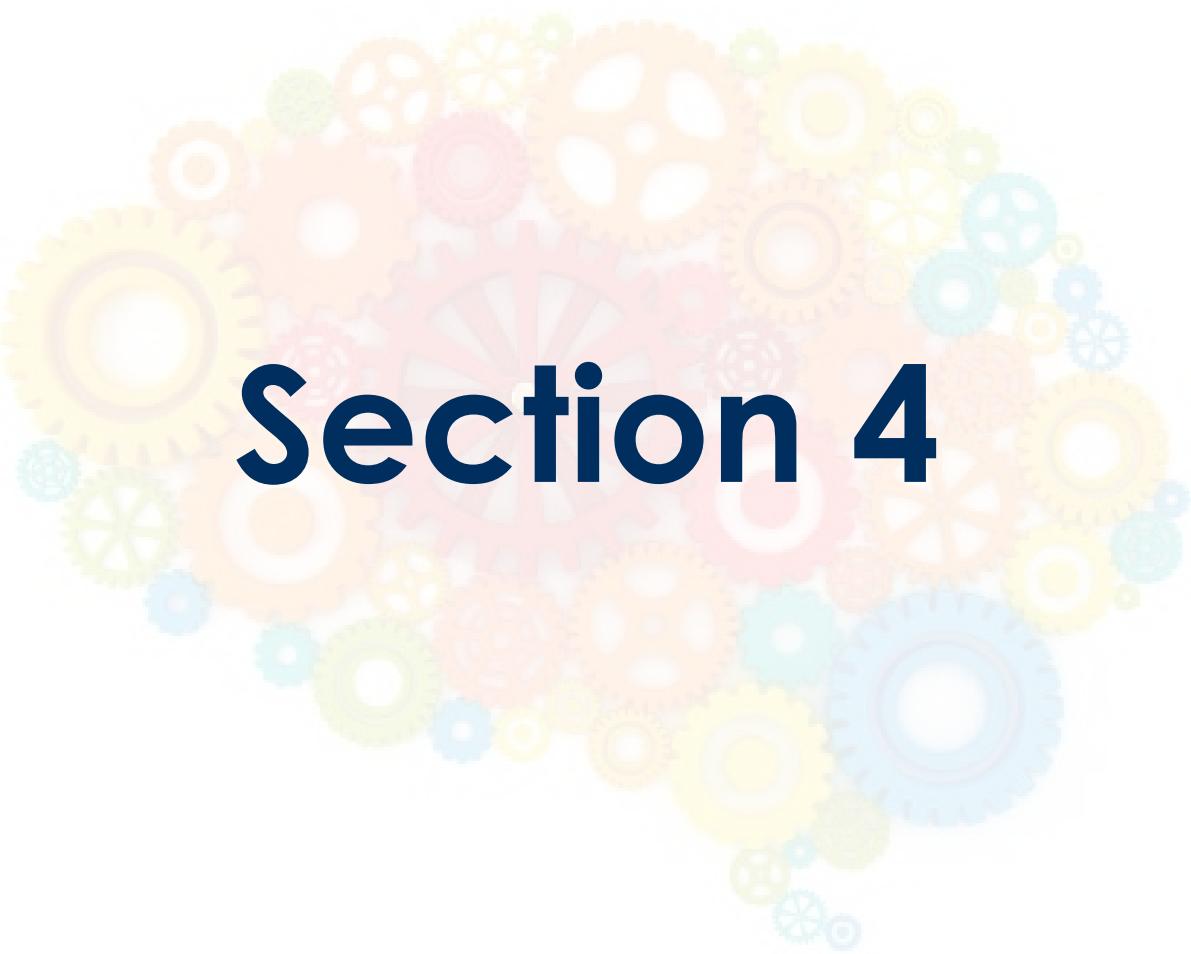
What, if any, factors affected the outcome that you could not have foreseen?

How appropriate or inappropriate do you now feel this decision was?

In hindsight, what alternative courses of action may have been possible?

In finding yourself in a similar situation in the future, what would you do the same and what would you do differently?

Are there any other steps are you going to take on the basis of what you have learned?"



Section 4



4.1 TARGETJobs Report

One tool to help you get planning is the Target Jobs Report as it includes an action plan. You have to register to use Target Jobs Report.

The screenshot shows the TARGETjobs careers report: career planner interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Home, About us, Services, Resources, Events, News, and Contact. The main header features the TARGETjobs logo and the cipd.co.uk/thinkHR logo. To the right is the CIPD 100 Years logo. On the left, there is a sidebar with various icons and a progress bar showing Step 1: Self-Assessment at 28% complete. The main content area is titled 'TARGETjobs careers report: career planner' and contains three main sections:

- Step 1: Self-Assessment**: Includes 'Diagnostic Self-Assessment' and 'Skills & Preferences'.
- Step 2: Personal Potential**: Includes 'Numerical Reasoning' (status: 15 minutes), 'Visual Reasoning' (status: 15 minutes), 'Parallel Logical Thinking' (status: 9 minutes), and 'Deductive Logical Thinking' (status: 9 minutes).
- Step 3: Next Steps**: Includes 'Find Myself', 'Action Plan', and 'Download Your (FREE) Careers Report'.

A sidebar on the right is titled 'IT's not just for the boys!' and features a call to action: 'Apply now! 18 October and 22 November'.

- Give the Self-Assessment exercises a go
- Try the optional Personal Potential tests
- Find out what's suggested for your Next steps
- What will you do next? Develop your own action plan and save this in your personal folder.

<http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-report>

4.2 Visual art action planning



Does using visual material help you plan better?

Try storyboarding your ideas and the different steps you are considering.

Use Post-its, pictures, drawings, photos, stickers, whatever visual or mix of visuals works for you.

Seeing a visual layout can be inspiring and motivating. If you haven't worked this way before, give it a try. Might get you seeing things in a different way?

<http://www.paysoncooper.com/101-marketing-strategies/making-planning-fun/#>

4.3 Assess a vacancy

In the Self awareness process, you looked at lots of vacancies to work out what might suit you and what you'd enjoy. Now it's time to assess and market yourself for a specific vacancy

Find a vacancy that interests you. **Start with MyCareerHub:** www.ed.ac.uk/careers

Break the vacancy requirements down into different elements:

- What qualifications do they ask for?
- What experience do they want you to have?
- What skills are they looking for?
- What personal qualities and values do they mention?
- What is essential and what is desirable?

Using lists, mindmaps or whatever works for you. Think about the **evidence** you have that clearly shows you have what they ask for.

Record a good bit of detail, quantify where you can – not just what you have but how you developed it.

Any gaps?

Don't let these put you off. Evaluate how crucial they might be to the role and consider any transferable skills and experience you have that shows you have the potential to do the job. Focus on what you have got and what you can do.

Not enough information?

Ask for a more detailed job description, use similar vacancies and the profiles on Prospects.ac.uk to get an idea what the job demands.

What next?

Now you've brainstormed the vacancy, use the results to develop a CV targeted at the job.

4.4 Thirty second review

You've seen a job advert. You've got a first draft of the CV you've designed for the job. Now look at it as the potential employer would.

Time is precious, this is the 42nd CV you've looked at, its 4pm on a Friday. In 30 seconds, does this CV convince you you'd want to interview the candidate?

If not, why not?

If yes, why?

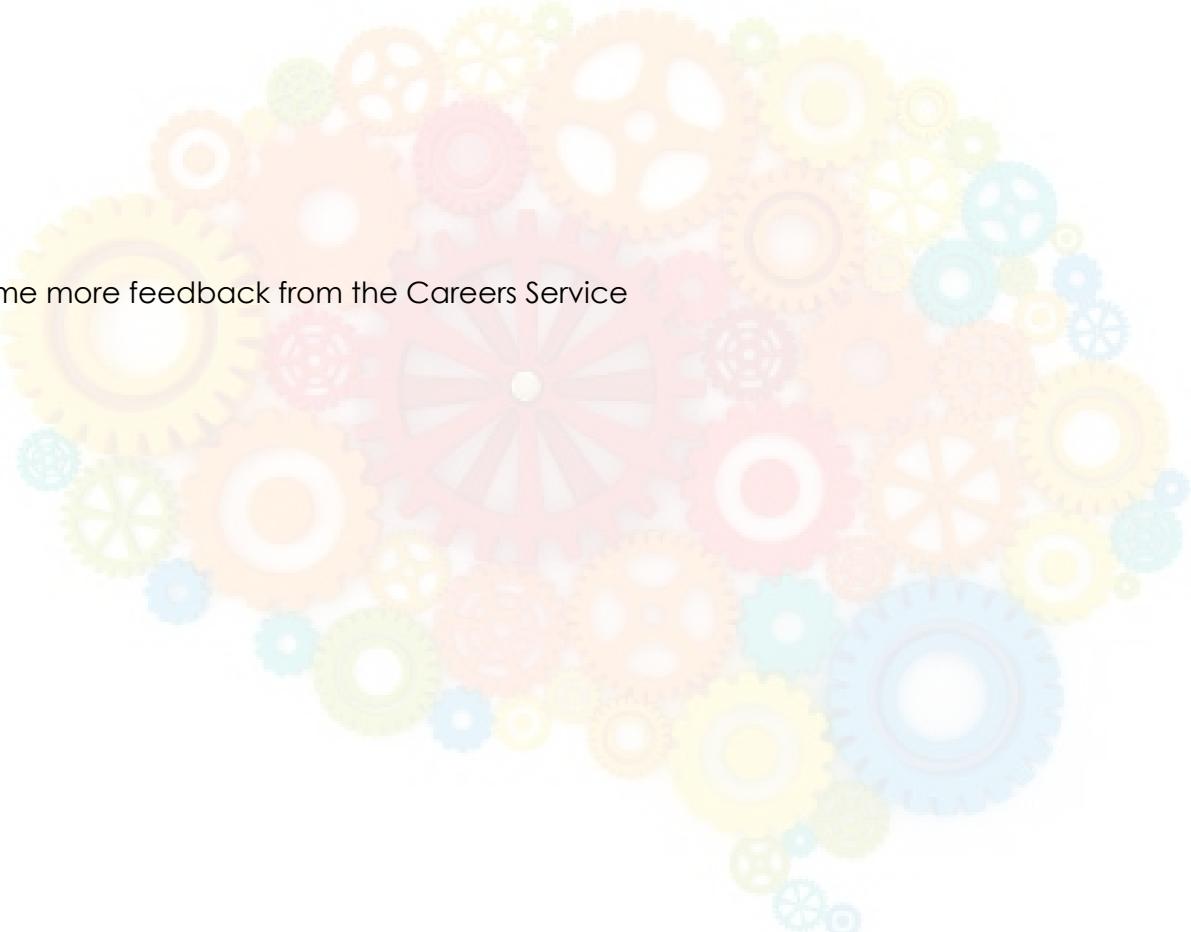
Now tell someone else what you are applying for and ask them to do the 30 second review.

What's their feedback?

What have you learned?

What next?

Get some more feedback from the Careers Service



4.5 SMART action planning

Setting SMART objectives is a useful strategy when you have goals you want to make happen. By completing this framework you will have a clear idea of what it is you want to do and how you are going to do it – rather than vague aspirations with no planned way of making the transition.

SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Advantageous, Realistic and Time bound (although you will see different versions of this!)

Specific

The objective can't be vague or overarching e.g. "I am going to lose weight or I am going to get fit". It must be specific. You can have a long term aim such as "I am going to lose weight" but then you need to break it down into specific smaller short and medium term objectives.

Measurable

How are you going to know when you have achieved the objective? By what criteria will you measure it?

Advantageous

Listing the advantages in achieving the objective provides the necessary motivation to fulfil it. It goes without saying that if there are no advantages to you, you are unlikely to do it.

Realistic

It can't be too lofty or you are likely not to succeed. Think honestly about the potential barriers to you achieving this objective. Similarly, don't set more than three objectives at a time. It is best to start with just one before building in a second. Small, consistent steps that contribute to a larger goal are MUCH more likely to be successful than trying to change everything at the same time.

Time bound

You must set realistic timeframes and / or deadlines, otherwise you are liable to let your plans drift and not achieve your goals.

Look at this worked example:

Overarching aim: To get a job

Specific objective: I want to improve my technique when writing application forms

Measurable

- Hopefully if my technique improves I will get invited to interviews on the strength of my application – however this is not an exact measurement that I can use.
- I will know my technique has been improved by seeking feedback from the Careers Service on my application forms.

Advantages – I think I will:

- Be more likely to be invited to interviews
- Be more prepared at interviews and assessment centres as I have been thorough at the application stage

Realistic

- This is realistic as there is a lot of support available to me to do this.
- I have checked the calendar of events and will attend the session on writing application forms at the Careers Service next week.
- After that I will draft an application form, using the booklet on Effective Applications from the Careers Service.
- Then I will take my application to an appointment with a Careers Consultant to get some feedback.
- I will also show it to my Aunt as she works in Human Resources.

Timebound

- I will do this by October 31st.
- I will then review my progress at that stage and see if I need to do more.

Overarching aim:

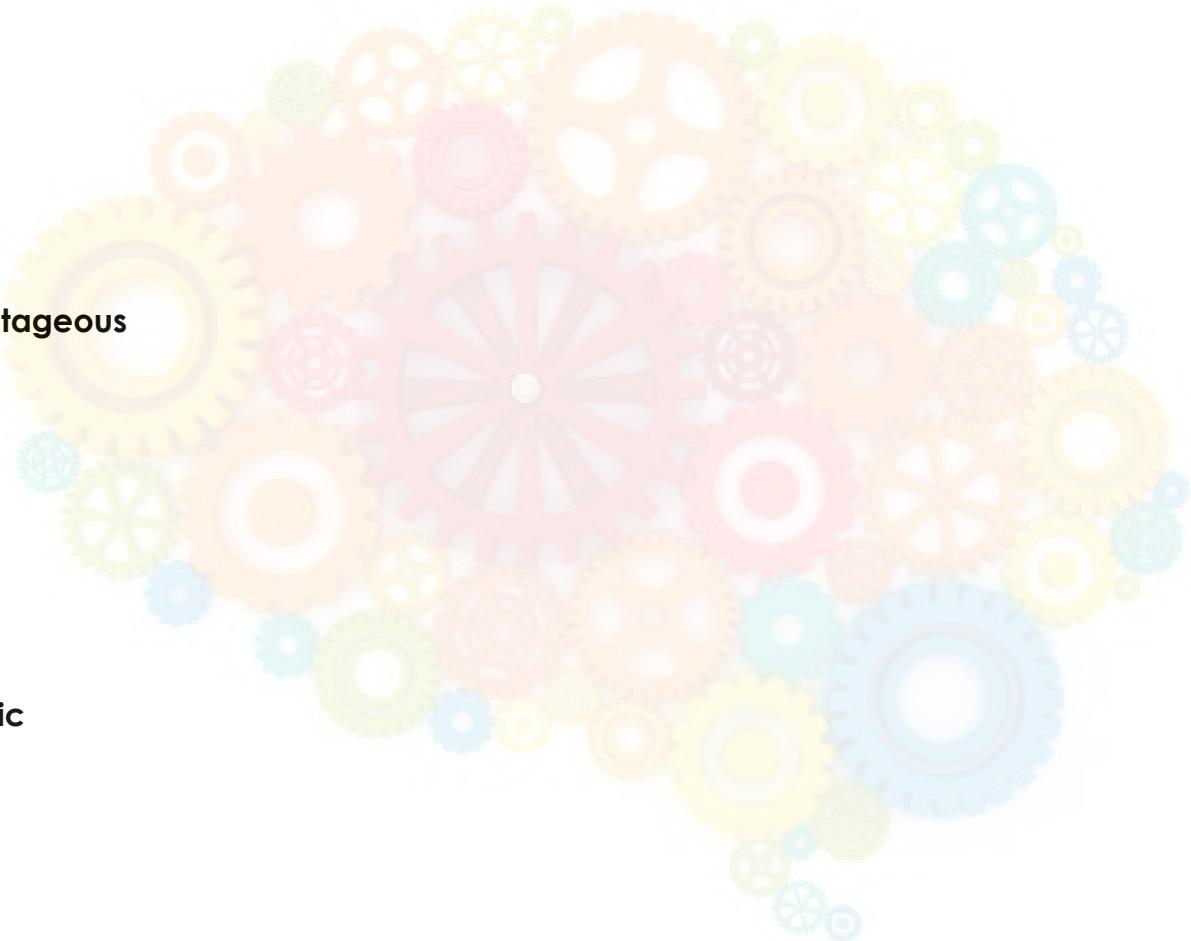
Specific objective:

Measurable

Advantageous

Realistic

Timebound



4.6 How much do you know about CVs? Take the CV test!

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Your CV should be 1 side of A4 in length | True / False |
| 2. Your CV should contain: | |
| • all your qualifications | True / False |
| • all your work experience | True / False |
| • your date of birth | True / False |
| • your age | True / False |
| • your marital status | True / False |
| • your nationality | True / False |
| 3. Your CV needs to stand out from the crowd
(perhaps a different colour/use of graphics) | True / False |
| 4. You can use the same CV (if it's a good one) over
and over again when applying for jobs | True / False |
| 5. Your CV should include references | True / False |
| 6. Even if applying by application form, it is a good idea to include
your CV to give the employer as much information as possible | True / False |
| 7. If applying for a job with a CV it is a good idea to include
a covering letter | True / False |
| 8. The amount of time employers will spend on an initial review
of your CV is: | |
| • a few seconds | True / False |
| • a few minutes | True / False |
| • half an hour | True / False |

The CV quiz - Answers

1. **False** - the ideal length of your CV depends on how much experience you have and what you are using your CV for. In the UK, 2 page CVs are fairly standard. In fields such as banking and management consultancy, 1 page is common. In academia, you may use 3 pages to include lists of publications and conferences.

2. Qualifications - (mostly) **False** - your degree certainly, probably your Highers or A levels, but perhaps not your GCSEs or Standard Grades (unless an employer specifically asks for them) or they have departments in Spain and you have Standard Grade Spanish.

Work experience - (mostly) **True** - unless you have had dozens of jobs and then your CV will be too cramped. How much you write for each job will vary you could consider splitting up a lot of work experience into 'relevant work experience' and 'other work experience'. Voluntary work can be included here.

Date of birth/age - **False** It is illegal in the UK for an employer to discriminate against applicants on the basis of age. You do not need to include this information on your CV.

Marital status - False. Employers do not need to know this information.

Nationality - False. In the UK, you do not need to put your nationality on your CV unless the employer specifically requests it. You can include the information for the sake of clarity.

3. (Mostly)**True** – your CV should try to stand out from the crowd but in its content not in flashy graphics (though a good layout/headings can make it look more attractive and easy to read). Use of bright colours or graphics is normally frowned upon and can detract from the content. An exception to this rule is for jobs within the creative industries.

4. **False** – focus your CV on the specific job/company you are approaching. A targeted/focused CV is more likely to get a favourable response. This does not mean that you will have to write a CV from scratch for every employer but you should make changes to the order, content, emphasis etc. depending on what the employer is looking for.

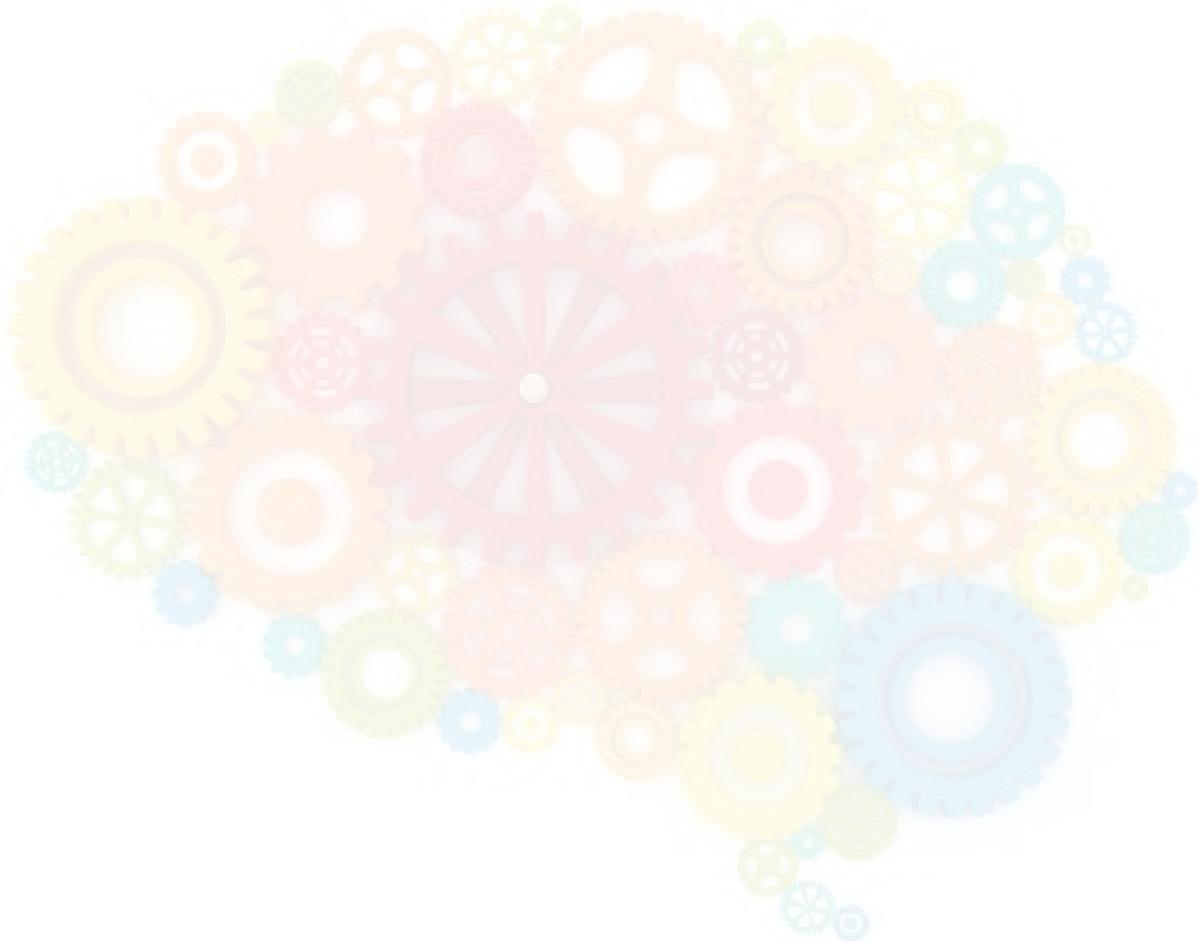
5. (Mostly)**True** – especially if you are applying for an advertised job. Your CV is like an application form. However if you are writing speculatively to a company in the hope that they may have a job then it is probably wiser to put down 'references available on request'.

6. **False**. Usually if an employer wants you to apply using the company application form it's because that's the only information they want from you. Adding your CV without being asked could be information overload. In many cases because the form is photocopied several times for the consideration of various people in the organisation, your CV will be binned without anyone having looked at it.

7. **True**. Always include a covering letter with a CV (unless expressly asked not to do so). The covering letter is the first thing an employer reads about you and where you get your motivation

across so spend time thinking about the content and how best to sell yourself to that employer.

8. In most cases, employers spend no more than a few seconds on an initial scan of your CV. Once they've decided you are worthy of further consideration they may spend more time looking at your CV in detail, especially if they intend to interview you. So on first reading it is vital to catch their eye with the right kind of relevant information in a targeted/focused well laid out CV.



What now?

Congratulations, you've finished the Career Ed course!

It may well be that the process of working through this course raises questions for you, and you would like to get some further support. The Careers Service offers support to undergraduate and postgraduate students at any stage in university, and for two years after graduation. Please look at our website, or come in to see us to find out more about the wide ranging service we offer - including careers information specialists, individual appointments with a Careers Consultant, talks and events, and much more.

