

Careers & Employability

A Quick Guide To Career Planning



University
of Worcester
Student Services

Career Planning

A Quick Guide

Introduction

There are likely to be many jobs that suit your skills, qualities, values and interests, which can begin to provide a variety of rewards you may be seeking.

We have produced this booklet, which we hope will help you to understand yourself better and gain further insights into the working world as you begin to make early decisions and choices.

There is no right or wrong way to make a career decision; the elements below may help you to weigh up your options carefully, consider what you want, what you are suited to, the options open to you and what you need to get where you want to be.



There will be times when the path ahead may not be straightforward and you may take a complicated route to your chosen career - *"There's no such thing as a career path. It's crazy paving and you have to lay it yourself"* (Dr Peter Hawkins, The Art of Building Windmills).

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

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

Equip yourself to embrace change by:

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

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

1. Understand yourself

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

a) Skills & abilities

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

- One way of identifying the skills you've gained whilst studying for your degree is to visit http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options_with_your_subject.htm. Click on your degree subject and look at the 'Skills for your CV' section.
- You can review your skills and identify any you might want to improve at the following sites; <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/tools/skillshealthcheck/Pages/default.aspx> and www.mindtools.com/pages/article/get-started.htm.
- www.usemyability.com can help you understand your skills and, if you have a disability, will help you to see how (if at all) this could impact on areas of work and specific employability skills.
- The Careers Competency Tool at <http://www.worc.ac.uk/careers/psychometrics.htm> helps you to reflect on your career/employability readiness. (Suitable for those who have at least 2 month's work experience).

b) Attributes

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

- Explore your personality type and preferences by using the Type Dynamics Indicator Test and/or the Work Personality Questionnaire at www.worc.ac.uk/careers/psychometrics.htm.

Any Queries?

call:
01905 855 166

email:
careers@worc.ac.uk

www.worcester.ac.uk/careers

c) Values

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

- Determine your top values at:
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_85.htm

d) Interests

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

If you are struggling for inspiration the following are useful career planners which may help you explore jobs that match your interests and abilities:

- The Career Interests Inventory at www.worc.ac.uk/careers/psychometrics.htm examines your interests, competencies and work style preferences to help you explore careers that might suit you.
- The Prospects Career Planner at www.prospects.ac.uk/myprospects_planner_login.htm explores what you want from a job, and your responses will then be compared with what professionals say their jobs involve.

*Reflecting on sections a) to d) now take a minute to consider your top 3 skills, attributes, values & interests below:

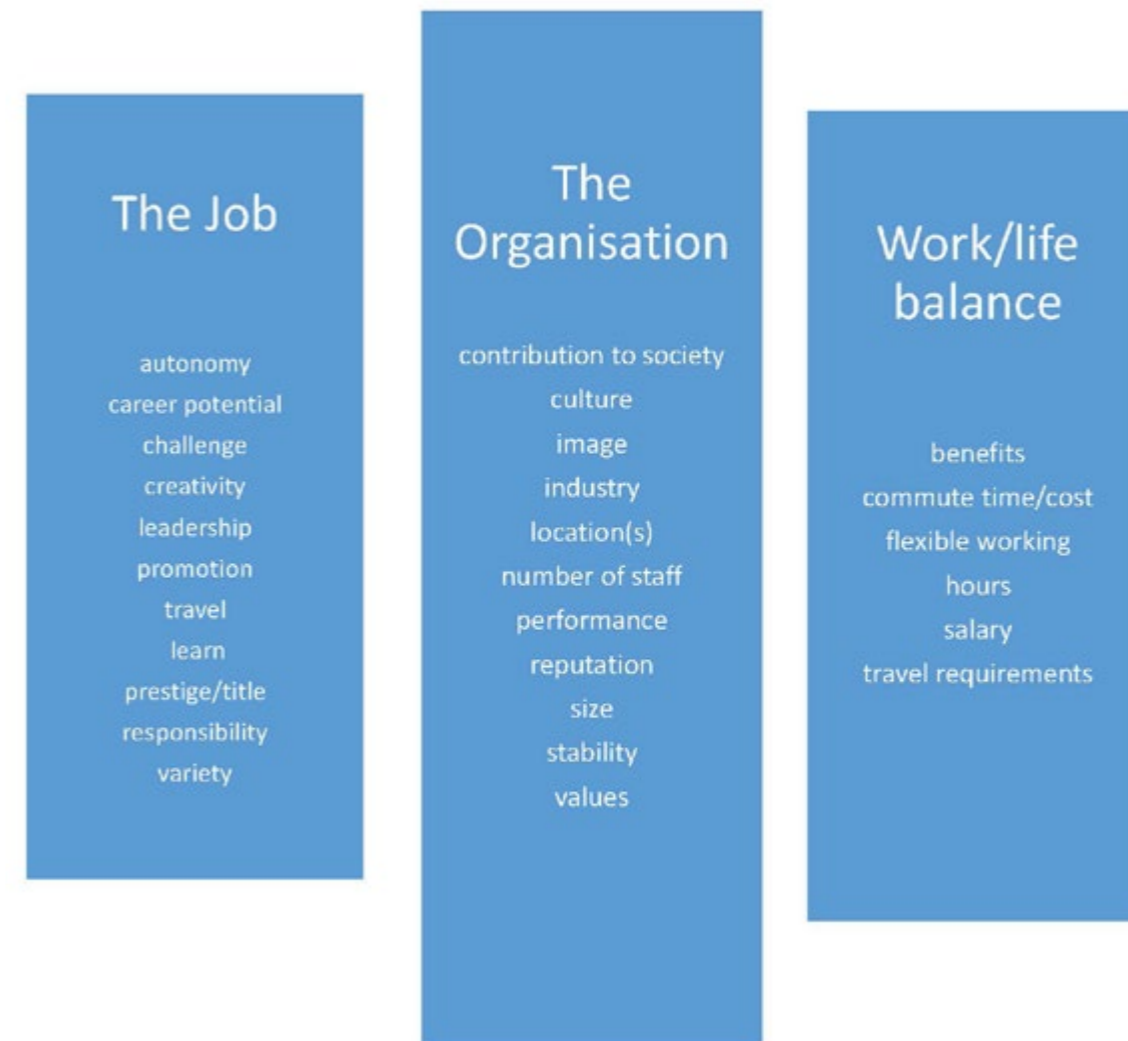
	1	2	3
Skills/Abilities			
Attributes			
Values			
Interests			

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

(The Guardian)

e) Priorities

Identifying what you want from work and what is important in terms of work/life satisfaction can help with career decisions. Now circle/underline your priorities in the chart below:



"There are a number of things that students can do to make themselves attractive to employers. Gaining as much exposure to the workplace and practising professionals as possible is key..."

(The Independent)

*Please note down any other priorities that aren't mentioned above:

2. Identify your options

In section 1 you explored options with your skills and interests. This section helps you to explore other options that you may have been unaware of.

a) Options with your subject

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

- Find out where UW graduates from your course in previous years have gone at: www.worc.ac.uk/careers/graduatedestinationresources. If you have a LinkedIn account you can use the search facility on www.linkedin.com to find alumni from your course/university.
- See the destinations of graduates from across the UK in 'What Do Graduates Do?' here: http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/current_projects_what_do_graduates_do.htm.
- Also see 'What Can I Do With My Degree?' at: http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options_with_your_subject.htm.

In the following paragraphs, we list other websites and information sources that will aid your research.

b) Explore job sectors

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

- **Prospects Sectors** covers 25 sectors including: Business, Consulting & Management; Health & Social Care; Marketing, Advertising & PR; Teaching & Education www.prospects.ac.uk/sectors.htm.
- **TARGETjobs Careers Sectors** offer advice on gaining entry to 25 graduate career sectors, and includes information on: Applications and Interviews; Graduate Jobs, Schemes and Work Experience Opportunities; Training and Development <https://targetjobs.co.uk/career-sectors>.
- **Inside Careers** offers free specialist careers guides: Actuaries; Banking & Investments; Chartered Accountancy; IT; Insurance & Pensions; Management Consultancy; Tax & Patent Attorneys at <http://www.insidecareers.co.uk>.

*Now take a moment to consider 3 careers you would like to research further & why with notes of anything you need to consider or do:

	Career	Notes
1		
2		
3		

3. Research jobs and careers

Make sure you have gathered as much information as you can before considering, or ruling out, a particular role.

a) Research online job profiles

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

- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/browse-a-to-z>
- <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobfamily/Pages/default.aspx>
- <http://www.careerplayer.com/graduate-jobs/>

b) Professional associations/publications

Some professional associations connected to specific degree subjects have a careers section on their websites providing careers tips and links to further sources of advice. You can find a list of many of these organisations at: www.totalprofessions.com/profession-finder

c) Review the job market

- Labour Market Information (LMI) can help you to identify the number of jobs available in your chosen sector(s) and geographical areas: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/ngrf/lmifuturetrends/
- Read specialist publications for any sectors that interest you: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_trade_magazines

d) Speak to professionals

Talking to professionals already in the role you would like to do can be a great way of gaining tips and advice on getting into the profession. Asking questions around how they got into their job, the best and worst parts of the role and any advice they would offer graduates trying to get into the job can be quite insightful.

- If you have a LinkedIn account use the search facility on www.linkedin.com to find people doing the job you are interested in. Send them a tailored 'connection request' asking them about their route into the profession and for any advice they would offer someone in your situation.
- Information interviews - ask your network of contacts (family, friends, students, lecturers and other people you know) to see if they know anyone doing that particular job, and who they could arrange for you to speak with to find out more about their role.
- Attend employer presentations/workshops on campus and go to local/national careers fairs to find out more about job roles and how to improve your chances of securing work experience/jobs.

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

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

(The Guardian)

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

(TARGETJobs)

e) Get experience

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

- Follow up the contacts you made via networking at careers events or on professional networking sites like LinkedIn. Look them up to see what projects they are working on and ask them if they need any help.
- Take advantage of any placements accessible through your course. The following have search facilities for placements and internships:
www.prospects.ac.uk/work_experience.htm
<http://targetjobs.co.uk/internships>
www.thebigchoice.com/Placements
www.topinternships.com/
- The university has a site dedicated to promoting voluntary live projects or work experience from local employers:
<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/community/win-win-opportunities.html>
- Worcester Students' Union hosts information on volunteering opportunities both within the Union and the local community:
<http://www.worcsu.com/volunteer/>. You can search for national voluntary opportunities by postcode or causes that matter to you at <https://do-it.org/>

*Don't forget to record your experiences and achievements & reflect on how these can help to improve your future employability. The Worcester Award is a great way of collecting this information to use later in your applications and interviews: www.worc.ac.uk/careers/worcesteraward.htm

4. Make a plan

What steps do you now need to take to find out more or move forwards with your plans?

Action	By when

The following may be useful prompts:

- Gain further information on specific careers (E.g. contact professionals already in those roles or join LinkedIn groups)
- Develop skills required for the role that you are less confident in
- Get work experience or voluntary work to see if the role is for you & prove commitment to future employers/course leaders
- Get a part time job
- Apply for further study/internships/jobs
- Work on your CV/cover letter/application/LinkedIn profile
- Prepare for interviews & assessment centres

We hope you found this guide useful to make a start and if you would like help with considering all this information, book an appointment to see a Careers Advisor; you can do this via www.timecenter.com/worcester or your SOLE page. Other guides can be found in firstpoint or at www.worc.ac.uk/careers.

If you have a question that isn't covered by this booklet, or would like to talk through your ideas with a member of the Careers team, sign up for a careers appointment at www.timecenter.com/worcester, or via your SOLE page.



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