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The Essential Career Organisation Toolkit

Resources and information to help you to explore your career options

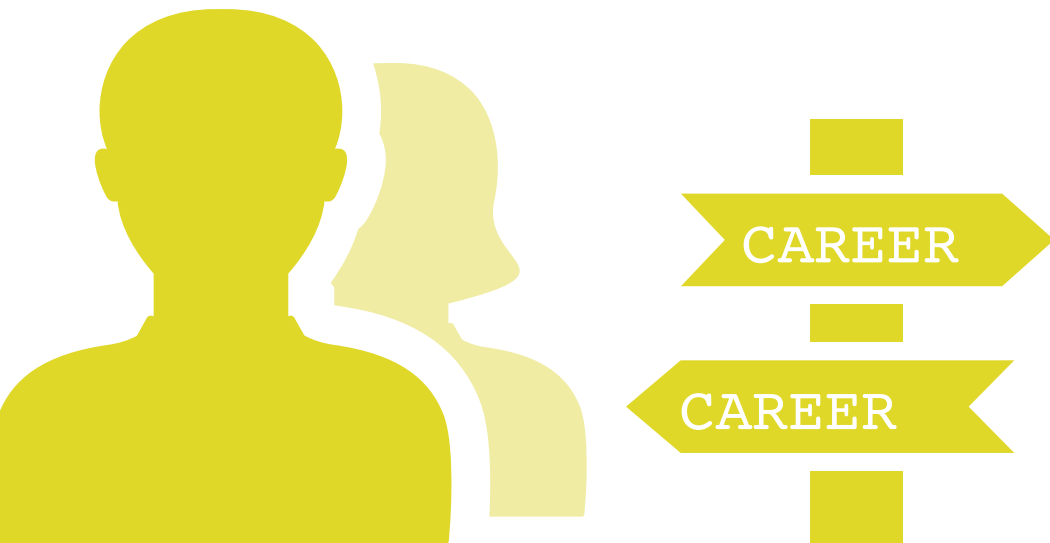
Introduction

It's never too late to start organising your career. The workplace is constantly evolving and it can make a big difference if you can adapt and move with it. It's not unusual for people to change their career several times over their working life or design their career to give them greater freedom and flexibility. If you can be pro-active in driving your future you are much more likely to be satisfied, fulfilled and have a sense of being in control.

The essential career organisation toolkit offers a range of resources and information to help you to explore what is important to you in your life and career. It aims to enable you to consider your options, understand how you can create opportunities and then set goals to achieve your short and long-term objectives.

Who is this toolkit for?

It is intended for anyone who wants to look ahead and play an active part in taking their career forward. You may be starting out, seeking promotion, looking for a career change or wanting to reshape your work-life balance. If you are one of the many people drifting along in your job, then this could just be what you need to kick start your career.



Contents

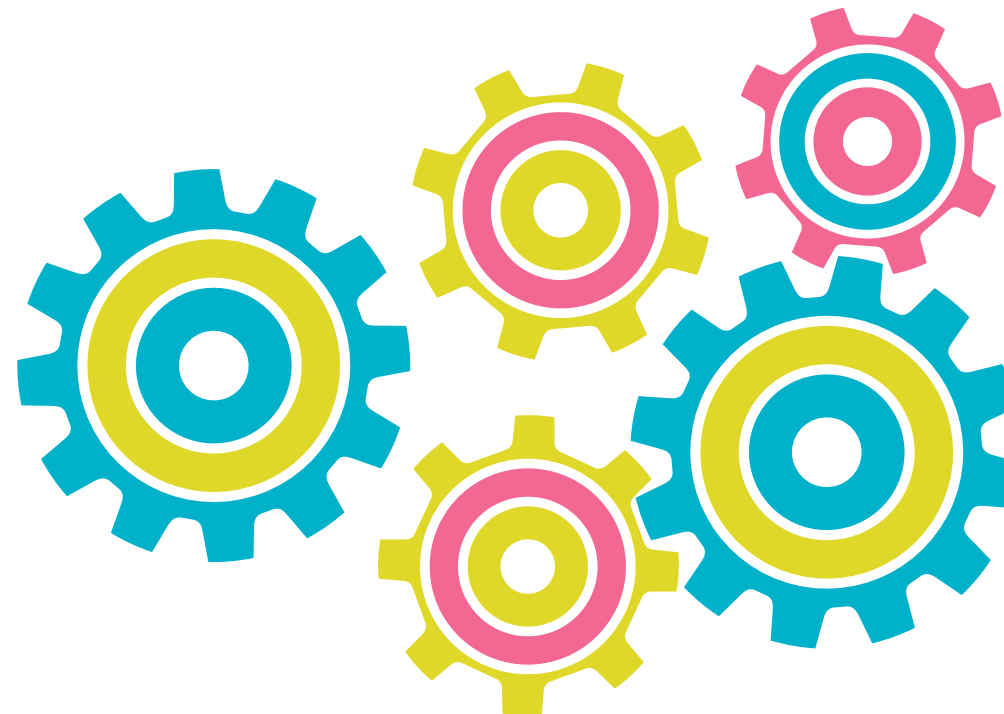
This toolkit includes:

Sections:

- 1 Why do you work?
- 2 Assess where you are now
- 3 Consider your options
- 4 Make a decision
- 5 Prepare for the future
- 6 Review your progress
- 7 Resources

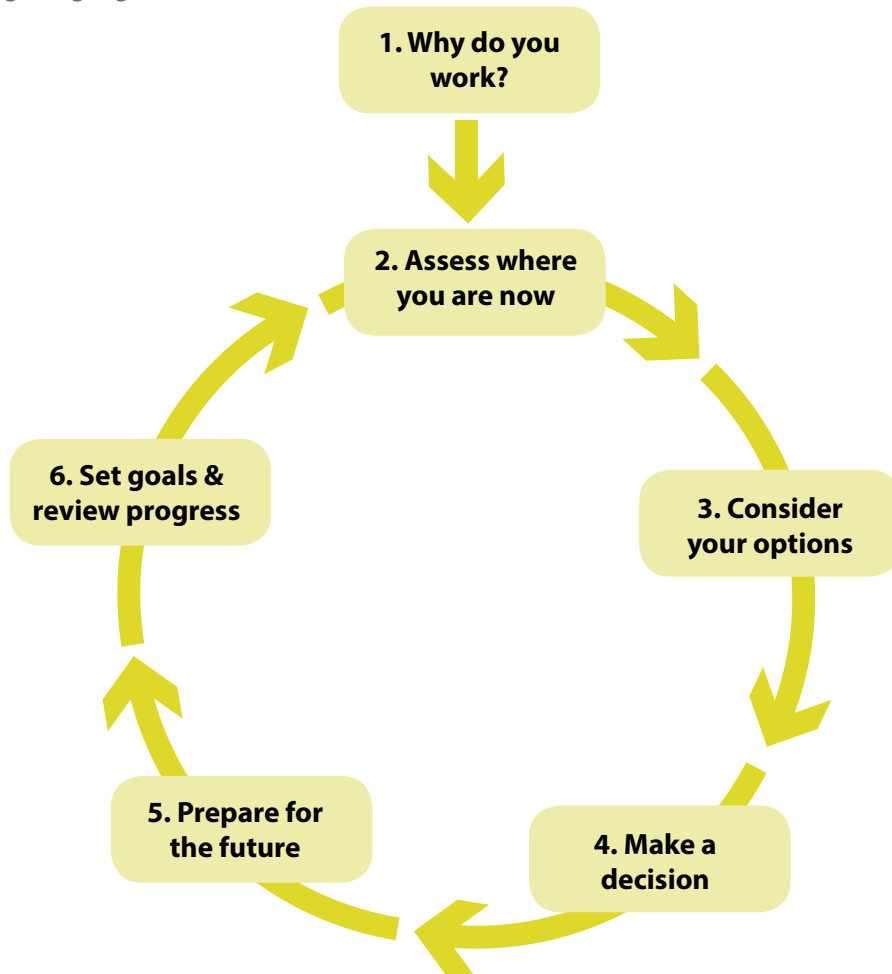
Activities:

- Career organisation chart
- The wheel of work
- Career self-exploration tool
- Career spot check
- Mind map



Career organisation chart

The career organisation chart can help you to identify where you are in the process of getting organised



1

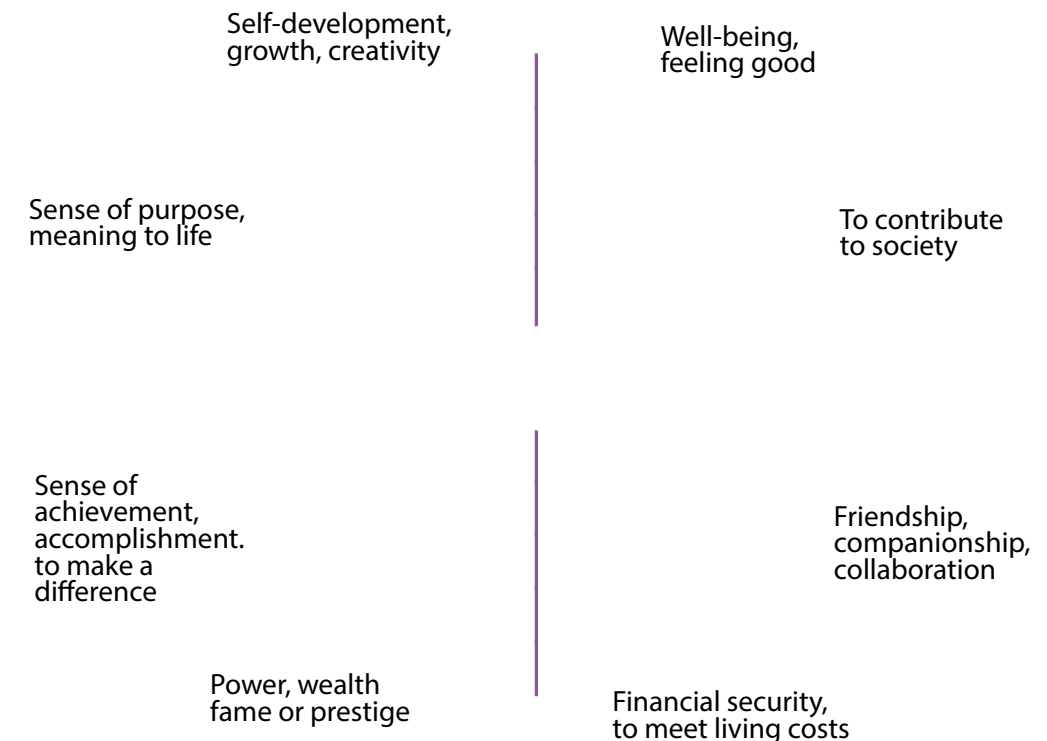
Why do you work?

Start by considering what you want from your career and whether your current role allows this. If you are unsure of your career objectives, use the wheel of work on the next page to assess what is important to you now.

Wheel of work

The wheel of work: analyse what your career means to you

- ▶ Select the segments of the wheel containing factors that are meaningful to you.
- ▶ Use the scoring system 1-5 to rate how important each factor is to you (1- not very important through to 5- extremely important) e.g. If feeling good is extremely important to you, click to shade all sections numbered 1-5 of this segment, if it is fairly important give it a score of 3 and click to shade the sections numbered 1-3.)
- ▶ Take a look; does your current career match your priorities?



2

Assess where you are now

Take some time to review and reflect on your career path to date. Does it fit with your current lifestyle, personal needs and preferences? What does career success look like to you? The career self-exploration tool will help you to consider what is important to you now.

Career exploration tool

Consider your preferences and needs; what sort of work environment, people and routine are important to you?

What inspires you? What would you like to do? If you knew you could not fail what would you do?

What are your strengths and talents?

List any barriers or blocks stopping you from reaching your potential

List the skills that you enjoy using:

Consider solutions to any barriers or blocks; what information do you need? Who can help you?

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You are more likely to be contented in your job if it involves using your strengths and talents. You may have developed skills outside of work, which you enjoy using. Remember that you will have many skills which are transferable to other roles, so think outside of the box if you're not happy with where you are now.

Career spot check

Next examine your current career in relation to your likes and dislikes; consider what else you might need; reflect on your work-life balance, your family, friends, leisure time and interests. Use the information from the career self-exploration tool to shape your thoughts and feelings.

Now take the career spot check and list what is working, what is not working and what is missing. If most of the comments are in the 'what is working box' then you're heading in the right direction, if not, consider whether it's time for a change.

What is working?

What is not working?

What is missing?

3 Consider your options

Ten ways to make a change

1. Stay in your current job and expand your opportunities or change some of your responsibilities
2. Stay in your current organisation and apply for a new similar role
3. Stay within the organisation and move into a different role using your transferable skills
4. Move to a new organisation into a similar role
5. Move to a new organisation using your transferable skills
6. Learn new skills through voluntary work/ a secondment or training course
7. Start full time study or a vocational training course
8. Do something different- like take a break, write a book or follow your passion
9. Set up a business
10. Change the way you work: move to part-time work, flexi-time or portfolio working



How to research your options

If you need to find out more about your options:

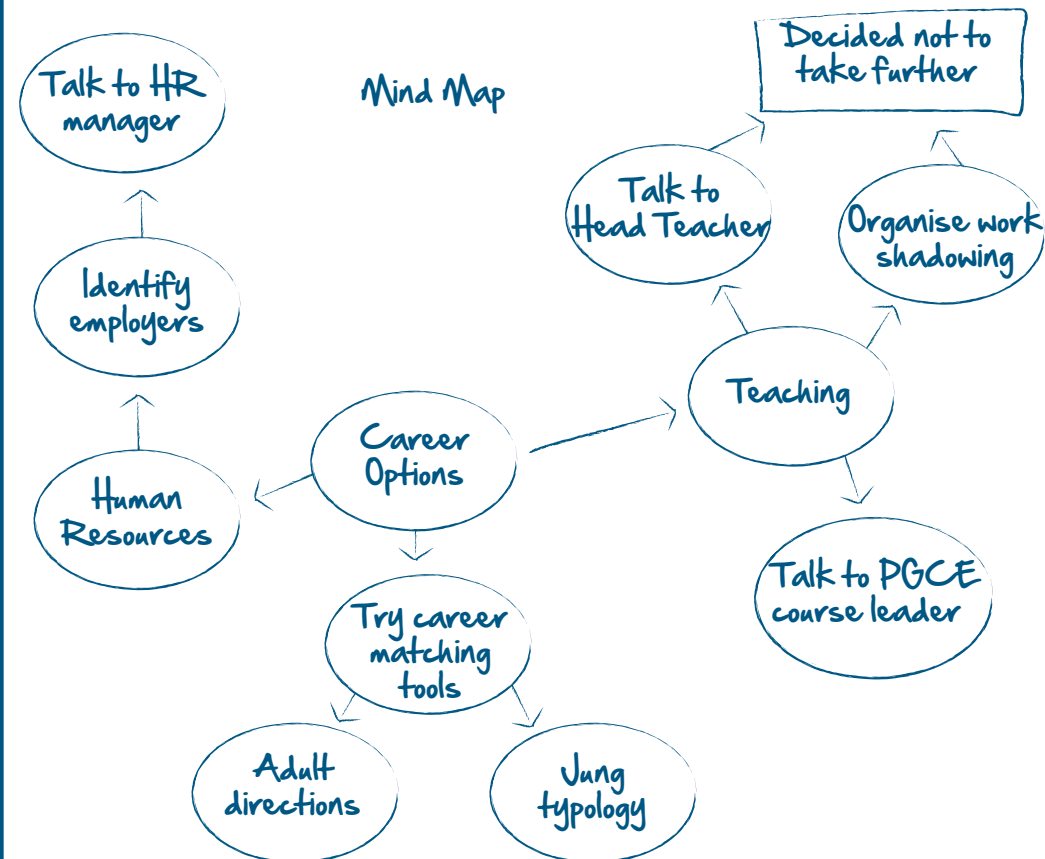
- Use your networks to explore new possibilities
- Research jobs on the internet; use careers websites and job vacancy lists
- Use a career coach to work with you
- Talk to people in roles of interest to you
- Arrange some work shadowing to get a real sense of what is involved in a job
- Check out the list of resources at the end of this toolkit

4 Make a decision

To organise your thoughts and make a decision, list the pros and cons for each idea and then prioritise your choices in order of importance. Alternatively try a mind map.

How to produce a mind map

Start with a central box containing the topic of interest. As you think of ideas relating to the topic add them in a bubble connected with a line to the central box. Keep breaking down the sub-topics into related subjects using bubbles and lines to connect them. They are a great way to brainstorm ideas, organise your options and help you to make a decision.



5 Prepare for the future

Getting organised in your career is as much about looking ahead as it is about sorting out the present.

Record your achievements and accomplishments

As you go along so that you can easily prepare for job applications and interviews.

Create opportunities:

Many people move forwards by being in the right place at the right time. Once you know what is important to you, use your network of contacts to help you find it. Having a presence on LinkedIn or Facebook can open new doors.

Design your CV:

If you have a clear idea of the role that you want, plan your CV to enable you to secure the position; analyse relevant job descriptions and consider how your skills match the requirements, if there are gaps, find a way to fill them by taking on new responsibilities in your current role or attending courses or training programmes.

Make yourself memorable:

Consider ways to make yourself stand out from the crowd when it comes to interviews; aim to work on high impact projects or take up memorable leisure pursuits which demonstrate key skills required for the job. Know how you can add value to an organisation and remember a positive attitude is going to make a real difference to your success.



6 Review your progress

Setting and reviewing long and short-term goals is something that if done on a regular basis can help you to shape your future and stay focused on what is important in your life and career.

Start by identifying career aims relating to your vision of the future and what you want to achieve. Break these down into step-by-step goals. To keep on track make your goals SMART. Remember to include a date to review your career aims to allow for changes in your priorities.

To set SMART goals make them:

- Specific:** Identify a clear outcome that you want to achieve
- Measurable:** Consider how you will know when you've completed the goal
- Achievable:** Ensure that goals are feasible within your time frame and that you are motivated to complete them
- Relevant:** Consider whether they are relevant to your career aims
- Timed:** State the date when you will complete them

[Take a look at the jobs.ac.uk '5 Minute Career Action Plan' for information on how to record your plans.](#)

Top tips for getting your career organised

- Be clear about what you want from your career and life
- Be pro-active
- Set yourself goals and review them regularly
- Keep an ongoing record of your achievements and accomplishments
- Stay abreast of employment trends and changes in the workplace
- Use lists or mind maps to brainstorm new options
- Keep your network of contacts alive
- Review your career annually to stay on track

About the author

Dr Wendy Broad is an independent career and professional development consultant. She started her career as a biomedical research scientist and manager in the pharmaceutical industry and more recently worked in the higher education sector in a variety of careers and professional development roles. She has a qualification in careers guidance from the University of Warwick and is an accredited Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) facilitator and Morrisby Guidance Adviser. She has worked with a wide range of clients from pre-university students, undergraduates and researchers through to senior academics and company directors.



Resources

On-line careers information

- Careers Advice, mainly for people working in Higher Education but also has some general ebooks and advice – www.jobs.ac.uk
- Graduate level careers information- www.prospects.ac.uk
- General careers information- nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Career matching tools

- Prospects planner to identify graduate level jobs which may suit you www.prospects.ac.uk/myprospects_planner_login.htm
- Adult Directions to help identify any career which may suit you www.cascaid.co.uk/adultdirections

Tools to identify your strengths and personality preferences

- Clifton Strengthsfinder®: www.gallupstrengthscenter.com
- Jung typology: www.humanmetrics.com
- Keirsey temperament sorter® (KTS® -II): www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx

Further reading

You may like these other ebooks from jobs.ac.uk:

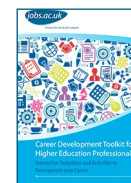
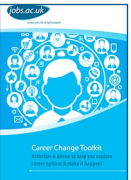


The 5 Minute Career Action Plan:

The 5 minute career action plan is for anyone who is short of time and wants a structured approach to their career planning

Career Change Toolkit:

Follow the 11 steps, complete the simple exercises and feel more confident in your decision making

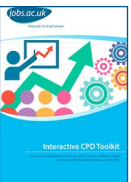


Career Development Toolkit for Higher Education Professionals:

Interactive Templates and Activities to Reinvigorate your Career

Interactive CPD Toolkit:

A Step-by-Step Guide to Progress your Career & Record your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)





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