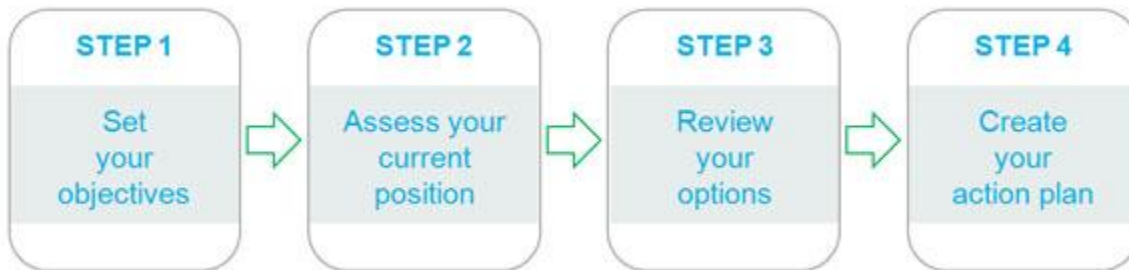


## ***How to Write a Career Plan***

Putting together a career development plan can be a daunting experience. In order to help you to navigate yourself through the career development and planning process, here are some simple steps to get you started in the right direction.



### ***Step 1. Set your objectives***

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Knowing what you want to achieve is an essential first step in creating an effective career development plan. However, as students, don't be afraid to have successive Career Plans, a current plan for the next year, followed by a new plan as you progress in your desired field.

Work through the following questions to help you to think about your career development and to refine your goals so that they are specific, relevant, and most importantly, inspiring to you. You have to want to achieve them!

- What do you want to achieve? What is your objective?
- Why do you want to achieve this objective? What's important to you about it?
- What difference would achieving your objective make to you personally?
- What difference would achieving your objective make to your future career?
- How will you know when you've achieved your objective?
- What would success look like for you and your career when you've achieved your objective?

### ***Step 2. Assess your current position***

In order to move towards to achieving your objective, it's important to have a good understanding of where you are now, as well as what skills and knowledge you've already attained. By having a clear idea of what you want to achieve (step 1, above) and where you are now (step 2), you'll find it much easier to map a path between the two. The following questions will help you to assess the reality of your current situation:

- Where are you now?
- What are your current skills / areas of expertise / competencies?
- What are your strengths? What do you do well?
- Which areas do you consider to be your development areas? What could you be better at?
- What skills, knowledge or behavior do you need to develop in order to achieve your objective?

### ***Step 3. Review your options***

Once you are clear about where you are going (your objective) and how far you have to go to get there, it's time to review all of the options open to you to help you bridge the gap. The best way to approach option generation is with an open mind. Write down as many ideas and options as possible (without analyzing them). Once you have a complete list, work through each option in turn, identifying the pros and cons. Here are some questions to get you started on generating options:

- Which skills / knowledge / behaviors do you want to develop?
- Which of the skills / knowledge / behaviors that you have chosen could be quick wins and which will take longer to achieve?
- What things can you do to make an impact to your skills and career development straight away?
- Who can help / support / coach or mentor you to enable you to achieve your objectives?
- What training or development is easily accessible to you?
- Which skills / knowledge / behaviors can you develop in your current position ?
- Where will you look for additional ways of developing your skills?

### ***Step 4. Create your action plan***

The final and most important stage of putting together your career plan is about committing to what action you are actually going to take. Your career plan is likely to include a number of separate actions, some of which will be quicker and easier to complete than others.

Use the following questions to help you create the actions that will form the final part of your career development plan:

- What individual steps do you need to take to achieve each objective?
- How will you track your progress of each objective?
- What barriers / obstacles might get in your way?
- How will you overcome the barriers / obstacles you have identified?
- How will you celebrate success when you've achieved each objective?

### ***Updating your career plan***

As a student, you will constantly be adding to and changing the path of your career plan. Keeping track of these changes will help you to stay on plan.

Use the following suggestions to help you update your career development plan:

- Have you started or completed a new internship or related experience?
- Have you updated your skills and interests?
- Have you researched industries or companies that might change your career direction?