

Career Planning Checklist

A checklist to plan your career, from self-assessment to landing the right job.

Self-assessment

- List your strengths, skills and natural talents.
- Identify your core interests and what energizes you.
- Clarify your values and what matters in work.
- Note your preferred work style and environment.
- Reflect on past roles you enjoyed or disliked.
- Consider a career assessment for fresh insight.

Explore options

- Research careers that match your strengths and interests.
- Read about day-to-day roles and responsibilities.
- Check the demand, growth and pay for each path.
- Talk to people working in fields you're considering.
- Try job shadowing, volunteering or internships.
- Narrow your list to a few realistic target paths.

Set goals

- Define a clear long-term career vision.
- Set specific short-term and medium-term goals.
- Break each goal into concrete, doable steps.
- Attach realistic timelines to your milestones.
- Identify obstacles and how you'll handle them.
- Write down your goals to stay accountable.

Build skills

- Compare your skills to your target roles' requirements.
- Identify the most important gaps to close.
- Take courses, certifications or training to fill them.
Prioritize skills most in demand for your target roles.
- Gain experience through projects or volunteering.
- Build durable skills like communication and problem-solving.
- Track your progress and keep learning over time.

Build your brand

- Write a strong, tailored resume.
- Create or update your professional online profile.
- Build a portfolio of your work if relevant.
- Craft a clear summary of who you are and what you offer.
- Gather references and recommendations.
- Keep your materials current as you grow.

Network and search

- Build relationships with mentors and peers.
- Attend events and join professional groups.
- Reach out for informational conversations.
- Search and apply for roles that fit your goals.
- Prepare for interviews and practice your pitch.
- Review and adjust your plan as you learn and grow.