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Career planning and skill development

There are many places you can go to get information about career planning and skill development and people you can ask for help.

Places to get career planning assistance

- Community learning centres (councillors and advisors)
- Libraries
- The internet
- Your work supervisor
- Your workmates
- Your trainer
- Other students
- Careers advisor
- Friends and family and/or people they know
- Social club members

Centrelink

Centrelink is a government agency. It gives people information about employment, training, social security, health and family services. Centrelink offices have information about careers.

Example: How Nick finds a local organisation that can help him find information about jobs

Nick visited the nearby Centrelink office. He told them that he wants to find out about getting a job. A person at Centrelink advised him to visit the Parkwood Community Learning Centre. This is a local organisation that helps people with training and finding jobs. Nick visits the community learning centre the next day.

The internet

Can you access the internet at home or in your learning centre? As mentioned earlier in this chapter, you can find out all sorts of information about jobs on the internet. Some sites are:

- www.jobsearch.gov.au
- www.humanservices.gov.au (go to Job Seekers> Looking for work)
- www.jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au
- www.seek.com.au

Jobs, industries and businesses

An industry is a group of businesses that are all based on a particular thing. For example, the motor industry consists of many types of businesses that are to do with cars, such as making cars or car parts, selling new or second-hand cars, repairing cars, selling spares and accessories, making tyres, and selling and fitting tyres. Another industry is the retail industry, which consists of businesses that sell things to people. A used-car dealer is a business that is part of both the motor industry and the retail industry. The used-car business would have many different jobs within it, such as receptionist, sales staff, mechanics and cleaners.



You might know the actual type of job you would like, or you may know you are interested in a particular industry or business. It is a good idea to think about the types of industry or business where you would like to work.

Planning

- └ Working out which tasks to do first, and organising your work

Technology

- └ Using a photocopier, fax machine, printer and computer

Choose a business

If you are thinking about working in an office, why not choose a business that interests you? Here are a few of the many types of businesses that you could work for.

Businesses that employ people include:

- transport company
- sports club
- printing firm
- record store
- factory
- mechanics workshop
- government office
- community organisation
- clothing store.

1B Work out your job goals

It's important to have a work goal. This means that you think about the type of job you would like to have and when you would like to get it. If you already have a job, you may want to get a better position in that workplace or you may want to change your job.

Set yourself a goal. A goal is something you are aiming for. Think about what you want to be doing in one year's time. Your goal might just be to 'get a job'.

To help you reach your goal, it's a good idea to write a plan.

Things to list in your plan

- The kind of job or career you might be interested in
- Places and people that could help you
- Skills and work experiences you already have
- Skills or qualifications you would need to get for the job
- How you could get those skills or qualifications

What sort of work interests you?

There are many different types of jobs. It's important that you think about the things you want in a job. For example, a job might require many years of training. You might have to work at nights or at weekends. You might even have to move to another town.



Practice task 2

Look at the questions in this table and write down brief answers to each question in the spaces provided.

Would you like a job where you learn something new?	
Is it important to have friendly workmates?	
Would you mind working on weekends?	
Would you mind travelling for an hour or more to work?	
Do you want regular work hours?	
Do you want a job straight away or would you be happy to study for a job first?	
Do you want to change the job that you have now?	
What would you like to be doing at the end of this year or in one year's time?	

Example: Nick finds people who can help him find information

Nick thinks of all the people who could help him in some way. He makes a list of these people. Next to their names he writes how they might be able to help. He knows he can also add to the list as he talks to more people and finds out more about jobs.



He types up a list with the following information:

- Centrelink careers officer: he can help me with job advice and where to go to get training.
- Mr Mitchell at Fast Track Couriers: he knows what I am like and what kind of worker I am.
- Ms Barenski at Sandalwood Secondary College: she knows my school results and what I'm like.
- Mr Hamilton at Benson's Motors: I did work experience there.
- Mr Sardi from next door: he works at Ajax Computers.

What your likes and dislikes show about you

You should now have an idea of a number of things about yourself and the type of work you would enjoy. Once you have decided that, then you will also need to find out what skills or qualifications are needed for that job.

You should know the following about yourself:

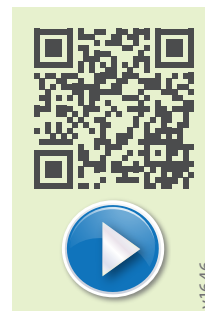
- The kind of person you are
- The things you like doing and the things you don't like doing
- Places and people that can help you
- The kind of job you might like to have

Example: Nick works with Karla to find out what sort of job he is best suited to

Nick still has no idea what he wants to do. He does know that he is very good at playing games on his computer. He likes sitting down all day and trying to increase his score. He likes talking to people but prefers to work more on his own. He looks again at the list he has completed.

Karla suggests that Nick might like to work in an office. Because Nick likes working with computers a lot, doing data entry might suit him. This means typing customer details into special lists, known as 'databases', on the computer.

This is an important job in an organisation. Nick thinks a data-entry position sounds interesting. But, what skills would he need?



Personal skills

When you are a new worker you may not have many skills. Employers will often give you training in those skills needed for a particular job. However, there are personal skills and qualities that all employers like you to have.

Personal skills that employers like

- Communication – speaking and writing clearly, and listening carefully
- Problem-solving
- Working well in a team
- Punctuality
- Honesty
- Being keen on your work
- Reliability
- Keeping certain work information confidential – not telling other people

Personal qualities

These qualities describe what you are like as a person. They affect the way people behave with others at work. For instance, a friendly and enthusiastic person is likely to work well in a team. The following explanations look more closely at these personal qualities.

**Punctuality**

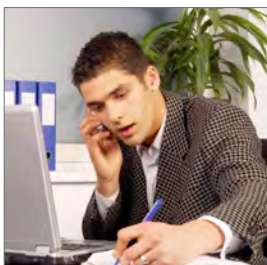
You must arrive at work on time every day. The employer pays you to work a certain number of hours. If you are late, you may not finish all your work. Other people might be waiting for you to arrive and they will be annoyed if you are not there. If you know you are often late, get yourself ready for work earlier.

**Honesty**

Being honest is very important, especially if you are responsible for money. If you make a mistake, you should admit it. You can learn from your mistakes if you think about what went wrong and change the way you do things.

**Enthusiasm**

Everyone likes people who are happy and enjoy their work. Nobody likes people who complain all the time. Let your supervisor know that you are keen to learn new skills.

**Reliability**

Can people rely on you to do what you say you will do? For example, if you say you will telephone them, do you do it? If you say you will meet them at a certain time and place, are you there? If your supervisor asks you to complete a task, they need to know that you will do it on time.

Practice task 4

1. Think about the personal skills listed in this table. Do you have all of them? Are there some things you need to be better at? Write your thoughts in the table next to each skill.

Personal skills that employers like	Notes about yourself
Communication – speaking and writing clearly, and listening carefully	
Problem-solving	
Working well in a team	
Punctuality	
Honesty	
Being keen on your work	
Reliability	
Keeping certain work information confidential – not telling other people	

2. Think about yourself. What sort of personality do you have? Answer these questions.

- a) Are you a friendly person?

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Places that run courses

Courses are held at universities, public and private training colleges and local adult education centres.

Places that offer courses list them in a catalogue.

Information about courses is often listed on their website.

Example: Nick identifies a need for a formal course

With Karla's help, Nick finds out that he needs to learn Microsoft Excel.

Karla tells Nick about a course at the local college. It is a four-day course for beginners. At the end of the course everyone will receive a certificate to show they have attended and the skills they have gained.



Karla arranges for Nick to be enrolled in the course. She explains how he is eligible for help with the course fee from Centrelink.

Nick enjoys the course because he can ask the trainer questions every time he doesn't know something.

Nick keeps a file of the course notes so he can refer to them again if he forgets anything.

Learn about the organisation you are going to

- What type of work does it do?
- How many people does it employ?
- What kind of work do people do there?

What to wear

- Have two or three sets of clean clothes that are suitable for the kind of job you are doing.

Have some questions prepared for your supervisor

- What skills are needed?
- What types of jobs does the organisation offer?
- What are the working conditions like?

Find a mentor or coach

When you are in the workplace, an employer often pairs a new employee with an experienced staff member. This person acts as a mentor or coach.



A mentor is a person who has had lots of experience and is an expert in their area. You can ask your mentor questions about skills needed and how you can learn them.

A coach is someone who shows you how to do something and helps you to get better.

Learning checkpoint 1 Find out about jobs and career

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in finding out about jobs and careers.

Part A

- Put an X next to all the places and people you can go to for help finding a job. Then think of other places and people that are not listed here. Put their names in the 'other' section.

Home	
Family members	
Community job networks	
Counsellors	
Advisors	
Neighbourhood	
Friends	
Neighbours	
Club members	
Study	
Your trainer	
Other students	
Careers advisor	
Work	
Your workmates	
Your supervisor	

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2A

Describe your experiences

Skills and experience can be gained from many different activities, not just from paid work. Think about all the different things you have done and the skills and experiences that you have gained from:

- family responsibilities
- hobbies, clubs and teams
- volunteer work
- courses you have studied
- work experience.



Family responsibilities

You may not think that you have gained any skills from your family. But you will have gained many. Think about the responsibilities you may have been given. Doing family tasks well can show that you are reliable, a good worker, a caring person and that you can plan and organise efficiently.

You might not be with a family now. You might be staying with flatmates. If so, you will be sharing tasks with them – cooking, buying food, cleaning and so on.

Tasks you may do at home could include:

- doing the shopping
- washing the car
- delivering messages
- answering the phone and taking messages
- picking up a family member from school
- babysitting
- cleaning the house

Creative skills

- └ Do you like drawing? Do you sew? Do you have an interest in photography?

Number skills

- └ Are you good at saving money? Can you work out your expenses or the expenses for your family or flatmates? Do you like number puzzles?

Manual (hands-on) skills

- └ Do you like building things? Do you enjoy painting the house or a room? Do you like fixing up your bicycle or car?

Caring skills

- └ Have you looked after children or elderly people? Do you have a pet to care for? Are you concerned about the problems of other people?

Skills from life experiences

In addition to the skills you have gained skills through doing tasks, you should think about what you have learned through life experiences. Then you should be ready to make a list of all your skills and knowledge.



Skills from life experiences could include:

- the experiences you have had
- the skills you learnt through those experiences.

Remember that some of the main ways to gain new skills are:

- attending a training course
- watching someone perform a job
- doing work experience
- finding a mentor or coach.

Practice task 9

1. Look at the skills listed in this table.
 - Put a Y by the skills you think you have.
 - Put an N by the skills you do not have.
 - Look at the ones you have placed a Y next to again. Put a question mark if you think you still need to improve those skills.

General (practical) skills	
Use a computer	
Write letters	
Answer the telephone	
Take messages	
Use business equipment	
Personal skills	
Work well with people	
Able to solve problems	
Good communication skills	
Personal qualities	
Honest	
Friendly	
Well organised	
Cooperative	
Sense of humour	

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Topic 3

Prepare a portfolio of evidence

In preparing for a job you need to gather together some details about yourself, your skills and your experience. You gather evidence. The documents that prove what you are saying is true is evidence of your skills. It is a good idea to gather all the evidence into a portfolio. A portfolio is simply a collection of information about you. It is information about the things you have done and the skills you have learnt in many situations.

When you apply for a job you will have to provide a résumé to the employer. A résumé is a list of your personal details, your qualifications, your experiences and your skills. The portfolio will help you to write the résumé.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Find the evidence you need
- 3B Understand why you need evidence
- 3C Put a portfolio together
- 3D Prepare a résumé

Practice task 10

Use this table to list the evidence you will gather for your portfolio.

Category	Evidence
Academic	
Training sessions and courses	
Work experience	
Volunteer work	
Personal interests and experiences	

Example: Nick begins to prepare his résumé

With Karla's help, Nick is now ready to prepare his résumé. Using the information he has collected, this is what his résumé looks like.

Résumé	
Name:	Nick Landis
Address:	54 Carlton Road PARKWOOD VIC 3000
Telephone:	(03) 5555 0909
Email:	nickl@gomail.com.au
Education:	2002: Short course in Microsoft Excel 2001: Completed Year 11 at Sandalwood Secondary College
Work experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six months as a bicycle courier for Fast Track Couriers• Delivering newspapers for Parkwood newsagency• Two weeks of work experience at Benson's Motors
Skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer skills including word processing using Microsoft Word for Windows 2003, database entry using Microsoft Access• Internet skills, including researching and sending emails• Following instructions• Taking and delivering messages• Handling money

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