



Goal Setting & Action Planning

Introduction to this workbook

Understanding goal setting and action planning can be really helpful.

ing, and follow a step by step guide to create a great goal. Finally, we'll learn
n and make your goal happen.

Step 1: Learn about goal setting

Setting a goal for what you want to achieve isn't the only way to 'do' careers stuff. There are plenty of people out there that are happy with their career and would say that they never had a 'goal' in mind. Let's look at the pros and cons of goal setting:

Pros	Cons
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Increases motivation

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Step 2: Generate a goal

Give yourself a few minutes to think deeply.

1. Sit back, turn off distractions (maybe even close your eyes).
2. Take a few deep breaths.
3. Ask yourself the question: What do you want to happen for your career?

Let thoughts come and go, until you get to something which 'clicks' – something that feels like the right answer to that question. It might be a short term, medium term or long-term goal:

- short term goal e.g. 'I want to get into a good college or sixth form to do my A-Levels'
- medium term goal e.g. 'I want to study Engineering at university'
- long term goal e.g. 'I want to make things that improve other people's lives'

IMPORTANT! Make sure that the goal is POSITIVE – what you want to happen, not what you want to avoid. For example, 'I want to get into a good job...' rather than 'I want to leave school'!

What's your starting goal?

Use this answer as the basis for the next steps. It doesn't matter if you're not 100% sure about your goal right now – you can always do the process again and you'll gain familiarity with it each time you do.

Step 3: Learn about SMART goals

Next, we're going to make sure your goal is 'SMART'. You may have come across this acronym before – it's used for goals, targets or even actions on a to do list.

Specific - add details and make it less vague

<i>e.g. I want a good job, making</i>	<i>that improves</i>	<i>lives.</i>
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Measurable – add numbers so you can check to what extent you've achieved your goal

e.g. I want to

earn £

Step 4: Build your SMART goal

Your starting goal

Specific - add details and make it less vague

Measurable – add numbers so you can check to what extent you've achieved your goal

Achievable – are you going to be able to do this? If not, adjust

Relevant – does this matter? Does it feel important and relevant to you right now? If not, adjust

Time-sensitive - when is this going to happen? Check that this is still achievable

Step 6: Think your goal all the way through

With your SMARTened goal, it's time to think the whole process through, checking the outcome of the goal before you put time and effort into achieving it. This approach draws on a theory of how to create 'well-formed outcomes'¹.

We're going to do this with a series of prompt questions, imagining that you've achieved your goal. After thinking for a moment about each question, write your thoughts in the box adjacent.

Imagine you've achieved your goal...

1. What do you notice that's different?	
2. Really imagine that you're there- what do you see, hear, feel, taste or smell?	
3. Having achieved your goal, how do you feel?	
4. Having achieved your goal, what do you think about your achievement?	
5. What have you done to achieve this? What specifically?	
6. Did you achieve this by yourself? If not, who else has been involved? What did you ask them to do?	
7. What resources did you need to achieve this goal (e.g. time, money, information, equipment)?	
8. What will your loved ones get from this?	
9. What might you have to give up or lose to achieve it?	
10. How might it impact your daily routine?	
Finally, on a scale of 1-10 how much do you want to make your goal a reality?	

If it's a 10

It sounds like you're really motivated after thinking this through – time to build an action plan!

If it's high, but less than 10

What would need to be different to make it a 10? Is that something within your control? If so, try making an adjustment to your goal or alternatively, just extra steps on your action plan.

If it's not something you can control, ask yourself if it would affect any goal you came up with right now? If yes, it might be an immovable external factor that you might need to accept for now. If i neneetup3 (d)-0.6 (af)-0.6 (f)-0.7 (e)-1 (c)-0.7 (e)-1 (4.6 (af)-0 (d)-0.6.6 (f)-0.7

Focus on tasks for the next few days or weeks.

After you've achieved this day or week's tasks, you can make a plan for the next day or week. It's a lot more motivating to have four tasks, get them ticked off, and then add four more, than to have 20 tasks and after day one feel like you've hardly made progress. Just make sure you're aware of any longer-term deadlines that might need some steps to be taken now.

Reward yourself

Find ways to reward yourself for getting your tasks done. Positive reinforcement (even from yourself) makes it more likely that you'll keep going.

Tell someone what you want to get done

If you can, show someone your action plan – they'll understand what you're trying to do, and hopefully offer some support. More than just that, the act of telling someone else what you're going to do makes it more likely that you'll do it.

Step 8: Build your own great action plan

You don't have to use our template action plan. Alternatives that might work better for you include:

- A to-do list app on your phone

- A pen and paper to do list you've made yourself

- The [online action plan tool at Careerpilot](#) (free, just need to register)

- An action plan tool in another piece of software your school or college uses

Action plan

My goal:

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What I'm going to do	When I'm going to do it	Tick when it's done