



Unit 30: Career Planning

Delivery guidance

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to plan their career in business. Learners will do this by exploring career options and building a career plan, supported by research, self-assessment and realistic targets.

Approaching the unit

Business organisations operate in a rapidly changing global economy and their labour requirements are constantly changing. Over the past three decades, employment opportunities have changed considerably. People are now less likely to be employed by the same employer for life; they may instead change job or even career pathway several times. In an increasingly competitive labour market, it is essential that learners recognise the importance of planning their career. This unit teaches learners how to develop a career plan based on research and realistic targets.

Learning aim A encourages learners to explore their own career choices. This will require a thorough analysis of job and career opportunities in their chosen field. Learners will need to develop knowledge of employment types and the advantages and disadvantages of different working contracts. They will also learn about the impact of employment legislation on career choices. Finally, they must develop an understanding of the characteristics of professional standards required for progression in their chosen fields and the processes for achieving these standards.

Learning aim B requires learners to develop a range of practical skills which will underpin the self-assessment requirements of their career plan. Learners will complete a skills audit and monitor the ongoing development of their transferable skills. They will need to reflect on the results of their skills audit and identify any skills gaps. They must set realistic goals and learn how to focus on priorities in order to fill any skills gaps they have identified. This will enable them to develop strategies based on realistic and measurable targets to meet their developmental needs. Learners will need to look ahead to create medium term (five years) projections for their career plan.

Learning aim C focuses on the communication and interview skills required to improve employment prospects. Learners will research application documents and the language and presentation styles used when completing them. They will learn about different approaches to interviews and the skills and competencies required for various interview situations. Learners will also consider how best to review their performance at interviews and how to improve for future job applications.

The unit introduces learners to the concept of continuing professional development (CPD). This develops their understanding of the process of lifelong learning and enables them to look beyond the boundaries of a short-term plan. On completion of the unit, learners will have developed a realistic picture of their career possibilities and how to achieve their career goals.

The unit will help learners to make effective career decisions within their chosen career pathway. Career management skills are particularly important as labour market conditions change. Such skills will give learners a competitive edge against those who are unsure of their career path or of labour market conditions.



Learning aim C highlights how employability skills are of relevance to any qualification and shows that the opportunity to demonstrate these skills is of value in preparation for employment. Continuing professional development is paramount to the progression and flexibility of an individual as an employee. This unit will help learners to understand the value of investing in training and development for their future prospects.

On completion of this unit, learners will have assessed their skills and completed an up-to-date personal development career plan relevant to a career in business. They will have a good understanding of the concept of transferable skills and the importance of continuing professional development.

To complete this unit, learners will need access to a range of research materials, which could include sources of information and tools on the internet, journals, magazines, and books.

You can use a range of delivery methods in this unit, such as:

- discussions, e.g. class and small group discussions on the ever-changing job market
- individual or group presentations
- case studies illustrating career opportunities in both well-known and lesser-known businesses
- videos, e.g. TED talks on interview techniques.

Group work is an acceptable form of delivery, but you must ensure that each learner produces sufficient evidence on their own for assessment.

You can involve local employers in the delivery of this unit by inviting them as:

- guest speakers
- members of the audience for learner presentations
- contributors to case study material
- providers of work experience for learners, and of business materials as exemplars
- mentors for learners.



Assessment model

| Learning aim | Key content areas | Recommended assessment approach |
|--|--|---|
| A Explore employment opportunities to target progression | A1 Researching employment opportunities A2 Employment types and legislation A3 Requirements for progression | Portfolio including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • career pathways research • personal skills audit • career development plan • review of methods and effectiveness of skills audit and career development plan. |
| B Examine personal skills and goals to produce a personal career development plan | B1 Types of skills audit B2 Soft and transferable skills B3 Skills audit and career development planning | |
| C Develop communication and interview skills to improve employment prospects | C1 Application documentation C2 Interviews and demonstration of skills C3 Performance review | A portfolio including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • application documentation • recording and observation records of simulated interview • learner self-evaluation of application and interview performance. |

Assessment guidance

This unit is assessed internally. The recommended assessment is through two internal assignments, one for learning aims A and B, and one for learning aim C.

An assignment is a distinct activity, completed independently by learners, that is separate from teaching, practice, exploration and other activities that learners complete with direction from tutors.

All learners must work independently and generate their own evidence towards the achievement of the learning aim(s), and this evidence must be appropriately authenticated. The unit specification suggests a portfolio of evidence for both learning aims A and B and for learning aim C.

Learners should ensure that all research is fully referenced with a bibliography. Research activities should involve learners using different source materials.

Interviews should **not** be scripted as this does not allow the learner to demonstrate skills appropriate to the situation, or to respond to questions and requests for information with a degree of confidence and consideration.



Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.

| Unit 30: Career Planning |
|---|
| <p>Introduction</p> <p>In a modern economy, employers want a flexible and adaptable labour force. People are now likely to have longer working lives as the retirement age increases and the pension's crisis deepens. It is important today that young people approach their working life with a clear sense of purpose and direction. In short, they need to have a game plan.</p> |
| <p>Learning aim A: Explore employment opportunities to target progression</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By the end of this learning aim, learners should know and understand how to identify and evaluate sources of information that are relevant to their career path.• Begin by giving a presentation on how to research employment opportunities, to include the characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of different sources of information for career opportunities.• Lead a class discussion on how and where to gather information and what learners should do with it once they have it. Explain that being able to carry out research is a transferable skill.• In small groups, learners could identify different sources of information. Each group could select a source and investigate the types of information and guidance it offers. They could then share their research with the group and collate a comprehensive careers directory.• Learners could work in pairs to analyse the sources of information they identified, and the information found. They could consider the strengths and weaknesses of the sources and discuss which information they found most useful for their chosen careers.• Give a presentation on how to evaluate labour market information in relation to a career path. You could use practical activities to identify labour market information and discuss how it can be used. Learners could be introduced to sector skills councils, professional bodies, trade organisations etc. and investigate how they support specific professions and trades.• Give a presentation on employment types and legislation, to include the characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of different working contracts and approaches. <p>As extension activities, learners could work individually to carry out extensive and thorough research into career opportunities using a wide variety of methods. Learners could also report on their research, considering the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used and giving well-reasoned, supported judgements on their effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead a class discussion on the different ways in which businesses recruit staff, including internal and external recruitment.• Learners could be given a range of different images of a large business, such as Sainsbury's or Walmart. The images should show snapshots of Sainsbury's (or an equivalent international chain) through the years, beginning with its opening. Using the images and working in pairs, learners could discuss the different reasons why businesses want to employ people. This could expand into a discussion on the types of contract businesses offer and why.• In order to expand on these ideas, you could lead a class discussion and ask learners to draw a timeline exploring the changes to employment legislation and local working regulations over a |



given time period.

- Individually, learners could investigate different ways of working (for example, full-time or part-time, the 'gig economy', self-employment etc). Learners could be given four case studies of people who work in different environments, in different jobs and with different working hours. Alternatively, they could interview a variety of people, such as family members or friends, aiming to speak with somebody who works in an office for an organisation and someone who works from home or is self-employed. Using this information, learners could write a newspaper article on different working practices. Learners could also consider the positives and negatives of different working practices and how business are able to accommodate these different working styles on an everyday basis.
- Give a presentation on requirements for progression within a career.
- Ask learners to work in pairs. Give each pair a list of different business organisations and ask them to find out about the different job roles available within each business and the career progression available within each role. For example, the career progression of a teacher in a school could be as follows: schoolteacher, head of department, member of the senior leadership team (SLT) and finally Headteacher. Learners should note the characteristics of professional standards required for progression in their chosen fields, and the processes for achieving them.
- You could provide learners with good quality job descriptions and person specifications. They should use these documents to identify the skills, knowledge, competencies and behaviours required for each role.
- Learners could be given a scenario of an individual who is looking for work, for example, a full-time manager of a local retail outlet. Using an online recruitment agency, learners could identify any jobs that would suit the individual and share their findings with the rest of the class, stating why the particular jobs would be suitable. This task would be a good way of summarising the knowledge developed during learning aim A. Within the class, individuals could be given different scenarios to ensure that a variety of different roles are investigated.
- Learners could work in small groups to decide who they would invite for interview. Give each group a set of exemplar CVs (curriculum vitae) and ask them to shortlist the candidates against the job description and person specification for a variety of given job roles.



Learning aim B: Examine personal skills and goals to produce a personal career development plan

- To introduce learning aim B, you could ask learners to carry out a self-assessment showing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). This should include their knowledge, interests, leisure activities, qualifications, skills and competencies.
- Ask learners to write up an initial development/action plan linked with personal and career objectives. Personal development might include maintaining a learning diary/log, progress review documentation and records of meetings with others such as careers officers, employers, tutors or staff from voluntary organisations. Initial career choices may change as information is gathered or personal circumstances change. Work experience can often influence career path decisions.
- Give a presentation on types of skills audit, to include the Likert Scale and Semantic Differential Scale.
- As an extension activity, learners could create resources on the Likert Scale and Semantic Differential Scale, pitched to meet the needs of a range of audiences, to confirm their knowledge of the new scales.
- Ask learners to work individually to carry out a further self-assessment, using the headings: 'skills', 'qualifications', 'personality', 'career aspirations' and 'achievements'. Then, in pairs, learners assess each other against the same headings and compare their notes. Ask learners to amend their self-analysis in light of the discussion with their partner. Alternatively, learners could ask for feedback from their families or another teacher.
- Give a presentation on soft and transferable skills, their importance, and how to develop them.
- Learners could create resources on soft and transferable skills, pitched to meet the needs of a range of audiences, to confirm their knowledge of these skills.
- Learners could watch an episode of Dragons' Den, Shark Tank or Lions' Den and reflect on the skills and personal attributes of applicants. This could stimulate a discussion on the need to match skills and personal attributes to job roles.
- Ask learners to consider jobs they would like to do, then to match their own skills and personal attributes with each job and decide if they would be a suitable candidate. Learners discuss their findings with the class.
- Give a presentation on transferable business skills. Explain how learners can demonstrate a range of transferable skills and highlight how these skills can improve their attractiveness in the workplace.
- In small groups, learners could identify a range of transferable business skills and discuss how they are used within business, why they are important and why they are transferable. Discuss how these skills are included in formal assessments for different types of job and the importance of learners practising and developing their own skills.
- Give a presentation on skills audits and career development planning.
- Ask learners to audit their current skills, identify how to develop these skills and incorporate this information into a career development plan that sets future SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals. Learners should be encouraged to reflect and review their skills development whenever they have an opportunity.
- Lead a class discussion on the importance of selecting appropriate skills for development and how this could improve learner success in the future.

- Learners could be given a comprehensive list of characteristics and asked to put them in one of two columns, either 'soft skills' or 'transferable skills'. They must support their choices with an explanation and share their findings with the class.
- Ask learners to complete an online careers test; there are many available online. A good example, based around the Myers-Briggs personality test focusing on personality, can be found by searching online for 'career test.co.uk'. This test uses multiple-choice questions with the answers summing up the user's personality and enabling the programme to suggest some basic career choices which learners may find useful.
- Ensure all learners are prepared before handing out the assignment brief for assessment for learning aims A and B.

Learning aim C: Develop communication and interview skills to improve employment prospects

- Begin by giving a presentation on the purpose and characteristics of application documentation and the language and presentation styles used in completing it.
- You could reuse the previous exemplars of CVs and ask learners to work in small groups to consider which is the best in terms of information, detail and presentation. Learners could then have a group discussion about the elements they think are most important when creating a CV.
- Lead a class discussion on the most important elements when creating a CV.
- Using a website such as the national careers service website (which can be found by searching for 'national careers service'), learners could work in pairs to discuss the advice that is given about application forms. Learners could also access examples of application forms so they can see what is required at the application stage by a range of organisations. They could then discuss as a group why application forms are an important part of the recruitment process.
- Learners could be given exemplar application letters and could consider which they think are the best. Learners make notes on the presentation, layout, content, spelling and punctuation, etc. of the letters, then discuss their findings as a group.
- Ask learners to fill in an application form and produce their own CV and application letter for a job role of their choice.
- Give a presentation on the features of different interview approaches and the impact of these different approaches on skills required and demonstrated by an interviewee.
- Ask learners to carry out some online research to find video examples of good and bad interviews and make notes on what makes each interview good or bad.
- Learners could incorporate the notes they made while watching the interviews into small group presentations on how to be prepared for an interview.
- Learners could work in pairs to research a range of job advertisements for different businesses. Learners choose one of these jobs, put together potential interview questions and create model answers for them. They should pay close attention to the job description and person specification to ensure their answers meet the requirements.
- In pairs, learners could interview each other for a role within a new business. After the interview they could swap roles. In this way, learners will gain experience of being both an interviewee and an interviewer.
- Give a presentation on the importance of accurate and realistic self-assessment of skills and interview performance. Learners should be made aware of the difference between self-assessment ranking options and external ranking options (how we perceive ourselves versus



how others perceive us). DVDs related to careers employability could be a useful tool to demonstrate a skill and its development.

- Ask learners to carry out a self-audit and a review of their interview performance in order to identify skills gaps. Learners should show understanding that early identification of a particular skill for development will enable them to practise and improve and consequently build their confidence in that skill.
- Ask learners to write a short report on how developing their skills will support them when applying for work, and enhance their performance within the workplace.
- On completion, ask learners to review all documentation to ensure it has been completed in a professional manner with attention to detail and skilful use of language and presentation.
- To conclude (and as an extension activity), learners could carry out a comprehensive critical review of their own performance and make discerning suggestions for improvement.
- Ensure all learners are prepared before handing out the assignment brief for assessment for learning aim C.



Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

This unit links with all other units in the specification.

Resources

In addition to the resources listed below, publishers are likely to produce Pearson-endorsed textbooks that support this unit of the BTEC International Level 3 Qualifications in Business and in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. Check the Pearson website (<http://qualifications.pearson.com/endorsed-resources>) for more information as titles achieve endorsement.

Textbooks

Anderson, A., Barker, D. and Critten, P., *Effective Self-Development: A skills and activity-based approach*, Blackwell, 1996, ISBN 978-0-631-20015-4

Journals

- *Business Review* (Philip Allan Magazines) – a journal designed for Business Studies learners that includes relevant theoretical articles, as well as information on companies and markets
- *Personnel Today*

Videos

- TEDEd – offers a variety of relevant education videos; search online for 'TEDEd'
- TED – offers online videos of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less) covering almost all topics; search online for 'TED Talks'

Websites

- NI Direct – a useful Careers A–Z can be found by searching online for 'career A–Z'
- Careers Gateway – a useful website that can be found by searching online for 'careers gateway'
- There are also various industry-specific websites which have useful career information.

Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling students to access them through the school/college intranet.