

# Unit 15: Development Planning for a Career in Business

<b>Unit code:</b>	<b>H/502/5444</b>
<b>QCF Level 3:</b>	<b>BTEC National</b>
<b>Credit value:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Guided learning hours:</b>	<b>60</b>

## ● Aim and purpose

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.

## ● Unit introduction

Business organisations operate in a rapidly changing global economy and their labour requirements are constantly changing. Implications for learners include the impact on the job and career opportunities that are available to them. In an increasingly competitive labour market, it is essential that learners recognise the importance of planning their career. This unit covers developing a career plan based on research and realistic targets.

The unit is a practical unit as learners develop and refine the content of their career plan. For the first part of the unit learners need to focus on researching into their own career choices. This will require a thorough analysis of job and career opportunities in their chosen field. Once this is established learners will be introduced to a number of techniques that will assist them in their planning. They will develop a range of practical skills which will underpin the self-assessment requirements of their career plan. This will include completion of a skills audit and monitoring the ongoing development of their transferable skills. Learners will need to reflect on the results of their skills audit and identify any skills gaps. They will need to be realistic and know how to focus on priorities. This will allow 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.

The unit introduces learners to the concept of continuing professional development. This will give them an understanding of the process of lifelong learning and enable 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.

## ● Learning outcomes

**On completion of this unit a learner should:**

- 1 Know how to access career-related information
- 2 Be able to develop a personal career development plan
- 3 Be able to develop a range of transferable business skills at the appropriate level
- 4 Understand methods of professional development and training.

# Unit content

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## 1 Know how to access career-related information

*Sources of information:* Connexions; Learning and Skills Councils (England only) (Skills Funding Agency from 2010 – England only); job centres; careers service (university, college, school); interviews; career fairs; recruitment fairs; websites; human resource departments; visiting speakers; work experience; newspapers; trade and specialist journals

*Types of information:* career-advice; computer accessed information, eg CASCAID's Kudos software, websites; published information eg newspaper articles, job advertisements, journal articles, company career packs, university and college prospectuses; qualification information eg HNDs, degrees, foundation degrees, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ); vocational qualifications (VQ); occupational qualifications; general qualifications; methods of learning; on-the-job training; off-the-job training; eLearning

## 2 Be able to develop a personal career development plan

*Personal career objectives:* short term (two years); medium term (five years)

*Personal development needs:* skills audit; skills gap; personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis; qualifications map; qualifications gap; timescales; training requirements

*Target setting:* personal development plan (set up, maintain, review, update); curriculum vitae; SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) targets; mapping progress against targets; recording achievement; evaluating progress; adjusting targets; re-assessing objectives; responding to feedback; lifelong learning

## 3 Be able to develop a range of transferable business skills at the appropriate level

*Transferable skills:* skills for life (communication skills, ICT skills, numeracy skills); wider transferable skills (functional skills); vocational skills; technical skills; work-related skills, research; time management skills

*Level:* levels of the Qualifications (Levels 1 – 8) and Credit Framework (QCF)

## 4 Understand methods of professional development and training

*Methods:* induction training; performance appraisal; on-the-job training; off-the-job training; graduate training programmes; management education; management training; coaching; projects; secondments; mentoring; shadowing; e-learning; vocational and professional courses; job rotation; retraining; continuing professional development; lifelong learning

## Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
<b>P1</b> identify sources of information related to the career path [IE]		
<b>P2</b> complete a career plan identifying their development needs [RL]	<b>M1</b> assess methods of achieving development needs within the timeframe of the career plan	<b>D1</b> evaluate the distance travelled in achieving the planned objectives of the career plan
<b>P3</b> carry out a skills audit to identify skills gaps [RL]		
<b>P4</b> create SMART targets for the career plan [SM]	<b>M2</b> monitor and audit progress towards targets using appropriate success criteria	
<b>P5</b> demonstrate transferable business skills	<b>M3</b> assess ways of achieving the level and types of transferable business skills needed for the career plan.	<b>D2</b> evaluate own development of transferable business skills.
<b>P6</b> discuss methods of continuing professional development and training relevant to the career plan. [CT]		

**PLTS:** This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

# Essential guidance for tutors

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## Delivery

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 more 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.

A useful starting point is to ask learners to carry out a self-assessment (SWOT) of themselves. This could include their knowledge, interests, leisure activities, qualifications, skills and competences. This would generate an initial development/action plan linked to personal and career objectives. Self and 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 be an influential factor in determining career path decisions.

This unit focuses on the processes and practices involved in developing a personal career development plan. It is a practical unit where learners will require guidance and support in shaping their career aspirations. Career objectives are limited to the short and medium term, two and five years respectively. For learners who are just starting to think about their career paths, longer-term goals may not be entirely appropriate and may be difficult to predict in a rapidly-changing, global economic environment. Learners will need to identify and establish performance objectives using SMART targets. Forward planning is essential and contingency plans should be considered.

Research skills will be important and learners will need to gather information from a variety of sources. Visits to organisations or visiting speakers can often be a source of inspiration for learners investigating potential career routes. Learners should be encouraged to attend careers fairs and talk with representatives from organisations about job opportunities. Company websites are a good source of information. Most large organisations will have a recruitment section and these are often good starting points for gathering information and ideas on career opportunities.

It is important that learners maintain an up-to-date CV which is produced to professional standards. The CV can also be used as evidence in *Unit 13: Recruitment and Selection in Business*. Many young people develop valuable skills and experience through their outside interests or part-time jobs, but they may not always recognise their value or record them on their CV. Teamworking skills, customer service skills and technical skills are examples which are often omitted from CVs. Learners at this level are likely to be taking a Skills for Life qualification as part of their learning programme. They will often be taking communications, numeracy and information and communication technology at the appropriate level. Employers constantly say that they are looking for applicants with good communication and numeracy skills and who are good team players.

Looking beyond the short or medium term can be difficult and it is not expected that career plans will include long-term projections. However, we live in an environment of lifelong learning and people can now expect to change careers several times during their working life. It is expected that learners will be familiar with the concept and implications of lifelong learning. Similarly, learners should be able to understand the concept of continuous professional development. It is expected that in making career choices they will research beyond the recruitment stage and investigate the opportunities offered by their potential employer for continuous professional development. This will link closely to researching into promotion prospects within the organisation. Effective career planning is rewarding but can be demanding. It requires good research skills in order to gather sufficient information from a variety of possible sources.

It also requires analytical skills in order to extract the relevant information that will inform career choices. Competition for some jobs will be intense and good written communication skills will be important at the application stage.

## Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme. Whole class
Overview of contents and structure of a career plan
Identifying sources of career information. Whole class
How to identify career objectives and relate these to development needs. Whole class
Pair work exercise on development needs
How to carry out a skills audit. Exercise in small groups
Introduction to target setting and SMART targets. Whole class
Introduction to continuing professional development
Individual tutor/learner tutorials on career plan development
<b>Assignment 1: Researching Career Information</b>
Individual work on identification of websites appropriate to a specific career:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research websites for information on chosen career path</li><li>• research non-internet sources of career information</li><li>• analyse the information</li><li>• select key information</li><li>• organise and write up relevant information in career plan folder</li></ul>
<b>Assignment 2: Creating a Career Plan</b>
Identify career objectives
Identify development needs
Carry out a skills audit to identify transferable business skills
Identify SMART targets for development needs
Assess progress towards targets
Show evidence of development of transferable business skills
Organise and write up relevant information in career plan folder
<b>Assignment 3: Continuing Professional Development (CPD)</b>
Research current methods of CPD appropriate to career plan
Assess appropriate methods
Build choices into career plan
Organise and write up information in career plan folder
Supervised assignment work
Non-supervised study time and completion of assignments

## Assessment

Evidence for assessment will be generated from the learning programme. For much of the evidence learners will need to research information and make decisions based on it. The career plan, skills audit and appropriate continuous professional development material will develop from the choices made from the research.

For P1, learners will need to demonstrate that they have accessed a sufficient range of information to allow them to make an informed decision on their career choices. It is likely that learners will gather information from a range of sources. These could include websites, journals, career packs, newspapers or company packs. The information learners provide should be sufficiently detailed and more than just a list.

For P2, learners will need to create an initial career plan identifying their development needs. The career plan will be a working document, and may be subject to change as learners carry out research into their original choices. It is important that learners understand that the short term is two years and the medium term is five years.

For P3, learners will need to examine their current skills profile and carry out a skills audit. They need to understand the importance of identifying skills gaps. This will involve looking at a wide range of skills that they may have developed through a variety of ways. This will include their current level of Skills for Life which is likely to be built into their learning programme. It will also require learners to look at other sources and a wider range of relevant vocational and employment-related skills. These may be practical, interpersonal or technical skills developed in part-time employment or through voluntary activities. They may be skills they are demonstrating on the learning programme, such as research skills or time management skills. Learners will need to include provision for continuous professional development in the career plan.

For P4, career plans should be realistic and be supported by SMART targets. Progress towards targets should be recorded with a folder containing all the appropriate research documentation, a CV and any other appropriate information or documentation.

For P5 learners will build on the outcomes of their skills audit. They should map out how they intend to develop transferable business skills at the appropriate level. The development of some skills may be measurable through qualification levels, for example functional skills. Other skills may only be measurable through observation and may require a range of evidence. For example, tutor observation sheets or work experience feedback on the development of time management skills.

For P6, learners will be expected to understand the nature and purpose of continuing professional development. They should understand that, in all occupations, professional updating and training are the norm and promotional prospects can be linked to training and development. This should be linked to the information that they have researched and selected to support their career plan. It will highlight the professional development and training that they will need to undertake to reach their short and medium-term career goals.

For M1, learners will need to show that they have linked their research to the skills gaps identified in the skills audit. They will need to demonstrate that they have researched and assessed the viability of achieving their development needs. Their projections must be realistic and they will need to show that these options are achievable within the medium-term framework of the career plan.

For M2, learners will need to be aware of the importance of setting realistic SMART targets, which are measurable, by setting appropriate success criteria. They will need to demonstrate that they are managing progress towards meeting their targets effectively. This will involve time management skills. Targets may be self-generated or set in conjunction with a tutor or supervisor. Learners should maintain an ongoing record which reflects their progress accurately. This may be a diary or a log and should record any adjustments made to the targets.

For M3, learners will need to demonstrate that they are aware of how they can progress in developing their transferable business skills. For example, if they needed to upgrade their IT skills, they should be able to assess the available options to determine which best fit their personal circumstances. These could be through ICT functional skills, IT modules or online courses. Learners will need to assess the suitability of options in line with their career plan and then pursue the chosen options. Evidence of progress should be recorded in the portfolio.

For D1, learners should be able to reflect on their research and the progress that they have made with their career plan. They should be able to identify any changes in the plan, any progress they have made in achieving their targets and any difficulties that they have encountered and how these have been overcome. Learners should evaluate the impact that these developments are having on their short-term plan and identify any impact on the medium-term career plan. They need to reflect on their own skills audit and their research into continuing professional development they are likely to undertake in the early years of their career.

For D2, learners will need to reflect on their plans for developing their transferable business skills. They should provide evidence of achievement or work in progress and this should be developed to the appropriate level, as identified in the career plan. Learners should provide an evaluation of their progress against the targets in the career plan, linking achievements to success criteria. Where appropriate, this will include an evaluation of the impact that lack of progress will have on short- and medium-term plans.

### Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Researching Career Information.	Brief outlining sources of information and types of information that will be relevant to the research.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of relevant information from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>internet</li> <li>non-internet sources.</li> </ul>
P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3 P4, M4, D4 P5, M5, D5	Creating a Career Plan.	Brief outlining the what is required in the career plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skills audit</li> <li>development needs</li> <li>SMART targets</li> <li>transferable business skills.</li> </ul>	Portfolio of evidence consisting of relevant information relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skills audit</li> <li>development needs</li> <li>SMART targets</li> <li>transferable business skills.</li> </ul>
P6, M6, D6	Continuing Professional Development.	Brief requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review of the types of CPD opportunities that are available in general</li> <li>assessment of which CPD opportunities are relevant to the learner's career plan.</li> </ul>	Portfolio of evidence consisting of a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review of the types of CPD opportunities</li> <li>assessment of CPD opportunities relevant to the learner's career plan.</li> </ul>

## Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Business sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the Business suite:

Level 2	Level 3
Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication in Business Contexts	Training in the Business Workplace
Business Communication through Documentation	

This unit links to the Level 3 National Occupational Standards for Business and Administration, particularly Unit 301.

This unit also links to the Level 3 National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership, particularly Units A1 and A2.

### Employer engagement and vocational contexts

This unit can be delivered without specialist resources. However, there are some useful resources, for example: Cascaid's Kudos software ([www.cascaid.co.uk](http://www.cascaid.co.uk)).

### Indicative reading for learners

#### Textbook

Anderson A, Barker D and Critten P – *Effective Self Development – A Skills and Activity based Approach* (Blackwell, 1996) ISBN 0631200150

#### Journal

*Personnel Today*

#### Websites

[www.careers-gateway](http://www.careers-gateway)

Careersoft

[www.careersa-z.co.uk](http://www.careersa-z.co.uk)

Careers A-Z

[www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)

Connexions

[www.channel4.com/brilliantcareers](http://www.channel4.com/brilliantcareers)

Brilliant Careers

[www.support4learning.org.uk](http://www.support4learning.org.uk)

Support4Learning

There are a number of industry-specific websites which have useful career information for example:

[www.acca.co.uk](http://www.acca.co.uk)

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

[www.cim.co.uk](http://www.cim.co.uk)

Chartered Institute of Marketing

[www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

[www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)

Law Society of England and Wales

[www.sflqi.org](http://www.sflqi.org)

Quality Improvement Agency

## Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	accessing and researching sources of career information
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	discussing their methods of continuing professional development and training based on their career plan
<b>Reflective learners</b>	developing their career plan and mapping future development needs with set targets
<b>Self-managers</b>	creating their SMART targets.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	planning and carrying out research into careers and information within organisations
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	looking at different careers
<b>Reflective learners</b>	setting goals with, success criteria, for researching careers inviting feedback on their own work and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism evaluating their experiences and learning to inform future progress
<b>Team workers</b>	working in groups to discuss issues managing activities to reach agreements and achieve results
<b>Self-managers</b>	seeking out challenges or new responsibilities and showing flexibility when priorities change dealing with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands responding positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed
<b>Effective participators</b>	taking part in group activities, working with colleagues, supervisors and managers.

## ● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>ICT – Find and select information</b>	
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	accessing, and assessing the relevance of, career information for a career plan
<b>ICT – Develop, present and communicate information</b>	
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	bringing together the information to include in the career plan
<b>English</b>	
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading career information and selecting appropriate material to develop their career options
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing a career plan.