

Careers guidance

Why is careers guidance important?

Whether you're just starting out on your career or looking for a change of direction you'll want it to be satisfying not just financially but also personally and socially. Talking to colleagues, friends and family can help you plan your career. Careers guidance will enable you to:

- take stock of your life
- decide what's important for you
- plan how to achieve your goals
- base decisions on sound facts
- understand yourself, your skills, interests, values and personality
- select training at the right level
- make an effective plan for job searching
- develop job search skills, such as writing a CV, filling in an application form or going for an interview

Use the activities and ideas here to identify and note your values, interests and skills and then use the contacts given to seek advice.

What do you want from work? What are your values?

Try to rank these statements according to how well they match your values (1 is most important, 10 is least important).

	Rank
It's important that work offers me a challenge	
I'm looking for steady employment and security	
Recognition and success are important to me	
I'm not put off by risk or uncertainty (either financial or physical)	
I'm motivated by significant financial reward	
I want to benefit the community and provide a service to others	
I like working independently and want scope for initiative	
It's important that I do something creative	
The social environment of work is important to me	
I want to take the lead or take responsibility at work	

What kind of job would you enjoy?

Would you prefer to deal with:	Would you like a job which is:
people	entrepreneurial
data	administrative
things	practical
ideas	intellectual
	creative
	social

What are you good at and what are you interested in?

Think about the things you do, the things you enjoy and your achievements at work and at home. Ask those who know you well what they think you're good at.

What options in work and training are open to you? Be realistic. Take into account where you live, your personal and financial situation, opportunities for promotion at work and your ability. Identify the areas you're interested in – here are some ideas to start you thinking.

Arts and media	Health and social care
Community development	Management
Business and finance	Science
Construction and the built environment	Sport & leisure
Engineering	Travel, tourism, hospitality & leisure
Hairdressing & beauty	Technology

For more information about careers areas go to the Career Planning section.
www.learning-opportunities.org.uk

What opportunities are there where you live?

Talk to your friends and family, look in the local papers, or visit a recruitment agency. For example try:

www.agencycentral.co.uk

How do the local opportunities fit with the values and interests you've identified so far? What qualifications are needed for these jobs?

Once you have an idea of what sort of work in your locality would match your values, interests and skills, you can think about the jobs you might be able to get if you studied and achieved new qualifications.

Getting some more qualifications

If you haven't studied for a while, you might be surprised to know how things have changed. For example, did you know that foundation degrees are directly related to employment and, although they are validated by universities, many are delivered partly at work and partly at local further education colleges.

Have a look at the **Foundation Degrees in the South East** website, where there are direct links to all the course descriptions and the institutions offering the courses.

www.foundation-degrees-in-the-southeast.org.uk

The National Careers Advice Service - Nextstep

The website includes information on over 700 job/career profiles and links to interactive quizzes that help you to work out what you're most suited for. You can contact your nearest Nextstep provider if you want face-to-face help or use the helpline or email.

0800 100 900

www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk

Other useful resources

If you're a graduate you can go back and seek help from the careers department of your institution. Most offer advice for at least two years after graduation and many offer much more and will also talk to graduates of other universities. In addition, many have excellent online resources that are open to all so go to Learning Opportunities and browse to **Career Planning** and then **University Careers Services in the South East** for direct links.

www.learning-opportunities.org.uk

Prospects is a graduate careers website that offers detailed descriptions of a wide range of graduate jobs and careers. It also includes:

- **free online software** to assess your skills, motivations and interests to generate ideas for your career direction.
- **live online chat** with graduate recruiters, postgraduate course providers and careers advisers
- **discussion forums** for you to express your opinions and generate ideas with other graduates and students
- a **Virtual careers fair** to meet graduate recruiters, apply for jobs and receive careers advice online
- **career and legal issues FAQs**: answers to commonly asked careers questions
- **case studies** featuring what real graduates have done

The **Open University** has a wide range of useful resources, video clips and activities.

www.open.ac.uk/careers

www.windmillsprogramme.com

Virtual careers coach

www.prospects.ac.uk

Careers support for graduates

www.insidecareers.co.uk

Careers support for graduates