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Bridge4Mothers

2025-1-DE02-KA210-VET-000359232

PSL Programme — Personal, Social and Learning-to-Learn Competences

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Personal Development & Career Planning Guide

Introduction

Personal development is a lifelong process of learning, building skills and gaining experiences that help people achieve their personal, educational and professional goals. Career planning is not simply about choosing a job—it is about understanding yourself, recognising your strengths, exploring opportunities and making informed decisions about your future.

Career paths are rarely linear. People may change careers, learn new skills, return to education or discover new interests throughout their lives. Developing a personal career plan helps you adapt to change, recognise opportunities and remain motivated as your goals evolve.

This guide provides practical tools to help participants:

- recognise their strengths, interests and values;
- identify transferable skills;
- set realistic personal and career goals;
- explore learning and employment opportunities;
- develop effective learning habits;
- improve employability;
- create a personal development plan;
- review progress and adapt future goals.

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1. Knowing Yourself

Successful career planning begins with self-awareness. Understanding your strengths, interests and values can help you make choices that suit your abilities and aspirations.

Recognise Your Strengths

Strengths are the qualities and abilities that help you perform well and overcome challenges.

Examples include:

- communication skills;
- teamwork;
- creativity;
- organisation;
- problem-solving;
- digital skills;
- leadership;
- reliability;
- adaptability;

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- resilience;
- attention to detail;
- willingness to learn.

Reflect on the following:

- Three strengths I already have are:
- A skill I enjoy using is:
- A task that others often ask me to help with is:
- A personal quality I am proud of is:
- A challenge I have successfully overcome is:

Remember that strengths can be developed through learning and experience.

Identify Your Interests

People are often more motivated when their work reflects their interests.

Ask yourself:

- Which subjects do I enjoy learning about?
- What activities make me feel engaged?
- What type of work would I like to do?

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- Do I prefer working with people, information, technology or practical tasks?
- What causes or issues are important to me?

Your interests can help guide future career choices.

Identify Your Values

Values are the principles that influence what matters most to you.

Examples include:

- helping others;
- creativity;
- stability;
- independence;
- continuous learning;
- teamwork;
- work-life balance;
- financial security;
- innovation;
- social impact.

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Understanding your values can help you choose careers that match your priorities.

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2. Building Your Employability

Employability is the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that help people find, maintain and progress in employment.

Many employers value transferable skills as much as technical knowledge.

Transferable Skills

Transferable skills can be used in many different jobs and sectors.

Examples include:

- communication;
- teamwork;
- critical thinking;
- time management;
- organisation;
- customer service;
- digital literacy;

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- adaptability;
- leadership;
- problem-solving;
- initiative;
- continuous learning.

Think about where you developed these skills:

- school or university;
- volunteering;
- work experience;
- internships;
- sports;
- community activities;
- hobbies;
- family responsibilities.

Every experience contributes to your development.

Reflect on Your Experience

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Consider the following questions:

- What achievements am I most proud of?
- Which responsibilities have I managed successfully?
- What have I learned from previous jobs or studies?
- What skills would I like to improve?
- What feedback have I received from others?

Reflection helps identify both strengths and future learning needs.

Developing Professional Habits

Positive professional habits include:

- arriving on time;
- meeting deadlines;
- communicating respectfully;
- being reliable;
- accepting feedback;
- showing initiative;
- solving problems calmly;

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- working collaboratively;
- continuing to learn.

These behaviours contribute to long-term career success.

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3. Exploring Career Opportunities

Career exploration helps you understand the wide range of opportunities available and identify pathways that match your interests and skills.

Explore Different Career Paths

Research careers by asking:

- What does the role involve?
- Which skills are required?
- What qualifications are needed?
- What are the working conditions?
- What opportunities exist for career progression?
- Which sectors are growing?

Useful sources include:

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- career guidance services;
- employer websites;
- professional associations;
- labour market information;
- job advertisements;
- networking events;
- educational institutions.

Identify Learning Opportunities

Learning can take many forms, including:

- formal education;
- vocational education and training;
- online courses;
- workshops;
- webinars;
- mentoring;
- volunteering;

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- workplace learning;
- professional certifications.

Continuous learning helps maintain employability in a changing labour market.

Build Your Professional Network

Networking means developing positive professional relationships.

You can build your network by:

- attending events;
- joining professional groups;
- participating in community activities;
- connecting with mentors;
- engaging in online professional platforms;
- maintaining relationships with teachers, trainers and colleagues.

Professional relationships often provide valuable information and opportunities.

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4. Learning Management Strategies

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Successful learners organise their time, monitor their progress and adapt their learning strategies.

Set Learning Priorities

Ask yourself:

- What do I need to learn first?
- Which skills will have the greatest impact?
- What resources do I already have?
- What support do I need?

Focus on one or two priorities at a time.

Manage Your Time

Helpful strategies include:

- using a weekly planner;
- creating realistic study schedules;
- breaking tasks into smaller steps;
- setting reminders;
- reducing distractions;

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- reviewing progress regularly.

Consistency is often more effective than long periods of study completed occasionally.

Monitor Your Progress

Regular reflection helps maintain motivation.

Ask yourself:

- What have I learned this week?
- Which activities helped me most?
- What still feels difficult?
- What support do I need?
- What will I focus on next?

Small improvements over time lead to significant progress.

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5. SMART Career Goal Setting

SMART goals help transform ideas into realistic action plans.

A SMART goal is:

- **Specific**

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- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time-bound**

Example 1 – Learning Goal

General Goal:

"I want to improve my digital skills."

SMART Goal:

"Within the next six weeks, I will complete four online Excel training modules and practise using spreadsheets for at least one hour each week."

Example 2 – Employment Goal

"Within the next month, I will update my CV, prepare a professional LinkedIn profile and submit applications for at least five suitable job opportunities."

Example 3 – Career Development Goal

"During the next three months, I will attend two networking events, speak with three professionals working in my area of interest and identify possible future career pathways."

SMART goals help keep progress organised and measurable.

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6. Creating Your Personal Development Plan

A personal development plan connects your goals with practical actions.

Step 1 – Define Your Goal

Examples:

- develop digital skills;
- improve communication;
- obtain a qualification;
- gain work experience;
- change careers;
- improve language skills;
- increase confidence.

Step 2 – Identify Actions

Examples:

- register for a course;
- prepare a CV;

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- practise interview skills;
- contact a mentor;
- attend networking events;
- volunteer;
- complete weekly learning activities.

Step 3 – Identify Resources

Resources may include:

- online learning platforms;
- career advisers;
- trainers;
- mentors;
- family support;
- financial assistance;
- professional organisations.

Step 4 – Set Milestones

Large goals become easier when divided into smaller milestones.

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Example:

Week 1 – Research learning opportunities.

Week 2 – Register for training.

Weeks 3–6 – Complete weekly learning activities.

Week 7 – Update CV.

Week 8 – Apply for opportunities.

Step 5 – Review Progress

Review your plan regularly by asking:

- What have I completed?
- What challenges have I faced?
- What adjustments are needed?
- What is my next priority?

Plans should be flexible and adapt as circumstances change.

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7. Preparing for Future Opportunities

Career development is an ongoing process.

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Continue building your future by:

- learning new skills;
- seeking feedback;
- remaining curious;
- staying informed about labour market trends;
- developing digital competences;
- volunteering;
- expanding your professional network;
- recording achievements;
- updating your CV regularly;
- celebrating personal progress.

Remember that every learning experience contributes to future opportunities.

Personal Development Planner

My Strengths

Three strengths I already have are:

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1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Skills I Would Like to Develop

_____

_____

My Career Interests

I am interested in working in:

_____

The reason is:

_____

My SMART Career Goal

My goal is:

_____

I will measure success by:

_____

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I aim to complete this by:

My Action Plan

The first action I will take is:

The second action is:

The support I need is:

Progress Review

One achievement I have already made is:

The next step I will take is:

The way I will celebrate my progress is:

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Final Reminder

Career development is a journey, not a single decision.

Remember to:

- recognise your strengths and achievements;
- continue learning throughout your life;
- explore different career opportunities;
- build transferable skills;
- set realistic SMART goals;
- seek feedback and support;
- adapt your plans when circumstances change;
- celebrate progress, no matter how small.

Every new skill, experience and achievement contributes to your confidence, employability and future career success. With curiosity, persistence and a positive mindset, you can continue developing throughout your personal and professional life.

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