

Theme 1

Training and working

The purpose of this section is to examine your existing skills, life experiences and interests. By exploring your skills and interests, you will discover what work would best suit you and be able to more effectively market yourself to potential employers. The following sections cover studies, job search skills and work experience. Some sections may not be applicable to you, but please complete as much as you can.

- 1 Goals / Targets
- 2 Profiling
- 3 Planning my vocational career
- 4 Finding a job
- 5 Drafting an employment agreement
- 6 Workplace rules and characteristics
- 7 Links



Goals / Targets

My life in five years

How do you see your life in five years? What do you hope for in the future? Set your goal! Afterwards you decide the steps you need to take to achieve this.

Good workplace features

We all are hoping for a job of our dreams. Some people feel that a good salary is the most important thing, others think it is good working relationships. What do you feel is the most important thing in your job?

Using the alternatives below, choose five different work-related features that you feel are most important. Rate them on a scale of 1-5 (5 being the most important).

Good team and pleasant co-workers	Good salary	Involvement in decision making	Easy work	Workplace location: close to home
Opportunity to improve oneself and make career advancements	Sense that one is doing something important	Permanent job	Safe Environment	Interesting work
Pleasant and understanding boss	Holiday entitlement	Sense of fairness at the workplace	Flexible working hours	Family friendly employer

Interesting jobs

Name three jobs in which you are interested.	What kind of training do you need?

If you cannot think of any professions that interest you, visit the following websites:

<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/index.html>

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/>

These websites will, among others, help you discover your areas of interest and jobs that are well suited to your skills. The websites also provide information on professions.

What opportunities for continuing education are there in the fields that interest you?

In the uppermost box write one of the jobs you mentioned before and in the boxes below it write various options for continuing education/professional development. What possibilities, barriers or obstacles need to be considered?

SWOT analysis

Why do you feel you want the job you mentioned before? What positive and negative features can you name for this job? What are the possibilities that your dream to work in this job could be true some day? What threats and risks can you name that could make you dream difficult to achieve?

Think about your ideal job and assess it with a SWOT analysis. Be as honest as possible when assessing things related to a certain profession or job:

My ideal job:

Strengths and good points (e.g. area of interest)	Weaknesses and bad points (e.g. undesirable working hours)
Opportunities (e.g. opportunities for continuing education)	Threats (e.g. threat of unemployment)

2

Profiling

Prior learning

What are your strengths? What are you good at?

How do you spend your spare-time?	What skills have you obtained in your spare-time?

Studies

Today, the approaches to study are tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Vocational studies often involve the opportunity for practical work, not just theory, exams and written assignments. Vocational training opens doors to a wide variety of jobs. With the following assignments you will be able to map your learning experiences and learning skills.

Please list details of your past and present education/training

Place of study / training	Duration	What skills have you obtained from these places?

Grade your study skills on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest, 5 the highest). Enter the grades in the first box.

Finding the right learning approach		Group work	
Computer skills		Tests	
Searching for information on the Internet		Activity and motivation for studies	
Independent working		Adapting family life to study	
Planning study		Practical application of information	

Which of the above-mentioned items would you like to improve? Mark these in the second column with an 'X'.

Think about the items you marked off for improvement.

Where do I want to improve?	How do I want to improve?	Who/what might help?

Work experience and skills

Have you got a lot of work experience?

Think about your previous work experience. List here the most important jobs or training places.

Place of work/training	Duration	Skills you have learnt in these jobs?

What do you feel you did well in these jobs?

General working skills are needed.

Grade your level of job search and workplace skills on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest, 5 the highest). Enter the grades in the first box. Mark in the second box the skills you want to improve.

Skills to solve problems		Computer skills	
Skills to manage in stress		Initiative	
Skills to manage conflicts		Social skills	
Other skills: which?		Co-operative skills with co-workers	
Responsibility		Co-operative skills with supervisors	
Time management		Ability to learn new things	

Which of the above-mentioned items would you like to improve? Mark the second column with an 'X'.

Think about the items you marked off above.

Where do I want to improve?	How do I want to improve?	Who/what might help?

Planning my vocational career

Comparing wishes and realities

Do you stay at the point where you want to be? Mention the barriers, if there are any!

Needed steps to achieve my goals

The following diagram can help you to structure your progress.

Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Goal

Life is made up of small choices, which we all make every day.

Think also about opportunities for continuing education e.g. children to kindergarten, nursery or school, living in another town!

What will you do today / next week / next month / next year to get closer to achieving your goal?	Who can provide you with assistance and support?

Work place influences

When you find a job that you like, how could it affect your life? Think about this from your own point of view as well as that of friends and family and daily life in general.

For yourself

In daily life

Among family

**New
job
influences**

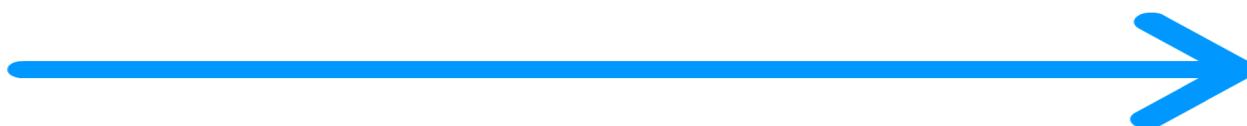
In financial matters

For the future

Timeline

Sometimes life is monotonous, maybe even boring, however, we all experience highs and lows and sometimes unexpected events or changes outside of our control. It can be helpful to summarise these events on a timeline. On the line below enter the highs, lows, steady periods and turning points in your life. You may want to add a short explanation for special events. The starting point is your choice: childhood, leaving education or starting work. The timeline should end at today.

This exercise can help to prepare you for different kind of life situations.



Decision over my vocational plan

Now decide, what steps you will really do!

A SUMMARY OF YOUR SELF-EVALUATION OF TRAINING AND WORKING BY USING AN “UMBRELLA MODEL”

Instructions for filling out the training and working umbrella.

The grading scale for the spokes is 0-10. The question number is at the end of each spoke with zero in the middle of the umbrella.

1. Answer the questions by drawing an ‘X’ on the spoke in question at a point you feel is appropriate.
2. After you have marked X to all 10 spokes, connect the Xs with a common line.
3. Colour the area inside the line.

The greater the surface area of the umbrella, the more you think that your training and working situation is up to date.

Life isn’t perfect, so don’t be too concerned if your umbrella isn’t fully coloured. The purpose of the umbrella is to show you which areas you still have to work on to reach your goals.

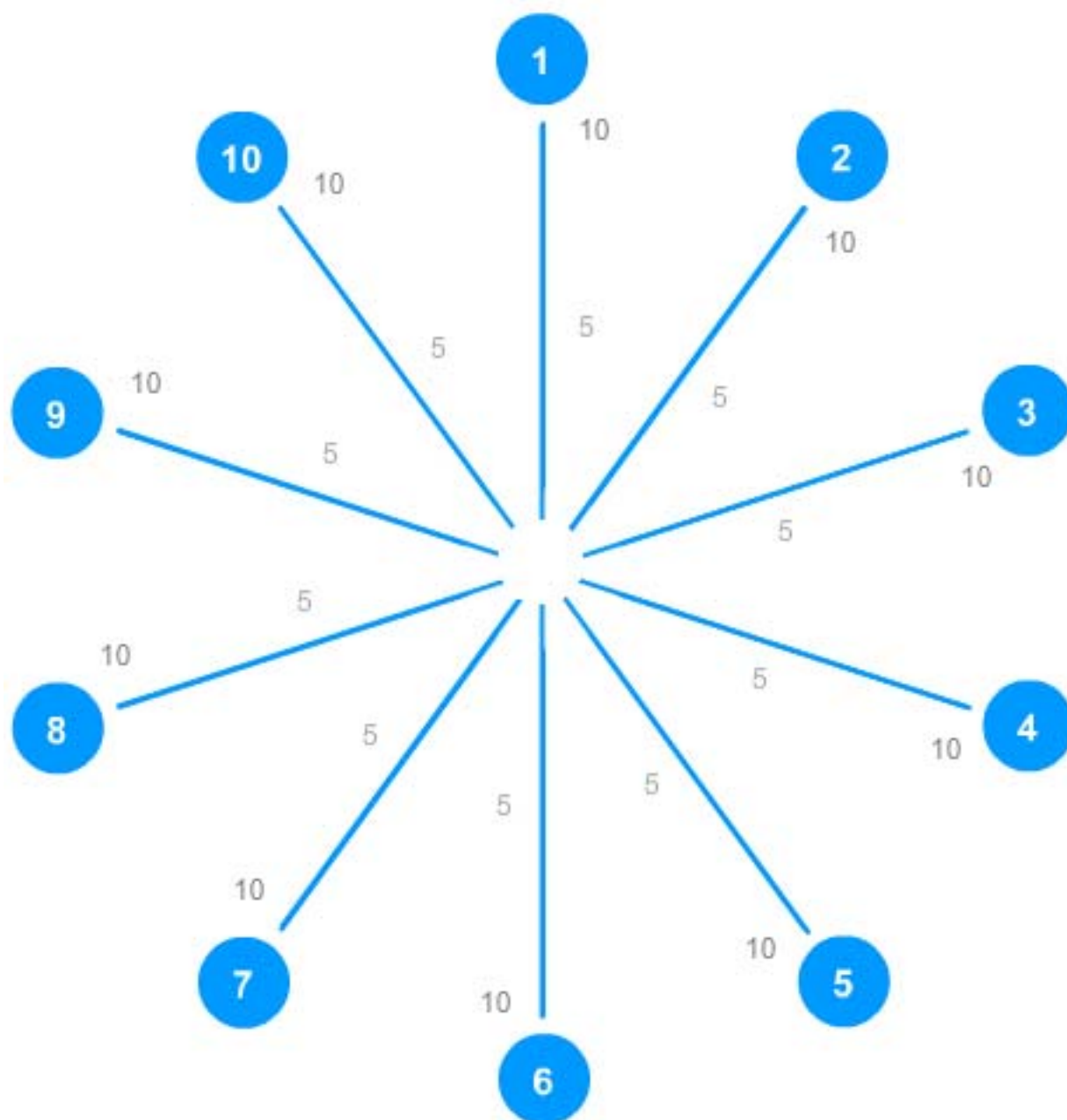
Think about how you could fix tattered areas or areas with which you are not fully satisfied. Address one of these areas at a time and think about how you could do things differently. Set an achievable goal to repair this section and then review the next area until you complete.

Questions for umbrella

1. I am aware of my strengths?
2. I am aware of my needs to improve?
3. I am aware of how to improve my skills?
4. I know the skills and qualifications I need for my chosen career?
5. I am aware of my opportunities?
6. I am realistic about my employment aims?
7. I know what I want from work?
8. I know what I need to do to manage my working life?
9. I know my next steps?
10. I know my (name it yourself)?

Training and working

Evaluate your situation in the scale 0 – 10: = not at all / 10 = completely



Knowledge or the labour market

The labour market is the relationship between the supply of people available for employment and the available jobs.

What do you know about the current labour market?

You can obtain additional information from other sources including web links at the end of this section.

Using different media

Employers publish job advertisements in different places: internet, newspapers etc. Gather and explore different job advertisements from different places.

How many vacancies were advertised through agencies? How do you feel about starting work through an agency position?

How does the employer want you to contact them?

What kind of knowledge and skills will be needed in these jobs?

Building networks

Less than half of all the positions get filled through advertisement! That is why other effective methods should be considered such as building networks, registering with agencies and sending speculative letters, make a telephone call etc. direct to businesses.

The main question is: How and where you can get hints (from your network, media etc) of places where an employee could be needed?

To enlarge your network visit friends, neighbours, employers, employees etc. and ask them

- How did you get your job?
- Do you know who is looking for an employee?
- Please name three persons who probably can help me!

In the previous chapter you have named the good work place features. Using this information gather a list of suitable employers. Next, work out the best strategy for you to make contact. E-mail, letter, phone call, visit - different ways for different companies.

Name of company	Person responsible for recruiting	Suitable ways to make contact	Why am I suitable for the employer

Later in this workbook there is more about employer contact and job interviews including how to make the best impression.

Developing self-marketing

When applying for a job, it is important that you know how to tell the employer about yourself and your skills. Return to Part 1 of this theme and examine your skills, features, strengths and areas needing improvement. Review your skills, strengths and competences especially those gained through life experiences.

Write them down in detail in the space below. How would you tell a prospective employer about these?

My skills (vocational and general)

My characteristics:

My strengths:

My areas needing improvement:

Self-marketing begins by drafting an up-to-date, informative, clear and marketing CV.

Drafting a CV

When applying for a job, you will usually be asked to provide your CV. “Curriculum Vitae” is Latin for “course of life”. In a CV you can describe yourself, your work and educational background, personal strengths and your professional skills. A CV is used to present, in a nutshell, your professional achievements, work history, interests and plans.

You need an up-to-date CV!

If necessary, you can draft or update your CV using the model provided. See the “CV Models” appendix. Remember to save it on your computer.

Create your Europass CV:

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>

Filling out a job application

A job application is your response to a job listing or advertisement. The job application is your sales pitch, an opportunity to get an employer interested enough in you as a potential employee, to be invited for a job interview. On a job application you will provide information about yourself that relates to the job in question.

Large or medium size organizations will normally send/email preset application forms with job and personal specifications. The application forms are returned on completion by the job seeker.

A free-form job application does not need to conform to a standard document, but still requires all the necessary information.

You can practice drafting both types of job application using the model of your choice. See the “Job Application Models” appendix or visit the websites linked here. Remember to save it on your computer.

www.direct.gov.uk

Telephone call and e-mail

Sometimes employers want the jobseekers to phone or send an e-mail instead of filling out an official job applications.

Think about telephone etiquette and self-marketing. How can you give the best impression on the phone when applying for a job?

What is different between an e-mail and job application or is there any differences?

Preparing for a job interview

Job interviews vary from very formal panel interviews to more relaxed one to one chats. The employer wants to find out, if you are the right person for the job and company. He/she/they will ask you different kinds of questions to judge your suitability.

How should you prepare for a job interview? If you were an employer, what would you ask from the jobseeker? If those questions were asked, how would you answer the employer? Make up challenging questions and convincing answers in the table below.

If you are afraid to answer certain questions, you should specifically prepare to answer them!

What would you ask as an employer to find out the jobseeker's life situation, personality, professional skills, motivation ect.	How would you answer to reassure the employer?
<i>For example: What have you done during your unemployment period?</i>	<i>For example: I have maintained my professional skills by doing voluntary work in...</i>

Practice job interviews with your tutor. You can also make a video recording of the practice sessions and assess how the interview went.

If you have been in an interview and you didn't get the job, ask the employer for feedback. It is very important for you to find out the reason. It helps further on!

5

Drafting an employment agreement

When you are employed, you always make an employment agreement with the company. An employment agreement defines the rules between employer and employee. When you make an agreement it is useful to work out, what it means in practise. For example, if you get a cell phone from work, are you allowed to use it to make private calls?

According to the law your employment agreement can be verbal, written or electric. In case of conflict, it is easier to find the solution if you have written employment agreement.

Write down the different items that should be included in an employment agreement.

-
-
-
-
-

What is a temporary employment agreement?

What is a fixed-term employment agreement?



You can obtain additional information from other sources including web links at the end of this section.

www.direct.gov.uk

6

Workplace rules and characteristics

The workplace has certain written and unwritten rules, some of which are based on law and some on company rules and practices. When everyone works within these rules there is a sense of belonging and mutual respect.

Rights and responsibilities in the workplace

List an employee's legal rights.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

List an employee's legal obligations.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Search for additional information on labour legislation from different sources. Also refer to the web links at the end of this section.

List an employer's legal rights.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

List an employer's legal obligations.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Search for additional information on labour legislation using different sources. Also refer to the web links at the end of this section.

Health and safety at work

A harmonious balance of work and free-time promotes personal well-being. Health and job safety duties that are balanced with person's abilities and skills, offer opportunities to learn new skills to promote well-being. Occupational health includes mental and physical strain, work group atmosphere and interaction and workplace harassment and violence.

List an employer's legal rights.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

List an employer's legal obligations.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Search for additional information on labour legislation using different sources. Also refer to the web links at the end of this section.

Health and safety at work

A harmonious balance of work and free-time promotes personal well-being. Health and job safety duties that are balanced with person's abilities and skills, offer opportunities to learn new skills to promote well-being. Occupational health includes mental and physical strain, work group atmosphere and interaction and workplace harassment and violence.

List key aspects of health and safety at work.

For you personally	For all employees
Health	Health
Safety	Safety

List the employer's responsibility for health and safety at work:

A SUMMARY OF YOUR SELF-EVALUATION OF JOB SEARCH SKILLS BY USING AN “UMBRELLA MODEL”

Instructions for filling out the job search umbrella

The grading scale for the spokes is 0-10. The question number is at the end of each spoke with zero in the middle of the umbrella.

Answer the questions by drawing an ‘X’ on the spoke in question at a point you feel is appropriate.

After you have marked X on all 10 spokes, connect the Xs with a common line.

Colour the area inside the line.

The greater the surface area of the umbrella, the more you think that your job search skills situation is up to date.

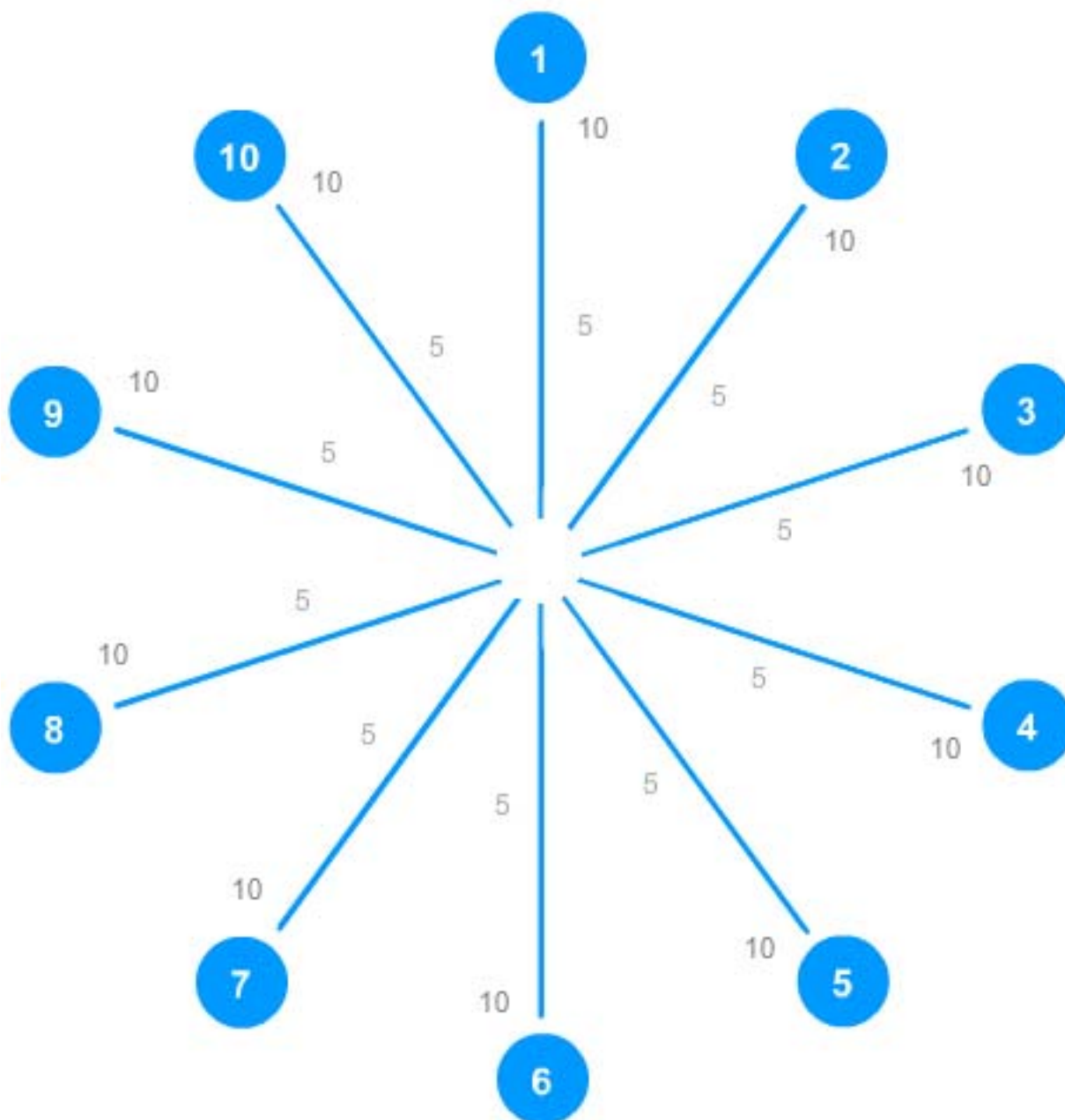
Life isn’t perfect, so don’t be too concerned if your umbrella isn’t fully coloured. The purpose of the umbrella is to show you which areas you still have to work on to reach your goals.

Think about how you could fix tattered areas or areas with which you are not fully satisfied. Address one of these areas at a time and think about how you could do things differently. Set an achievable goal to repair this section and then review the next area until you complete

1. I understand the local labour market?
2. I have the computer skills to research employers, job vacancies and make on line applications?
3. I use different media and large network to find contacts to potential employers?
4. I am aware of my strengths in job seeking?
5. I know what I need to do to improve in job seeking skills?
6. I know how and what to write in a CV?
7. I know how and what to write in a job application?
8. I know how to prepare for a job interview?
9. I am aware of the employee’s and employer’s rights and responsibilities regarding law, health and safety?
10. I know my (name it yourself)?

Job search skills

Evaluate your situation (job search skills) in the scale 0 – 10: = not at all / 10 = completely



7 Links

www.direct.gov.uk

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/