

- How do you feel about it?
- What do you know about it now?
- What's going right in relation to it, even if only a bit?
- What makes this important to you now?
- What have you tried so far?
- How do you explain this to yourself?

What is your goal?

- Where would you like to be in your career?
- What makes you happy?
- What does 'good' look like?
- What fulfils you?
- What is possible?
- What if it works out exactly as you want it to?
- What is the dream?
- What is exciting to you about this?
- What will happen if you do, and what will happen if you don't?
- What is your desired outcome?
- If you got it, what would you have?
- How will you know you have reached it?

What's holding you back? What's getting in your way?

- What have you already tried?
- What's standing in the way of that ideal outcome?
- What are the barriers?
- What part of the situation have you not yet explored?

What would help you?

- What resources do you need to help you decide?
- How do you suppose you can find out more about it?
- What resources are available to you?
- What resonates for you?
- Imagine you're at your most resourceful and energetic – what do you say to yourself about the issue?
- What are your options for action here?
- (Try some brainstorming)
- What criteria will you use to choose between options?
- What options can you create?
- In an ideal world, what would be happening about this issue?
- What other angles can you think of?
- What is just one more possibility?
- What are your other options?

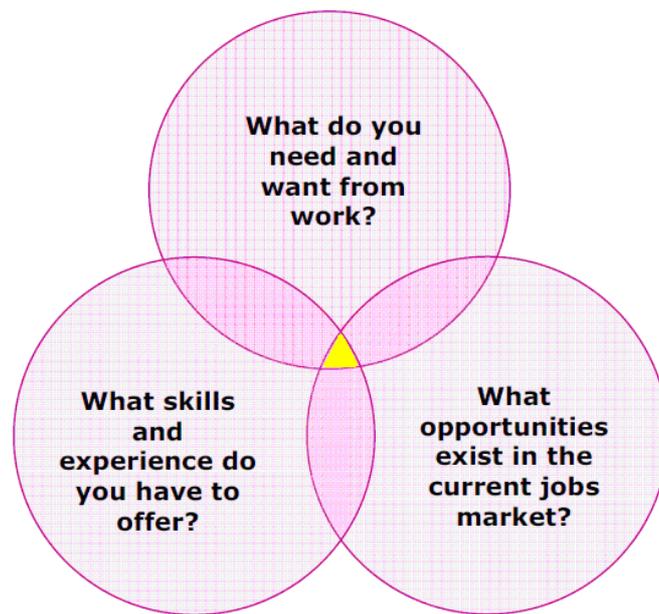
Taking action

- What action will you take? And after that?
- What will you do? When?
- Is this a time for action? What action?
- Where do you go from here? When will you do that?
- What are your next steps? By what date or time will you complete these steps?

Preparatory work

What do you want to do, when, where and how?

Building on knowledge gained from using the career map, there are three things you need to be clear about in your mind when you start thinking about career progression:



Your perfect job lies in the area where all three factors overlap with each other.

What you need and want from work

Step 1

What would your ideal job look like?

- How many hours would you like to work a week?
- How much do you need / want to earn?
- How important is your work location?
- Do you want to use your existing skills or learn new ones?
- What tasks would you like to spend most of your day doing?
- What type of organisation would you like to work for?
- What sort of colleagues would you like to work with?

Step 2

Put the answers, and any other information gathered from using the career map, into the table below. Add anything you know you wish to avoid in the final column (but don't get too distracted by this!).

Essential want	Nice to have	Definitely don't want

Step 3

Think about where you have placed each item. Can anything be moved (e.g. from the 'Essential' to 'Nice to have' column)? What are you prepared to give in order to get what you want? Review your thoughts with your manager or a Trust Coach or Mentor.

What skills and experiences do you have to offer?

This exercise is designed to help you understand what's involved when you are 'at your best' at work.

Step 1

Think of a time in your life when things were going really well for you, when you felt you were 'at your best'. It doesn't have to be a time when you were in a paid job - it could be a voluntary role or a training course you did or some other activity. If it helps, think about an achievement you are particularly proud of.

Step 2

Note down your thoughts in the following table:

I was at my best when...	
What was the environment like? (e.g. were you outside, inside, in a busy office, working at home, what were your colleagues like?...)	
How did I feel? (energised, relaxed, excited, curious, nervous)	
What would others have noticed about me?	
What was going on around me?	
What skills was I using? (listening, organising, bringing people together, generating ideas...)	
What tasks was I doing?	
What work values were being met? (e.g. were you being challenged, making a difference, caring for others, being well rewarded financially?)	
Is there anything else? What else do you know about what makes you 'at your best'?	

What opportunities are around you?

If you're hoping to find a new job, you need to understand what the current market looks like. You need to know what sort of roles are in demand, and what skills and experience they are looking for. You'll need to research opportunities. Here are some ideas for how you could go about this:

- Look at the Trust jobs board
- Speak to colleagues in Workforce or within your wider network across the Trust
- Read job adverts and job descriptions to see what skills, experience and qualifications are being sought
- Contact ex colleagues (try LinkedIn or Facebook if you've lost touch). Find out what they are doing now and how they're using their skills and experience
- Take a look at the job profiles section of the National Careers service. This gives information about training, salaries and current job market data. <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

- Look at the websites of professional bodies to find out about recognised qualifications
- Find out what's happening locally. Read the local press, look at your local authority website, join local online forums and networking groups.

Stage 2: Application Forms

Before completing an application form

When you see a job opportunity that interests you, before you complete the form, read through all of the information first:

- Consider how far the job meets your skills/experiences and wants and needs from work. Will this job give you what you are looking for?
- Read and note any guidelines you have been given about how to complete the form.
- Review the job description and any other available details about the role.
- Gather your content and details for each section.
- Prepare a draft for each section.
- If using a paper form, take a copy so that you can do a rough version first.

When completing the form

- Be specific in your answers and give evidence (specific examples) for your skills and experience
- Use bullet points and headings to make what you write as clear to the reader as possible. This is especially useful in longer sections such as a 'personal statement' or 'reasons for applying'. The job description will give you clues as to which headings to include.
- Keep to the guidelines on the number of words for each section. Avoid the temptation to write more. If you have to, and the guidelines allow, attach additional pages (clearly headed). Keep the number of additional pages as low as possible.
- Group together some content if space is short – e.g. several jobs from your earlier work history.
- Focus on the skills and experience you have that are most relevant for the job you are applying for.

Once completed...

- Ask someone to proof read the form for you before you send it.
- Keep a copy. Essential for the interview and useful for future forms you may do.
- Submit your application by the deadline along with any additional documents requested. Do not send a CV, attach a photo or covering letter etc unless specifically asked to do so.

Stage 3: Interviews

You will be offered an interview if the recruiting manager likes your application and believes you can probably do the job. There is a role to be filled and your focus simply needs to be on giving them the evidence to show that you are the person they need. An interview is just as much about whether you want the job, as about whether they want you. It's a two-way process:

- The interviewer is working out whether you can do the job, fit in with the team and organisation, and if you will be motivated to stay.
- You're working out whether the job is what you want, whether you like the culture of the team/organisation and if the package is what you are looking for.

There are three key steps to help you do your best at interview:

- Preparation
- Practice
- Performance

Preparation for Interviews

Sort out the practicalities:

Venue - Make sure you have clear directions to the location of the interview and that you work out how long it will take you to get there. If you feel nervous about finding it, do a practice journey. Ideally arrive about 15 minutes before the agreed time of the interview. Allow time for delays!

Clothes - Wear appropriate clothes and something that you feel comfortable in. If you are a little unsure, go for something more formal. Avoid anything that might distract the interviewer (or you), such as lots of jewellery, uncomfortable clothing or strong perfume.

Time - Check the time of the interview and how long it will last. Allow some extra time in case the interviews are running late (particularly if you are arranging childcare).

Practice the STAR Model

Whether you are completing an application form or answering questions at an interview, the STAR approach is a great way to structure examples. It helps employers and course providers evaluate what skills, qualities and experiences you have that would help you fit with the job, course, company or institution. It stands for:

Situation

Task

Action

Result

Situation

Explain the situation that you were in. This should be a short description, it could be: 'during my degree' or 'whilst working in the Dental department'.

Task

You need to briefly explain what it is that you had to do, and what the success criteria was. If you were working as a group explain what the overall task of the group was but be clear about your own role.

Action

This is the most substantial part (around 50-70%) of any example and you need to include:

- What you did.
- Why you did it.
- How you did it.
- What skills you used.

Result

There is little point in explaining the situation, task and action if the employer or course provider is left wondering whether what you did made any difference. So be prepared to explain:

- What happened as a result of the actions you took?
- What you would do differently or improve?
- What impact the result had overall on the team task?

Checklist

- Use an example that is up to date and relevant.
- Talk about action that you took not just a whole team.
- Make sure that the task and action are as related to a job or course description as possible.
- In the action part of the example cover the skill and qualities that are being sought.
- Use an example with a positive outcome.
- Be concise.

Using the example areas below, complete the STAR model to ensure you have answers for common questions. Think about any extra values and behaviours that might be relevant to your specific role.

Values, behaviours and experiences commonly sought in interviews/applications	Situation	Task	Action	Result
Experience of working in a team				
Negotiation				
Using own initiative				
Overcoming a challenge				
Working to a tight deadline				
Resolving conflict				
Influencing other staff groups				

Possible interview questions you may be asked

- What interested you about this position?
- Tell me about a typical day in your current/previous job
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Tell me about a time when you were able to use your influencing skills to convince a colleague to accept your point of view
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that showed your ability to deal with pressure
- Tell me of a time when you used your analytical skills to solve a problem
- Give me an example of a time when you had to work to a very tight deadline
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a presentation to a group of people who did not want to hear what you had to say
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to satisfy a really difficult customer/patient

Take time to listen to the question being asked and formulate a response. Try to include facts, figures and numbers when you can, as this adds weight to your credibility. Never criticise former employers or colleagues in your answers, even if you think you have good reason.

Interview questions to ask

In an interview it is extremely important that you ask questions too. If you don't ask questions at all, they may assume you are not interested in the job. It's all too easy for your mind to go blank when asked what questions you have, so it can help to have some written down to take in with you. Here are a few suggestions:

- How would you describe a typical day/week in this position?
- What do you enjoy about working here?
- Who does this position report to? If I am offered the position, can I meet him/her? (If this is not clear from the particulars/job specification)
- How many staff will I be line managing?
- How much travel is expected?

Closing the interview

Make sure that you end on a positive note with good eye contact and saying something like 'Thank you for your time, it was good to meet you.'

Self Reflection and Feedback

After the interview, take some time to think about what went well during the process, and what you could have done in a different way, so that you can keep learning for future situations. Remember to ask for feedback on your interview technique, regardless of the outcome!

Next steps and support

For more information about the Learning and Careers Advice Service, please visit:

<http://gti/services/traindevt/NonMandatory/Learning-&-Career-Advice-Service.aspx>

<http://gti/services/traindevt/nonmandatory/cv-&-application-form-writing-and-effective-interview-skills.aspx>

For information about the Trust Coaching and Mentoring Service, please visit:

<http://gti/services/traindevt/nonmandatory/coachingmentoring/coachingandmentoring-service.aspx>