The Careers and Employability Service will support you throughout your course and after graduation

**EmployableMe**: Our innovative and fresh approach to careers and employability at the University of Huddersfield is about taking control of your own career planning – with support from your professionally qualified and experienced award winning careers team. Look out for the green EmployableME character around campus and particularly within the careers centre in Student Central.

**MyCareer**: MyCareer is the hub of everything you do within careers. From here you can access everything! Including:

- JobShop
- The Huddersfield Graduate Programme
- Careers events on campus
- Resources

You can access MyCareer through the Student Hub via the Jobs and Careers tab.

**Career Resources**: The Careers and Employability Service provides you with access to personalised career resources. You can create a CV, listen to experts discussing job interviews, explore career options and test your skills through online assessments before facing the real thing.

You will be able to find:

- CV Builder
- Interview training
- Preparation for assessment centres
- Practice psychometric tests
- Short videos to help you with applications

You can access these resources from your MyCareer platform.

**Grad Jobs Bureau**: The Careers and Employability Service is here to help you with your future; whether that be moving into a graduate job, exploring postgraduate study options or training for a particular career. We continue to support you after you have finished your course to aid your transition from final year student, to graduate of the University of Huddersfield.
Introduction:

Taking responsibility for your career planning is one of the key skills required for career success. The ability to make decisions about your own future and then taking action to achieve your goals is vital and a structured approach to this is one of the benefits of career planning.

But where do you start, how will the Careers and Employability Service support you, why can it help you, and what has EmployableME got to do with it?

Your Careers and Employability Service is an ideal place to start your career planning. Our Careers Resource Wall within Student Central is packed with resources to enable you to plan your career and we also offer careers guidance appointments alongside workshops throughout the academic year that you can attend in order to develop your existing skills and even gain new ones.

EmployableME is a way of thinking about your career whilst you’re at the University of Huddersfield. It can be everything that you learn, for example from the careers service, your course or your placement – but also it’s the experiences that you go through, maybe from the Students Union, sport, volunteering or a part time job. EmployableME is a journey and the destination is one where you’re an employable graduate.

Your career planning doesn’t necessarily have a straightforward beginning, middle and end. In fact, it’s a process you travel through each time you face a decision.

The good news is that career planning is not difficult and although you might not be aware, you’re already successfully doing it.

Just think how it is you came to be on your course at the University of Huddersfield: did you choose the subject yourself or were you influenced by friends? Did you hear about it at an Open Day or did you read the UCAS Guide? Was it determined by your career choice, or did you already know and love the subject? And then just think about how you acted on your plan to reach the stage you’re now at as a student or graduate: completing your application form, maybe attending an interview, passing your exams and arriving ready for the start of term.

At the University of Huddersfield we use a simple four point strategy that enables you to kick start your EmployableME journey around your career planning.

It can be used around any career decision whether it’s a major life choice around where you’d like to work or simply selecting course modules.

• Think
• Decide
• Plan
• Do

Please see the following pages for the four steps in more detail.
Imagine if someone put you on the spot and asked you these questions:

• What do you think you’re good at?
• Do you have any career plans?
• Could you tell me about your practical skills?
• Why are you on your course?
• Where do you see yourself five years from now?
• If I asked your friends for one word that describes you, what do you think they would say?

Taking time to think about yourself is a core part of career planning. In fact, if you fail to do it you can easily find yourself applying for jobs or courses that you’re either unsuitable for or which you don’t actually want.

You may have heard about ‘self assessment’ - this is essentially a way of auditing your skills and thinking about your strengths and areas where you might need more support.

You’re in control of your career planning. As careers professionals we can offer support, advice and guidance throughout your time at the University of Huddersfield but it’s important to remember that you’re at the heart of it.

Thinking enables you to be self critical but it also allows you to focus on what you’ve already achieved. In this sense writing a CV can be a suitable way of starting to assess what you have to offer. A CV, whether as a document created within MyCareer or somewhere else, will be your own personal record that will help you when it comes to making career decisions and when marketing yourself. In the same way, a public social media profile such as LinkedIn or a blog, can help you to summarise your current role alongside past achievements and future ambitions.

If you have a range of options, try to think about each one equally; be careful not to rule any options out until you’ve reflected on their pros and cons.

Think about trying to challenge your own pre conceived ideas and about beliefs that you’ve changed in the past – reflecting on your experience is an important part of career planning.

The deciding phase is the point where researching your options becomes a principal part of the career planning process.

Good planning and research are essential as they enable you to make well informed career decisions.

For example if you were considering which companies to target for your placement year, research will help you to identify: differences between companies; where their posts are advertised and when; what they want alongside their entry requirements; and of course it would help you understand whether or not you might like the employer too.

There are many factors to consider when making decisions – one of the most crucial is considering the sources of your information. They could include:

• Your Careers and Employability Service: any information you receive from us will be up to date, impartial and relevant whether in person or from our website.
• Social Media: most organisations are on the internet, Facebook and LinkedIn. Can you differentiate between data that can inform you about recruitment, and pure advertising?

• Other people: LinkedIn and Twitter have revolutionised the way that we network yet are fundamentally a way of communicating and talking with each other. People can be a great and under valued source of information yet at the same time information from our friends, course mates, employers and family can be inaccurate and biased, but it often will have the biggest impact on our ideas whilst planning.

It can be challenging to make decisions, but there is rarely a ‘right or wrong’ approach. Instead you need to make a decision based on what you think to be the best for yourself at a given point in time.

Try to allow time for your research; it’s important because any decisions you make from this point onwards need to be underpinned by strong evidence, and these facts can only be gleaned from your research.
If Thinking and Deciding are knowing what you want and researching it, now comes the part where you need to narrow your options down to the point where the path ahead becomes clear and you’re happy to proceed – whether that means applying for a post graduate course, looking for a job, going for an interview or taking an assessment.

Making your career decisions involves taking the information that you have already gathered about yourself and matching it to the options that are available.

Career planning is structured to be a flexible process: sometimes we change our minds and this need not be a negative thing.

You can write down your decisions in the form of a career plan.

• Ideally it should include a goal and smaller steps that you need to take in order to reach it.
  • It should take into account the stage that you’re at currently, alongside the place where you’d like your decisions to take you.
  • You could think about a short term, smaller goal for example getting a part time job, or you might want to look at a long term ambition such as setting up your own business or gaining employment as a designer.
  • If you do have a plan based on your decisions, try and identify deadlines for your actions, and think about how often you’ll need to review what you’ve decided.

Career planning helps you to focus on the decisions that you’re making right now that will directly help you to achieve your goals. Make a start with an action plan like this:

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So you’ve thought about your ideas, you’ve planned your approach and you know what you want. Now the next step is to make it happen. It’s time to act.

There are many actions that might result from your decision making. At the Careers and Employability Service our resources both office based and online will enable you to practice many of these examples of actions. Talk to us if you need more support.

Your actions could include:
  • Applying for a job or a post.
  • Submitting a CV alongside a cover letter.
  • Investigating further study.
  • Taking an initial assessment.
  • Phoning an employer or an organisation.
  • Pro-actively sourcing opportunities.
  • Attending interviews.

These options all have one thing in common: that you will be far more successful in completing them if you have spent time career planning.

For example, imagine you’ve used career planning as part of your job search strategy. If you’re well organised and focused, have a clear understanding of what you have to offer, can market yourself effectively, have researched the options available to you and if you’re clear about what skills employers want their applicants to possess then you will be a far more credible and professional candidate.

This active element of career planning will often require you to take action within a timeframe and so it is the aspect which requires you to have the most self discipline and good time management skills.
Career planning in action

Career planning is fine in theory but how do you apply it to real life? Here's one example based on attending an interview for a job:

Every interview is your chance to shine in person. You'll rarely be offered an interview unless you have a strong chance of being offered a post but preparation, research and career planning are still a vital ingredient to success:

1. THINK clearly about what you have to offer and prepare how you can show that you are a suitable match to the position and how you can clearly articulate this to the interview panel.
2. DECIDE why you want this position and try to anticipate the questions that might arise.
3. You can PLAN by practicing your interview technique within MyCareer or by having a mock interview with the Careers and Employability Service.
4. Lastly DO approach interviews confidently and assertively. The Careers and Employability Service offer advice and guidance around interview technique as well as workshops each term.

Enhancing your career planning

We know from research that employers, and in particular those who recruit graduates, value one key skill from their candidates more than any other: communication.

Being able to reflect on your knowledge and articulate what you have learnt is therefore a vital part of career planning in that being able to communicate your experience is a valuable skill in itself.

Here are other ways in which you can enhance what you offer:

- **Gain work experience**
  Employers who recruit graduates want more than a degree; they look for a range of relevant skills and experiences. Work experience is a great way to develop skills, to gain experience and contacts, and to try out career ideas.
  If you’re looking for opportunities such as part time employment, internships and placements then our JobShop can be a great source of current vacancies. You can access these both in person at Student Central JobShop board and online through our website.

- **Develop your skills**
  You can develop your skills in a number of ways via work experience, extra-curricular activities and academic studies.
  Employers expect you to have developed a range of skills via a range of experience and to be able to clearly articulate these during the application process.
  Sport can often be overlooked when you consider skills yet every sport has elements of teamwork and accountability as well as demonstrating your proficiency and aptitude in the game itself.
  Volunteering can not only be a nice way to network and to contribute to society, it can also offer you the chance to get real experience of responsibility.
  Volunteering need not be a burden alongside your studies. The Students Union is a great source of opportunities. The Students Union is a great source of opportunities as it has regular events and activities that are open to all students, alongside societies for every subject under the sun from sport and politics to Quidditch and drama. And if you can’t find a society for your interest group, why not start one?
This publication is also available online - should you like to have it in an alternative format please contact us.

**Careers and Employability Service**

Telephone: 01484 472124  
Email: careers@hud.ac.uk  
Twitter: HudUniCareers  
Facebook: HuddCareers  
Website: www.hud.ac.uk/careers