

FIRST LEANINGS

Career Development Toolkit
for Guidance Counsellors and
Transition Year Coordinators



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

HEA

HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

FIRST LEARNINGS

Career Development Toolkit
for **Guidance Counsellors** and
Transition Year Coordinators

University of Limerick



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

First published 2015

Cooperative Education & Careers Division

University of Limerick

Limerick

www.ul.ie

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Design: Identikit

Layout: Carole Lynch

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Proofreader: Dog's-ear

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This toolkit and its accompanying resources are funded by the Higher Education Authority's Strategic Innovation and Development Fund.

Many individuals, groups and organisations have contributed to this publication, including staff and students of St Munchin's College, Limerick, guidance counsellors, higher-education careers advisers and academics.

www.ul.ie/careers/firstleanings

INTRODUCTION

The *First Leanings* toolkit is designed to:

- Help Transition Year students to develop an accurate understanding of their individual traits, interests, personality preferences, skills, personal values and motivations
- Assist Transition Year students in learning about third-level education in a range of disciplinary areas and relevant employment market sectors
- Encourage Transition Year students to align their career preferences with their choices in relation to Leaving Certificate subjects and subsequent third-level courses
- Support Transition Year students in making informed decisions around their course and career options
- Allow Transition Year students to make choices that are congruent with their profile and preferences and the world of work
- Guide Transition Year students in preparation for relevant work experience and the reality of the world of work.

Teachers can adapt the toolkit in order to facilitate existing guidance and development initiatives in the school. The toolkit has been developed so that teachers can easily integrate the teachings with nearby facilities and links in the locality, e.g. further education colleges, higher education colleges, local industries and other community resources.

The Transition Year programme is a busy one. While it brings valuable teaching and learning opportunities for everyone involved, it can also bring educational, administrative and organisational challenges. For this reason, the toolkit is designed to be flexible enough so that it can be integrated into any school's current Transition Year structure. Teachers will find it possible to make the toolkit their own, and to adapt it to fit the specific needs and interests of any student group. The toolkit comprises twenty 40-minute classes and teachers have the option to run these classes over the full academic year or within a shorter timeframe if they wish.

The toolkit has been structured in four sections on relevant topics, e.g. Skills Evaluation, Subject Choices and Preparing a CV. Each workshop begins with a brief introduction, overview and summary for teachers. The practicalities of each workshop are listed at the outset so that teachers can plan lessons with prior knowledge of any materials needed, IT considerations, etc.

The workshops have been built around a variety of worksheets that teachers can distribute to the students for completion. Worksheets are engaging and interactive and will provide students with hands-on learning as well as opportunities for reflection, self-awareness and personal development. Worksheets cover many different topics, e.g. Personality Test Summary, Mock Interview and Employability.

Work experience is a core aspect of the Transition Year programme. For this reason, Section 4 Work Experience is a stand-alone element of the toolkit and it can be moved to suit any school's work experience programme.

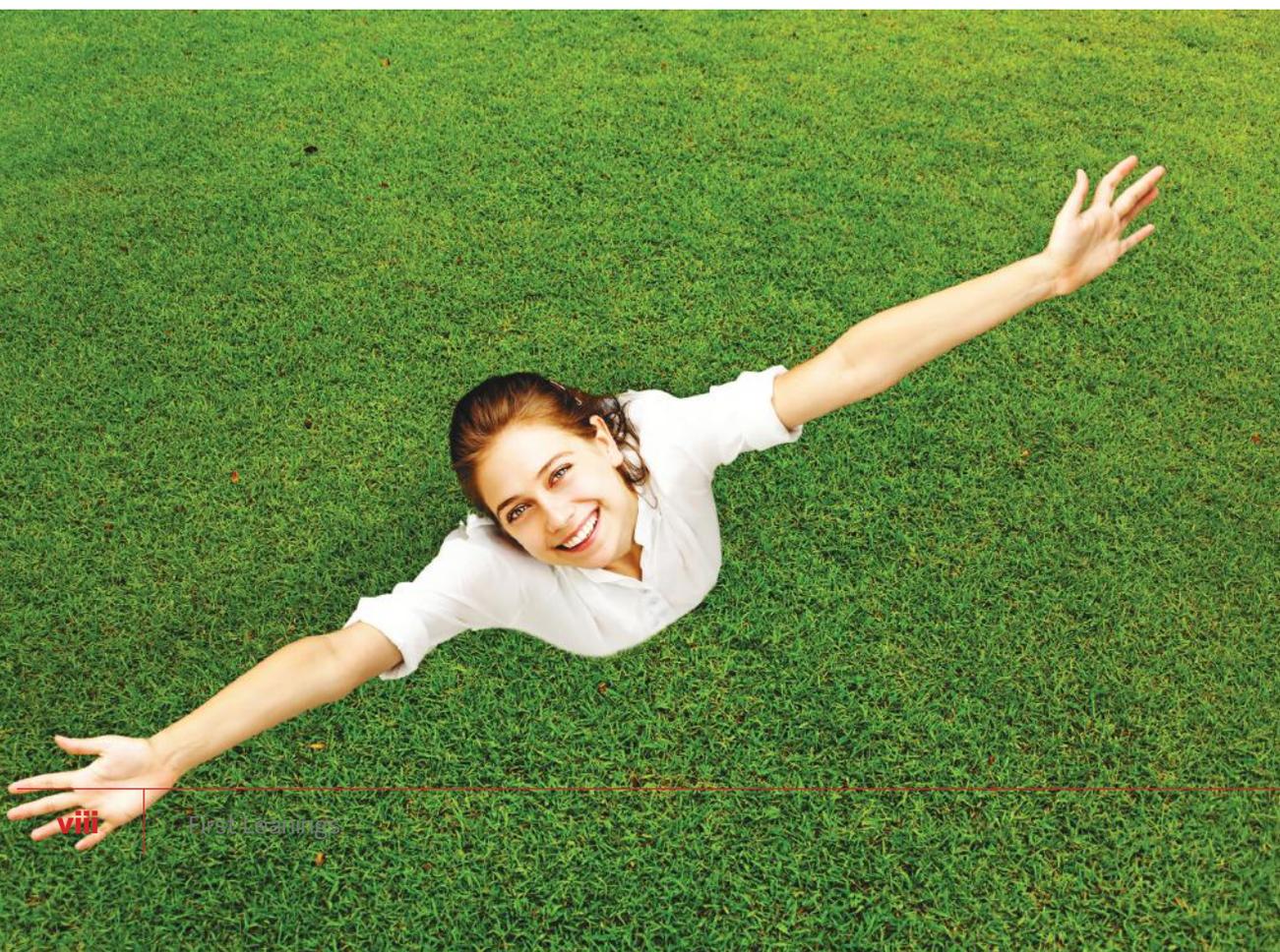
It is our hope that teachers will find the toolkit to be a valuable resource in exploring and fostering the first leanings of every student towards a bright and positive future.



INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO THE PROGRAMME

Sections 1–4 of the toolkit are comprised of many different workshops and complementary worksheets in relation to Transition Year. However, before you embark on any of the main workshops and worksheets with your students, you may find it useful to provide students with an introductory session on the *First Learnings* toolkit. This will offer an opportunity to explore students' expectations around the programme and the broader area of careers.

The sample workshop below will encourage students to begin to think about their careers and what path they might pursue after leaving school. This sample workshop can then be used as a springboard to a broader discussion on how Transition Year will be of benefit to the students in the coming year in assessing their options for the future.



Sample Workshop: Introduction to Transition Year and Careers



Materials needed: Flipchart /whiteboard, sticky labels, marker



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion that includes the following questions:
 - What is the difference between a job and a career?
 - What is the average number of jobs a person will have in their lifetime?
[Answer = 11]
 - What is the average number of career changes a person will make in their lifetime?
[Answer = 4]
 - What is the average number of hours a person will work in their lifetime?
[Answer = 83,200]
 - If you gain a qualification in one area of study, do you have to find a job in this same area?
 - Some jobs have a specific academic requirement. Can you name some of these jobs?

2 Write the following occupations on the board.

Nurse	Journalist	Childcare worker	Doctor
Hotel worker	IT person	Salesperson	Architect
Plumber	Electrician	Mechanic	Engineer
Dentist	Vet	Physiotherapist	Chef
Teacher	Solicitor	Guard	Hairdresser
Social worker	Librarian	Firefighter	Farmer
Accountant	Pharmacist	Pilot	Actor

3 Ask the pupils to work in pairs and to quietly discuss their first impressions of these occupations.

4 Meanwhile, write each occupation on a sticky label. Then move around the class, placing one label on each student's back. Each student should not know which label is on his or her back.

5 Ask the students to work in pairs. The object of the game is for each student to correctly guess the label that is on his or her back. Each student can guess the label by asking his or her partner for clues. Their partner can answer yes or no to any question.

6 Remind the students that the following questions could provide helpful clues:

- Is this occupation done mainly indoors?
- Is this occupation related to medical care?
- Is this occupation related to business?
- Does this occupation involve the environment?
- Does this occupation involve working with animals?
- Does this occupation require a university degree?
- Does this occupation require IT knowledge?
- Does this occupation call for lots of creativity?
- Does this occupation result in a lot of travel?

7 As the students work in pairs, move around the class to observe and assist the students.

8 In the final moments of the lesson, show the following slideshow to the students:
<http://tinyurl.com/qgucc2v>





SECTION 1

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Section 1 guides students through a series of discussion- and activity-based workshops on self-assessment. In many ways, self-assessment is the first step in the career development cycle. Self-assessment requires each student to look inward and to identify an accurate understanding of their own personality, interests, motivations, skills and values. Through self-assessment, students gain valuable insights which will allow them to make informed decisions about their education and career options.

Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life.

Confucius.

The four workshops in Section 1 focus on:

- Interests
- Personality
- Skills
- Values

Interests

When students embark on self-assessment exercises, it can be helpful to first steer them towards an examination of their own interests. Ask each student about their interests: what is it they like to do and, more importantly, why do they like doing it? It is enormously beneficial to students if you can help them to identify their own strengths and aptitudes. Each student has natural talents that can be fostered, e.g. working with people, working with numbers, solving problems, communicating, researching, organising, being creative and being entrepreneurial.

Personality

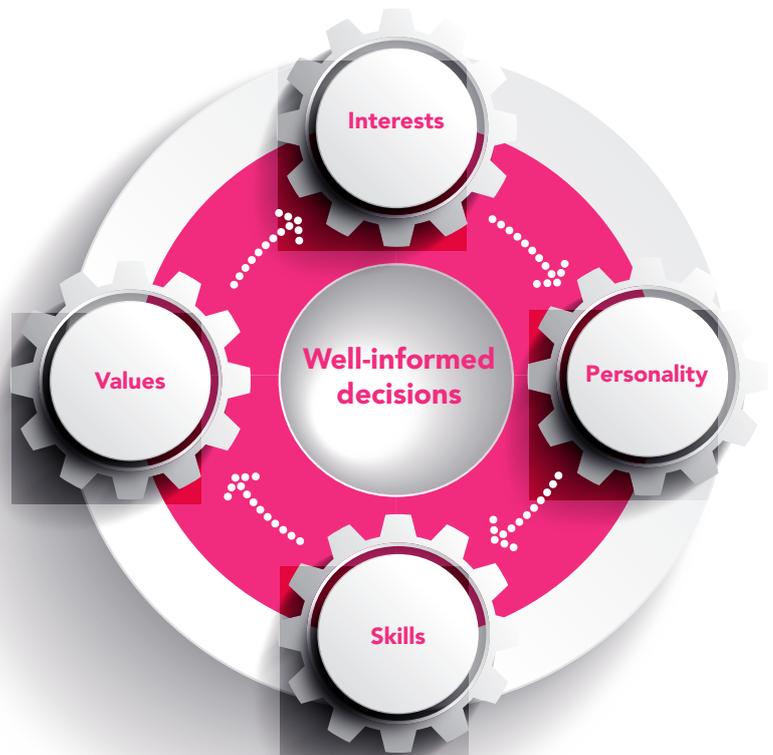
Personality refers to the combination of qualities that form an individual's distinctive character. Personality involves genetic traits but it is also developed through life experience. Personality traits can have a major influence on how well suited a person is to a certain career. Remind students that there is no such thing as a right personality or a wrong personality. However, if a student can find a career that aligns with his or her personality, this can enable the student to feel genuinely fulfilled.

Skills

A skill is a demonstrated ability to do something well. Some skills are inherent. Some skills can be learned and developed through work experience, education, hobbies and interests. When a student faces decisions on future education and career goals, it is vital that the student can determine his or her own skills. Each student has unique skills that are of use in different careers.

Values

Values are the principles that underpin our actions. Each of us holds personal values. If a student can be enabled to find work that is closely aligned with his or her personal values, the student is much more likely to flourish in a career. Students must be encouraged to take into account their personal values when considering their education and career options.



SECTION 1 · OVERVIEW

Workshop 1 Career Interest Evaluation

❖ Worksheet 1.1 Career Interest Summary

Workshop 2 Personality Evaluation

❖ Worksheet 1.2 Personality Test Summary

Workshop 3 Skills Evaluation

❖ Worksheet 1.3 Skills Cards

Workshop 4 Personal Values Evaluation

❖ Worksheet 1.4 Personal Values

❖ Worksheet 1.5 Self-assessment Summary

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources will help you to extend the workshop with your students.

❖ www.careersportal.ie

❖ www.qualifax.ie

Workshop 1 · Career Interest Evaluation



Materials needed: Internet access



Arrangement of group: Large group; students need individual internet access



Time: 1 class

In this workshop, students will complete the Careers Portal Interest-Profiler online test. This test is based on the work of John Holland and measures the relative strengths of a person's career interests. Holland believed that a match between individual traits and workplace factors will lead to career satisfaction. Therefore, choosing a career direction that takes this into consideration is an important starting point for students. The Careers Portal website provides lots of useful information on the theory of career interest. It is well worth reviewing the Careers Portal website with your students before embarking on this workshop.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Ask the students to reflect on what they hope to achieve by participating in this workshop.
- 2 Direct the students to www.careersportal.ie and give them the following instructions:
 - Select **Self-assessment**.
 - Select **Career Interests**.
 - Click the **You Can Learn About Career Interests Here** button.
- 3 Ask the students to read the information on this page and to jot down any questions they might have.
- 4 Ask the students to take a few moments to register on the Careers Portal website. (If they have already registered on the website, ask them to log in.)
- 5 Ask the students to take the Careers Portal Interest-Profiler test. Give students the following instructions to find the test:
 - Select **Self-assessment**.
 - Select **Career Interests**.
 - Click the **Go to the Careers Portal Interest-Profiler Here** button.
- 6 As the students complete the test, encourage them to jot down any notes that are relevant for later discussion.
- 7 When the students have completed the test, provide each student with *Worksheet 1.1 Career Interest Summary* (p.5).
- 8 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 9 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually.
- 10 Facilitate a group discussion based on what the students have learned from completing the worksheet.

Worksheet 1.1 · Career Interest Summary

What are your highest scoring categories?

List three occupations that match your interest.

Would you consider pursuing these occupations? Why/why not?

Workshop 2 · Personality Evaluation



Materials needed: Internet access



Arrangement of group: Large group; students need individual internet access



Time: 1 class

Personality can be described as a person's preferred style of behaviour. We are creatures of habit: in many ways, we tend to be consistent over time and in certain situations. A personality test is merely an indicator of a person's preferences. However, when students can identify their individual strengths and characteristics, this can prove to be valuable in their career explorations.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Ask the students to reflect on what they hope to achieve by participating in this workshop.
- 2 Direct the students to www.careersportal.ie and give them the following instructions:
 - Select **Self-assessment**.
 - Select **Personality**.
- 3 Ask the students to read the information on this page and to jot down any questions they might have.
- 4 Ask the students to take a few moments to register on the Careers Portal website. (If they have already registered on the website, ask them to log in.)
- 5 Ask the students to take the Careers Portal Personality-Profiler test. Give students the following instructions to find the test:
 - Select **Self-assessment**.
 - Select **Personality**.
 - Click the **Go to the Careers Portal Personality-Profiler Here** button.
- 6 As the students complete the test, encourage them to jot down any notes that are relevant for later discussion.
- 7 When the students have completed the test, provide each student with *Worksheet 1.2 Personality Test Summary* (p.7).
- 8 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 9 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually.
- 10 Facilitate a group discussion based on what the students have learned from completing the worksheet.

Worksheet 1.2 · Personality Test Summary

What are your strongest personality types?

When are you most happy?

Do you agree or disagree with the test results?

Workshop 3 · Skills Evaluation



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

Workshop 3 focuses on students' skills. It is important for each student to be able to identify his or her unique skillset and to articulate how they might apply these skills to their education and career options.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion that includes the following questions:
 - What are skills?
 - Why is it important to have a good understanding of your skills when it comes to making decisions about education and career options?
 - Can anybody name the skills that they possess?
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 1.3 Skills Cards* (p.9).
- 3 Provide the class with a set of Skills Cards (included in your *First Leanings* toolkit). Each student must examine the set of Skills Cards in order to complete the worksheet. Each student must read the description of each skill and categorise it into either *I am naturally good at these skills* or *I need to work to improve these skills*.
- 4 When each student has completed the exercise, facilitate a group discussion that includes the following questions:
 - What skills are you naturally good at?
 - What skills do you need to work on?
 - What skills are you undecided about? Why?
 - Can you find any connections between the skills that you are naturally good at and your hobbies, talents or favourite subjects?
 - Can you find any connections between the skills that you are naturally good at and any potential career paths?
 - Is it important to find a career in which you can use the skills that you are naturally good at? Why/why not?

Workshop 4 · Personal Values Evaluation



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

Workshop 4 combines individual work and group work. As an individual, each student has the opportunity to discover and reflect upon his or her own personal values. As part of a group, each student can also explore conflicts related to personal values and the ways in which these conflicts can be overcome.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion that includes the following questions:
 - ❖ What are values?
 - ❖ Why is it important to have a good understanding of your values when it comes to making decisions about education and career options?
 - ❖ Can anybody name the values that they hold?
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 1.4 Personal Values* (p.11).
- 3 Read through Part 1 of the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Ask the students to complete Part 1 of the worksheet individually. Facilitate a group discussion that includes the solutions on p.15.
- 5 After the group discussion on Part 1 of the worksheet, divide the class into groups of four.
- 6 Bring the students' attention to Part 2 of the worksheet. Read through Part 2 of the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 7 Ask the students to work in their groups and to complete Part 2 of the worksheet.
- 8 When the groups have completed Part 2 of the worksheet, facilitate a group discussion that includes the following questions:
 - ❖ What values are at odds for each of the people in the stories?
 - ❖ Can you suggest what each person might do to resolve his or her conflict?
- 9 After the group discussion, provide each student with *Worksheet 1.5 Self-assessment Summary* (p.16). Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 10 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually.

Worksheet 1.4 • Personal Values: Part 1

Read the values and the descriptions below. Match each value to the correct description.

When you have matched the values to their correct descriptions, list the five values that matter the most to you for the future.

Value	Description
1 Prestige	A The work you do may improve society.
2 Variety	B You work without close supervision and make your own decisions on the job.
3 Job security	C Your job involves brainstorming and testing out new ideas and innovations.
4 Social conscience	D You enjoy the company of your colleagues and you work well on team projects.
5 Leadership	E Changes in the economy do not threaten your job: there will always be career opportunities in your area.
6 Independence	F Your employer places a value on your suggestions and you receive credit for doing good work.
7 Flexibility	G Your job allows you to plan and direct activities and to oversee the work of other people.
8 Recognition	H Your work environment is safe, clean, comfortable and attractive.
9 High income	I As soon as you leave work, you are able to forget about the stresses of the job.
10 Creativity	J You provide direct care to others and help them on a one-to-one basis.
11 Learning	K You set up your own work schedule.
12 Good working relationships	L You are exposed to new things every day on the job. You have the opportunity to do further study outside of work.
13 Leisure	M Your work involves many different activities, people and places.
14 Aesthetics	N You do not have to commute far for your job. There is no chance that you will have to relocate to another region or country for your job.

Value	Description
15 Challenge	O You have the opportunity to really test your knowledge and abilities.
16 Geographical location	P You get plenty of time off and you are able to spend holidays with friends and family.
17 Peace of mind	Q Your job has high status in the community and you are respected for your work.
18 Advancement	R You have a good chance to earn a lot of money through your salary or through bonuses.
19 Helping others	S Your employer promotes from within.
20 Mastery	T You can become an expert in your field. You will feel personal satisfaction from a high level of competency in your job.

1 =	2 =	3 =	4 =	5 =	6 =	7 =	8 =	9 =	10 =
11 =	12 =	13 =	14 =	15 =	16 =	17 =	18 =	19 =	20 =

The values that matter the most to me for the future	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Worksheet 1.4 · Personal Values: Part 2

Read the fictional scenarios below. Each story features an individual who faces a conflict of personal values in relation to his or her career.

Work in groups to discuss the scenarios. Think about the person in each story and:

- Identify the values that are at odds for this person
- Suggest how this person might resolve the conflict.

Remember!

There are no right or wrong answers for this worksheet. Read the stories carefully, discuss with your group and offer your opinions.

Scenario 1

Mary is 38 years old and has worked for a prestigious law firm since she was 25 years old. Over the past thirteen years, Mary has regularly worked 60–70 hours per week. She has won major cases and has felt the recognition of her peers and the partners in the firm. Two years ago, Mary got married. She and her husband decided to start a family. Mary recently had her first baby and she is now wondering whether she wants to return to work at the firm. Mary is very attached to her little boy and she wants to watch him grow up. But she has worked so hard on her career and she is proud of her achievements. She is very accomplished and she is reluctant to opt out completely from her career path. She is coming towards the end of her maternity leave and she has to make a decision about what she wants to do. She has the full support of her husband but she is at a personal crossroads.

Scenario 2

At 29, John has been a Garda for five years. He studied Forensic Science and received an honours degree. John's work involves tracking and investigating gang activity in Dublin in order to prevent criminal activity. John knows that he is helping to make the Dublin community a safer place. He feels that he is improving society and that this is what makes his job worthwhile. However, John was recently attacked while on duty and he has been warned that he is a target for gang retaliation. John has become distressed: he has disturbing dreams and recurring health problems. He is trying to decide whether he should apply for a desk job, which would be less dangerous.

Scenario 3

George works as a manager for a top IT company. He has been with the company for over twenty years, and he worked in various other IT companies in the ten years before that. George has received several promotions throughout his career. Now, at 52 years old, he earns a high salary that allows him to live comfortably. However, George's view is that his job in recent years has become more managerial in nature. George manages projects and in-house staff but he does not have the opportunity to try out new technologies or to develop new strategies that might help the company's customers. George misses the creativity and brainstorming that used to be part of his job. George is passionate about his hobbies: acting and videography. He often wonders if he could make a decent wage in one of these career areas. George is thinking about changing careers now, but he wonders if he should wait until he is old enough to take early retirement before trying out any new career paths.

Scenario 4

Anne is 22 years old and has recently finished college. After graduation, Anne returned home to live with her parents and she took up the office job that she has held every summer during her college course. Anne really likes her employer and colleagues. They have all worked closely together in the past three years. They get along and work well as a team. Recently, Anne's employer told her that they would be looking for an office manager and suggested that Anne could apply for this permanent job now that she has finished college. Anne's degree is in Early Childhood Education. She has always wanted to work with children with intellectual disabilities. She feels that she could really help to make a difference in children's lives. In the past few months, Anne has seen several job opportunities in her area of study. However, Anne has not applied for any of these jobs. While these jobs certainly sound interesting, Anne also likes her current work in the office. She is unsure what to do.

Teacher's solutions to Worksheet 1.4 Personal Values Part 1

1 = Q	2 = M	3 = E	4 = A	5 = G	6 = B	7 = K	8 = F	9 = R	10 = C
11 = L	12 = D	13 = P	14 = H	15 = O	16 = N	17 = I	18 = S	19 = J	20 = T

Worksheet 1.5 · Self-assessment Summary

What did I learn from the Interest-Profiler test?

What is my personality type?

What are my top five skills?

What are my top five personal values?



SECTION 2

RESEARCHING THE OPTIONS

The decisions students make about third-level courses and career choices are influenced by a range of factors, such as: family and peer expectations, CAO points, popularity of certain courses and careers in any given year, graduate salary expectations, and stereotypical views of certain jobs. Therefore, it is essential that students conduct thorough research on courses and career options. Students need to look beyond the title of the course or career in order to understand what is really involved in pursuing this path. For each student, it is vital that their chosen course or career is well suited to their individual strengths and interests.

Section 2 facilitates students in developing research skills and completing a career investigation exercise. This encourages students to learn more about their personal interests and career preferences. Students will develop practical career research skills, along with the ability to integrate information from a variety of sources in order to prepare a presentation. Students will gain in-depth knowledge of a particular career area and its surrounding educational and training requirements. Students will identify and analyse the skills and personal qualities required for a particular career. They will plan and set up an informational interview with a person in a selected career area. Finally, students will reflect on what they have learned and will evaluate all of the information they gained through the career investigation exercise.

SECTION 2 · OVERVIEW

Workshop 1 Course Research Skills

- Worksheet 2.1 Qualifax
- Worksheet 2.2 Careers Portal/CAO Wizard
- Worksheet 2.3 CAO Course Search
- Worksheet 2.4 Taking a Detailed Look

Workshop 2 Career Investigation

- Worksheet 2.5 Career Investigation

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources will help you to extend the workshop with your students.

- www.cao.ie

The CAO website provides information on everything related to the CAO application process, including an online version of the handbook and video guides.

- www.careersportal.ie

This website brings together a wide range of career-related information aimed at students, parents, guardians and guidance professionals.

- www.cimaglobal.com; www.cpairland.ie; www.accaglobal.com; www.charteredaccountants.ie; www.taxinstitute.ie

These websites provide information on careers in accountancy and tax consultancy.

- www.european-funding-guide.eu

This website is a useful database that can be used to search for third-level funding opportunities.

- www.failteireland.ie

This is the official tourism trade website for Ireland. It provides up-to-date information on the Irish tourism sector.

- www.garda.ie

This website provides information on careers in Ireland's police service.

- www.gotocollege.ie

This website has a database of courses and provides information on career paths and preparation for college.

- www.gradireland.com

This website offers career advice and information on graduate jobs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

••••• www.heca.ie

The Higher Education Colleges Association website is a good source of information on most independent colleges in Ireland.

••••• www.kingsinns.ie

This website provides information on careers in the area of law.

••••• www.lawsociety.ie

The Law Society is the educational, representative and regulatory body for solicitors in Ireland.

••••• www.military.ie

This website provides information on careers in the army, air corps and naval service.

••••• www.nursingboard.ie

This website provides information on careers in nursing and midwifery.

••••• www.onetonline.org

This website provides detailed descriptions of the world of work in order to inform students about their career options.

••••• www.qqi.ie

The Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) website provides information on programmes, awards, providers and foreign qualification recognition.

••••• www.qualifax.ie

This website offers a comprehensive list of all of the courses on offer in Ireland.

••••• www.science.ie

This website brings together information on many areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in Ireland. The website offers information for students, parents and teachers.

••••• www.steps.ie

This website provides information on STEM subjects and associated careers.

••••• www.teachingcouncil.ie

The Teaching Council promotes and regulates the profession of teaching in Ireland. This website provides information on training and career opportunities.

••••• www.teagasc.ie

Teagasc is the agriculture and food development authority in Ireland. This website provides up-to-date information on the sector.

Workshop 1 · Course Research Skills



Materials needed: Internet access



Arrangement of group: Large group; students need individual internet access



Time: 1 class

The process of researching courses takes time and effort. When a student conducts this research, it is vital that they focus on the structure and content of courses. This gives the student a good understanding of what is involved in a course and how it might suit their individual strengths and interests. When third-level students decide to opt out of a course of study, the common reasons cited are that the student did not know enough about the course before they began, and that they had a poor understanding of what would be involved in this study path.

It is important for students to understand that research is a valuable activity for everyone. The process of researching different courses will prove to be just as valuable for those students who have a definite course in mind as it is for those who are still undecided. Encourage students to keep an open mind and to look beyond course titles, which can sometimes be misleading.

Students can find valuable information on a specific course by looking at the prospectus or the website of the course provider. When students research specific courses in this way, encourage them to learn about the course structure in full. The course structure (or programme structure) will provide information on the specific subjects (or modules) taught within a course. Encourage students to follow the course structure through to the second, third and fourth years. Many courses now offer a broad base of modules in the first year and allow students to specialise in second, third and fourth year.

Remind students that the prospectus or website of the course provider can be a useful resource for contact details. Programme outlines will usually include direct phone or email contacts for course directors. If a student has a specific question in relation to a course, suggest that they send a direct email to the course director.

The website of the course provider can also be a worthwhile resource for student videos and blogs. These videos and blogs provide students with a good overview of the courses available and can be useful in answering frequently asked questions. In addition, students may have friends or acquaintances who are already taking a course that they themselves would like to take. Encourage your students to have conversations with these third-level students, where appropriate.

Workshop 1 includes four worksheets specifically designed to guide students through the process of researching a course of study. In Workshop 1, students will become familiar with online research tools and will develop their individual research skills.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion on the following points:
 - Why is it important to conduct course research?
 - Can you name some of the ways in which we can conduct course research?
 - What are some of the practical tasks involved in conducting course research?
- 2 Provide each student with the following worksheets: *Worksheet 2.1 Qualifax* (p.24), *Worksheet 2.2 Careers Portal/CAO Wizard* (p.26) and *Worksheet 2.3 CAO Course Search* (p.27).
- 3 Read through each worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Ask the students to complete each worksheet individually.
- 5 Provide each student with *Worksheet 2.4 Taking a Detailed Look* (p.29) and repeat Steps 3–4.
- 6 Ask the students to look again at the answers they provided in *Worksheet 2.4 Taking a Detailed Look*. Facilitate a group discussion based on what the students have learned in completing this worksheet.



Worksheet 2.1 • Qualifax

- 1 Go to www.qualifax.ie.
- 2 Select **Students**.
- 3 Select **Course Finder**.
- 4 Select **Higher Education CAO**.
- 5 In **Course Title/Keywords**, type in *Business Studies*.
- 6 In the **Award Name** drop-down list, select **Degree – Honours Bachelor (Level 8 NFC)**.
- 7 In the **Province** drop-down list, select **Leinster**.
- 8 Click the **Search** button.
- 9 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

- 10 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

- 11 Conduct a new search, beginning again at **Higher Education CAO**.
- 12 In **Course Title/Keywords**, type in *Medicine*.
- 13 Click the **Search** button.
- 14 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

15 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

16 Conduct a new search, beginning again at **Higher Education CAO**.

17 In **Course Title/Keywords**, type in any subject area in which you have an interest.

18 Click the **Search** button.

19 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

20 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

Worksheet 2.2 · Careers Portal/CAO Wizard

- 1 Go to www.careersportal.ie.
- 2 In the **What to Study** drop-down list, click on **CAO Wizard Search**.
- 3 In **Select Study Areas/Science & Engineering**, select **Medicinal Devices**.
- 4 In **Choose a Level**, select **Level 8 (Honours Degree, Higher Diploma)**.
- 5 In **Estimate Your CAO Points**, type in *400*.
- 6 In **Course Requirements/Maths Level**, select **Higher**. In **Lab Science**, select **Yes**. In **Modern Language**, select **No**.
- 7 In **What Region or College**, select **Munster**.
- 8 Click the **Search Now** button at the bottom of the page.
- 9 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

- 10 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

Worksheet 2.3 · CAO Course Search

- 1 Go to www.cao.ie.
- 2 Select **Menu** and **Courses**.
- 3 In **Search by Institution** type in, for example, *Galway–Mayo Institute of Technology*.
- 4 Click the **Go** button.
- 5 Choose two courses from **Honours Bachelor Degrees – Level 8** and two courses from **Ordinary Bachelor Degrees/Higher Certificates – Level 7/Level 6** and list them below.

(a)	
(b)	
(c)	
(d)	

- 6 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

- 7 Select **Return to Course Search**.
- 8 In **Search by title/keyword**, type in *Spanish*.
- 9 Click the **Go** button.
- 10 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

11 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

Worksheet 2.4 · Taking a Detailed Look

Choose one course that you have researched and answer the questions below.

In your opinion, does the course title reflect the course content?

Does the course content interest you?

What do you think of the modules?

Does the course match your strengths?

What kind of study is involved? For example, will the course involve independent project or research work, laboratory work or group work? Will it involve a lot of reading or maths?

Workshop 2 · Career Investigation



Materials needed: Internet access, PowerPoint



Arrangement of group: Large group; students need individual internet access

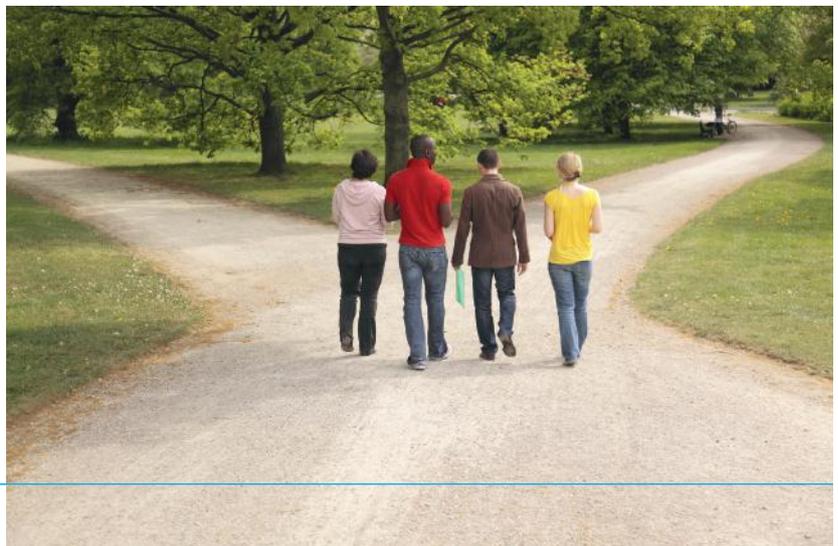


Time: 3 classes

Workshop 2 builds on the research skills developed in Workshop 1. By now, students are aware that the ability to research and plan a career is essential when preparing for life after school. Students have learned how to access the career information that will allow them to make informed decisions. In Workshop 2, students put their research skills to specific use in a career investigation. Students will identify and analyse the skills and personal qualities required to pursue a specific career. They will plan and set up an informational interview with a person in their selected career area. As a result of Workshop 2, students can evaluate and reflect on all of the information they have gained as part of their career investigation.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students.
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 2.5 Career Investigation* (p.31).
- 3 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually and to use it as a basis for a 10-minute presentation on their career investigation.
- 5 Three class periods have been scheduled for this workshop. During Classes 1 and 2, focus on preparing the students to create their presentations. If the students cannot complete their presentations within the time allowed, encourage the students to complete this work at home. Class 3 should be scheduled in order to allow you time to review each student's presentation. During Class 3, focus on shared learning and facilitate a question-and-answer session on the issues that students faced during their career investigations.



Worksheet 2.5 • Career Investigation

This worksheet will help you to investigate a career and to create a 10-minute presentation on your findings. You may use PowerPoint or other methods to display your presentation. Ideally, you should investigate a career that you intend to pursue in the future. Regardless of which career you focus on for this investigation, try to include the following pointers in your final presentation.

Job Title or Career Area

- Clearly identify the job title or career area that is the focus of your investigation.

Description

- Describe the job title or career area. Give details about the type of work, the usual tasks and the main responsibilities to be expected.

Education Pathways

- Identify two pathways that can lead to this career: one pathway that includes Level 8 and one pathway that includes Levels 6, 7 or apprenticeship. Use the following headings to provide the information for each pathway:

- ∞ Course name (and code, if available)
- ∞ College or organisation name (e.g. Cork IT)
- ∞ Course entry requirements (e.g. Irish OL B3, English OL D3, Maths HL C3)
- ∞ Where to apply and what to expect (e.g. through CAO: 360 points last year)
- ∞ Length of course (e.g. 3 years full-time)
- ∞ Level of qualification on the National Framework (e.g. Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree, Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree).

Career Skills and Personal Qualities

- Career skills can be defined as a person's ability to do a particular job.
- Personal qualities (traits or characteristics) also play an important role in career choices.
- Examine the list of career skills and personal qualities at the end of this worksheet. Choose two skills and two qualities that are linked to your career investigation and explain why each one is important for a successful career in this area.

Future Opportunities

- Investigate the job prospects, career progression and salary potential for this career. For example: What might a biomedical engineer earn? Does this career bring the opportunity to travel?

Career Interview

- ❖ While online research can provide plenty of information for your career investigation, you may still have unanswered questions. If possible, conduct an interview with a person who is currently working in the career area that you are investigating. Use the following questions as a base for your interview:
 - ∞ Why did you decide to go into this career?
 - ∞ What are the typical education requirements for this career?
 - ∞ What skills are needed for this career?
 - ∞ What personal qualities are needed in order to be successful in this career area?
 - ∞ How would you describe a typical working day?
 - ∞ Do you work standard business hours (i.e. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or is shift work, weekend work or overtime required?
 - ∞ What do you like the most about your career?
 - ∞ What do you dislike the most about your career?
 - ∞ What effect does your career have on your lifestyle?
 - ∞ What other jobs or volunteer positions did you have before you reached your present position?
 - ∞ What opportunities for advancement or lateral movement exist in this career?
 - ∞ How do you foresee your career area changing in the future?
 - ∞ What is the employment outlook for this area over the next ten years?
 - ∞ What is the average starting salary? What benefits can be expected in a career in this area?

Reflection and Future Decisions

- ❖ After you have gathered lots of information as part of your career investigation, take some time to reflect on the questions below.
 - ∞ Do you feel that this career is suited to your personal skills and interests?
 - ∞ Are you still interested in this career? Explain why/why not.
 - ∞ What Leaving Certificate subjects must you choose in order to gain entry into this career?
 - ∞ Do you need to gain voluntary work experience as part of this career path?
 - ∞ Are there any hobbies you can take up that might be relevant to this career?
 - ∞ In pursuing this career, are there any areas (e.g. academic, work experience, personal qualities) in which you need to develop?

••• In undertaking this career investigation, what skills did you develop and what insights did you gain?

Career Skills	Personal Qualities
Writing	Drive
Presenting	Determination
Listening	Enthusiasm
Public speaking	Energy
Time management	Hard-working
Showing initiative	Honesty
Analysing	Leadership
Problem solving	Flexibility/adaptability
Evaluating	Motivation
Project management	Confidence
Entrepreneurial skills	Innovation and creativity
IT	Team-player
Numerical	Ability to influence
Teamwork	Self-confidence
Planning and organising	Persuasiveness

SECTION 3

SUBJECT CHOICES

Section 3 facilitates students in exploring their subject choices for the Leaving Certificate. This section is designed to be integrated with your school's current options on subject choices. Choosing subjects for the Leaving Certificate is a very important process for students. Sometimes the decisions can be difficult. However, if a student can make the correct subject choices, this sets the student on the path to their preferred career and helps them to get the points needed in order to gain entry to the third-level course of their choosing.

Workshop 1 of Section 3 encourages students to reflect on what they have learned to date and to link this information with their subject choices. The workshop aims to build awareness around subject options. As a result of the workshop, students can create a list of possible subject choices and will be able to communicate why they want to choose these particular subjects.

SECTION 3 · OVERVIEW

Workshop 1

- Worksheet 3.1 Subject Choices: What I Need to Consider
- Worksheet 3.2 Subject Evaluation
- Worksheet 3.3 My Possible Subject Choices

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources will help you to extend the workshop with your students.

- www.education.ie
- www.examinations.ie
- <http://tinyurl.com/p4juvkx>
- <http://tinyurl.com/pcufpou>
- www.qualifax.ie
- *Student Yearbook and Career Directory*

Workshop 1 · Subject Choices



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Ask the students to reflect on what they hope to achieve by participating in this workshop.
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 3.1 Subject Choices: What I Need to Consider* (p.37).
- 3 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually.
- 5 Facilitate a group discussion based on what the students have learned from completing the worksheet.
- 6 Provide each student with *Worksheet 3.2 Subject Evaluation* (p.39) and repeat Steps 3–5.
- 7 Provide each student with *Worksheet 3.3 My Possible Subject Choices* (p.47) and repeat Steps 3–5.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- At the end of the workshop, each student will have created a list of possible subject choices. Each student will be able to communicate why they want to choose these particular subjects.
- Remind the students that they can conduct further research of their own, using the resources listed on p.35.
- Encourage the students to discuss their subject choices with their parents/guardians.

Worksheet 3.1 · Subject Choices: What I Need to Consider

My interests and abilities

What I would like to do after the Leaving Certificate

--

The subjects I enjoyed at Junior Certificate

What I hope to achieve in the Leaving Certificate (grades/points)

The subjects I can potentially do well in at Leaving Certificate

I have a particular college course in mind and the entry requirements are

I have a particular college course in mind and it requires these Leaving Certificate subjects

I am undecided on what to do after my Leaving Certificate and these subjects will keep my options open

Worksheet 3.2 · Subject Evaluation

Remember!

Since Irish, English and Maths (the core subjects) are compulsory, you do not need to evaluate these subjects here.

You do not need to evaluate every subject on this worksheet: evaluate *only the subjects that are offered by your school.*

Applied Sciences

Agricultural Economics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Agricultural Science	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Architectural Technology/ Construction	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Design and Communication Graphics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Engineering	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Business

Accounting	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Business	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Economics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Languages

Arabic	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Classical Studies	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

French	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

German	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Greek	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Iralian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Japanese	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Latin	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Latvian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Lithuanian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Polish	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Russian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Spanish	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Sciences

Applied Mathematics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Biology	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Chemistry	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Physics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Physics and Chemistry	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Social/Arts

Art	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Geography	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

History	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Home Economics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Music	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Worksheet 3.3 · My Possible Subject Choices

	Subject	Why?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

CAREER



SECTION 4

WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience is a core aspect of the Transition Year programme. Work experience offers students a valuable opportunity to gain an understanding of the world of work and to explore the career areas of interest to them. Through work experience, students can develop the employability skills that will be of benefit to them in their future educations and careers. Work experience can result in students being drawn towards particular courses and careers. Equally, work experience can result in students being reluctant to pursue certain career paths after school. Either way, the experience is valuable.

Students must be equipped with the tools that will enable them to source relevant work experience. If work experience is chosen carefully, this experience will provide students with deep insight into what certain jobs really entail. Work experience is also valuable in teaching students the concept of employability skills. Work experience highlights for students the skills that they already have, as well as the skills that they may need to develop. In order for students to really gain benefit from their work experience, they need to reflect on the experience and document the things that they learn along the way.

Section 4 will equip students with practical tools for employment, e.g. how to write a CV and cover letter. Students will learn the most effective ways of contacting employers. They will learn about the interview process and will gain experience in mock interviews. The workshops in Section 4



combine practical, hands-on exercises with plenty of opportunity for students to reflect and develop self-awareness.

SECTION 4 · OVERVIEW

Workshop 1 Preparing a Curriculum Vitae

•••• Worksheet 4.1 CV

Workshop 2 Preparing a Cover Letter

•••• Worksheet 4.2 Cover Letter

Workshop 3 Elevator Pitch

•••• Worksheet 4.3 Elevator Pitch

Workshop 4 Interview Skills

•••• Worksheet 4.4 Interview Skills

•••• Worksheet 4.5 Mock Interview

Workshop 5 Employability

•••• Worksheet 4.6 Employability

Workshop 6 Preparing for Work Experience

Workshop 7 Work Experience Diary and Work Experience Review

•••• Worksheet 4.7 Work Experience Diary

•••• Worksheet 4.8 Work Experience Review

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources will help you to extend the workshop with your students.

•••• www.spunout.ie

•••• www.irishjobs.ie

•••• www.monster.ie

Workshop 1 · Preparing a Curriculum Vitae (CV)



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard, Microsoft Word access



Arrangement of group: Large group; students need individual computer access



Time: 2 classes (students will complete the CV in class)

A student's CV may be the first impression that he or she makes on a prospective employer. Therefore, it is essential that each student has a well-presented, professional CV. This workshop highlights the key elements of a CV and offers answers to frequently asked questions in relation to CVs. The worksheets will guide students through the creation of a targeted CV that they can use to source work experience. This workshop will also include tips on emailing CVs and making online applications.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion on the following points:
 - What is the purpose of a CV?
 - Why is it important to have a well-presented, professional CV?
 - Has anyone completed a CV already? What did you include in it?
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.1 CV* (p.52).
- 3 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Before the students begin creating their CVs, show students the following video:
 - <http://tinyurl.com/o697xsn>
- 5 As the students prepare their CVs, move around the class to observe and assist the students.



Worksheet 4.1 · CV

Tips for Preparing Your CV

The following questions and answers will help you to write a good CV.

How long should my CV be?

- ❖ Your CV should be 1–2 pages of A4 size.

How should I present my CV?

- ❖ Your CV should be clear, concise and easy to read.
- ❖ Use a legible font, e.g. Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial.
- ❖ Use headings for smaller sections and put these headings in bold so that they stand out.
- ❖ Leave some white space on the page so that the headings are clearly separated and your CV can be scanned and read with ease.
- ❖ If you are providing your CV as a printout, use good-quality white A4 writing paper.

What style of language should I use?

- ❖ Use business-like language.
- ❖ Use an active voice. For example: use action verbs such as *organised*, *planned* and *created*.
- ❖ Look at the language used in the job advertisement and try to mirror this language in your CV.
- ❖ Connect the descriptions in the job advertisement to your work experience, skills and abilities.
- ❖ Use concise phrases to convey your key skills or knowledge, e.g. *Proficient in Excel* or *Fluent in Spanish*.
- ❖ Avoid using the personal pronoun 'I', if possible.
- ❖ Be positive and focus on your accomplishments.

What personal details should I include?

- ❖ Your contact details are most important: name, address, telephone number, email address.
- ❖ Pay attention to your email address: ensure that it sounds suitable in a business environment.

What educational information should I include?

- List your education in reverse chronological order, i.e. put the most recent events at the top.
- List your post-primary details: name the school you attended and give the date span of your time there.
- Provide your Junior Certificate results.
- List your primary school details: name the school you attended and give the date span of your time there.

What work experience details should I include?

- List your work experience in reverse chronological order, i.e. put the most recent events at the top.
- For each work experience, give the following details:
 - Name of employer
 - Dates of work experience
 - Job title
 - Responsibilities involved.

What other qualifications should I include?

- Give details of any other qualifications that might relate to the job description, e.g. First Aid or HACCP certificate.
- Provide the date of each qualification earned.

What about my interests and achievements?

- Give some details about your interests.
- Focus on any positions of responsibility that you hold in committees or clubs in or outside school, e.g. youth club.
- Highlight any activities that involve community work, charity work or sports.
- Give some indication of the level of commitment involved.
- List any major achievements.
- Link your interests and achievements to the skills and personal qualities highlighted in the job application, e.g. leadership, teamwork or commitment.

What references do I need?

- ❖ Two references are usually required: one from a teacher and one from a work environment.
- ❖ Check in advance that your referees are willing to support your application.
- ❖ Provide the name, job title and contact details for each referee.
- ❖ It is an option for you not to provide referees immediately. If you wish to do this, write *References available on request.*

Remember!
Proofread your CV carefully, paying special attention to spelling and grammar. Then ask your teacher or guardian to double check your CV before you send it anywhere.

Tips for Emailing CVs and Making Online Applications

Most employers accept CVs by email. Also, in order to deal with a high volume of applications, it is common nowadays for large employers to accept online applications only. Online applications provide employers with an efficient means of pre-interview screening. Online applications are not an easy option, however. You need to spend just as much time thinking, researching and planning as you would for traditional application forms or CVs. The tips below will help you to become familiar with emailing CVs and making online applications.

Emailing CVs

- Before sending your CV as an attachment, ensure that you have given the file an appropriate name. It is useful to include your own name as part of the file name. For example: *John O'Connor CV* will be easier to identify than *CV1*.
- Convert your file into a PDF before you send it as an attachment.
- Include a suitable subject line in your email, e.g. *Transition Year Work Experience Application*.
- In the body of the email, write a cover letter. Specify the job application that you are answering and summarise your skills, education, etc.
- Ensure that you are sending the CV to the right person. If you have any doubts, phone the company to ask who exactly should receive applications.
- Email the CV to yourself as a 'test email' before you send the final email to the employer.

Making Online Applications

- Download the form and practise your answers on the hard copy first.
- If you want to insert a larger piece of text, you can write it in a Word document first. When you are certain that the text is free of errors, you can cut and paste it into the application form.
- If the application form asks you to demonstrate a particular skill (e.g. leadership) use the STAR Technique – see *Worksheet 4.4 Interview Skills*.
- As you work through the application, save the file at regular intervals.
- If the spell-check facility does not work with your application form, make an extra effort to ensure that all spellings are correct before you send the application.
- Check and save the final version of your application form before you submit it.
- Print a hard copy of the final version that you sent.
- Keep a record of all online applications that you send.

Sample CV

John O'Connor

45 Wolfe Tone Avenue, Dublin Road, Limerick City

Telephone: 061 123 456 Mobile: 086 123 4567 Email: joconnor@email.com

Education

- 2014–Present: Castletroy Comprehensive, Limerick City
- *Junior Certificate 2017*
HL results: Maths B, English A, Science C, Metalwork C, History B, Geography C, Business A
OL results: Irish B, French C, Technical Graphics A
- 2007–2014 St Michael's Primary School, Castletroy, Limerick City

Work experience

2017–Present: Tesco, Castletroy, Limerick City

Floor Assistant duties include:

- Assisting shoppers to find goods and products
- Stocking shelves with merchandise
- Reporting discrepancies and problems to the supervisor
- Keeping the store tidy and clean, e.g. sweeping and mopping
- Attaching price tags to merchandise on the shop floor
- Receiving and storing the delivery of large amounts of stock

Other qualifications

- 2017 Basic First Aid
- 2016 HACCP Certificate
- 2016 Manual Handling

Interests and achievements

- Keen sportsperson: plays on the school's Gaelic football and rugby teams
- Passionate about music: plays the piano; currently preparing for Grade V exams
- Active member of the local youth club
- Junior Sportsperson of the Year award-winner in 2016

References

Anne Lynch

Principal

Castletroy Comprehensive

Limerick City

061 123 123

Mark Shanahan

Store Manager

Tesco

Castletroy, Limerick City

061 456 456

CV: Putting it into Practice

Put into practice all of the information you have learned about CVs. Read the job advertisement below and create your own CV for this job.

Customer Assistant in Fresco Ireland

Main responsibilities

- Put the customer first and consider them in everything you do.
- Get to know your customers and serve them with pride.
- Ensure that products and services are available for customers at all times.
- Handle all products with care in order to maintain quality and ensure that all products reach the customer in the best possible condition.
- Keep the shop floor and back areas clean and tidy at all times.
- Follow all company policies and adhere to health and safety routines.
- Fulfil your core role and also support colleagues by helping in other departments occasionally.

Ideal candidate

- You have a proven ability to provide quality customer service.
- You can greet, acknowledge and help customers with natural enthusiasm.
- You work hard for your customers, your team and your department.
- You have the ability to prioritise and ensure that anything you do is right for the customer.
- You are adaptable and resilient: you can meet the ever-changing demands of the business.
- You can follow instructions: verbal and written.
- You are reliable and a good timekeeper.
- You look neat and tidy at all times.

Workshop 2 · Preparing a Cover Letter



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard, Microsoft Word access



Arrangement of group: Large group; students need individual computer access

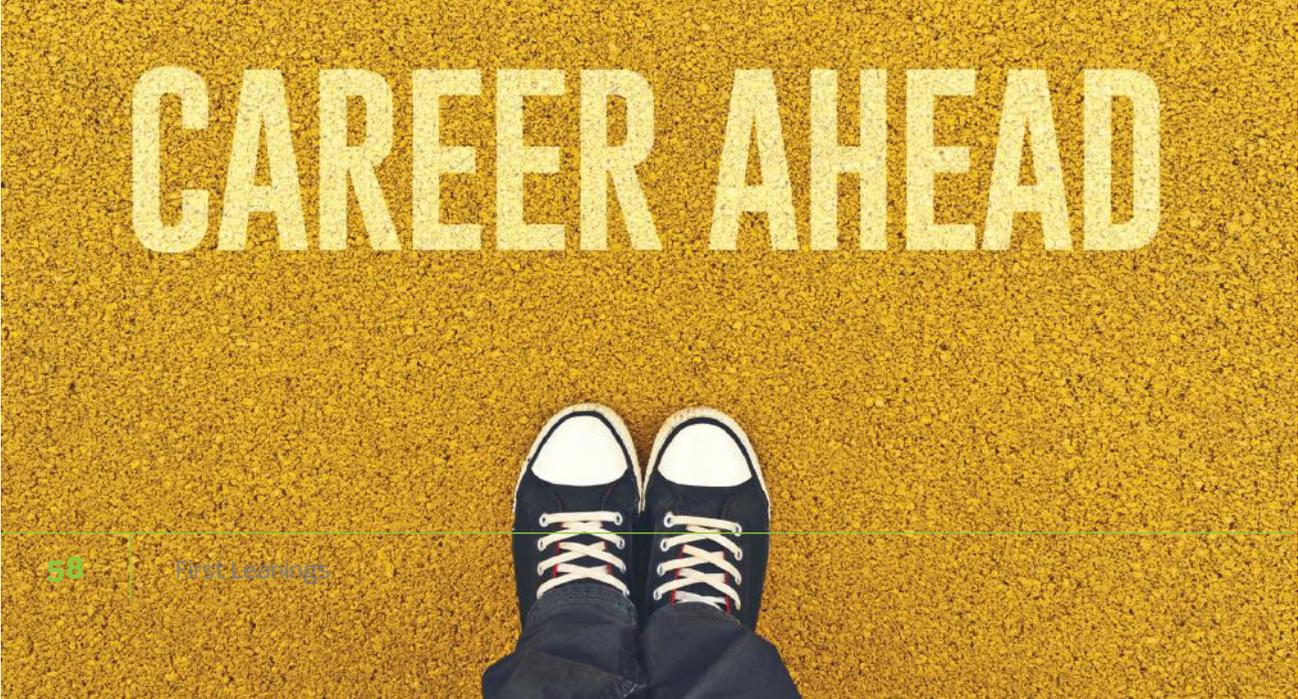


Time: 2 classes (students will complete the cover letter in class)

A cover letter should attract the employer's interest and invite them to read the attached CV. A well-written cover letter brings focus to a CV: it tells the employer what position the student is applying for and explains how the student's education, skills and accomplishments will fit the job. A cover letter offers the student an opportunity to highlight his or her writing abilities and it gives the employer a glimpse of the student's personality. This workshop equips students with the skills required to write an effective and engaging cover letter.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion on the following points:
 - What is the purpose of a cover letter?
 - Why is it important to have a well-presented, professional cover letter?
 - Has anyone written a cover letter already? What did you include in it?
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.2 Cover Letter* (p.59).
- 3 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Before the students begin creating their cover letters, show students the following video (section 2):
 - <http://tinyurl.com/o697xsn>
- 5 As the students prepare their cover letters, move around the class to observe and assist the students.



CAREER AHEAD

Worksheet 4.2 · Cover Letter

The cover letter provides you with an opportunity to:

- Introduce yourself to the employer
- Personalise your CV
- Highlight the information that addresses the needs and interests of the employer.

Tips for Preparing Your Cover Letter

The following questions and answers will help you to write a good cover letter.

How long should my cover letter be?

- Your cover letter should be no longer than one A4 page.

How should I present my cover letter?

- Your cover letter should be clear, concise and easy to read.
- Use a legible font, e.g. Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial.
- Space your cover letter evenly on the page.
- If you are providing your cover letter as a printout, use good-quality white A4 writing paper.

What style of language should I use?

- Use business-like language.
- Address your cover letter to a named person, e.g. *Dear Ms Murray*. Use a generic phrase, e.g. *Dear Head of Human Resources*, only as a last resort.
- If your letter is to a named person, start the letter with, for example, *Dear Ms Murray* and end the letter with *Yours sincerely*.
- If your letter is to an unnamed person, start the letter with *Dear Sir/Madam* and end the letter with *Yours faithfully*.

What should I include in the opening of my cover letter?

- Use your opening paragraph to say why you are writing, e.g. *I am writing in response to your recent advertisement*.
- Your opening paragraph should also state what you are currently doing, e.g. *I am a Transition Year student in St Mary's College, Bishopstown*.

What should I include in the middle of my cover letter?

- ❖ The main part of your cover letter can include a few paragraphs. Aim to answer these questions:
 - ∞ Why do you want to work for this particular company, government department or organisation? If possible, refer to something interesting that you read in the job advertisement or on the website of the organisation.
 - ∞ Why should this organisation employ you? What do you have to offer? What is the relevance of your education, work experience or interests? How can you apply these to the goals of the organisation?
 - ∞ Why do you want this particular job? What appeals to you? Why are you applying?

What should I include towards the end of my cover letter?

- ❖ Use your closing paragraph to say that you would like to discuss employment opportunities and that you are available for interview.
- ❖ Express your willingness to provide additional information.
- ❖ Thank the person for taking the time to read your cover letter.
- ❖ Sign the letter and print your name below your signature.

Remember!

Proofread your cover letter carefully, paying special attention to spelling and grammar. Then ask your teacher or guardian to double check your cover letter before you send it anywhere.

Sample Cover Letter

43 Parkwood Avenue
Glasnevin
Dublin 9

8 October 2017

Mr John Nolan
Principal
St Mary's National School
Glasnevin
Dublin 9

Dear Mr Nolan,

I am writing to enquire if you have any opportunities in your school for Transition Year students to complete work experience. I am currently a Transition Year student at St Michael's Secondary School, Glasnevin. As part of our Transition Year programme we will complete two weeks of work experience from 1 March to 14 March 2018.

I would be very grateful for the opportunity to complete my work placement in your school because I want to pursue a career as a primary school teacher. I love teaching young children in particular. I have had the opportunity to teach hip-hop dancing to children in the age range of 6–10 years old. I enjoy putting all of my energy into each class. I am an enthusiastic person who thrives on being busy. I am patient and I like the challenge of finding fun ways to teach children how to dance. I believe that teaching is a very challenging job but it is also one of the most rewarding ones.

I have developed many other skills in school: I am a member of the school debating team and have competed in several competitions. This has allowed me to become a confident presenter. I am also a committee member on the school year book. I really enjoy this role, as it allows me to work as part of a team and to develop creative content for the school year book.

Please find attached my CV. Thank you in advance for taking the time to view my application. I hope that you will consider offering me the opportunity of an interview.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Murphy

Maria Murphy

Cover Letter: Putting it into Practice

Put into practice all of the information you have learned about cover letters. Read the job advertisement below and create your own cover letter for this job.

Customer Assistant in Fresco Ireland

Main responsibilities

- Put the customer first and consider them in everything you do.
- Get to know your customers and serve them with pride.
- Ensure that products and services are available for customers at all times.
- Handle all products with care in order to maintain quality and ensure that all products reach the customer in the best possible condition.
- Keep the shop floor and back areas clean and tidy at all times.
- Follow all company policies and adhere to health and safety routines.
- Fulfil your core role and also support colleagues by helping in other departments occasionally.

Ideal candidate

- You have a proven ability to provide quality customer service.
- You can greet, acknowledge and help customers with natural enthusiasm.
- You work hard for your customers, your team and your department.
- You have the ability to prioritise and ensure that anything you do is right for the customer.
- You are adaptable and resilient: you can meet the ever-changing demands of the business.
- You can follow instructions: verbal and written.
- You are reliable and a good timekeeper.
- You look neat and tidy at all times.

Workshop 3 · Elevator Pitch



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

According to Cornell University's Career Centre, 80 per cent of available jobs are not advertised. Because of this, the ability to network effectively is an essential workplace skill. Workshop 3 of Section 4 aims to give students the information and confidence they need to be able to introduce and describe themselves to a prospective employer or other contact.

As a result of this workshop, students become familiar with the concept of the elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is a short summary. The name *elevator pitch* reflects the idea that you can deliver this summary in the time span of an elevator ride. Students will learn how to create an elevator pitch: a snapshot of who they are, what they do and what opportunity they seek. Each student will learn how to craft a memorable, effective elevator pitch and they will practise delivering the pitch in a classroom environment.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion on the following points:
 - What is an elevator pitch?
 - What should you include in an elevator pitch?
 - What makes a good elevator pitch?
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.3 Elevator Pitch* (p.65).
- 3 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually.
- 5 When the students have completed their elevator pitches, divide the class into groups of four.
- 6 Ask the students to work in their groups. Each student must deliver his or her elevator pitch to the group. The other group members will provide feedback.
- 7 As the students deliver their elevator pitches, move around the class to observe and assist the students.
- 8 When the groups have completed their work, facilitate a class group discussion that includes the following questions:

- ❖ What did we learn about the challenges of an elevator pitch?
- ❖ Can you name anyone who made a good elevator pitch? Why was their elevator pitch successful?
- ❖ Are there any things we should avoid when making an elevator pitch?



Worksheet 4.3 • Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a short summary of your education, interests and career aspirations. The name *elevator pitch* reflects the idea that you can deliver this summary in the time span of an elevator ride – in other words, the time spent in a lift with someone as you travel together to a certain floor.

Imagine that you are in a lift and you meet a person who is highly respected and influential in the career field of your choice. You would love the opportunity to talk to this person in more detail and to gain some work experience in their career area. However, this person hits the button for the 5th floor. You have between 30 seconds and 2 minutes to introduce yourself, to make a connection and to persuade this person to speak with you another time.

Fill in the Blanks

Hello. My name is _____ **[your first and last name]**. I am a student at _____ **[your school]**. I am in _____ **[your year]**.

I am really interested in _____ **[your chosen career area]**. I am also involved in _____ **[your extra-curricular activities]**. Can I tell you a bit more about myself?

I've worked with _____ **[an employer]** and have experience in _____ **[a task linked to your chosen career]**. I would really love the opportunity to gain some work experience in _____ **[your chosen career area]**. Does your company offer any opportunities to Transition Year students?

Handling the Response

Positive Response

If the person responds positively, follow up with:

- Do you have a business card with contact information on it?
- When would be the best time to call or email you?
- Thank you! I will contact you _____ **[a suitable time]** to discuss this further.

Negative Response

If the person responds negatively, follow up with:

- No problem – thanks for your time. Take care.

Remember!

You can adapt your elevator pitch to be used on the phone or in an email, if you decide to make your initial contact through one of these methods instead.

Workshop 4 · Interview Skills



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 2 classes (students will complete the mock interview in class)

Many people consider interviews to be among the most stressful things they encounter in life. However, as part of the recruitment process, we must all face interviews from time to time. Interviews are undoubtedly valuable for employers. The interview process gives the employer the chance to review several candidates and to find the best person for the job. The interview process is also valuable for the applicant and, when approached with the right frame of mind, interviews can offer the applicant worthwhile opportunities for learning.

In Workshop 4, students work in groups to conduct mock interviews. As part of the process, students will learn how to prepare for an interview. They will come to understand the importance of first impressions and they will become familiar with the kinds of questions that may be asked in an interview setting. The workshop also fosters each student's ability to give and to receive feedback in a constructive way.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Facilitate a group discussion on the following points:
 - Has anyone attended an interview already? How did you prepare for this?
 - What kinds of questions were you asked? How did you answer them?
 - What did you enjoy about the interview? What did you not enjoy?
 - What advice would you give to a student who must attend an interview?
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.4 Interview Skills* (p.69).
- 3 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 Before the students begin their mock interviews, show students the following videos:
 - <http://tinyurl.com/o697xsn>
 - <http://tinyurl.com/ofwjzab>
- 5 In particular, draw the students' attention to the STAR Technique on *Worksheet 4.4 Interview Skills*.
- 6 Divide the students into groups of three. Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.5 Mock Interview* (p.73).

- 7 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 8 Ask the groups to begin their mock interviews. Remind the students to be aware of their movements and the noise level in the classroom.
- 9 As the students conduct their mock interviews, move around the class to observe and assist the students.
- 10 When the groups have completed their work, facilitate a class group discussion that includes the following questions:
 - ❖ What did we learn about the challenges of an interview?
 - ❖ Can you name anyone who did a good interview? Why was their interview successful?
 - ❖ Are there any things we should avoid during interviews?



Worksheet 4.4 · Interview Skills

Tips for Interviews

- An interview is a meeting with a purpose. The employer wants to find the best person for the job. They want to know:
 - ∞ Can you do the job? What are your skills, abilities and qualifications?
 - ∞ Will you do the job? What are your interests, attitudes and motivations?
 - ∞ How will you fit into the organisation? What is your personality?
- In an interview, it is up to you to prove that you are the most suitable person for the job.

Preparation

Preparation is the key to success! Before you go to the interview:

- Review your CV.
- Anticipate the questions you might be asked. Prepare your answers and include relevant examples.
- Research the company. Review their website and any company literature. Use your personal contacts to speak with people who already work in the company.
- Research the job and career area.
 - ∞ Read the job description very carefully.
 - ∞ Research current issues, trends or challenges in the industry.
- Practise answering interview questions out loud.

First Impressions

First impressions really do count. Ensure that you:

- Dress appropriately
- Have a firm handshake
- Smile and make eye contact
- Remain aware of your body language, e.g. do not fold your arms or slouch.

Typical Questions

Certain questions can come up frequently in interviews. Become very comfortable in answering these questions:

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- What is your favourite subject? Why?
- Can you tell me about your work experience or voluntary work?
- What are your interests and hobbies?
- What subjects will you take for your Leaving Certificate? Why?
- What would you like to do when you leave school? Why?
- What would you consider your greatest achievement to date?
- What do you know about this company?
- Why would you like to work here?
- Have you any questions for us?

Tips for Competency-based Interviews

In competency-based interviews, the interviewer is looking for particular skills and abilities. The interviewer hopes to find examples of how you have used these skills and abilities in the past. After all, past behaviour can be a predictor of future success. Do not be daunted by competency-based interviews. The likelihood is that you have plenty of examples you can share – you just need to reflect on your skills and abilities so that you can easily identify them in an interview situation. Typical competency-based questions are listed below.

Teamwork

- Can you describe a team project you worked on?
- What problems arose during this project?
- How did you deal with these problems?

Communication Skills

- Have you ever had to make a presentation to a group of people? Can you describe how that went?
- Can you give an example of any reports you have written, which would illustrate your writing skills?

Interpersonal Skills

- Are there any kinds of people that you find challenging to work with?
- How do you handle situations such as this?

Taking Responsibility

- Can you describe a time when you took responsibility in order to achieve a challenging goal?
- What are your regular responsibilities and how do you handle them?

Problem-solving

- Have you ever had to manage several different tasks with conflicting deadlines?
- How did you deal with this?

STAR Technique

The STAR Technique can be very helpful in answering competency-based interviews. The STAR Technique works as follows:

- **S:** Describe the *situation*.
- **T:** Explain the *task* or problem that arose.
- **A:** What *action* did you take?
- **R:** What was the result or outcome? What did you learn from this experience?

Putting it into Practice

Put into practice all of the information you have learned about the STAR Technique.

Choose one example of a problem you encountered. Think about how you approached it. Reflect on the outcome of the situation. Use the STAR Technique below.

S: Describe the *situation*.

T: Explain the *task* or problem that arose.

A: What *action* did you take?

R: What was the *result* or outcome? What did you learn from this experience?

Worksheet 4.5 • Mock Interview

Guidelines for the Mock Interview

- Work in groups to conduct mock interviews.
- Each group must have three people:
 - ∞ The candidate
 - ∞ The interviewer
 - ∞ The observer.
- Use the job advertisement from *Worksheet 4.1 CV* as a basis for the mock interview. Alternatively, work with your group to write a new job advertisement.
- Interviews will last for 10 minutes.
- Interviews will be followed by 5–10 minutes of feedback to the candidate.
- Before you begin the interview, use the tips below to prepare for your role.

The Candidate

- Think about the job you are applying for.
- Consider the competencies that the organisation is looking for in a candidate.
- Anticipate the questions you might be asked.
- Prepare evidence-based answers.
- Use the STAR Technique to help you prepare your answers.

Remember!

Keep your answers relevant. Expand on answers but do not talk too much. Choose good examples (stories) that will be memorable for the interviewer.

The Interviewer

- Your role is to take on the persona of the employer: you want the best person for the job.
- Get into character! Be engaging and friendly, but somewhat formal.
- Simulate the beginning of a real interview:
 - ∞ The person playing the candidate should leave the room so that they can re-enter and behave as they would in a real interview situation.
 - ∞ Greet the candidate and shake their hand.
- Begin with a broad question, such as *Can you tell me about yourself?*

- ❖ Ask four other questions based on the examples you have learned in recent class work.
- ❖ Make notes on the candidate's responses. These notes will help you to provide feedback to the candidate. The following questions will help you to take relevant feedback notes:
 - ∞ Is the candidate demonstrating enthusiasm and interest in the job?
 - ∞ Does the candidate relate past achievements and skills through use of the STAR Technique?
 - ∞ Does the candidate include relevant examples to support his or her statements?
 - ∞ Does the candidate successfully avoid flat 'yes or no' answers?
 - ∞ Does the candidate answer questions clearly and concisely?
 - ∞ Does the candidate appear confident?
- ❖ Try to keep the interview flowing as natural conversation.
- ❖ Ask follow-up questions about some of the responses given by the candidate.
- ❖ At the end of the interview, ask the candidate if they have any questions for you. Do your best to answer any of the candidate's questions.
- ❖ Finally, thank the candidate for his or her time. Let them know that you will contact them in relation to the next steps of the interview process.

The Observer

- ❖ Your role is to give the candidate feedback after the interview.
- ❖ You should give feedback on the content of the interview (the interviewer can assist you with this), along with any first impressions or body language you noticed in the candidate.
- ❖ Make specific notes on the following first impressions:
 - ∞ Appearance: Is the candidate dressed neatly and appropriately?
 - ∞ Handshake: Does the candidate appear to have a comfortably firm handshake?
 - ∞ Greeting: Is the candidate friendly, energetic and smiling when they first meet the interviewer?
- ❖ Make specific notes on the following body language and non-verbal communication:
 - ∞ Posture: Is the candidate sitting properly? Does the candidate appear relatively relaxed and poised? Does the candidate maintain an open posture?

- ∞ Eye contact: Does the candidate establish good eye contact throughout the interview?
- ∞ Voice: Does the candidate maintain appropriate volume and speed when speaking? Does the candidate vary their tone appropriately?
- ∞ Hand movements: Does the candidate successfully avoid distracting mannerisms, e.g. twirling a pen, bouncing their knee or making dramatic hand gestures?

Remember!

Look for strengths as well as areas for improvement. Ask the candidate how he or she thinks it went before you begin to give your feedback. Read the guidelines on Giving Feedback below.

Feedback

Some people find the mock interview to be stressful. However, it is a worthwhile exercise in terms of providing us with feedback. The guidelines below will help you to give feedback and receive feedback in a constructive way.

Giving Feedback

- Describe the behaviour you see but do not evaluate it. If we simply describe what we see and hear, there is less chance that the recipient of the feedback will act defensively.
- Be positive: find some complimentary things to say.
- Be constructive in any criticism you make. Point to specific areas for development: focus on solutions.
- Do not make harsh statements. Instead, talk about how you feel and what you observed, e.g. *I feel confused about your approach to the question on...*
- You must give feedback only on those behaviours that the other person can change and/or control.
- Take into account the other person's feelings.
- Since feedback is given in a group, ask the other members of the group for their opinions on the accuracy of your feedback.

Receiving Feedback

- Acknowledge the positive aspects of the feedback. Receive any compliments that are given!
- Give the feedback serious consideration and make your own evaluations. Weigh up the consequences of changing or not changing an answer or certain behaviour. Express your thoughts and feelings about alternatives.
- Communicate your decisions and reasoning to the person giving you the feedback.

Workshop 5 · Employability



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

Employability skills are defined as the skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress through a lifelong career. Increasingly, employers seek out generic employability skills (soft skills) to accompany the technical skills needed for a particular job. In an increasingly competitive labour market, businesses need people who can be flexible, take initiative and undertake a variety of tasks in different environments. Many employability skills are inherent, e.g. some people are naturally good problem-solvers. However, in general, employability skills can be learned, e.g. time management techniques can be studied and developed by an individual. It is through work experience that students will discover the employability skills that seem to come naturally to them, as well as those employability skills that could benefit from further development.

Workshop 5 of Section 4 will introduce students to the concept of employability skills. Throughout the workshop, employability is defined and students are encouraged to explore the employability skills that are most sought-after. The workshop combines engaging class discussion with opportunities for individual reflection so that students can foster the development of many different employability skills.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students. Ask the students to reflect on what they hope to achieve by participating in this workshop.
- 2 Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.6 Employability* (p.77).
- 3 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that the students may have.
- 4 In order to make the topic tangible, encourage the students to supply concrete examples of employability skills. Facilitate a group discussion on the following points:
 - What are employers looking for when they are recruiting a new staff member?
 - What is meant by employability skills?
 - Look at the list of employability skills on the worksheet. Why, do you think, are employers looking for people with these particular skills?
- 5 When the students have understood the concept of employability, ask them to complete the worksheet individually.

Worksheet 4.6 · Employability

What is employability?

Employability skills are defined as skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress through a lifelong career.

What skills do employers seek?

✦ Communication

- ∞ Verbal communication is the ability to express your ideas clearly and confidently in speech to individuals and groups.
- ∞ Written communication is the ability to write in a clear and concise manner, using appropriate grammar, style and language for the reader.

✦ **Teamwork** is the ability to interact and cooperate with a group of people in order to achieve a common goal.

✦ **Leadership** is the ability to motivate and direct others.

✦ **Initiative/self-motivation** is the ability to act on your own initiative. It involves identifying opportunities and being proactive in putting forward ideas and solutions.

✦ **Problem-solving** is the ability to define or identify a problem. It involves generating alternative or potential solutions. Problem-solvers know how to choose and implement the best solutions.

✦ **Flexibility** involves being able to adapt successfully to changing situations and environments.

✦ **Planning and organising** are the skills that enable us to plan activities and to carry them through effectively.

✦ **Persuasiveness** is the ability to influence and convince others.

✦ **Time management** is the ability to manage time effectively. It involves prioritising tasks and being able to work to deadlines.

How can I develop my employability skills?

There are many different activities that can foster your employability skills. These include:

- ✦ Sports (individual or team)
- ✦ Hobbies
- ✦ Clubs or social groups
- ✦ Community projects
- ✦ School projects
- ✦ Work experience

Putting it into Practice

Employability Skills

Examine the list of skills shown on the right. Have you demonstrated any of these skills in the past? Reflect upon situations where you used these skills, then fill in the table below.

- Communication
 - Written and verbal
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Initiative
- Problem-solving
- Flexibility
- Planning and organising
- Persuasiveness
- Time management

Employability skills	
My skill	Activity where I developed this skill
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Work Placement Skills

Reflect upon your upcoming work placement. Think about the skills you already have that will be of use to you in a work placement. Then consider the skills that you hope to gain from your work placement. Fill in the table below.

Work placement skills	
The skills I hope to improve on	The new skills I hope to develop
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Workshop 6 · Preparing for Work Experience



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

The Transition Year programme aims to prepare students for the working world. Work experience provides students with the opportunity to explore the workplace. Work experience is valuable in assisting students in the transition from school life to work life. It is vital that each student is well prepared for work experience since, for many students, this may be their first time in a workplace environment.

Workshop 6 aims to build on the knowledge students have gained from Workshop 5 Employability. In Workshop 6, students will work in groups to discuss their expectations of the workplace. Students will be asked to consider some issues that may arise in the workplace and students will be encouraged to discuss how they might overcome such issues.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students.
- 2 Facilitate a group discussion on the benefits of work experience.
- 3 Divide the class into groups of four. Explain that each group will discuss the topic of expectations in the workplace.
- 4 Ask the groups to take note of the following issues and to discuss them:
 - What is the employer's expectation of the Transition Year student?
 - What are your expectations for your first day at work?
 - Are there workplace standards in relation to what clothes or jewellery you can wear?
 - What is expected in terms of punctuality?
 - What behaviour and language is expected in the workplace?
 - What are your expectations for the working hours and working conditions?
- 5 When the groups have completed their work, facilitate a class group discussion on what the students have learned about expectations in the workplace.
- 6 Ask the students to remain in their groups. Explain that each group will now discuss the topic of workplace issues.
- 7 Ask the groups to take note of the following issues and to discuss them. The students can use role play as part of their discussion:

- A customer makes a complaint. What do you do?
 - You have to work with private or personal information. How do you do this?
 - One of your colleagues is unhelpful. How do you manage this?
 - Someone asks you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable. How do you manage this?
 - You are sick and cannot attend work. What do you do?
 - Something goes wrong in work. Who do you talk to?
 - You are asked to do something that you do not know how to do. How do you deal with this?
 - You are not certain about your role and responsibilities. Who do you talk to?
 - You must handle money at work. What should you be aware of?
- 8 When the groups have completed their work, facilitate a class group discussion on what the students have learned about issues that can arise in the workplace.



Workshop 7 · Work Experience Diary and Work Experience Review



Materials needed: Flipchart/whiteboard



Arrangement of group: Large group



Time: 1 class

As part of work experience, students are encouraged to reflect upon what has happened during any given day. It is through such reflection that students can recapture their experience, think about it and make evaluations. This is a vital part of the learning process. Therefore, it is essential that each student keeps a Work Experience Diary and creates a Work Experience Report. By completing these activities, each student will:

- Understand what they already know
- Identify what they need to know in order get the most out of their work experience
- Make sense of new information and feedback they receive
- Learn how to make improved choices for future learning.

Workshop Steps

- 1 Explain the aims of the workshop to the students.
- 2 Ask the students to identify some of the benefits of keeping a Work Experience Diary.
- 3 Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.7 Work Experience Diary* (p.82).
- 4 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that students may have.
- 5 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually.
- 6 Ask the students what they already know about writing a Work Experience Review. Ask the students to identify some of the benefits of writing such a review.
- 7 Provide each student with *Worksheet 4.8 Work Experience Review* (p.85).
- 8 Read through the worksheet with the class as a group, answering any questions that students may have.
- 9 Ask the students to complete the worksheet individually.
- 10 Facilitate a group discussion on what the students have learned by participating in this workshop.

Worksheet 4.7 · Work Experience Diary

Transition Year Work Experience Diary

Student name: _____

Class: _____

TY coordinator: _____

Class teacher: _____

Name and address of employer: _____

Dates of work experience: _____

Job title: _____

Job description:

(List the tasks undertaken.)

Why I selected this work placement:

(This should be consistent with your career aspirations.)

Diary of Work Experience

Day: One	Start time:
Date:	Finish time:
Training and instructions:	
Work undertaken:	
Interactions with others (staff, customers, etc.):	
Problems/challenges encountered and how I overcame them:	
Skills that I improved:	

New skills that I developed:

How others viewed my performance:

My personal evaluation of today:

Worksheet 4.8 · Work Experience Review

Work experience is an opportunity to sample first-hand some of the day-to-day experiences to be expected in a particular career area. Review your work experience by writing a short report. Answer the following questions in your report.

- What is your name and class group?
- What is the name of the employer?
- What were the dates of the work placement?
- What duties did you perform?
- What tasks did you undertake during your work experience?
- Did you receive any formal or informal training?
- Did you have any interactions with staff or customers in relation to the job?
- Did you experience any difficulties or challenges? How did you respond to them?
- Did anything unusual or unexpected occur? Were things different from what you expected?
- Can you make any observations in relation to your work experience? Did you learn anything new about yourself?
- How has your work experience influenced you in terms of your personal career direction?
- What employability skills have you enhanced or developed as a result of your work experience?

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