



Action plan template

As you use this template, remember that action planning is a cyclical process. Once you have been through one cycle, you can start again at the beginning. However, more likely is that stages will overlap or your goals might change. As a result, be willing and prepared to change.

By developing action plans you'll be able to focus your ideas. You'll also be able to decide upon the steps that you need to take to achieve your goals. Put simply, action plans are statements of what you want to achieve over a given timescale. The stages of action planning can be defined as follows:

- **Where am I now?** In this stage you would review your progress and achievements undertake some self-assessment
- **Where do I want to get to?** At this point you would determine your goals
- **How can I get there?** This is where you define the strategy you will use to achieve your goals. You would also determine the (smaller) steps that you'll need to take to achieve these goals
- **Taking action:** This is where you implement your plan
- **Where am I now?**

Where your action plans are centred upon your career, there are likely to be three main areas, namely:

- Choosing the career you wish to pursue
- Working out your strategy to enter this career e.g. how to find work; how to apply and interview preparation
- Developing skills that you need to acquire to secure the career of your choice and to be successful in it.

Effective action plans share the following characteristics:

- **They start with a clear objective.** Unsurprisingly, the goals that you set should be challenging but not too difficult. That way you can ensure that you are motivated and stimulated without being put off. Precision is vital here too.
- **They note the benefits to be gained when the goals are attained.**
- **They begin with things that you'll do now.**
- **They clearly define the steps you'll take.** These will be steps that take you closer to attaining your goals. To be most effective, you should break large steps into smaller ones. Ask yourself 'How do I get there and what might go wrong?'

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SAMPLE ACTION PLAN

Goal:	To gather enough information on the roles of communications officer and events manager to make an informed choice about which to pursue as a career.		
Deadline:	December 12th		
Action required	How to achieve it	Deadline	Achieved?
Gather relevant information	Visit the Career and Employment Service for advice on accessing relevant careers information	September 1st	
As above	Explore the websites of relevant professional bodies and the suggested sources of information (as above)	September 15th	
As above	Identify two people working in each area that I could contact for more information	September 20th	
As above	Draft questions that I can ask my contacts	October 8th	
As above	Make contact with the people that I have identified and use the questions prepared for an informational interview	October 30th	
Assess my realistic chances of securing either role	Explore the job outlook for both roles – are the numbers employed growing or shrinking?	November 4th	
As above	Research possible employers and their requirements	November 20th	
As above	Consider the skills required and any skills 'gaps' that I have	November 25th	
As above	Determine how people in these roles find work	November 28th	
As above	Note any other factors that might limit my chances of working in these roles	December 1st	

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Record the pros and cons of each of the roles	Create a list showing what my job must have and what would be nice to have, then assess both roles against this list	December 4th	
As above	Talk to my contacts about the pros and cons of their roles	December 8th	
As above	Note how I think I would feel if I couldn't find work in each of the roles	December 12th	

SAMPLE ACTION PLAN

Goal:	To find graduate employment within a NZ-based bank		
Deadline:	November 2015		
Action required	How to achieve it	Deadline	Achieved?
Explore the range of possible employers in the NZ banking sector	Contact the Career and Employment Service for advice	February 2014	
Research these employers to determine what they look for in applicants	Access information from each organisation's websites and attend any events that they are participating in	March 2014	
As above	Explore their presence on sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn	As above	
As above	Use the Careers NZ site to research the requirements of roles within the sector	As above	
Try to secure relevant part-time, vacation or internship work within a bank	Prepare my CV and cover letter using resources and advice from the Career and Employment Service	June 2014	
As above	Access relevant vacancies through Massey CareerHub and related sites	As above	
As above	Apply for roles that interest me; access information on interviews and practice my interview skills	As above	

