



Introduction and guidance

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Introduction and guidance



Planning a better future is an introductory course for anyone considering changing jobs, wondering how to move up the ladder or return to work after a break, and those who might be looking to aspire to better things.

Each section of the course offers short, interactive quizzes to test your knowledge and provide you with the opportunity to earn a digital badge.

Successful completion of the course will enable you to gain a suite of online badges and a statement of participation. The badges are validated by the Social Partnership Network (SPN), a group of organisations with a shared commitment to extending education opportunities to all those that wish to benefit. These courses do not carry any formal academic credit. However, they do provide a way to help you progress from informal to formal learning.

Planning a better future is part of a suite of six free SPN-badged courses that aim to provide you with an opportunity to engage with learning informally, studying as much or as little of the course and at your own pace.

Guidance for accessing alternative formats

You can download this section of the course to study offline. The alternative formats offered that will best support offline study include Word, PDF and ebook/Kindle versions of the materials. The other alternative formats (SCORM, RSS, IMS, HTML and XML) are useful to those who want to export the course to host on another learning management system.

Although you can use the alternative formats offline for your own convenience, you do need to work through the online version of the course for full functionality (such as accessing links, using the audio and video materials, and completing the quizzes).

Please use the downloads as convenient tools for studying the materials when away from the internet and return to the online version to ensure you can complete all activities that lead to earning the section badge.

In order to access full functionality in the online course, we recommend that you use the latest internet browsers such as Internet Explorer 9 and above and Google Chrome version 49 and above.

If you have difficulties in streaming the audio-visual content, please make use of the available transcripts.

Structure of the course

This course consists of three blocks, with each block focusing on a particular aspect of planning a better future:

- 1 How did I get here?, which helps you to take stock of where you are by exploring the roles you play in life, reflecting on your experiences – both positive and negative – recognising your achievements and identifying your strengths, weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats you face.
- 2 Where do I want to go?, which helps you to move forward by exploring the changes you want to make, enabling you to gather information, helping you to consider what options are available, make good decisions and to define and refine your goals.
- 3 How do I get there?, which helps you to make sound decisions, set realistic goals and create feasible action plans. You will also receive useful advice on the recruitment process, and on how to complete job applications, write CV and covering letters, and prepare for interviews and their aftermath.

You'll note from Figure 1 that the blocks can be thought of as a continuous process involving taking stock, exploring opportunities, setting goals and taking action.



Figure 1 The process of planning for a better future

Together they amount to approximately 15 hours of study time. Each block has a mixture of reading, video clips, activities and quizzes that will help you to engage with the course content.

A further section, [Taking my learning further](#), will enable you to reflect upon what you have learned within this course. It also directs you to relevant websites and resources, which further relate to the development of your learning and career prospects.

Once you have studied a block, you will be asked to complete a short online quiz of no more than five questions per block. This helps to test and embed your learning. If you pass the quiz (and you do get more than one attempt!), you will be awarded with a downloadable badge for that block.

Planning a better future is designed to allow you to dip in and out of the resources and collect badges as you wish, so that you can study in small chunks to fit around your work and life commitments. If you choose to complete all blocks of *Planning a better future* and collect the full set of badges, you can download a statement of participation that recognises your achievement. You may find this useful to show your employer as evidence of your learning. For more information on how to obtain your badges, read [What is a badge?](#)

Navigating the website

To find your way around this course, you simply click on the links. The home page has links to all the blocks, quizzes and relevant resources. When you are in a block, the left-hand menu has links to that block's topics and its associated quiz. The menu also has links to the other sections of *Planning a better future* and to the resources section.

If you feel unsure, practise hovering your mouse over a link in the menu and clicking on it. This is the easiest way to move from page to page. You can also click on the 'Next:' link at the end of each page of text. Don't worry about breaking a link or damaging the web page – you won't. Have a go as soon as you can before you begin your study.

Why study this course?

Lynne Johnson, one of the contributors to this course, will now give you a bit of background into why you might like to study this course.

Video content is not available in this format.

The guided activities throughout this course will help you to reflect on your life-long and life-wide experiences to help you to plan for a better future. Throughout the course you will find activities that ask you to write down your thoughts and feelings based on the issues being discussed. There will be a few simple questions that encourage you to focus your thinking. It would be helpful for you to spend some time thinking about what you have learned within each section, and how it relates to your current situation and future goals. These activities are not there to test you, but designed to help you reflect in more detail upon what you have read. These activity spaces are entirely for your own use to help you recognise what you have learned. Nobody else will see what you write here. The aim is to

help you become more reflective, by bringing together aspects of both your personal and work experiences so you can review and learn from them.

Here's an interview with Daniel Morrissey about combining work and study.

Video content is not available in this format.

The following interview demonstrates the importance of support from mentors and family.

Video content is not available in this format.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course you will be able to:

- reflect on where you are now and where you would like to be
- understand the impact of change for you and what options are open to you
- identify your goals and action that you can take next to reach them.

Finally, we hope that you will enjoy your study on the course as well as finding it useful when planning for a better future.

Before you begin

Spend a few moments thinking about your current learning needs and opportunities by doing Activity 1 below.

Activity 1

Allow about 15 minutes

Below is a link to a short questionnaire. It has been designed to get you thinking about:

- What are your current priorities for learning?
- How does studying a short online course fit into your everyday lifestyle?
- What goals are you hoping to achieve by studying this course?

[Questionnaire about your learning \(1\)](#)

Hopefully, by the end of the course you will be able to reflect on your answers.

[We hope you enjoy the course!](#)

References

icould (2011) 'Robin H - director of menswear and Mini' [Online]. Available at: <http://icould.com/videos/robin-h/> (Accessed 21 April 2016).

Acknowledgements

This free course was written by Neil Murray (lecturer at The Open University). Contributions were made by Clare Riding (Head of Careers and Employability Services at The Open University), Lynne Johnson (Careers Advisor at The Open University), Louisa Smith (Projects Officer at Unionlearn) and Rachel Bennet (Learning Services Officer at Prospect Union).

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