

Turning the spotlight on yourself

Here is a template you can use to get your thoughts and ideas down so you can 'get to grips' with your decision-making.

Step 1 – Where are you now?

This is a good starting point – it's about you, so think carefully about the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your interests?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your skills?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you value?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What motivates you?	

Step 2 – Where do you want to get to?

You may have a clear picture of what you want to do next, or what career you're aiming for, or you may feel you haven't got a clue and don't know where to start. Chances are, you're somewhere in between, so what ideas do you have?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there job or career areas you're interested in?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there subjects you love?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have hobbies or interests you'd like to take further?	

Step 3 – How are you going to get there?

This is where you need to focus on what choices you have. Consider and compare each of your post-18 options using the points you've identified about yourself in steps 1 and 2. Familiarise yourself with what each option involves, then compare them by asking the following questions:

	Higher education	Apprenticeship	Work	Gap year
1. What are the potential advantages and disadvantages are for you? Look at the pros and cons of each.				
2. What is the potential impact of each option? Think in terms of the short term (the next year), medium term (the next five years), and long term.				
3. Which one do you prefer? Rank the different options, from of most interest to least interest.				

Considering higher education

What are your favourite subjects, where do you get your best marks, or are there new ones that really appeal to you?

Are you more interested in studying a traditional academic subject (such as maths, history, French, or chemistry), or something that has more vocational, such as retail, travel and tourism, hospitality, or engineering?

Which of these subjects and courses will keep you motivated and interested for three years or more?

If you have any career aspirations, do you need particular degree subjects or qualifications to enter the career you're aiming for?

Are you interested in doing a work-based placement as part of your degree course? It makes your course longer (four years instead of three), but means you get experience in a career area related to the subject you're studying.

Do you have a preference for the location or sort of university or college you want to attend?

Considering apprenticeships

Do you have a clear idea of what sort of job role and career pathway you want to follow? What is it?

Are you ready to start work? You will be based in the workplace for the majority of the time.

How do your skills, qualities, achievements, and interests link to what employers are looking for in the job roles and career areas you're aiming for?

Do you have a preference for the location and type of employer you want to work for?

Considering going into work

<p>Do you have a clear idea of what sort of job role and career pathway you want to follow? What is it?</p>	
<p>Are you ready to start work?</p>	
<p>How do your skills, qualities, achievements, and interests map to what employers are looking for in the job roles and career areas you're aiming for?</p>	
<p>Do you have a preference for the location and type of employer you want to work for?</p>	

Considering a gap year

<p>You need to set goals to make your time productive. Can you identify what you want to achieve?</p>	
<p>What value will it add to your university study, your CV, or career?</p>	
<p>How much time can you be away for and when, and how will you pay for it?</p>	