Unit 308: Career awareness in building services engineering

Handout 1: Career planning

**Learning outcome**

The learner will:

1. Understand how to plan for careers in building services engineering.

**Assessment criteria**

The learner can:

1.1 Identify **resources** to support career planning.

1.2 Describe **elements** of career planning.

**Range**

**Resources**: Internet, publications, professional bodies/organisations, educational support and guidance, independent research, mentors, networking, job descriptions, role models, job centres, recruitment agencies, awarding organisations.

**Elements**: Goal setting, qualifications, curriculum vitae (CV), person specification, aspirations, work experience, SWOT analysis.

# Career planning

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| A plan helps you to focus on what you should do when thinking about a new career. It also helps if you would like to progress in your current career.  Career planning helps realise your ambitions – what you would like to do in your working life.  Planning needs time and careful consideration. You need to think about:   * what you can do already * what you would like to do next * what else you need to learn.   Before you leave school or college you will need to plan out a career path for yourself. |  |

You will also need to plan a career path if you change careers partway through your working life.

In both cases, the full use of all resources available to you is important. These resources include:

* internet
* publications
* professional bodies/organisations
* educational support and guidance
* independent research
* mentors
* networking
* job descriptions
* role models
* job centres
* recruitment agencies
* awarding organisations.

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| The internet Use the internet to your advantage; research different areas of employment, companies and the qualifications required.  The internet will also help you to research colleges offering the courses required to achieve your career path. It will also identify the various awarding bodies that offer the qualifications you need.  Go to your college website and list all the opportunities available connected to electrical installation work. |  |
| Publications Read through different publications associated with electrical installation. They will list opportunities, careers, courses and companies, as well as give you a better understanding of the electrical installation world.   * Wiring Matters * Professional Electrician |  |
| Professional bodies/organisations These can offer guidance and support to people seeking a career in the electrical installation trade. Many organisations can be joined at an early stage and their helplines can be used for career guidance.   * www.jib.org.uk * www.summitskills.org.uk | Description: 04a JIB Logo.png |

## Educational support and guidance

Use all stems of career advice available, whether the advice is at school, college or the employment office.

## Independent research

Back up any advice with your own research. This can be carried out on the internet, by using publications or in conversation.

## Mentors

If you are able, use a mentoring scheme. This is where someone who is more experienced and qualified in your career choice helps and guides you through career decisions. Their advice comes from their experience in the trade, as well as wanting the best outcome for you. This relies on knowledge, honesty and good communications from both parties.

## Networking

This is a useful way to gain information regarding career advice. This can be carried out verbally in your local area or on the internet via social media.

## Job descriptions

Always read job descriptions in full. They should outline the general tasks to be undertaken and the responsibilities accepted in the position. They may also outline various requirements for the post, like a driving license, and may outline to whom you may be responsible.

**Role models**

Contact people who you think could serve as a good example and ask them about their career path.

## Job centres

Use the website to help you find a suitable position. It can also offer guidance and advice in your search. Website: www.gov.uk/jobsearch

## Recruitment agencies

These can be used for temporary or permanent positions within electrical installation. Tradespeople sometimes use recruitment agencies to help them fill gaps between employment or to get noticed early on.

## Awarding organisations

To complete your career path you may have to undertake various courses, which could include:

* Levels 2 and 3 Electrical Installation Diploma (2365)
* Electro Technical Technology (2357)
* Building Regulations for Electrical Installations in Dwellings (2393)
* Design, Erection and Verification (2396)
* Electric Vehicle Charging (2919)
* Fundamental Inspection, Testing and Initial Verification (2392)
* Initial and Fundamental Inspection and Testing (2394)
* Installation, Service and Maintenance of Environmental Technology Systems (2399)
* Installing and Testing Domestic Photovoltaic Systems (2372)
* Installing, Testing and Ensuring Compliance of Electrical Installation Work in Dwellings (2397)
* Periodic inspection and testing (2395)
* Requirements for Electrical Installations (2382)

## Elements of career planning

A number of tools can be used in the career planning process, including:

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| * goal setting * qualifications * curriculum vitae (CV) * person specification | * aspirations * work experience * SWOT analysis. |

## Qualifications

What qualifications do I need?

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| Level 1 | Introductory level |
| Level 2 | Basic installations |
| Level 3 | Complex installations |
| Level 4 or 5 | Supervisory and management |

* Specialist degree
* Additional or subsidiary qualifications
* Can I attain these through a college only or will I need the support of an employer via an apprenticeship?

## Curriculum vitae

This is commonly shortened to CV. It is important to thoroughly prepare your personal CV. It is your selling tool to a company, offering an overview of yourself, your experience and your qualifications.

It is commonly the first item that a potential employer looks at regarding a prospective employee, and a lot of critical judgment is made at this early stage.

For help with your CV go to the following website: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/cvs/Pages/default.aspx>

## Person specification

As part of your CV, you may wish to include a personal statement. This can be used as an opportunity to outline the type of character you are, your hopes for the future, your ambitions, experiences and inspirations.

This is an important part of your introduction to your prospective employer and it needs to be honest, realistic and reflect exactly who you are.

## Aspirations

Career aspirations are simply the goals you have set out to achieve in either your current profession, or your desired profession. An example of how the term is used follows:

“My career aspirations are to find a stimulating and challenging position which builds on my university skills and knowledge, as well as professional experience. I am an ambitious individual who wants to learn and develop under the guidance of those who are at the top of their field and then use those skills to become an expert myself.”

One of the keys to achieving career success is to clearly define your aspirations. Begin by taking time to sit in a quiet location and answer these questions:

* What were my original childhood career hopes and dreams?
* What are the things that are important to me in life?
* What am I good at accomplishing at work?
* What work situations don’t I enjoy?
* Three to five years from now, what would I like to be doing? What could I envision myself doing? What would I like to have achieved?
* How would I describe my perfect job?

Don’t worry if you can’t decide on a specific career aspiration now. If you are new to your position, you could aspire to become a sought-after expert in your new job or simply to determine the position you want in the future.

## Setting goals

Once you have written down your career aspirations, the next step is to identify your goals. Your goals are the stepping-stones you will use to reach your desired destination. Keep in mind that the quality of the goals you set will determine their effectiveness.

You need to set out a realistic and achievable career path with short, medium and long-term goals.

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| Short term (within 1 year) |
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| Medium term (within 5 years) |
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| Long term (within 10 years) |

One technique to use when creating goals is the age-old S.M.A.R.T. technique, which stands for:

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| **S = Specific** | Goals need to be explicit and detailed. |
| **M = Measurable** | Your goals should have a specific outcome against which you can measure your progress. |
| **A = Attainable** | Goals must allow you to stretch yourself, but still be reasonable. |
| **R = Relevant** | Each goal must have meaning for you. |
| **T = Time-bound** | Goals must clearly define a beginning and an ending. |

Countless businesses and individuals around the world use this technique. While over the years many variations have been created, S.M.A.R.T. continues to embody sound principles for the process of creating goals.

Here is an example of a poorly defined goal and then that same goal translated using the S.M.A.R.T. technique:

**Poorly defined goal**: I will work to improve myself in business.

**S.M.A.R.T. goal**: I will identify one area of weakness and, during the next six months, complete one class and read at least two books to improve my expertise in that business topic.

If you use the above aspiration example of determining which position you would like to have in the future, your S.M.A.R.T. goal could be defining the steps you will take to determine your specific aspirations, such as researching career options or completing some personality or work-style evaluations.

In the same way that using a map helps you to arrive at a destination, having a clear list of goals will help ensure you are headed on the right career path, and end at the desired location (your aspiration), using the most direct route.

## Work experience

Unpaid work experience – also known as volunteering – can bring you great rewards. Work experience gives you the chance to learn new skills and improve those you already have. You will be helping others at the same time, and helping yourself to build a better future. Many people have moved into new types of work on the back of the work experience they have done, and you can join them.

You should carefully choose the organisation or group you wish to help. Make sure it does something you feel is important; something you feel passionate about. Also, make sure that the experience will improve your own chances of getting back into paid work.

## SWOT analysis

This is a structured planning method used to evaluate your personal **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats**.

The identification of SWOTs is important because they can inform later steps in planning to achieve the objective. It helps you be honest about yourself and your aspirations, allowing you to outline your characteristics and your suitability.