

Get Feedback and Iterate

Walk through your plan multiple times and plan and re-plan things wherever necessary.

Once you implement a module, you will face difficulties. Make a note of them, and modify your study plan bottom-up, starting with Step 3, and ending with Step 1.

For instance, you may figure out a dependency that blocks you. You may either reorder your modules or add new ones to unblock yourself. You may even figure out that some of your modules are useless from the perspective of the outcome.

Always be goal-oriented! Cross out modules that don't contribute to your goal. I can't emphasize the importance of the Pareto principle often enough: 20% of your effort contributes to 80% of your results. When it comes to learning, the right 20% will give you the solid foundation that you can build on later in your career. If you need to dig deeper, you will understand the topics you need in depth. *Many professionals get stuck in the bottom 80% of things to learn, at the expense of doing the top 20% right. Digging deeper only makes sense when you know where to dig.*

The most frequent modifications only affect the bigger picture of your milestone. This requires you to re-iterate Step 3 only.

Sometimes you will discover a cross-milestone dependency, or you may replace technologies as you get to know more about the subject. For instance, you may initially decide on using a REST API for your project, but then you stumble upon GraphQL. Given that you already know about REST, and GraphQL perfectly fits your project, chances are, it makes sense for you to redesign the whole milestone. This way, you can make better use of your time, and learn something new.

Some of your decisions and discoveries may lead to small changes in your career plan. Other changes may shape the description of your projects. Make

sure you go back to steps 1 and 2 and update them.

Don't worry about changing your plan frequently. Flexibility is key to getting the best learning experience for yourself.

Your iterations may also depend on external feedback. Be open about your side projects. Show them to your colleagues and friends. Post about them online, and discuss your discoveries in tech forums and communities. You will be amazed how quickly you can improve your skills.

Last, but not the least, step back and look at your career path from time to time. Learning new things may unlock new possibilities for you. These are paths that you were not aware of. Some path may revolutionize your future projects or even your current project. If you unlock a new path, don't be afraid of modifying your study plan in a top-down way.