

# Self-analysis: your skills and strengths, plans and vision

This is an in-depth analysis to help you reflect on your career development.<sup>1</sup> You could do this analysis by yourself, but it will be much more useful to work through it with a mentor, tutor or trusted colleague, so that you get their perspectives too.

You may choose to answer some or all of the questions in each section – some act as challenges and prompts to get you thinking and reflecting, rather than requiring a written response. By reflecting and discussing with others, you will be able to consider your analysis more clearly.

You may find that this process takes a number of hours over several months to complete, as you gradually build up your responses and better understand your current situation and the opportunities for career progression.

*Instructions: print off and complete this table, then arrange an appointment with a colleague or mentor to discuss it. The information will help to identify the sort of future career opportunities that would be most appropriate for you.*

Who are you and where are you now?	Your comments
<p><b>You</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your strengths and weaknesses in your various roles or posts?</li> <li>• Do you understand your own personality: does your personality affect your career choice?</li> <li>• What transferable skills do you have that might fit you for a different kind of career?</li> <li>• How does your current work and life measure up to your inner values?</li> <li>• What kind of roles and responsibilities do you prefer? Do you enjoy leading or following? Do you like to manage or be managed?</li> <li>• What fears do you have that you need to overcome?</li> <li>• What qualities do you have that you need to exploit or harness?</li> </ul>	



Your current job	Your comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the features of your job fit with your personal style?</li> <li>• How satisfied are you with your:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– job</li> <li>– working hours</li> <li>– responsibility</li> <li>– location</li> <li>– patient contact</li> <li>– workload</li> <li>– income</li> <li>– challenge</li> <li>– opportunities for change or development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- extent of socialising</li> <li>- your skills</li> <li>- on-call commitment</li> <li>- support from colleagues</li> <li>- variety?</li> <li>• How satisfied are you with your career in general?</li> <li>• What aspects of work do you value?</li> <li>• Are there inner barriers that hinder your career advancement in your current job (eg self-doubt, low self-esteem)?</li> <li>• Do you act the part in your post, even if you do not feel confident?</li> <li>• Do you exceed your job description? Can you impress others with your initiative and capability?</li> <li>• Do you set yourself new targets within your job to keep your interest alive and provide new challenges?</li> <li>• Do you nurture your relationships with other colleagues? You never know when you may need their support or help!</li> </ul>	
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Looking outwards	Your comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What opportunities are there in your current job for promotion, transferring to other roles or extending your skills?</li> <li>• What opportunities might there be for developing new skills or enhancing current skills in your present job?</li> <li>• What other jobs are on offer elsewhere for which you might apply?</li> <li>• What other role(s) and responsibilities do you see yourself taking on?</li> <li>• Have you got enough support from others at work?</li> <li>• What qualities and skills do others perceive you having?</li> <li>• Is your potential recognised or realised in your current post?</li> </ul>	



Looking sideways	Your comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do your current workload and conditions impact on your family and other aspects of your non-working life?</li> <li>• How satisfied are you with your lifestyle and time spent outside work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sport</li> <li>- relaxation</li> <li>- hobbies</li> <li>- travel?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• How much quality time do you have for your friends?</li> <li>• What is the balance like between your current work and other aspects of your life?</li> <li>• Do you have a mentor? A role model or influential colleague might well give your career a boost</li> </ul>	



What changes do you want to make?	Your comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent are you content to remain in the same role, practice or primary care trust?</li><li>• To what extent will your current role satisfy you in 1–3 years time?</li><li>• What is it that you most want to achieve? What are your career goals?</li><li>• Do your career goals conflict with other types of success or fulfilment that you are seeking in other areas of your life (eg financial goals, social goals, leisure goals or personal goals in relation to your family)?</li><li>• What will your strengths, skills and achievements be by certain time milestones?</li><li>• How will you acquire those skills and experience in the meantime to develop your full potential? Skills developed outside work may be just as important as those developed as part of your job</li><li>• What resources do you have to help you achieve your career goals?</li><li>• Consider applying for promotion to show others that you are motivated to progress your career</li></ul>	



Career challenge: take a career challenge in formulating your goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What role do you see yourself doing in 3, 5, 15 years time? Think widely:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– academic career</li><li>– research interest or audit</li><li>– opportunities for teaching</li><li>– location</li><li>– preferences or hobbies</li><li>– access to relatives</li><li>– alternative and parallel clinical or management work</li><li>– availability of colleagues and friends</li></ul></li><li>• Do you know of someone whose career pathway or roles you would like to emulate?</li></ul>



### Where do you want to be in 1 year? Write down your goals

Looking inwards

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Looking outwards

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Looking sideways

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### Where do you want to be in 3 years? Write down your goals

Looking inwards

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Looking outwards

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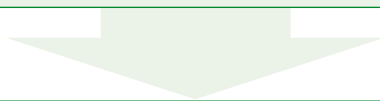
Looking sideways

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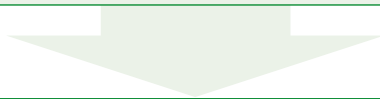
### Career challenge: how are you going to get there?

Work out the series of steps you will need to take over the next 12 months to achieve your 1-year goals; and longer-term action for your 3-year or even 5- or 15-year goals. Think how to make things happen. To whom can you talk to get more information or advice? Who can you visit to see if their type of work appeals to you? Who can give you well-informed careers guidance or career counselling? How can you gain the preliminary achievements and experience that you need?

Getting ready to make a change – what you need to do first	Your comments
<p><b>What do you need to do first?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further reflection and review of how satisfied you are with your career, your job and your life in general – as in stages A.1, A.2 and A.3</li> <li>• Discuss your satisfaction and options with others close to you – at home, your family and friends, work colleagues, trusted advisers and confidantes</li> <li>• Find out more information about other careers or development opportunities for new skills</li> <li>• Ask someone for advice about opportunities in their field and what their jobs entail</li> <li>• Seek further careers information, careers advice or guidance</li> <li>• Make a list of your options and reflect (with someone whose opinion you value) on their relative advantages</li> </ul>	



Are you ready to change – what will you do?	Your comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How positive are you about going ahead and making changes?</li> <li>• Does what you are proposing fit with your ethics, values and boundaries?</li> <li>• What is it that has limited you from making changes in the past? Have you overcome those constraints or barriers now?</li> <li>• Are you clear about what interests and motivates you to work effectively?</li> </ul>	



Make your plans happen with timetabled action – what is your plan?	Your comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– setting goals</li> <li>– what new insights, knowledge, skills and attitudes you need to develop</li> <li>– using your skills and experience</li> <li>– your timetable</li> <li>– how you will proceed</li> <li>– support and resources you will need to make your plans come to fruition</li> <li>– overcoming limiting factors – what risks you need to manage</li> <li>– situations you may wish to influence – to prevent or provoke events or activities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

What will you do if you don't get what you want or hope for?	Your comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write down your contingency plans, for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– how could you change your current job so that you have more job satisfaction?</li> <li>– re-evaluate your options – what is your 'second choice' alternative career path or career-development plan?</li> <li>– re-assess your previous goals and objectives</li> <li>– what other skills might you develop within medicine or in your leisure time?</li> <li>– could you get more balance into your life by building in more self-development time?</li> <li>– think again if anyone else might help you through all your networks and contacts</li> <li>– can you fit two different jobs into your life, working part-time on each?</li> <li>– think again about what you really want out of life</li> <li>– counter any self-defeating beliefs that you have uncovered in undertaking the review of your career</li> <li>– adopt a better approach to personal stress management in all sections of your life and work</li> <li>– build up your support mechanisms – at work, with friends, with family and your partner at home.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

### Getting it right for children and young people: a self-assessment tool for practice nurses

A best-practice, self-assessment tool has also been developed to help nurses to work with their colleagues and clinical supervisor to identify existing skills in caring for children and young people, and any gaps that need to be addressed. This is available at: [www.rcn.org.uk/publications/pdf/getting\\_it\\_right\\_for\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people.pdf](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications/pdf/getting_it_right_for_children_and_young_people.pdf).

#### Reference

1. Chambers R (editor). *Career Planning for Everyone in the NHS. The Toolkit*. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing; 2005.