

What is Prospects Planner?

Prospects Planner is a job exploration tool which aims to help you identify your skills, motivations and interests and then to match yourself to relevant job types. Prospects Planner has been developed in close consultation with university careers services who recommend Prospects Planner as a valuable tool for exploring and planning your job and future career.

To access Prospects Planner quickly, bookmark www.prospects.ac.uk/links/Pplanner.

What it **can** do:

- Identify what you want out of a job.
- Generate and evaluate job ideas.
- Identify what you can offer to the job/employer.
- Compare options and identify the right types of jobs to apply for.
- Provide useful and relevant information sources.

What it **can't** do:

- Tell you what you should do - choosing a job or career is a complex and personal process.
- Make sense out of nonsense - you need to clarify your thinking about what you want. This may take time and effort but Prospects Planner can help you get there.
- Come up with a list of 'the Top 10 best graduate jobs' - your list will be a personal one. Your 'ideal job' may not be a widely popular choice but it is the right one for you.
- Get you a job - finding vacancies and marketing yourself effectively is another vital part of the process. Prospects Planner provides a sound basis for convincing yourself and an employer that you have made the right choice.

What does Prospects Planner involve?

- There is no set route for using Prospects Planner; it can be used flexibly and in different ways no matter where you start. You might start off analysing your skills or motivations or you might just want to start freely exploring jobs that sound interesting.
- **[Access my personal profiles](#)** - in this section you can build up and analyse what skills you have to offer. You can also build up and analyse what you believe motivates and interests you in your life. From here you can use your personal profiles to identify potential jobs that offer a good match. You can also see jobs that offer a poor match and identify why.
- **[My types of job](#)** - in this section you can build your personal jobs list. You can either add jobs as a result of these matching your personal profiles or you can just add jobs to your list that you think sound interesting. You can also compare 2 job types as well as comparing how your personal profiles compare in 2 different job types.
- **[Add a type of job](#)** - in this section, you can explore the complete range of jobs held on the Prospects.ac.uk job types database and if you identify jobs that sound interesting and you want to explore further, you can add these to your personal jobs list.
- **[Improving the match](#)** - as a result of comparing your personal profiles with different jobs and identifying good and poor matches, this section offers you strategies for improving the matches and encourages you to undertake further analysis of what you can really offer a job and what you really want from your ideal job.
- **[Report](#)** - you can print out a Prospects Planner report which will display the results of your analyses and job exploration. This will be your reference which you might want to discuss with a careers adviser, friend or relative.
- **[What can I do next?](#)** - in this section, Prospects Planner offers you a range of options for further action and decision making in order to ensure that you get the best from your Prospects Planner experience.

How do I use Prospects Planner effectively?

You will need to set aside enough time to engage with the process and reflect on the results. Choosing a career is more than a 30 minutes job! You don't have to explore all the suggestions in one go. Your work is saved as you go along and between visits, and you can return to Prospects Planner as many times as you like.

- Set aside enough time to engage with the process and reflect on the results.
- Revisit, review and, if appropriate, modify your responses.
- Print out your results and 'sleep on them'.
- Get feedback on your ideas - talk to careers advisers, employers, friends, family, contacts etc.
- When you have finished using Prospects Planner you will be offered suggestions to enable you to further explore your job options, including a link back to your university careers service's website, as well as further help available on Prospects.ac.uk.

Prospects Planner won't tell you what to do, but it will enable you to explore your job options and begin the process of self analysis and career planning.

Why do I need to register to use Prospects Planner?

Prospects Planner allows you to use personal information about your skills and preferences to generate and check out ideas and match them against job information. Exploring and making decisions about jobs often involves revisiting Planner and adding to this information over a period of time. By registering, you are able to set up a personal space for you to save your profile information and job lists and work on them from anywhere and at anytime, without the need to start again.

Prospects Planner factor definitions – understanding your skills, interests and motivations

What skills would you prefer to use in your work? One aspect of exploring your job choices involves considering the things you are good at and how you would like to make use of these in a job. These factors are commonly called your Skills. The results of analysing your Skills will form your Skills Profile. Remember, that your Skills Profile is only one part of the picture, your Interests and Motivations are also important.

| Think about each of the skills described below. Consider how much you want this to feature in your preferred job. Tick ONE of the statements that best reflects this. | Key part It is one of my strengths or a skills I could easily develop. I would enjoy using it and want it to be a major part of my work | Secondary part I am competent or even strong at this skill but I would not enjoy using it too much. It would only play a minor part in my work. | No part This is not one of my strengths or it is a skill I do not enjoy. I wish to avoid using it. |
|--|---|---|--|
| Confronting Challenging the attitudes, behaviour or actions of others in a face-to-face situation | | | |
| Creative Thinking Tackling problems or developing ideas in an innovative or imaginative way | | | |
| Dexterity Using your hands, or equipment, in a precise way | | | |
| Flexibility Changing or modifying your behaviour in response to the needs, wishes or demands of others | | | |
| Logical Thinking Tackling problems or developing ideas in a systematic, rational or methodical manner | | | |
| Negotiating & Persuading Holding discussions with people in order to reach a position of mutual satisfaction and agreement about a contentious issue | | | |
| Numeracy Understanding and using facts or ideas expressed in numbers, graphs or simple equations. | | | |
| Oral presentation Using speech to express ideas, give information, or explanations to individuals, groups or audiences, in a way that is easily understood by others | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| who are unfamiliar with the topic. | | | |
| Organising Planning the use of resources and scheduling activities in order to meet an objective | | | |
| Perceiving Assessing and understanding the feelings, attitudes or temperament of other people | | | |
| Questioning & listening Obtaining information from and clarifying the opinions of others by asking appropriate questions. | | | |
| Reading comprehension Understanding complex information, facts, ideas or instructions which are expressed in written English. | | | |
| Spatial sense Extracting meaning from, understanding and using the information in diagrams or pictures or three dimensional structures | | | |
| Written communication Producing grammatical, well expressed, easily understood and interesting text about topics that may be unfamiliar to the reader | | | |

More detailed Skills Factor definitions can be found within the Prospects Planner online program in the “Access my personal profiles” section.

Prospects Planner factor definitions – understanding your skills, interests and motivations

What interests and motivations would you prefer in your work? Factors that interest you include how you would like to behave; how you would like to interact with others and the problems you would like to work on. Factors that motivate and reward you include things you consider to be worthwhile in a job; worthwhile to society and worthwhile to you. Together, the result of your exploration will produce your Interests and Motivations Profile. Remember, that your Interests and Motivations Profile is only one part of the picture, your Skills are also important.

| Think about each of the aspects of a job described below. Consider how much you want this to feature in your preferred job. Tick ONE of the statements that best reflects this. | Key part This would give me considerable job satisfaction. I want it to be a major part of my job | Secondary part This could contribute to my job satisfaction but I would not want a lot of it in my job | No part This would detract from my job satisfaction. I would rather avoid this sort of thing. |
|--|---|--|---|
| Advising people Listening and offering opinions or guidance to people by using expert knowledge | | | |
| Altruism Being involved in work without an emphasis on profit or significant personal gain; contributing to the wider community. | | | |
| Artistic creativity Creating or designing challenging or aesthetically pleasing artefacts | | | |
| Being commercial Using initiative in a commercial context; taking an interest in profit and loss in the public or private sectors; taking responsibility for a business venture | | | |
| Financial reward The potential for a higher than average graduate salary or other benefits such as profit-sharing and bonuses. | | | |
| Health & welfare Directly helping people who are sick, disadvantaged or at risk in some way. | | | |
| Intellectual challenge Dealing with intellectually difficult problems that require high level understanding and reasoning | | | |
| Managing information Collecting, organising and disseminating data, facts or figures | | | |
| Organising & motivating people Managing individuals and working groups; planning, controlling, evaluating and taking responsibility for their work and inspiring them to do well | | | |
| Risk taking Seizing opportunities as they arise without being sure of the outcome. Taking | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| decisions on the basis of incomplete information | | | |
| Science Observing, monitoring and understanding physical or biological phenomena, processes and systems. | | | |
| Stability and security Having long term security of employment or working in an established stable organisation | | | |
| Team work Working with others in order to reach a common goal by sharing ideas, decision making and responsibilities | | | |
| Training or educating people Passing on knowledge or expertise to individuals or groups in formal or informal settings. | | | |

More detailed Interests & Motivations Factor definitions can be found within the Prospects Planner online program in the “Access my personal profiles” section.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

I did something like this at school and it wasn't very good

Prospects Planner is principally aimed at graduates, undergraduates (including NVQ level 4 & 5). It is not something for everyone to use. To succeed, you must give your career planning, and your Prospects Planner session, some intelligent thought. Prospects Planner encourages you to think about what you can offer an employer/job. It should be seen as the start of your career planning process.

I want something to tell me what to do

Prospects Planner is not a predictor. It is here to help you generate ideas for further discussion and exploration. It will certainly enable you to focus your thinking as you work through the information and suggestions the program provides.

I'm doing a degree in Physics/Modern Languages/Business/Fine Art ... won't Prospects Planner push me into jobs in these sort of areas?

Absolutely not. If Prospects Planner suggests exploring job areas which are linked to your degree subject, then this is solely because of the way you have described yourself, and not because of your degree discipline. However, Prospects Planner can be used very effectively to confirm a career direction which is predicated on studying a particular topic – usually vocational in nature.

Are all the possible graduate jobs listed in Prospects Planner?

There are over 500 job types listed in the database, and this is an extremely good representative sample of what's available. Nevertheless, there are many more graduate job types than that. What Prospects Planner can do is to help you start looking in the right areas, so that you can begin to refine your ideas and begin to target specific job areas for potential graduate employment opportunities.

What if I don't like what Prospects Planner is telling me?

The results that Prospects Planner gives are not set in tablets of stone. You can revise your answers as often as you like – this can be a great way of sorting out which aspects of the world of work are important to you, and those, which are not.

How long will it take?

Initially between 30-40 minutes depending on what stage of your career planning you are at. Maximum benefit can also be achieved if you take time out to discuss the results with a careers adviser, so you might need to earmark some time for that as well. However, Prospects Planner is such a sophisticated tool that you may want to use it more than once, to extract the maximum benefit from it in your career planning.

I tried Prospects Planner before, and it came up with a huge list. What can I do?

The results report will identify the job types that indicate a "good" match and a "poor" match, based on how you assessed which skills, interests and motivations were important to you in your preferred job types. You might want to start looking at the list of job types that indicated there was a "good" match. If you need to reduce this list, then you might want to revisit your skills, interests and motivations profiles. Ask yourself, "why is this job a "good" match?". If you have a long list of "poor" matched job types, then again, you might need to revisit your profiles and review your responses. Take time to think about what is important in your most preferred job types.

I tried Prospects Planner before, and it came up with a very small list, none of which interested me. Is my situation hopeless?

Be reassured that you are not in a hopeless situation. Try revisiting your skills, interests and motivations profiles to see how you described yourself and then try matching the profiles to job types again. Alternatively, choose some job types that you think you might like and compare their profiles with your profiles – where are the matches and where do you differ. If your skills profile didn't match well to the job profile, do you need to develop particular skills, gain some experience or training? If your interests and motivations profile didn't match well to the job profile, then is this really the preferred job for you or do you need to reassess this profile?

Prospects Planner told me to be an airline pilot, but I'm petrified of flying!

Don't get hung up on this one. Prospects Planner does not take every possible aspect of work into consideration. What it is saying is that you have described yourself in a very similar way to someone who is doing that job. Look again at the job types contained in your Planner report for the sort of jobs being suggested. What they will have in common with each other, and you, are the type of skills, interests and motivational factors that you indicated were important in your chosen job types.

What should I do after my Prospects Planner session?

By using Prospects Planner, you may well have identified several types of jobs, which could make use of your skills and engage your interests and motivations. You may now find it beneficial to review these job types and here are some suggestions to help you:

- **Take a break and reflect on what you have learned.** Career planning and job exploration is not a one-off exercise completed in 30 minutes. It takes time and energy. So you might want to just review your Prospects Planner results so far.
- **Visit your university careers service** to discuss your printed Prospects Planner report. And if you can't get to your careers service, see if they will accept an emailed pdf report which you might be able to discuss with them via the telephone or email.
- **As a graduate**, if you are unable to access your careers service, Prospects.ac.uk offers a range of interactive services to graduates. You might therefore want to submit an online careers query to our team of careers consultants at www.prospects.ac.uk/links/grademail to discuss your Prospects Planner report and develop an action plan.
- **Be realistic about your most preferred jobs.** What do they really involve? What do you think are your chances of success in relation to your chosen jobs? What about additional issues such as location, job availability, further study/funding, mature entry, disability? Were you really honest with yourself when you completed your personal profiles?
- **Identify job vacancies or further study opportunities.** Once you have identified your most preferred job types, you may also want to search job vacancies or identify postgraduate courses and research at www.prospects.ac.uk. You can also review the jobs profiles in your personal jobs list in Prospects Planner to identify other sources of job vacancies.
- And finally, remember that Prospects Planner has saved all of your work during Prospects Planner session. You can return to Prospects Planner at any time to modify your personal profiles and/or edit your types of job list.

What equipment do I need?

The only equipment you require is access to the Internet. Prospects Planner is available 24/7 at www.prospects.ac.uk/links/Pplanner. In order to access all parts of Prospects Planner, you should ensure that Javascript is switched on to "enable", otherwise some of the functions and page display may not be accessible.