



## DO A CAREER PLANNING OVERVIEW

### Why?

Thinking about your own future and career plans starts with knowing yourself. But when engaging in self-reflection, it can be easy to overlook all the external matters affecting your situation and thoughts. Moreover, you can easily miss how the significance of and relationship between internal and external matters changes over time.

In this assignment, you will examine factors that affect your ideas about your future. You will look at them from three different perspectives: from your own, from that of the people around you, and more broadly from that of society and the environment.

### How?

#### Stage 1:

Draw three circles inside each other. Leave some room to write outside each circle.

- **The inner circle describes you.** Inside it, write down observations about yourself: What roles do you have in life? What are your skills and what are you good at? What words or terms do you use to define yourself in your different roles?
- **The middle circle describes the people around you.** Write down people and groups: Which people and groups are important to you? Where do you belong? Who are the people close to you?
- **The outer circle describes the environment and society.** Write down things such as geographical locations and observations about your socioeconomic background and your relationship with nature: Where are you from and where do you currently live? Where are the places important to you? What kind of educational background do your parents / family / people close to you have? How would you describe your previous and current standard of living? What kind of role does nature play in your life? What kinds of surroundings are you comfortable in?

#### Stage 2:

Look at the things you have written down in the different circles and consider the following questions. Also write down any new observations.

- The inner circle: Do you see yourself in these descriptions? Which of them are the most important to you at the moment? Also write down your values, interests and strengths.
- The middle circle: Whose opinions influence your ideas about your future? What are these people saying? Think at least about how your family, friends, hobbies, education, work and traineeship experiences affect your thoughts. Also consider the role traditional and social media play in your ideas about your future: What kinds of stories and messages do you see and hear? What thoughts do they evoke in you?



- The outer circle: How do you see your role in society? How do you feel about public discourse? Does it address things that are important to you? How does this discourse affect your ideas about the future? How do you feel that society or politics affect your plans for the future (e.g., through various forms of financial support or restrictions)? What kinds of thoughts do questions and debates about environmental issues bring up in you? What matters would you like to make an impact on?

### Stage 3:

Look at your work and consider at least the following questions. Write down your thoughts either inside the circles or around them.

- What are your first remarks?
- What are you increasingly certain about?
- What would you like to change?
- Now examine the interconnections between what you have written. How do the thoughts in the different circles affect each other? What takes priority right now?

### Stage 4:

Think about your journey from past to present. Write down your thoughts either inside the circles or around them.

- What would you have put in the circles, say, five years ago? Or before your university studies?
- How did you make decisions before? What kinds of things have affected your decisions?
- Which people have been important in your journey? Who have affected it at different times?
- How have the things in the different circles changed and what role have they played at different times?

### Stage 5:

Now look to the future. Look at what you have written down and highlight the things that feel the most relevant to your future at the moment. You can also make notes about these. Consider at least the following:

- What kinds of values or activities will be important? What kinds of skills would you like to acquire?
- What kinds of roles would you like to have in the future?
- What kinds of groups and communities would you like to belong to? Who would you like to keep close to you?
- What would you want to let go of? What will you perhaps have to give up even if you do not want to?
- Will some locations be important to you in the future?
- What kind of a role would you like to have in relation to the environment and society?



### Stage 6:

Now look at everything you have written down and consider what you want to do next. Write down your thoughts.

- Who would you like to discuss your observations and ideas with?
- What information would you like to acquire next?
- What kinds of decisions about your future are you likely to face?
- Based on your findings, what will your next steps be?

Source: (Adapted from) McMahon, M. & Watson, M. (2008). Systemic Influences on Career Development: Assisting Clients to Tell Their Career Stories.