

LEARNER GUIDE TO

Occupational Qualifications

Guidance for Real Jobs

Trades • Skills • Occupational Pathways

**Skills
+ Experience
↓
Opportunity**

STEP 1: Self-Exploration

STEP 2: Explore Work Opportunities

STEP 3: Make Career Decisions

STEP 4: Your Action Plan

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YOUR PATH FORWARD: Skills for real work

The world of work is changing fast.

The world of work is changing, and skills matter more than ever. This workbook is designed to help you understand how occupational qualifications prepare you for real work that employers need today and in the future.

Occupational qualifications are developed through research into skills shortages. This means that when you choose an occupational pathway, you are training for skills that are in demand and linked directly to work.

In this workbook, you will:

- Learn about different types of work and careers.
- Explore occupational pathways linked to real industries.
- Be introduced to occupational qualifications.
- Understand scarce skills and why they matter.
- Create an action plan that guides you towards achieving your career goal.

This is not about choosing one 'right' occupation. It is about understanding your options and taking a practical step towards a future where your skills can grow into a career.

How to Plan Your Career

Making informed career decisions does not happen by chance. It involves a step-by-step process that helps you understand yourself, explore options, and choose a direction.

Q HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Good Career Choices don't just happen by luck. They happen step by step.

This guide is for learners who are finishing school and are thinking about skills, trades, and hands-on occupations. It helps you figure out what to do after school by showing clear options and next steps. You'll go through four easy steps to plan your future with confidence. By the end, you won't just have ideas, you'll know your next steps and how to move toward trades and skills that lead to real work.



STEP 1: SELF-EXPLORATION

**Is an occupational pathway suited to you?
Before choosing a pathway, let's start with you.
Everyone is different. The better you understand your interests, strengths,
and how you like to work, the easier it becomes to make good career choices.
This section helps you understand who you are, so you can find the pathway that suits
you best.**



1.1 My dream job

Everyone starts with a dream.

This activity helps you think about the kind of work you imagine yourself doing in the future.

Your dream job does not have to be realistic right now. There are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is simply to get you thinking.

Activity

Use the space provided to describe your dream job.

You can write a few sentences, make a list, or draw a picture.

You may want to think about:

- What is your dream job? (for example: chef, electrician, designer, mechanic, nurse, IT technician)
- Where do you imagine working? (for example: a workshop, office, hospital, outdoors, or from home)
- What do you spend most of your time doing?
- What tools, equipment, or technology do you use?
- Are you working mostly with people, your hands, technology, systems, or creatively?



A large, empty rectangular box with a red border, intended for the user to describe their dream job.

1.2 Different ways of learning and working

People learn and work in different ways.

Some prefer classroom learning with theory and exams. Others learn best through practical training and real work experience. Many people enjoy a mix of both.

After school, there are two main learning routes in South Africa:

- **Academic pathway**

Mostly classroom learning, theory and exams.
Often linked to universities and academic qualifications.

- **Occupational pathway**

Practical skills for real work.
Training is combined with workplace experience to prepare you for a specific occupation.

There is no right or wrong choice. What matters is how you prefer to learn and work.

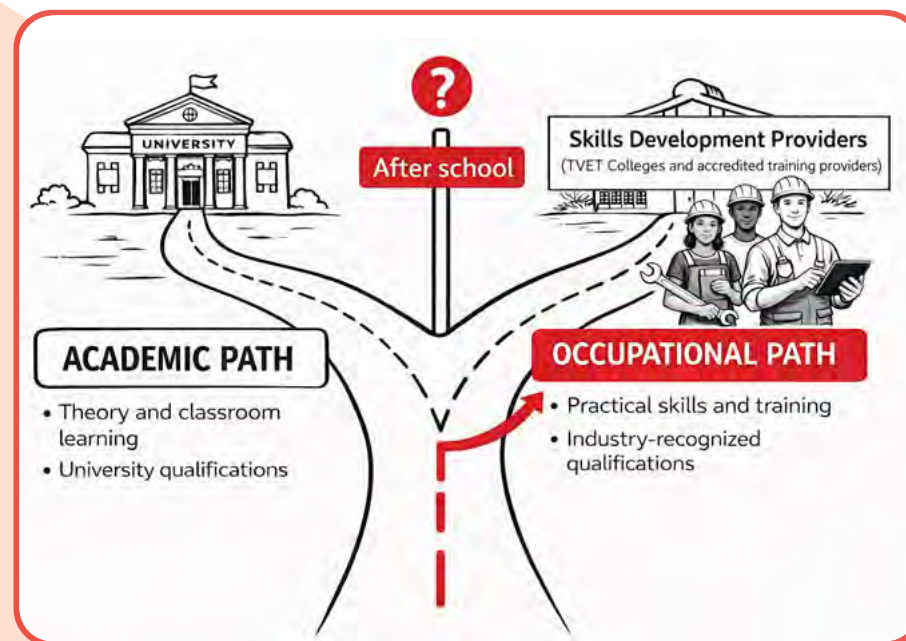
In this guide, we focus on skills based occupational pathways.
Learning for real work through skills, practice and work experience.

Activity: How do you prefer to learn right now?

Tick the option that best describes you:

- ☐ I prefer mostly theory and classroom learning.
- ☐ I prefer mostly practical, hands-on learning.
- ☐ I enjoy a mix of both.

Your preferences can show you which pathway may suit you best.
They can also change over time.



1.3 Occupational path: Find your kind of work

Now that we are focusing on the occupational pathways, **the next step is to think about the type of work that suits you best.**

Occupations involve different ways of working. Some occupations are practical and hands-on. Others involve working with people, technology, systems, or creative tasks.

This activity helps you identify how you like to work. Remember, you are not choosing an occupation yet.

Activity: How do you like to work?

Instructions:

- Read through “Type of work” in the table below.
- Tick one or more of the options that you enjoy.
- Please note, there are no right or wrong answers.

Type of work	Description	Tick ✓
 Working with your hands	Practical, hands-on work such as fixing, building, installing, repairing, farming, baking, or cooking.	
 Working with people	Helping, caring for, teaching, supporting, serving, or communicating with others.	
 Working with technology	Using, fixing, or working with computers, machines, electronics, digital systems, or data.	
 Working with systems & processes	Organising, checking, operating, or managing systems and following procedures to ensure work is done safely and efficiently.	
 Working creatively	Creating, designing, making, or improving how things look or work, using ideas and imagination.	

1.4 Link your interests to careers

Now that you have identified the type of work you enjoy, this activity will help you see how it links to different careers within the occupational pathway.

There are no right or wrong answers.

Remember: One career can fit into more than one column.

For example: A **welder** works with hands and technology.

A **graphic designer** works creatively and with technology.

Activity: Match your interests to careers

Instructions:

- Look at each column heading.
- Think about the type of work you enjoy.
- Write careers that match the type of work you enjoy.
- Include careers you already know or want to learn more about.

 Working with your hands	 Working with people	 Working with technology	 Working with systems & processes	 Creative work
Electrician	Early Childhood Practitioner	IT Support Technician	Office Administrator	Graphic Designer
Plumber	Human resource clerk	Toolmaker	Supply Chain Clerk	Fashion Designer
Baker/Chef	Salesperson	Welder	Logistics clerk	Interior decorator
Farmer	Security Officer	Graphic designer	Transport Manager	Chef

1.5 Work environments: Where you work best

Different work is done in different work environments.

Knowing where you feel comfortable and productive, can help you understand which types of occupational work may suit you.

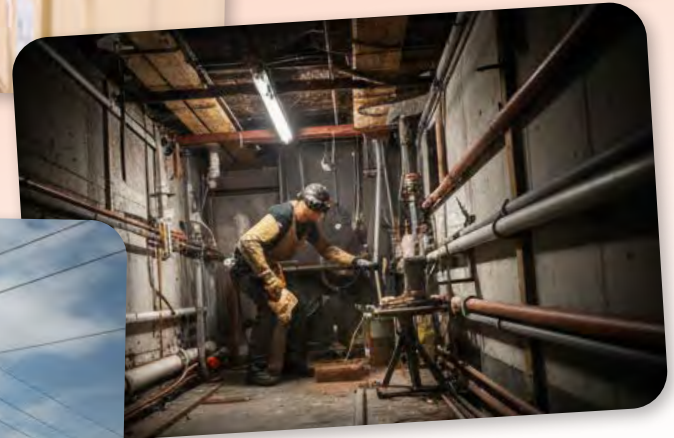
This activity helps you think about the kind of places you prefer to work. You can choose more than one option. There are no right or wrong answers.

Activity: Work environments

Instructions:

- Look at each work environment below.
- Tick the environments that suit you best.

Environment	Examples of occupations linked to this environment	Tick ✓
Indoors	Office administrator, call centre agent, admin assistant, Human Resource assistant, finance clerk	
Outdoors	Farm worker, agricultural technician, landscaper, construction worker	
Indoors & outdoors	Sales representative, marketing promoter, visual merchandiser, events assistant	
Busy or noisy environments	Factory worker, production operator, construction labourer, chef, warehouse picker	
Quiet or focused environments	Library assistant, records clerk, data capture clerk, archive assistant	
Physically active work	Bricklayer, mechanic, machine operator, delivery driver, landscaper	
Working with people	Community health worker, early childhood practitioner, sales assistant, tourism guide	
Uniformed work	Traffic officer, security officer, emergency care assistant, protection services worker	
Creative	Graphic design assistant, marketing assistant, visual merchandising assistant	
Health and care environments	Clinic assistant, home-based care worker, health support worker	



STEP 1

1.6 Types of activities and tools

Different work involves different activities and the use of different tools or equipment.

Some work involves building or fixing things. Other work involves planning, helping people, checking systems, or using machines and technology. Occupational qualifications are based on doing real work. This activity helps you think about the kinds of activities you enjoy and the tools or equipment you are comfortable using.

Activity: Activities and tools you enjoy

Instructions:

- Look at the table below.
- Tick the activities and tools that appeal to you.
- You can tick more than one option.
- Complete the follow up activity below.

Activity	Typical tools / equipment	✓	Activity	Typical tools / equipment	✓
Assembling	Hand tools, spanners, machinery		Helping & caring	Care tools, medical equipment	
Repairing & maintaining	Toolkits, testers		Managing & organising	Schedules, computers	
Cutting & shaping	Saws, grinders, welding tools		Inspecting & checking	Gauges, measuring tools	
Growing & producing	Farming tools, irrigation		Packing & handling	Forklifts, scanners	
Designing & planning	Plans, drawings, computers		Protecting & securing	Safety gear, radios	
Assembling	Hand tools, spanners, machinery		Helping & caring	Care tools, medical equipment	
Repairing & maintaining	Toolkits, testers		Managing & organising	Schedules, computers	

Follow-up activity:

You have identified activities and tools you enjoy using.
Choose one activity you selected and think of a career where people do this kind of work.

Activity selected: _____ Career linked to this activity: _____

1.7 Summary: What have you learned about yourself?

In Step 1, you explored how you like to work within an occupational pathway.

You did not choose an occupation yet. Instead, you learned more about your interests, preferences, and work style.

So far, you have thought about:

- The type of work you enjoy (for example: hands-on, working with people, technology, systems, or creative work).
- The work environments where you feel most comfortable (for example: indoors, outdoors, busy, quiet, physically active)
- The activities and tools you enjoy using as part of real work.

These insights help you understand what kinds of occupational work may suit you best.

Quick reflection

Use the space provided to capture your main insights.

The type of work I enjoy most: _____

The work environment that suits me: _____

Activities or tools I enjoy using: _____

Looking ahead

In the next step, you will use what you have learnt about yourself to explore occupational pathways, careers, and learning options in more detail.

Remember: Career planning is a process. You can refine your ideas as you learn more and gain experience.

In Step 2, you will explore work opportunities.



STEP 2: EXPLORE WORK OPPORTUNITIES

After learning more about yourself in Step 1, the next step is to look outward at the world of work. Many occupations that exist today did not exist a 100 years ago and many familiar occupations now require new skills and ways of working.

In Step 2 you will learn:

- How work and occupations are changing.
- Where work opportunities exist.
- How people build skills over time.



2.1 The world of work is always changing

Why does the world of work change?

Before exploring qualifications and career pathways, it is important to understand why work changes.

Think first:

- Why do some occupations disappear?
- Why are new occupations created?
- What causes these changes?

Discuss your ideas with a partner.

One major reason the world of work changes is because of technology. Technology and innovation involve new or improved tools and ways of doing things that help solve problems.

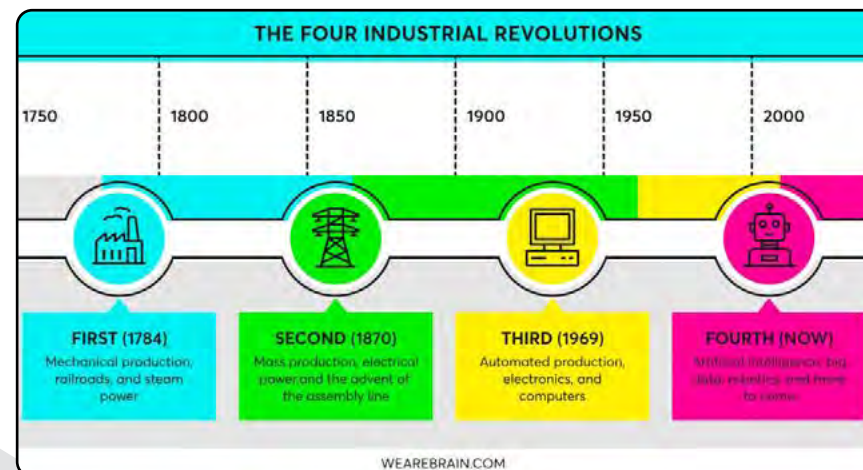
An invention is something brand new that did not exist before.

When people use innovation to develop new technology, they create inventions.

These inventions often lead to new industries, new skills and new careers. This describes the four industrial revolutions, we are currently in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) describes where technology like AI, robotics, data, and automation work together with humans to do work faster, smarter, and differently than before.

This has changed how work is done and what skills people need to succeed.



Activity: New inventions that changed the world of work

Many careers today exist because of inventions such as cars, the World Wide Web, artificial intelligence, drones, 3D printing and solar panels.

Instructions:

- Look at the table on the next page.
- Each invention already has some example occupations.
- Think of more occupations that exist because of these inventions.
- Write your answers in the spaces provided in the table.

Extra Question:

Which invention do you think will create the most occupations in the future & why?

New inventions that changed the way the world worked

Invention	New occupations	Invention	New occupations
Car 	Motor Mechanic	World Wide Web 	IT Support Technician
	Automotive Electrician		Web Content Administrator
	Vehicle Diagnostic Technician		Digital Marketing Assistant
3D Printing 	Additive Manufacturing Technician	Drones 	Drone Operator
	Computer Aided Design Operator		Aerial Survey Technician
	Prototype Technician		Agricultural Drone Technician
Artificial Intelligence 	Data Technician	Solar Panels 	Solar PV Installer
	Automation Technician		Solar Maintenance Technician
	AI Systems Support Technician		Renewable Energy Technician

STEP 2



2.2 Jobs today use NEW tools, skills & ways of working

Work today is not done in exactly the same way as it was in the past.

Many occupations still involve practical, hands-on work, but this is now often combined with new tools, technology and systems.

For example:

- A mechanic still works with engines and tools, but also uses diagnostic software.
- A construction worker still builds and repairs, but may use digital plans, measuring tools or machines.
- When tools change, training also changes

When the tools and ways of working change, training and qualifications need to be updated to accommodate that change. People need to learn how to work with both hands-on skills and modern tools.

Now many occupations require people to:

- Use technology alongside practical skills.
- Work with machines, systems or technology.
- Solve problems when things do not work as planned.
- Adapt as tools, methods and workplaces change.
- Continually learn new skills.

This is why many employers look for people who can do the work, not only know the theory about doing it. Skills-based and occupational pathways are designed to prepare people for this kind of work.

Occupational qualifications are designed for this future. They combine learning, practice, and workplace experience so you are ready to work, not just study.



2.3 Scarce Skills: Where occupations are in demand

Scarce skills are occupations that are in high demand because there are too few qualified people to fill them. These careers are important for the country's growth and offer good opportunities for employment.

Most scarce skills are:

- Practical and technical
- Linked to real workplaces
- Found in areas such as trades, technology, health, construction and engineering.

Activity: Identifying a scarce skill that interests you

This activity will help you learn more about South Africa's top 20 scarce skills from 2025, and explore the one that interests you. Answer the questions below.

Name of Scarce Skill

Qualification needed:

TOP 20 scarce skills

1. Software Developers
2. Civil Engineers
3. Electrical Engineers
4. Mechanical Engineers
5. Registered Nurses
6. General Medical Practitioners
7. Medical Specialists (e.g., Anaesthetists, Oncologists)
8. Quantity Surveyors
9. Project Managers
10. Chartered Accountants
11. Cybersecurity Specialists
12. Systems Analysts
13. Electricians
14. Welders
15. Plumbers
16. Solar Technicians
17. Wind Energy Specialists
18. Foundation Phase Teachers
19. Senior Phase Mathematics and Science Teachers
20. Veterinarians

2.4 What do employers really want?



Look at the LinkedIn job advert below.

A restaurant in Cape Town is hiring a Junior Chef:

Read the advert carefully and note what skills and experience are required?
Two people apply for the job. Answer the questions to the right.

Junior Chef

Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa · 1 month ago

No response insights available yet



On-site

Full-time

Easy Apply

Save

About the job

The Urban Table is looking for a passionate and reliable Junior Chef to join our dynamic kitchen team. This is a great opportunity for someone eager to grow their culinary skills in a fast-paced, professional environment.

Key responsibilities & requirements

- Food preparation skills
- Knowledge of kitchen hygiene and food safety standards
- Ability to use digital ordering systems
- Experience working in a busy kitchen environment
- Ability to work well under pressure and as part of a team

What we're looking for:

We're looking for a motivated individual with a strong work ethic, attention to detail, and a genuine passion for food and service.

Applicant A	Applicant B
• Completed a Hospitality Diploma • Studied food science and nutrition • Completed modules on health effects and menu planning	• Completed an Occupational Certificate: Chef • Learned food theory • Completed practical kitchen training • Worked in a real restaurant during workplace training • Has good references

Activity: Discuss and answer the following questions

Who is more likely to get the job? Why?

What is the difference between studying cooking and working in a kitchen?

If you were the employer, what would matter most: theory, practice or workplace experience?

Skills-based and occupational qualifications (where learning and practical training happen together), are designed to prepare people for the real workplace.



2.5 Occupational Qualifications

Training linked to real work

An occupational qualification prepares you for a specific type of work.

- You do not only study about the occupation.
- You are trained to do the work.

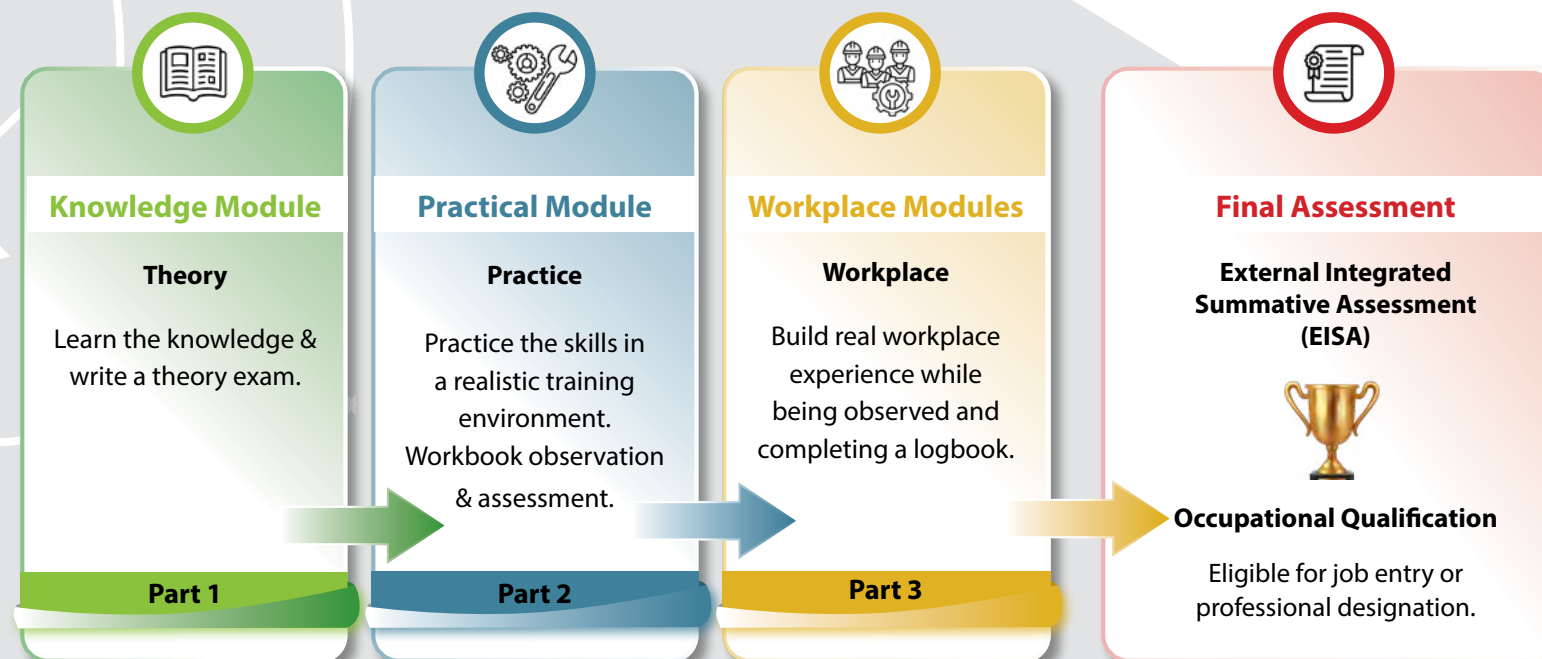
An occupational qualification:

- Focuses on real job skills.
- Combines learning, practical training and workplace experience.
- Helps you build skills that employers actually need.

How occupational training works:



The image below shows how occupational qualifications are structured. You learn the theory, practice the skills and gain real workplace experience.



LAUNCH YOUR FUTURE

STEP 2

2.6 Learning while working

In Section 2.5 you saw that an occupational qualification follows this pathway:

Learning → Practice → Workplace → Assessment → Job

This is where you apply your skills in a real or realistic work environment.

There are different ways the workplace experience can happen:

1. Learnership:

You study and work at the same time.

2. Apprenticeship (Artisan):

You train mainly in the workplace in a specific trade such as an electrician or a plumber.

3. Workplace Experience or Simulation:

You gain experience at a company, or in a college workshop, or in a training environment.

Activity: If you had the choice, which would help you learn best:

- ☐ Learning in a classroom first.
- ☐ Learning while working at the same time.
- ☐ Mostly learning in the workplace.

Why?

Activity: Which occupational pathway would you prefer?

Read through the information on the next page and answer the following questions:

Which pathway sounds more interesting to you?

- ☐ Artisan/Apprenticeship Pathway
- ☐ Occupational (Non-Artisan) Pathway

Why?

2.7 Two career pathways: Artisan and Non-Artisan

At the final stage, the pathway leads to either a trade test (artisan) or an occupational assessment (non-artisan). The table below explains the two pathways:

Artisan/Apprenticeship Pathway	Occupational (Non-Artisan) Pathway
Similarities • Skills-based. • Include workplace learning. • Lead to recognised Occupational Certificates.	Similarities • Skills-based. • Includes workplace learning. • Leads to recognised Occupational Certificates.
Differences • This pathway leads to a recognised trade. • You train in a recognised trade and must pass a trade test. • When you pass the trade test, you are recognised as an artisan. • In South Africa there are about 125 recognised artisan trades. • These are regulated by the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).	Differences • This pathway leads to a skilled occupation. • These occupations are practical and workplace-based, but they do NOT require a trade test. • Instead, you complete an external assessment.
Use the QR code/or link below to view the Trade Test Centres in your province and select a trade from the drop down menu. https://nadsc.dhet.gov.za/site/Trade%20Test%20Centres.aspx Examples of artisan trades: • Electrician • Plumber • Boilermaker • Fitter and Turner • Millwright • Hairdresser • Joiner • Diesel Mechanic • Bricklayer • Rigger 	Examples include: • Office Administrator • Logistics Clerk • Tourist Information Officer • Marketing Practitioner • Human Resource Officer • IT Support Technician • Graphic Designer • Early Childhood Development Practitioner • Project administrator
Learning → Practice → Workplace → Trade Test → Job	Learning → Practice → Workplace → External Assessment → Job

2.8 Summary: Explore work opportunities

In Step 2, you explored the world of work and how people move from school into skills-based work.

You still have not chosen a course or qualification yet, but you have learnt how skills connect to real work and real opportunities.

So far, you have learnt about:

- How work is changing.
- Which occupations are in demand.
- Different routes into skilled work.
- How learning links to real workplaces.

Quick reflection

Use the space provided below to capture your main insights.

Jobs or work areas that interest you most:

Skills that seem important for work today:

Pathways I want to explore further:

Looking ahead

- In the next step, you will start narrowing your options.
- You will explore study fields and pathways that match your interests and strengths. You are not expected to decide everything now.
- You will take this one step at a time.

Remember: You are exploring possibilities, not making a final decision yet.

STEP 2

STEP 3: MAKE CAREER DECISIONS



In Step 1, you explored yourself, in Step 2, you explored the world of work. Now it is time to narrow your options and choose between pathways.

In this step, you will:

- **Select study fields that interest you.**
- **Choose one occupation to explore further.**
- **Understand how occupational qualifications are structured.**
- **Research the qualification linked to your chosen occupation.**
- **Identify your next realistic education step.**

By the end of this step, you should feel clearer and more confident about your next move.



3.1 Explore occupations by study field

A **study field** groups together similar occupations and represents an area you may be interested in pursuing.

Look at the 18 study fields on the next page (You should also have a poster and a separate workbook in your classroom).

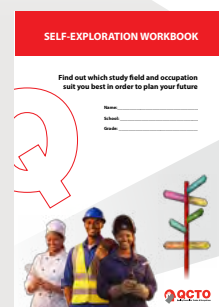
Activity: Identify your favourite study field.

Read pages 28–30 and review each study field in detail.

- Look at what you do in each field as well as the related occupations.
- Which study fields match what you enjoy doing.
- Choose three study fields that interest you the most.
- Tick the three selected fields in the blocks provided.

Activity: Choose your favourite occupation.

Once you have made your selections, complete the activity on page 31 where you will choose one occupation from your selected study field.



STEP 3

3.2 Choose a study field that suits you



3.2 Choose a study field that suits you

CHOOSE YOUR 3 STUDY FIELDS:

☐ Safety in Society



- ✓ Protecting people or information
- ✓ Security or safety work
- ✓ Community protection

Occupations: Security Officer | Community Safety Worker

Other: _____

☐ Education and Community Development



- ✓ Helping others learn or grow
- ✓ Working with children or youth
- ✓ Community-based work

Occupations: ECD Practitioner | Youth Development Worker

Other: _____

☐ Information Technology (IT)



- ✓ Working with computers and digital systems.
- ✓ Solving technical or software problems
- ✓ Networks, systems or cybersecurity

Occupations: IT Support | Computer Technician | Network Technician | Cybersecurity Analyst

Other: _____

☐ Building and Construction



- ✓ Working with tools and materials
- ✓ Building or repairing structures
- ✓ Outdoor or site-based work

Occupations: Plumber | Bricklayer | Carpenter

Other: _____

☐ Electrical Engineering



- ✓ Working with electricity
- ✓ Installing or repairing electrical equipment
- ✓ Practical technical work

Occupations: Electrician | Solar PV Technician | Automotive Electrician

Other: _____

☐ Mechanical Engineering



- ✓ Working with machines and tools
- ✓ Fixing or building mechanical systems
- ✓ Practical problem-solving

Occupations: Boilermaker | Fitter and Turner | Millwright

Other: _____

3.2 Choose a study field that suits you

☐ Hospitality



- ✓ Preparing food or drinks
- ✓ Working in restaurants or hotels
- ✓ Fast-paced team work

Occupations: Cook | Chef | Kitchen Assistant

Other: _____

☐ Health and Beauty



- ✓ Working with people or clients
- ✓ Personal care, beauty or fitness
- ✓ Hands-on service work

Occupations: Hairdresser | Beauty Therapist | Fitness Instructor

Other: _____

☐ Primary Health



- ✓ Helping people in communities
- ✓ Basic health or care support
- ✓ Working in clinics or homes

Occupations: Community Health Worker | Home-Based Care Worker

Other: _____

☐ Arts and Crafts



- ✓ Creative or hands-on work
- ✓ Making things by hand
- ✓ Design or craft skills

Occupations: Furniture Maker | Upholsterer | Craft Producer

Other: _____

☐ Travel and Tourism



- ✓ Working with visitors or travellers
- ✓ Providing information or services
- ✓ Customer-facing work

Occupations: Tourist Information Officer | Travel Assistant

Other: _____

☐ Agriculture



- ✓ Working outdoors
- ✓ Plants or animals
- ✓ Practical farm or production work

Occupations: Plant Production Worker | Animal Production Worker

Other: _____

3.2 Choose a study field that suits you

☐ Transport and Logistics



- ✓ Moving goods or people
- ✓ Organising transport systems
- ✓ Working with vehicles or warehouses

Occupations: Logistics Clerk | Warehouse Supervisor | Transport Coordinator

Other: _____

☐ Office Administration



- ✓ Organising information or records
- ✓ Office or computer-based work
- ✓ Supporting teams

Occupations: Office Administrator | Receptionist | Records Clerk

Other: _____

☐ Human Resources



- ✓ Working with people at work
- ✓ Supporting training or development
- ✓ Organising staff information

Occupations: HR Assistant | Training Administrator | Career Information Officer

Other: _____

☐ Marketing



- ✓ Communication or creative work
- ✓ Promoting products or services
- ✓ Digital or social media interest

Occupations: Marketing Assistant | Digital Marketing Assistant

Other: _____

☐ Financial Services



- ✓ Working with numbers
- ✓ Managing money or accounts
- ✓ Structured, accurate work

Occupations: Bookkeeper | Accounts Clerk | Payroll Assistant

Other: _____

☐ Management



- ✓ Leading or coordinating others
- ✓ Planning or organising work
- ✓ Making decisions

Occupations: Team Leader | Project Administrator | Operations Assistant

Other: _____

3.3 Choose ONE occupation

Activity:

Choose one occupation from your selected study fields.

The occupation can be:

- One of the examples listed under your chosen study fields.
- Or another occupation related to that field.

This occupation should:

- Match your interests.
- Feel realistic.
- Link to a recognised qualification.

Occupation name: _____

Study Field it belongs to: _____

Why I chose this occupation? _____

Now that you have chosen an occupation, you need to understand how the qualification pathway works and more about NQF levels.



3.4 How occupational qualifications work

Occupations linked to QCTO qualifications follow a structured pathway. Every Occupational Qualification includes:

Entry Requirements → Knowledge Modules → Practical Modules → Workplace Experience → Assessment (EISA) → Competent

The table below shows real examples from different study fields. You will notice that the occupations are different, but the structure is the same.

Occupational Qualification	Entry Requirement	 Knowledge Modules (KM) Examples	 Practical Modules (PM) Examples	 Work Experience Modules(WE) Examples	 Assessment (EISA)
IT Technical Support SAQA 118708 NQF 4	NQF 3 with Maths	Computer theory Operating systems & software Networking & cybersecurity	Install & configure computer networks. Troubleshoot problems	Work in an IT support environment under supervision	External practical & theory assessment on IT skills
Electrician SAQA 101101 NQF 4	NQF 2 with Maths	Electrical principles & theory Wiring systems & safety	Install and connect electrical wiring.	Work as an apprentice under a registered electrician	National Trade Test
Chef SAQA 101697 NQF 5	NQF 4 or experience	Food preparation theory Kitchen operations management Food safety & hygiene practices	Prepare and cook a range of food dishes Apply cooking techniques.	Work in a professional kitchen (restaurant or hotel)	Practical cooking assessment
Office Administrator SAQA 102161 NQF 5	NQF 4	Business communication theory Office systems & procedures	Prepare and organise documents using office software (Excel, email, etc.)	Work in a real office environment under supervision	External practical & theory assessment on office skills
Bricklayer SAQA 94020 NQF 4	NQF 2 with Maths	Construction drawings Materials Safety	Build walls. Apply plaster and finishes.	Work under supervision on a building site	Trade test and external assessment

These examples show that every qualification has an official name, a SAQA ID, an NQF level and a final external assessment.

Now we will look at how NQF levels work.

3.5 How the NQF levels work

The NQF is a system that shows different learning levels in South Africa.

Think of it like steps on a ladder.

Each level means you are learning more and becoming more skilled.

NQF Level 1 starts at school. NQF Level 4 is Matric.

After Matric, you can continue learning at higher levels.

Occupational Qualifications are placed at different NQF levels, usually between Level 2 and Level 8.

This means:

- Some Occupational Qualifications can be done before Matric.
- Some are done after Matric.
- Higher levels mean more advanced skills.

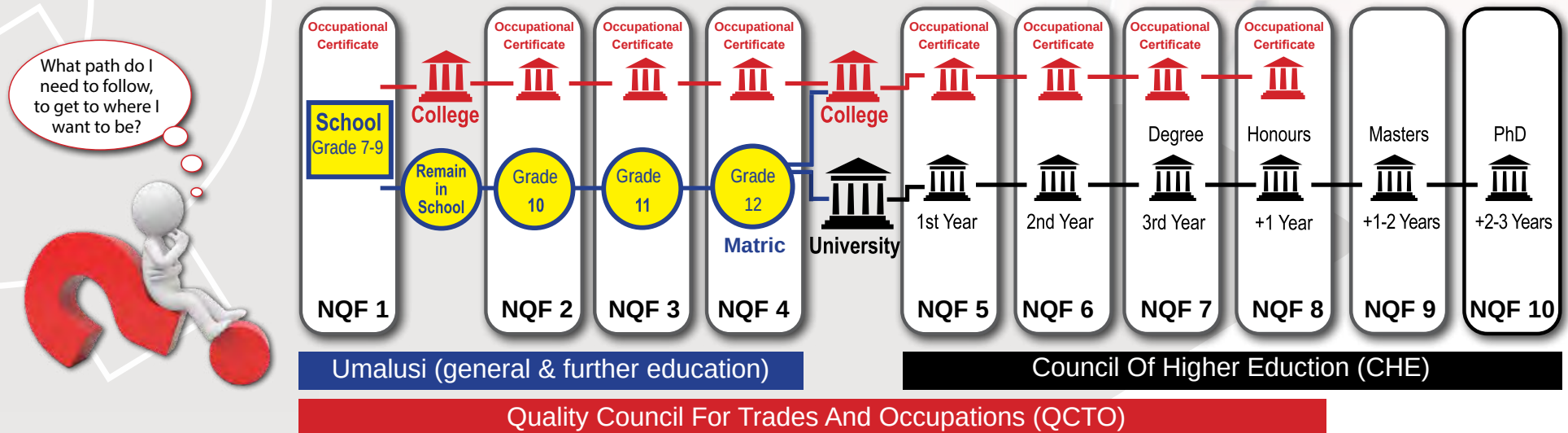
The diagram below shows how school, college and Occupational Qualifications fit into the same system.

This helps you see:

- What level you are on now?
- What level is your chosen qualification?
- What step comes next?

Each level is simply the next step up. An occupational qualification prepares you for a specific type of work.

**You do not only study about the job.
You are trained to do the job.**



3.6 Clarify your education pathway

Now position yourself on the pathway.

What grade am I currently in?

My current NQF level is:

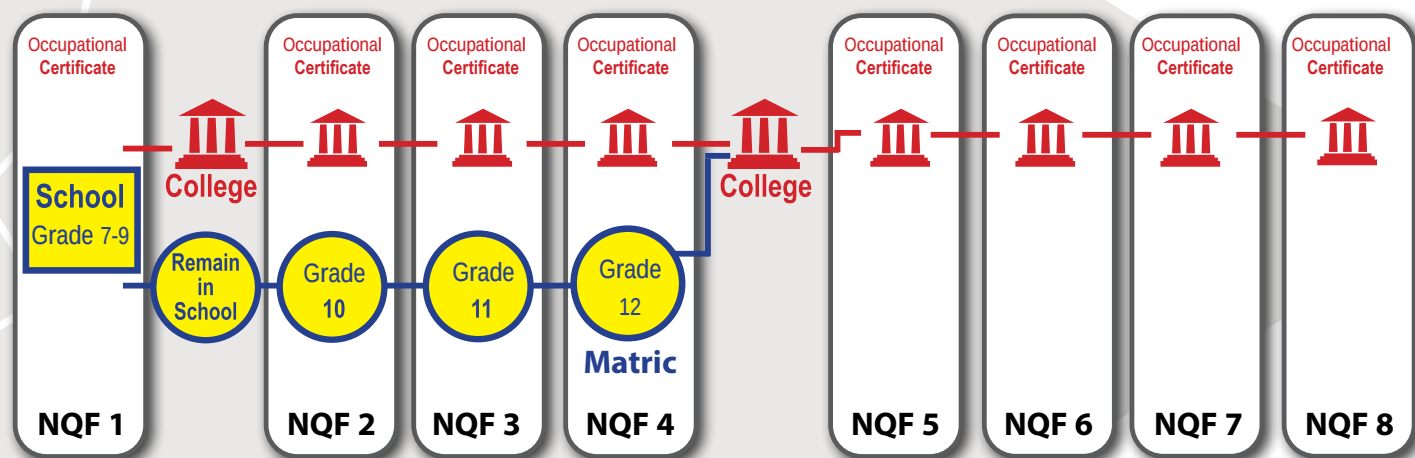
- ☐ NQF level 1
- ☐ NQF level 2
- ☐ NQF level 3
- ☐ NQF level 4
- ☐ NQF level 5
- ☐ NQF level 6
- ☐ NQF level 7
- ☐ NQF level 8.

What NQF level is the qualification I researched?

What level do I need to reach next?

My next realistic step is:

- ☐ Improve required subjects marks
- ☐ Complete school successfully
- ☐ Apply to a TVET College
- ☐ Apply for an Occupational Qualification
- ☐ Apply for a Learnership
- ☐ Apply for an Apprenticeship
- ☐ Start with a Skills Programme.



FINDING THE WAY UP THE STEPS

What is your current NQF?
What Occupation Pathway have you chosen



CLIMBING UP THE STEPS

My new
NQF level

Completing my
Occupational
Pathway



3.7 Research an occupation

Activity:

Now that you understand how Occupational Qualifications are structured, it is time to **research your own pathway**. Use the occupation you chose on page 31.

Use the following reliable websites:

- <https://www.gostudy.net>
- <https://ncap.careerhelp.org.za>
- <https://www.qcto.org.za/full---part-registered-qualifications.html>
- or another reliable source.

Occupation name: _____

Occupational Qualification name: _____

SAQA ID: _____

NQF Level: _____

Entry Requirements: _____

What will you do in this job? (Describe main tasks, services, or products you would work on).

Tick in the block next to the likely work environment for your career

- ☐ Outdoors ☐ Indoors ☐ Laboratory ☐ Remote work (work from home)
☐ Workshop/ factory ☐ Mine/construction site ☐ Hotel/kitchen ☐ Office

Where can you study this qualification?

- ☐ University ☐ University of Technology ☐ Private College
☐ TVET College ☐ Learnership ☐ Apprenticeship ☐ Skills Programme
☐ Online Platform (e.g., Coursera, Udemy, Google)

Write down the name of the institution where you would like to study.

Who are the possible employers for this career/occupation.

Write down related or similar careers you can also consider.

What steps can you take to get started? (Make a list of things to do and institutions to contact).

3.8 Summary: What career decisions have you made?

In Step 3, you moved from exploring to deciding.

So far, you have:

- Selected study fields
- Chosen one occupation
- Researched the Occupational Qualification linked to it
- Identified entry requirements
- Understood the pathway structure and NQF level
- Identified your next realistic step

In Step 4, you will turn this direction into action by identifying practical steps and creating your Action Plan.



STEP 4: YOUR ACTION PLAN

In Step 3, you chose an occupational qualification. In Step 4, you will prepare and apply for that qualification

In this step, you will:

- Confirm your qualification choice
- Check entry requirements
- Plan your application
- Prepare your documents
- Identify funding and support

This step turns your direction into action!



4.1 Future me

Lets look into the future:

Complete the sentence:

Future me is a qualified _____

This must match:

- The occupation you researched in step 3
- A real occupational qualification or trade.

Examples:

- Future me is a qualified Electrician.
- Future me is a qualified IT Support Technician.
- Future me is a qualified Chef.

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a striped long-sleeved shirt, light blue jeans, and pink sneakers, stands against a vibrant blue wall. A white banner with the text "CAN YOU SEE YOUR FUTURE?" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters is stretched across the wall. The question mark at the end of the banner is a large, orange, stylized font. The wall has a textured, slightly mottled appearance. The entire scene is framed within a large, tilted diamond shape with a red border. In the background, to the left of the main text area, there is a faint, white line-art graphic of a head profile with a gear-like shape inside, suggesting thought or planning.

CAN YOU SEE YOUR FUTURE?

4.2 Your next realistic step

Activity: Choose one realistic step you can take soon:

Tick 1 of the options below

- ☐ Check the entry requirements
- ☐ Find a TVET college or skills development provider
- ☐ Prepare my documents (ID, results, CV)
- ☐ Talk to someone in this job
- ☐ Other: _____

My next step is: _____

STEP 4

4.3 Your qualification plan

Lets get all the information into order:

Name of the Occupational Qualification:

Where is it offered?

(TVET College / accredited provider / employer)

Entry requirements:

Does it include workplace learning?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

By when will I apply?

Date: _____

What must I do before then?

1. _____

2. _____



4.4 Funding and support

Some occupational programmes are funded.

Possible funding:

- ☐ NSFAS
- ☐ SETA learnership
- ☐ College bursary
- ☐ Employer sponsorship
- ☐ Family support
- ☐ Other: _____

My Funding Action:

I will contact: _____

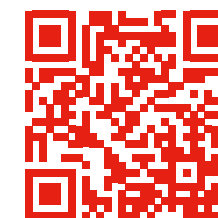
On this date: _____

To ask about: _____



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

NSFAS provides funding at 26 universities and 50 TVET colleges. Use the QR Code above to find out more.



SETA learnerships

Do a search on the web for SETA Learnerships. Alternatively use the QR Code above which will take you to all current learnerships, listed on QCTO's website.



4.5 Prepare your application

A **CV** is a document that shows employers your skills, education, and experience. It's often the first impression they have of you, so it's important to make it clear and professional. Even if it's your first job, a good CV can help you stand out and get interviews for work opportunities.

Activity: Create your own CV

Check your CV has the following information:

Contact Details	Name, phone, email, address
Objective	1-2 lines about your goal/why you must get the position.
Education	School and college / university qualification with dates.
Experience	Jobs or volunteering, including tasks, dates.
Skills	Soft and technical skills.
Achievements	Awards, certificates.
References	A reference is someone who can confirm your character, skills, and/or work ethic (use school, college or work contacts).

Application Checklist:

- ☐ CV completed
- ☐ Certified copy of ID
- ☐ Latest academic results
- ☐ Other certificates
- ☐ CV File saved as/exported to Acrobat PDF
- ☐ Save your CV with this name: Your Name_Surname_CV.pdf
- ☐ Documents stored safely (Computer folder / email / phone / USB)

Tips:

- Keep it short (1–2 pages)
- Make it honest & clear
- Make sure there are no spelling & grammar errors



CONTACT

Cell:
082 665 3091

Email:
fransn@gmail.com

Address:
Belhar, Cape Town, 7718

SKILLS

- Technical Skills**
- Basic knowledge of electrical wiring.
 - Reading simple electrical diagrams.
 - Safe use of hand tools.
 - Basic fault identification.

Personal Skills

- Punctual and dependable.
- Strong work ethic.
- Team player.
- Physically fit for site work.

Frans Nokwe

SUMMARY

Motivated and reliable school leaver with a strong interest in electrical and technical trades. Completed Matric with Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Electrical Technology. Eager to begin an apprenticeship or learnership to gain hands-on experience and develop practical skills. Committed to safety, teamwork and continuous learning.

WORK HISTORY

Baptist Church - Volunteer Work (June - July 2025)

Worked with a sound and lighting team:

- Plugged in projectors and speakers.
- Made tea and coffee for the team.

Electrical Vacation Work (Nov - Dec 2024)

Elec Co.

Worked with a qualified electrician doing the following:

- Carrying and preparing tools and materials.
- Cutting, stripping, and handling cables.
- Installing conduits, boxes, and fittings under supervision.
- Pulling cables and assisting with wiring.

EDUCATION

Perseel Secondary School, Cape Town Matric Certificate (2024)

Subjects:

- Mathematics (55%)
- Physical Sciences (50%)
- Electrical Technology (68%)
- Engineering Graphics and Design (72%)
- English (45%)
- Afrikaans (52%)
- Life Orientation (68%)

REFERENCES

Miss Holman, School Head at Perseel Secondary School
(021 656 8033)

Mr Snyman, Supervisor at Elec Co. (083 254 0088)

4.6 Find Learnerships and work experience

Opportunities are advertised online.

Start with trusted platforms. Use the QR Codes below:

- SAYouth.mobi
- Department of Employment and Labour (ESSA)
- SETA websites
- TVET college websites
- Company websites
- LinkedIn
- Indeed

Search using clear keywords:

"Learnership 2026"

"Apprenticeship Electrical"

"Workplace experience IT"

Before you apply:

- ☐ Read the requirements
- ☐ Check the closing date
- ☐ Make sure you qualify
- ☐ Attach all required documents

How to find learnerships and work opportunities



Activity: Search for an opportunity for your occupation online:

Name: _____

Closing Date: _____

Where I found it _____



SAYouth.mobi



Department of Employment
and Labour (ESSA)



LinkedIn



Indeed

STEP 4

4.7 Build support around you

Many opportunities come through people you know. Your network can help you find information, advice, and job opportunities.

Activity: People who could support you.

Think about the people and organisations that could support you in applying for jobs or building your career. Consider how each person could help you (for example: advice, referrals, job leads, or encouragement).

Your Inner Circle:

In the inner circle, write the names of the people closest to you, who provide you with immediate, personal, and emotional support.

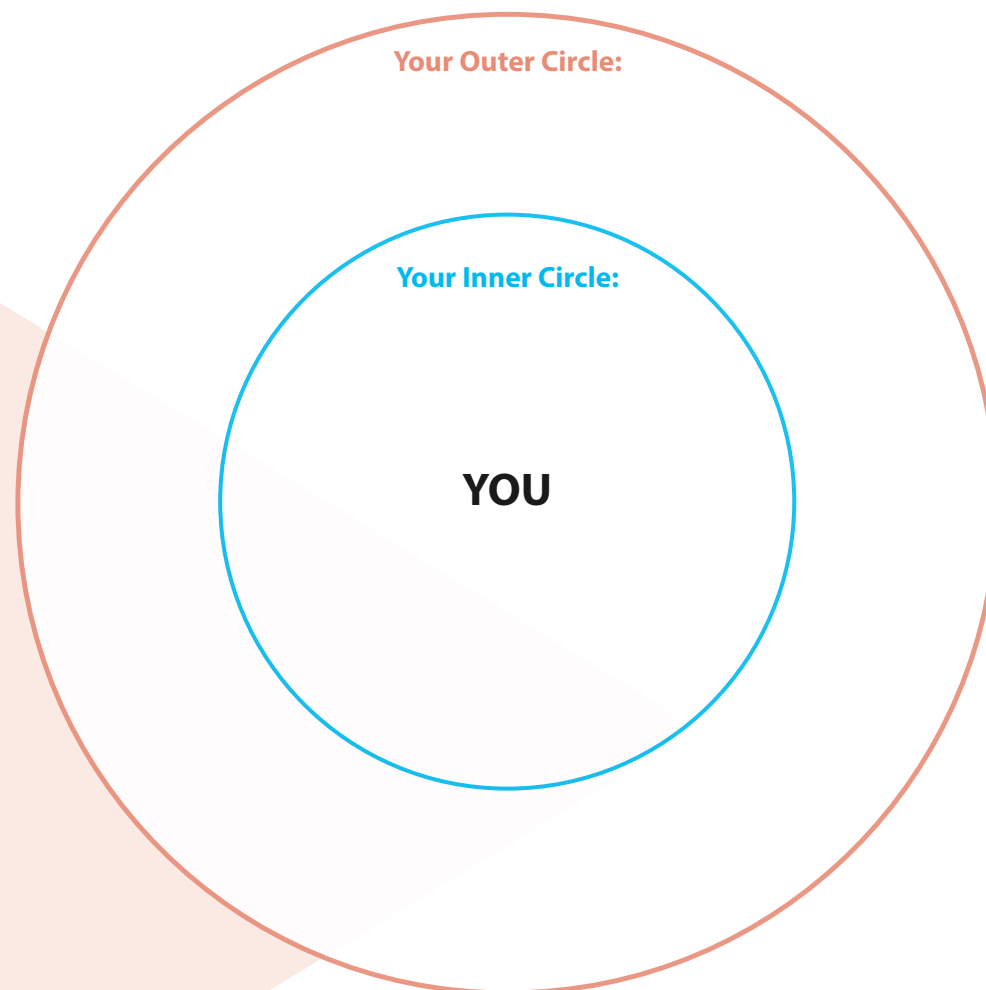
Your Outer Circle:

Write the names of people you can contact for help or guidance, but do not rely on as often. This may include teachers, past employers, mentors, or LinkedIn and other online connections.

Identify Additional Resources:

List people or organisations you could contact when needed, such as youth group leaders, career centres, employers, or industry bodies.

Additional Resources:



4.8 Final Action Plan

Activity: Write down your goal and in the table below complete your action plan (how you achieve your goal)

My main goal: _____

Action	Due Date	Completed Tick ✓

**Remember your actions
need to be SMART:**

S - Specific
M - Measurable
A - Attainable
R - Relevant
T - Time-based



4.9 Summary: Your Action Plan

In Step 4, you prepared to apply for your occupational qualification. You documented all you need to do to achieve your goal in an action plan, which will help you achieve your goal.

Complete the checklist below:

My chosen occupational qualification: _____

The work it leads to: _____

My CV is ready:

☐ Yes

☐ No

My documents are ready (ID, results, etc.):

☐ Yes

☐ No

Who I will speak to for support: _____

Applications I will submit:

Where I will apply: _____

By when: _____

Next step:

My next action: _____

By when: _____



STEP 4



Accelerating Skills Development for Inclusive Economic Growth



OUR VISION

The QCTO vision is to qualify a skilled and capable workforce.



OUR MISSION

The QCTO's mission is to effectively and efficiently manage the occupational qualifications sub-framework in order to set standards, develop and quality assure national occupational qualifications, part qualifications and skills programmes for all who want a trade or occupation and, where appropriate, professions.



OUR VALUES

Innovation and Excellence
Empowerment and Recognition
Respect and Dignity
Ethics and Integrity
Ownership and Accountability
Authenticity



Contact us

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