

# 2.

## CHOOSING YOUR PATH



GET PREPARED WITH UNILEVER | MODULE 2

# GET PREPARED

This is the first of six sessions in the GET PREPARED programme, designed to support young people as they leave school, college or university and approach the world of work and further study. They are designed to be run either as standalone sessions or as a series, depending on the needs to the young people you are working with.



This first session is about helping people make decisions about the route they want to take next, be that study or employment. While we don't go into specific career counselling, we help people start to 'sketch out' priorities, passion and purpose – such as they exist at this point – to make sense of the options available.

Later sessions – if used – are focused on exploring, applying to, interviewing for and starting out on the paths they identify in this first session.

## KEY POINTS TO COVER IN THIS SESSION ARE:

1. With so many options to explore, it's useful to choose a few to focus on.
2. A good starting point for this is to look the things that interest and motivate us, both at home and at school/ college/ university.
3. It's also worth reflecting on the practicalities of different career and study routes and organisations and thinking about which of those appeal.
4. While it's useful to start thinking about these things now, we should question how we feel about these things throughout our careers.

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Like every GET PREPARED session, this guide includes the following things to help you out:

1. WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO RUN THIS SESSION	Materials and equipment that you'll need to complete the session as designed.
2. THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND	Decisions you'll need to make about this session and key considerations for this particular content.
3. HOW TO RUN THIS SESSION	All the detail on running the session including timings, questions to ask the group to create a conversation, how to run exercises and how you might need to vary things for different levels.
4. FLEXING THE SESSION	How to shorten or extend the session as needed to fit into the school, college or university's schedule.

## 1. WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO RUN THIS SESSION

- A projector and screen
- Session 1 slides
- Copies of the relevant handouts for each participant  
*If following the 'foundation' approach this will required Handouts 1a, b and c.*  
*If following the 'advanced' approach this will require Handouts 1d and e.*

## 2. THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Before this session, speak to the teacher or contact at the school, college or university you're working with. Find out and/or check:

- Information about the group – *how many young people are there? How old are they? How well do they get on with each other?*
- What the group have already done on this topic – *have they had any career counselling? Might they already have applied for jobs?*
- Practical details about the room, any equipment you need (e.g. a projector) and timings (*e.g. will you be able to have an hour or are you needed to fit into a specific school period/class length?*)

Based on what you find out about the group, you'll need to decide how to run the session.

Think about:

- Whether you'll use the 'foundation' or 'advanced' level activities (where relevant). If the group are younger and/or have not done much thinking about careers, keep things simple with the 'foundation' approach. If they are a little older and more 'professional' in their thinking, try the 'advanced' activities. You can of course mix and match as you think appropriate. You can always speak to the school, college or university about your planned approach beforehand.
- If you need to remove or add any exercises to fit the time available to you. This session is designed to last an hour as standard. There are suggestions on how to do flex this for more or less time at the back of this guide.
- How you'll make the exercises work with the group size you'll have.
- Making sure you don't over-expose people, particularly in the younger school environments. This session calls on them to think about their strengths and passions; they may not be comfortable sharing these things with others. The exercises have been designed with this in mind, but you should feel free to adapt things to suit the group you're working with.
- Any local references you want to make. These sessions have been designed to be used globally so think about any useful resources or cultural points that are relevant to your location that you might want to mention.
- How to link the session to the next decisions the group will have to make. For example, you might deliver a session like this to a young group thinking about which subjects to pick for the next part of their schooling. Throughout the session you'll need to make links from the career-based subject matter to how that might start giving them an indication of appropriate subjects e.g. your interests and motivations help you think about subject- as well as career-choices.

### 3. HOW TO RUN THE SESSION



HANDOUTS



DISCUSSION



EXERCISE



TIPS



SLIDES

APPROX. TIMES	<h2 style="text-align: center;">FOUNDATION</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">14-18 YEAR-OLD</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">ADVANCED</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">18-22 YEAR-OLD</p>	APPROX. TIMES
0' - 5'	<h3 style="margin-bottom: 10px;">INTRODUCTION</h3> <p><b>WHAT REALLY MATTERS:</b> During this introduction, you need to explain what we're trying to do today, establish yourself as someone worth listening to/ who can help them and get them feeling comfortable with whatever level of thinking they've already done (or not).</p> <p> SLIDE 1</p> <p>Introduce yourself to the group. You might want to very briefly share one or two highlights from your career journey that will help you connect with the group and boost your credibility as someone who can help them think about their next steps.</p> <p> SLIDE 2</p> <p>Introduce the Get Prepared programme. Explain which sessions you'll be running with them.</p> <p> SLIDE 3</p> <p>Introduce today's subject matter – how to make sense of all the different career and study options out there so that we can take our next steps – whether that's choosing the subjects we'll study in the next part of our education, or choosing a few career areas to explore. The key point is that today is about giving just a little direction for them to investigate more.</p> <p> SLIDES 4</p> <p> EXERCISE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that we're going to start with a quick 'temperature check' of how far the group's thinking has got on careers.</li> <li>• Find a space in the room and ask the group to imagine a scale on the floor from 10 ("I know exactly what I want to do, where and in what role") to 0 ("I haven't got a clue").</li> <li>• Ask everyone (at the same time) to go and stand on the approximate place on the scale where they think they are. To encourage them to do this and to be honest, you should use yourself as an example to explain this. For example: "I'd put myself at 3 on the scale [go and stand there] because..."</li> <li>• Once the group have found a spot, ask them to turn to one or two people near them and share why they stood there i.e. what have the done (or not done) that made them choose that place?</li> </ul>		0' - 5'

 DISCUSSION

- Ask for one or two people to share some ideas.
- As you hear back from them, point out any great steps people have taken to further their thinking on their next steps and explain we'll be looking at how to do these things during the programme (e.g. researching companies, updating your CV).
- It's really important during this discussion that you highlight that lots of people are in the same situation e.g. haven't got that far in their thinking about this and that we're here today to help them do that. Lots of young people find career planning overwhelming so use this exercise to reassure them.

 TIP

*Make a note of the spread of the group on this scale so that you can tailor the rest of the session; also be aware of the group dynamics in this exercise e.g. how willing were they to be honest and talk with each other?*

APPROX.  
TIMES

## HOW DO I CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM?

APPROX.  
TIMES5'  
-  
10'

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** During this section, what's important is that people recognise they need to think about their own preferences and situation when considering career paths. This session is about reassuring them that whatever their preferences are they are valid.

5'  
-  
10'

- Link from the temperature check exercise by explaining that sometimes it can be hard to move up that scale because there are so many options out there; it can be overwhelming and confusing. So, let's take a look at the main options available.

 SLIDES 5-6

- Explain the main options available and outlined on the slide. [TIP] Feel free to bring this to life with local examples or language as appropriate. When you've explained the options, stress how exciting but bewildering the range of choice we have today can be.

 DISCUSSION

- For each type, ask: what could we gain from each decision/ what the benefits are of each?  
You are looking for answers like:
  - **STUDY:**  
Provides academic challenge, satisfies interest in researching a particular area, during a recession it can provide you with useful training which will develop your career while jobs are not easy to get, university transfer programmes may enable study abroad, allows continued focus on an area which you've enjoyed at school/ college/ university, may be viewed positively by certain employers/ industries and boost ultimate earning power.
  - **APPRENTICESHIPS:**  
Allows you to earn money while still training, appeals to practical learners who enjoy learning while doing, in lots of countries there are incentives to join many of the professions which traditionally begin in this way, core functional industries using apprenticeships may offer later job security.
  - **EMPLOYMENT:**  
Earning, potential range of career paths and travel opportunities, great opportunities to learn directly from successful people currently in your chosen career, opportunities to

contribute directly to company and economic growth.

- Explain that the purpose of today isn't to pin down a detailed career or study path - most evolve over time – or even 'pick one of these options – that may require personal reflection (alone or with a career counsellor) – but to help them think about how to make those decisions and give them some personal starting points for areas to explore further.

#### DISCUSSION

- Ask the group what sort of things they think will come into their decision-making process/ the sort of things they might need to consider.

#### TIP

*If you don't get many volunteers, ask those who were at the higher end of the scale in the earlier exercise what they've considered when making some of their decisions.*

- You're looking for people to start generating the content on Slide 7 e.g. what I like doing, how much money I can earn, whether I'll have the right qualifications etc. If your audience is still at the stage of considering subjects they might study, you should also try to draw out of them things like specific study options that might be required for certain careers; what the labour market might think of particular subjects or universities.

#### SLIDES 7

- Talk through the three factors that should influence career decisions, detailed on the slide, explaining that if we can understand what matters to us in each of these areas we might be able to pick subjects, study paths and careers which are a best match for us.

#### DISCUSSION

- Ask the group what impact it will have if we pick a career which matches what matters to us in these areas.
- You're looking for people to connect doing something that matters to them to feeling motivated to succeeding and feeling satisfied.
- It's important they think about these things as they will inform the jobs/study they pick and how they apply for, interview and make a start on their chosen path (i.e. prospective employers will ask 'why us?' or 'why this career?' or 'why should we pick you?' and this will help them articulate this.
- However, explain these will evolve over our lives; they can (and should) come back to these preferences and questions again and again. There are relatively few people who know what they want to do at a young age and stick with that for their whole careers; most people move into different areas at different times.
- You might like to explain that we ask these questions at Unilever when planning our careers at all levels – including our most senior leaders.

#### TIP

*Feel free to tell a short story about how you've used these reflections to shape your career at some point.*

- Explain we'll all have preferences informed by different things and they are all justified – it's our path, after all.

## MAKING A MATCH (FACTOR 1)

10'  
-  
30'

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** The group are unlikely to make fully-formed career decisions during this session but a great aim is to arm them with some things they might discuss with a career counsellor or research a bit more on the Internet after the session.

 EXERCISE

- Explain that we're going to start by looking at the things we like doing or would like to do.

 HANDOUT

- Give a copy of Handout 1-A to each person and get them to look at the side with the set of words on it. These describe things people might do or be good at.
- Give the group about five minutes to read through the words and circle or underline the five that stand out to them. Perhaps these will be things they are already good at/ enjoy; or they might be things that sound interesting to them for another reason.

 TIP

*The instructions on the handout say they should pick five words. This is just a guide – if only four or six appeal that's OK – it's just important they think more broadly than a single task but do some limiting of their options!*

- After the exercise, get the group to turn the handout over and talk them through the different career/study fields. Explain that it's almost impossible to put together an exhaustive list of all the different study and career areas in the world – certainly on a single page – but this might prompt some thinking for them.
- What's important is to combine our thinking on our own interests with a reflection on the available study/ career paths.
- Give the group a few minutes to look over their answers and the career areas and answer the question at the bottom of the handout.
- Conclude the exercise by explaining that this should now have given them one or two areas to explore further (simplifying the wide range of options out there).

## ALL ABOUT YOU (FACTORS 1/2)

10'  
-  
30'

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** The exercise the group are about to do is based on those asked during our IDP workshops and ULDP sessions. The questions are tricky so it's important the group take time to really think about them both during and after the session.

 EXERCISE

- Explain that we're going to start by looking at our skills, strengths, values, passions and motivators.

 HANDOUT

- Give a copy of Handout 1-D to each person. This is a mental map which gives space to capture the things that matter most to us. It is based on materials used and questions asked at Unilever to help employees plan their career and even new leaders think about the kind of leader they want to be.
- Explain that these questions are really important in helping us decide on career/study paths because they help us think about what really matters to us, deep down inside. Depending on the group you might want to use language like 'our sense of purpose'. Ultimately, finding a career that links to what really matters to us will keep us motivated which will help us to succeed and be satisfied with our career.
- Get people to find a partner and to interview each other using the four numbered questions on the template (NB we recommend following the order of the questions). Person A will start by asking Person B the questions and making a note of their partner's answers. After approximately 8 minutes, they should swap over.

30'  
-  
45'

## SEARCH FOR THE HERO (FACTOR 2)

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** Talking about values and motivators is tricky with a young audience so we achieve this by getting them to think about someone they admire. What's important is that they really think deeply about why they admire someone, avoiding the superficial or unachievable (e.g. "he's really good looking") to something aspirational and motivating for them.

- Explain that another thing to think about when picking out path is our values/ motivators/ drivers. Picking a path which plays to these helps us succeed and helps us get more out of life. While some people know what motivates them or what they want their future to look like, it can be hard to pin this down. So, to help we can think about people who we admire (for what they've achieved in their career) and why.

### EXERCISE HANDOUT

- Give out a copy of Handout 1-B to each person. Explain they need to think about someone they admire – a celebrity or someone they know. What's important is they pick someone who they aspire to be like in their career. They'll have a chance to think about what marks that person out as successful or admirable to them and then what those traits mean to them and their career (e.g. rich, travelled, did some good, have done lots of different things, their own boss etc).

### TIP

*Share your own example with the group. Choose someone you think they will be able to relate to (e.g. a celebrity they'll know or a figure they can understand such as a parent).*

- Get people to find a partner and to interview each other using the questions on the handout. Person A will start by asking Person B the questions and making a note of their partner's answers. After approximately 5 minutes, they should swap over.

### DISCUSSION

- After the exercise, ask people to share some of the things they admire and explain these are things that might motivate us to succeed in our career so it's worth thinking about which of those things might drive us and so are important in a career choice.

## ALL ABOUT YOU...SO WHAT? (FACTORS 1/2)

30'  
-  
40'

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** This section is designed to help people make sense of the various bits of information they came up with when doing their interviews. What's important is that they reach some overarching conclusions and help each other to work out what they could do with those conclusions/ areas to look at next.

- At the end of the interviews, ask people to swap handouts (so people should now be looking at a handout with their own answers on).

### EXERCISE

- Direct people to the final question in the middle of their map.
- Explain that this asks them to now try and make sense of all the other answers they gave. By reflecting on them, looking for patterns and spotting the really key messages, they need to think about what it tells them about what they really love doing (or might love to do more of in the future).
- Give them 5 minutes to reflect on this question.
- At the end of the 5 minutes, get them to turn back to their partner and briefly get their perspective or any advice on other areas they might explore given their preferences.

### TIP

*Depending on the group size you have you may choose to replace the paired discussion with a whole group discussion on this. If you do, ask for volunteers to share some of the things they've noticed about themselves and what matters to them, and get the rest of the group to advise them on careers or study areas they might look into given their preferences..*

## LOOKING AT THE PRACTICALITIES (FACTOR 3)

45'  
-  
50'

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** For many people we reach in these sessions, career choices will not be driven (solely) by personal passions and drivers. It's important people feel as comfortable with practical factors influencing their decision as those related to purpose. It's also important that in this session they feel positive yet realistic about some of the trade-offs they might need to make and have predetermined some of their priorities so that those decisions aren't a shock and can be made positively rather than regretfully.

- Explain that personal passions and interests are not the only thing that will govern what path we choose and what satisfaction we get from it. There are many factors that distinguish different companies and learning institutions from one another. It's useful to think about these factors so that you can choose which to look at or dismiss from our research and applications.

### » SLIDES 8-9

- Build Slide 8 talking about the different factors at play. This should be done in discussion with the group so that they help to build the content. For example, you might ask:
  - What might the differences be between small and large companies?
  - What sort of things might differ in the working culture of different companies?
  - What have you heard from friends and family who work about different aspects of working culture?

40'  
-  
45'

50'  
-  
55'

## STANDING OUT (FACTOR 3)

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** This group won't consider trade-offs given their likely age but this exercise gives them a chance to start thinking about what might appeal to them when they first start thinking about which organisations to work for or where to study.



- Give out copies of Handout 1-C to each person.
- Having listened to the different factors at play, they should make a note of anything that has particularly interested them/ stood out as important.
- Then they should rank the different points in terms of their level of importance to their decision making process. For example, if high funding is very important to a study choice, or location will be key when picking an employer that would be ranked 1.
- Explain that they should just go with their 'gut instinct' and not over-think this exercise. We're not making final decisions about what we will do at this stage, but just capturing some ideas about preferences so that when they do come to research their options further they have some thoughts on what to look out for as key to them.

## MAKING TRADE-OFFS (FACTORS 2/3)

**WHAT REALLY MATTERS:** What's key here is getting the group comfortable with the reality of the world of work (and study) so that they are open to 'imperfect' options. We want to encourage them to recognise that trade-offs might be necessary, not shutdown to potential opportunities if trade-offs arise, but make sure they stay true to the things that really matter to them.



- Give out copies of Handout 1-E to each person.
- Explain that, as we've been discussing these different factors, chances are they've been thinking about which things are particularly important to them. However, when we're looking to take our next step, it's not always straightforward as each study or job opportunity might offer some things which seem 'perfect' for us but may not fulfil everything we'd like.

Sometimes this means we need to make trade-offs in order to get the things that really matter to us.



Share an example of your own here (e.g. "For

45'  
-  
55'

*example, when I took on X role I spent some time based at a location further away from my family than I ideally wanted. It was a trade-off I was prepared to make because in return I got...*

- What’s important is that we give some prior thought to what trade-offs we might be prepared to make – and those we will not. This will help us to filter out opportunities that won’t work for us or appeal to what matters, but keeps us open to those that – while imperfect – may be great for us.
- Give the group about 5 minutes to look at the pairs of statements on the handout and pick the options that appeal most to them. Talk through an example answer to explain this.
- Once they’ve answered all the questions, get them into small groups of 3-5 people. Get them to:
  - Discuss any decisions they found particularly tricky or anything else which stood out for them.
  - Focus on what stood out for them as learning from this exercise – what does it tell them about the sort of choices they’d like to make?
- We’ll do this by pairing up traits that aren’t necessarily opposites but which different companies may or may not have (e.g. ambitious growth targets and corporate social responsibility). They will then either have to pick one OR mark on a scale between them where they assign most importance e.g. it could be halfway or one could be much more important.
- We’ll prompt a discussion as a group or in pairs around this.

55’  
-  
60’

### NEXT STEPS

WHAT REALLY MATTERS: Concluding the session with a sense of purpose – how they can use what we’ve done so far either independently or as a basis for what we’ll look at in Part 2 (if relevant).

➤ SLIDES 10-11

- Sum up the sessions top tips and check for any final questions.
- Share the thought-provoker questions/ things to consider as they leave today’s session. If relevant, explain what we’ll do with these considerations in Part 2 i.e. start thinking about how to research and approach the organisations/ institutions they’re interested in.

55’  
-  
60’

## 4. FLEXING THE SESSION

FLEXIBILITY	CONTENT (FOUNDATION)	CONTENT (ADVANCED)
LESS TIME?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut the ‘Search for the hero’ exercise and/ or reduce the time spent on ‘Standing out’.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the ‘Making trade-offs’ exercise with the ‘Standing out’ exercise from the foundation design or simply cut the group discussion part.</li> </ul>
MORE TIME?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combine this workshop with Session 2 to make the topic more practical.</li> <li>• After the ‘Making a match’ exercise add in more personalised discussion about specific career areas that could be explored by getting people to share a few of their key interests and getting others to make suggestions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These subjects at this level are quite big and meaty areas to reflect on so more time can be allowed for each exercise, particularly the ‘All about you’ interviews.</li> <li>• To add even further depth to these discussions, encourage further pair/ small group/ whole group ‘coaching’ of each other to get multiple perspectives and/or add the element of providing ‘feedback’ on things like strengths and successes if the group know each other.</li> </ul>