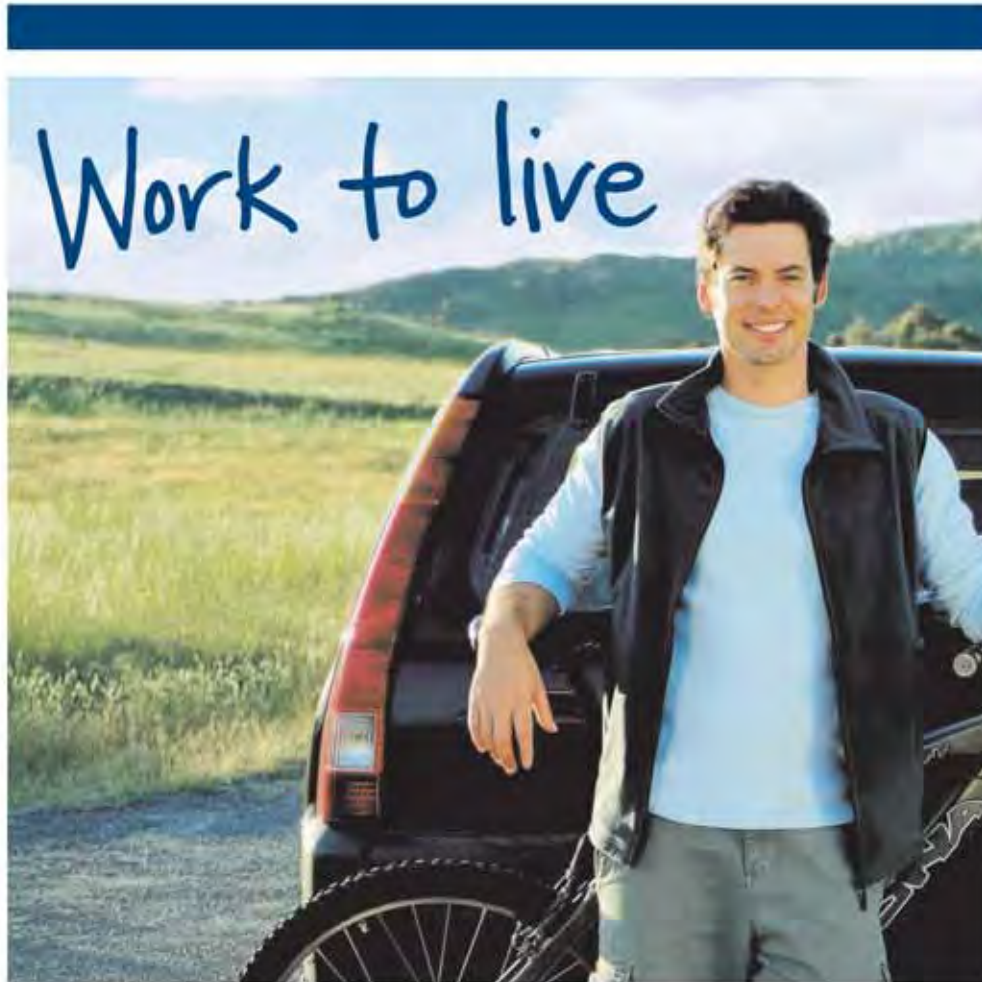


# your & career & you

## Your Career & You

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Self Assessment for  
Students and Graduates  
(and all lifelong career planners)



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**Australian Government**  
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## Your Career & You

Self Assessment for  
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# contents

Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) is the leading authority on the supply of, and demand for, new graduates in Australia. GCA fosters employment and career opportunities for graduates, in association with the higher education sector, government and business.

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This book is a substantially updated edition of *Your Career and You* which was originally written by Bronwyn Duncan for GCA. It has been an extremely valuable and well-respected resource in university Careers Services for some time.

This new edition, written by Karen Sims (with Dugald McNaughtan and Di Rachinger) for GCA, encompasses modern workplace skills and will continue to assist students and graduates of all experience levels in self assessment, a crucial component of a successful job search. Careers Service personnel from around Australia assisted with the content of this publication.

Graduate Careers Australia would like to thank the Australian Taxation Office for its ongoing generous financial support, which enabled the update and original release of this publication.

## your career & you

Your Career & You

Self Assessment for  
Students and Graduates

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# introduction

## how do you do it?

If you *analyse* things you've done or sometimes *think* about yourself, then you've already started on the road to self assessment.

To self assess, you need to have a 360 degree perspective. You need to be able to look forward, look back and also look at yourself in the present. This is quite a complex process but also a rewarding one. Self assessment gives you insight into who you are – everybody has a 'toolbox' of skills – identifying them and being able to enunciate them sets you on the path to career success.

## what's in it for you?

**Self assessment is vital for gaining a clearer understanding of where you may be going in life, not just in terms of a career, but also in terms of life goals and relationships.**

Self assessment is a way of learning what you do well, what you don't do so well and what you might do in the future. Essentially, you can determine what makes you *you* – what values, skills and attributes *you* have. And keep in mind, if you don't know who you are, you cannot expect an employer will readily be able to determine what you have to offer.

# how to use this book

**This book will help you focus on the kinds of qualities you currently have (or are developing) that will be relevant in your working life.** The book, by way of a number of written exercises, involves thinking carefully and objectively about yourself at a very personal level, and possibly getting others to help you work out the answers.

Self assessment is a valuable activity. If you know yourself well you will be better able to make decisions that are right for you. The idea here is that you think about general qualities in yourself at as specific a level as you can and then write down examples of situations, experiences or skills that demonstrate you have these qualities. Focus on positive qualities and achievements, but if you come up with some weaknesses, don't be too hard on yourself – everybody has them.

At the end of this book you should have a snapshot of a real person with strengths and weaknesses, talents and skills, preferences and distastes – all of which will be relevant to your future working life.

Think of it as putting yourself under a microscope, and then look for patterns of skills and qualities. Since we all change over time this snapshot can only be of you at this stage in your life, based largely on your past, with a few glimpses into the hazy future.

You can work through the written exercises on your own (perhaps doing a few at a time) however, it may be more valuable to consult the Careers Service staff at your institution who will be able to transfer some of the issues the book raises into tangible points for job applications and interviews. Find their contact details on the Graduate Careers Australia website – [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au) under 'Campus Contacts'.

Finding the right job and exploring career possibilities is an exciting time of life but it can also be quite daunting. This book will help you prepare for your job search.

# part one

## personal goals

### sense of direction

**Have you thought about where you're going?** Can you talk about what you want out of life? Apart from describing your specific career goals and personal qualities, you should be able to say something about your general sense of direction.

For example, can you name three things that are more important to you than anything else? They might be broad things, such as travel, fame, love, children, possessions, security, adventure or health. In a face-to-face situation such as a job interview, it is better if you can specifically say what you want out of life. For example, regarding travel you could say that you "would like a job which offers overseas travel". Regarding adventure you could say that "an outdoor job which challenges me physically is what I prefer".

It's important in the upcoming exercise to pinpoint the things that are so meaningful to you that you would be unfulfilled or discontent and frustrated without them. Don't exclude things because they might be 'uncool', and don't worry that your wishes may change – you can only be expected to deal with how you are at the present time.

### written exercise

**Sum up your life goals in a few words or phrases.**

**Come back to this exercise after you've worked on the others and assess how closely your sense of direction and goals match up with the rest of your profile.**

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## goal setting and achievement

**Goals can be immediate, in the near future or a long way ahead.** They may be broad or very specific. What goals have you set and reached in your education and personal life so far? What goals have you set for the future regarding your work, personal life or interests? Do you prefer to wait and see, or to plan ahead – or a combination of both?

In applying for work you need to think about broad longer-term career goals as well as immediate ones that specifically relate to your first job.

### written exercise

**Write down some examples of different types of goals you've previously set and reached, and some that you hope to reach in the future. Also, write down why they are important to you.**

#### past goals achieved

general:

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specific:

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#### future goals

general – (in 12 months, in three years, in 10 years)

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specific – (in 12 months, in three years, in 10 years)

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# part four

## competitiveness

## personal attributes

**Are you willing and able to compete with others and have your performance measured against theirs?** Do you actually enjoy competition, and if so in which circumstances? What sort of competition do you dislike? Do you prefer to work cooperatively?

Healthy competition in the workplace can spur employees on to new heights. It can also add excitement and foster teamwork.

### written exercise

**Give some examples of competitive situations you've been in, write down how you approached them and how you felt at the time. Then, describe some cooperative situations, explaining how you approached them and how you felt about them.**

competition – (examples: study, sport, prizes, clubs, jobs, family, friends)

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cooperation – (examples: teamwork, family, friends, study, jobs, community activities)

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## initiative

**Do you make decisions easily and then follow through with them?** Do you get things done without waiting to be asked? Employers sometimes use the word 'self-starter' or 'self-motivated' to describe these qualities. Another word is 'enterprising'. It means they expect you to be resourceful and use your own discipline and energy to achieve projects or tasks. It may also mean that you will be expected to take the lead in a situation.

Most students have to use their initiative just to complete their studies, but it is developed in other ways too, even in social situations. Have you had to think of clever, unusual ways to raise funds for an organisation connected with one of your hobbies?

### written exercise

**List some situations in which you saw a need and filled it, or found yourself facing a problem and acted independently to solve it. Also, list some situations where you started something from scratch either alone or with others.**

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# part four

## personal attributes

### self confidence

**Self confidence is a changeable quality.** You can have it, lose it, get it back, have it in some circumstances and not in others. Some people seem full of confidence but you can be sure there are times when they're not. Even the appearance of self confidence can be just that – an illusion that hides fear or uncertainty. Remember, appearing self confident can actually help you feel that way.

Confidence grows with preparation and practice, and you are right to feel confident about things you do well, just as it's natural to feel hesitant or unsure about things you do poorly or have never done before.

It is important to be positive and confident with prospective employers about your skills and abilities, as well as showing that you believe in your potential to succeed in new situations.

#### written exercise

**Put your good points into words using the expressions below, which all show confidence without conceit or arrogance.**

■ i can...

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■ i find it easy to...

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■ i have a flair for...

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■ One of my aptitudes is...

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■ i've got good skills in...

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■ people have told me I'm...

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■ i've done well in...

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■ i found (x) hard at first but now...

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■ i need more experience in (y) but I do know about...

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■ my experience in (z) has taught me to...

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# part five

## personal skills chart\*

skills

organising	social group	communication and Linguistic	creative
Time structuring and management	Encouraging, monitoring, criticising	Technical presentation	Formulating hypotheses
Setting and achieving goals	Networking	Expressing ideas, feelings, opinions, judgements	Demonstrating a capacity for inventiveness
Thoroughness and attention to detail	Effectiveness in group interaction	Presenting information and ideas in effective written form appropriate to the purpose and to the reader	Perceiving likenesses among things apparently unlike
Effective decision making	Working cooperatively and constructively	Editing	Working with analogues, parallels
Helicopter view – being able to look from above and see all aspects	Participating in team work	Communicating orally in large or small groups	Extrapolating from the known to the unknown
Managing others	Sharing responsibilities	Giving and receiving feedback	Capacity for vision
Motivating others	Willingness to learn from others	Active listening	Ability to think laterally
Leading	Assessing and evaluating others	Ability to move to closure	Use of metaphors and analogies
Planning	Recognising, accepting, allowing for differences	Questioning	Suspending judgement
Political awareness	Dealing with conflict/negativity/apathy/passivity	Reflecting	Building on the ideas of others
Contracting	Handling controversy	Clarifying	Being proactive
Initiating	Explaining, persuading, negotiating, influencing	Non-verbal communication	
Delegating	Constructive disagreement ■ confrontation ■ resolution	Clarity of expression	
	Empathising	Fluency	
	Openness	Foreign language competence	

cognitive	contingency	self-managing	physical
Numerical competence	Responding effectively to change	Self-awareness	Psychomotor coordination
Collecting, selecting and ordering data	Adapting concepts, skills and materials to new situations	Responsibility – planning own work	Fitness appreciation and development
Making effective use of information	Adjusting to individual differences and to changing group characteristics and reactions	Operating independently	Spatial awareness
Observing and recording	Recognising need for change	Ability to de-centre	Psychosomatic cues
Applying judgement and discrimination	Coping with the unexpected	Developing self-esteem	Performance inhibitors
Evaluating, data, values, issues	Showing capacity to improvise	Developing self-confidence	Diet, exercise
Identifying and solving problems	Dealing with ambiguity	Coping and managing stress	
Analysing key factors into components	Role adaptability	Being assertive	
Inductive/deductive reasoning	Transfer and application of ideas and concepts	Identifying personal potential and routes to achieving it	
Synthesising and integrating disparate elements	Anticipating problems and building in ways to manage them	Ability to self-disclose	
Formulating and testing hypotheses		Personal power	
Evaluating evidence		Personal presentation	
Extrapolating		Managing personal/professional boundaries	
Summarising		Self-evaluation and assessment	
Assessment		Elimination of prejudice and stereotypes	
Diagnosis			

\*Source: Personal Skills Unit, University of Sheffield, UK.







### employability skills framework

Personal attributes that contribute to overall employability:

- Loyalty
- Commitment
- Honesty & integrity
- Enthusiasm
- Reliability
- Personal presentation
- Commonsense
- Positive self-esteem
- A sense of humour
- A balanced attitude to work & home life
- An ability to deal with pressure
- Motivation
- Adaptability

<b>Skill communication</b> <i>...that contributes to productive &amp; harmonious relations across employees &amp; customers</i>	<b>Skill team work</b> <i>...that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes</i>	<b>Skill problem solving</b> <i>...that contributes to productive outcomes</i>	<b>Skill self management</b> <i>...that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth</i>	<b>Skill planning &amp; organising</b> <i>...that contributes to long- and short-term strategic planning</i>	<b>Skill technology</b> <i>...that contributes to effective execution of tasks</i>	<b>Skill learning</b> <i>...that contributes to ongoing improvement &amp; expansion in employee &amp; company operations &amp; outcomes</i>	<b>Skill initiative and enterprise</b> <i>...that contribute to innovative outcomes</i>
<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening and understanding</li> <li>Speaking clearly and directly</li> <li>Writing to the needs of the audience</li> <li>Negotiating responsively</li> <li>Reading independently</li> <li>Empathising</li> <li>Speaking and writing in languages other than English</li> <li>Using numeracy effectively</li> <li>Understanding the needs of internal and external customers</li> <li>Persuading effectively</li> <li>Establishing and using networks</li> <li>Being assertive</li> <li>Sharing information</li> </ul>	<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working effectively with people of different age, gender, race, religion and political persuasion</li> <li>Working as an individual and as a member of a team</li> <li>Knowing how to define a role as part of the team</li> <li>Applying team work skills to a range of situations, eg. futures planning, crisis problem solving</li> <li>Identifying the strengths of the team members</li> <li>Coaching, mentoring and giving feedback</li> </ul>	<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing creative, innovative solutions</li> <li>Developing practical solutions</li> <li>Showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them</li> <li>Solving problems in teams</li> <li>Applying a range of strategies to problem solving</li> <li>Using mathematics including budgeting and financial management to solve problems</li> <li>Applying problem solving strategies across a range of areas</li> <li>Testing assumptions taking the context of data and circumstances into account</li> <li>Resolving customer concerns in relation to complex projects issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a personal vision and goals</li> <li>Evaluating and monitoring own performance</li> <li>Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and visions</li> <li>Articulating own ideas and visions</li> <li>Taking responsibility</li> </ul>	<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing time and priorities – setting time lines, coordinating tasks for self and with others</li> <li>Being resourceful</li> <li>Taking initiative and making decisions</li> <li>Adapting resource allocations to cope with contingencies</li> <li>Establishing clear project goals and deliverables</li> <li>Allocating people and other resources to tasks</li> <li>Planning the use of resources including time management</li> <li>Participating in continuous improvement and planning processes</li> <li>Developing a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it</li> <li>Predicting – weighing up risk, evaluating alternatives and applying evaluation criteria</li> <li>Collecting, analysing and organising information</li> <li>Understanding basic business systems and their relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a range of basic IT skills</li> <li>Applying IT as a management tool</li> <li>Using IT to organise data</li> <li>Being willing to learn new IT skills</li> <li>Having the OHS knowledge to apply technology</li> <li>Having the physical capacity to apply technology, eg. manual dexterity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing own learning</li> <li>Contributing to the learning community at the workplace</li> <li>Using a range of mediums to learn – mentoring, peer support, networking, IT, courses</li> <li>Applying learning to ‘technical’ issues (eg. learning about products) and ‘people’ issues (eg. interpersonal and cultural aspects of work)</li> <li>Having enthusiasm for ongoing learning</li> <li>Being willing to learn in any setting – on and off the job</li> <li>Being open to new ideas and techniques</li> <li>Being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills</li> <li>Acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change</li> </ul>	<p><b>Element*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapting to new situations</li> <li>Developing a strategic, creative, long-term vision</li> <li>Being creative</li> <li>Identifying opportunities not obvious to others</li> <li>Translating ideas into action</li> <li>Generating a range of options</li> <li>Initiating innovative solutions</li> </ul>

\*Facets of the skill that employers identified as important noting that the mix and priority of these facets would vary from job to job



# part six self assessment profile

## personal goals

the things I want most in the rest of my life are...

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my main immediate goals are...

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my main long-term goals are...

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in five to 10 years time I expect to be...

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## values and attitudes

i would describe the position of work in my life as...

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my current and expected commitments are...

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the most important rewards for me in a career are...

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# part six self assessment profile

## interests

my strongest interests are...

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my strongest work-related interests are...

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whatever my career, I regard as top priority my interest in...

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i would like to develop interests in...

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## personal attributes

the attributes I most value in myself are...

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the attributes employers are most likely to value in me are...

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the attributes I would like to strengthen are...

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# part six self assessment profile

## skills

i have outstanding skills in...

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i have good skills in...

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i am competent in...

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i would like to improve in...

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i believe the skills most relevant to my career interests are...

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careers and jobs of interest to me which seem most compatible with my profile are...

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careers and jobs of interest to me which seem least compatible with my profile are...

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notes

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# last word

**There are numerous publications available on all aspects of career planning – self assessment is only one component.** Other topics include career choice, cover letter and résumé building, interview preparation and interview skills. Visit the Careers Service at your institution, your Career Advisor or peruse bookstores and the web to find publications that will help you. A great place to start is also Graduate Careers Australia (GCA).

The GCA website – [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au) – is an easy-to-use, central source of information about graduate careers, which can help students and graduates to:

- search for a graduate position
- investigate work in different industries
- find vacation work
- write a winning job application and résumé
- get in touch with university Careers Services
- explore options for further study
- research graduate starting salaries and employment rates (through GradsOnline – [www.gradsonline.com.au](http://www.gradsonline.com.au)).

GCA also provides quality education products covering many other aspects of employment and career exploration to students and graduates. As well as this self assessment guide – *Your Career and You*, GCA produces the employer directory *Graduate Opportunities*, industry career information booklets, the *Graduate Destination Survey* reports and videos such as *Getting the Job* and *Out in Front with an Arts Degree*. Many GCA products are available to students free of charge from Careers Services on campus, or by visiting its website – [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au).

For further information contact the GCA Helpdesk on ph: 03 9349 4300, fax: 03 9347 7298 or email: [info@graduatecareers.com.au](mailto:info@graduatecareers.com.au).

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