

Once you have defined both your [long-term and short-term goals](#), you can go on to develop a career action plan. The career action plan will list all your goals and the steps you must take to reach them. Whereas a long term goal is the destination you want to reach, an action plan is the strategy you employ to get there. Your action plan will detail the activities necessary to accomplish your goals and take action.

Action Plan in Motion

In your Career Action Plan, short-term goals are listed as the steps to prepare for reaching your long term goal. If you are presently working and attending school, you may also want to take on some different projects to demonstrate to your employer that you are ready to branch off into a different area. Or, perhaps you wish to apply for a lateral transfer within your company to get some experience working with different people and pursue different work within your organization to expand your skills. If you are at the early stages of obtaining your degree, or are considering going on for a higher degree in the future, include this in your action plan. Part of your short-term plan may also include investigating the most beneficial courses to take to support your intended career, whether you qualify for financial aid, or if your employer will provide assistance with the cost of tuition for work-related program of study.

On Your Way

In short, take the time to figure out the steps necessary to reach your professional and personal goals, include them in your action plan, and then take action. By keeping these steps in mind and implementing them, you will greatly increase your chances of reaching your career goals.

Once you have drawn up your action plan, make sure you use it. Put it in a prominent place, on the refrigerator in the kitchen, or a bulletin board in your office so that you have a constant reminder of what you need to do.

Review and Revise as Needed

Your career action is a way to help you move forward and stay organized. The plan should be well-thought-out, realistic and, most importantly, flexible. Whenever you learn new information or receive feedback, review your strategy and action plan and revise them. If circumstances change over time, or your goals and priorities change, it is okay to amend your career action plan as needed; just make sure you continue to move forward. Don't look at it as a set-in-stone plan for your professional life, but rather as a road map that may grow and change as you move along your career path.