

YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

A practical guide for advising
on skills and career paths



SECTION 1:

FUTURE OF WORK



1.1: Guiding Learners in a Fast-changing World of Work

“Future of work” isn’t just a buzzword your learners see online—it’s a shift that’s already reshaping how people learn, work, and build careers. It describes how work, workers, and workplaces are evolving under powerful megatrends: the sustainability transition, rapid technological advances, changing workforce demographics, and new ways of organising work.

For guidance practice, the message is clear: the choices learners make now, such as which subjects or programmes to pursue, which pathway to take (academic, VET, apprenticeships), and which skills to prioritise, carry more weight than ever. Alongside qualifications, they’ll need transversal skills like communication, problem solving, collaboration, digital and data literacy, and “green” skills that align with a more sustainable economy.

The National Skills Council’s awareness campaign on emerging careers is designed to support your conversations with learners. It offers concise insights into how the world of work is changing and points to the skills and opportunities most likely to help young people build confident, future-ready pathways.

How to use this with learners

- Start with the megatrends:
Invite learners to link each trend (sustainability, tech, demographics, work design) to real roles they know.
- Align interests to skills:
Help learners identify strengths and the transferable skills they can build across subjects and activities.
- Show multiple routes:
Highlight that degrees, VET, apprenticeships, micro-credentials, and work-based learning can all lead to meaningful careers.
- Plan next steps:
Agree on one near-term action (course choice, job-shadowing, a taster module, or a skills badge) to keep momentum.
- Normalise uncertainty:
Frame career planning as iterative—learn, try, reflect, adjust.

Use these pages as prompts for discussions, one-to-one guidance, and parent engagement. The goal isn't to predict a single destination, but to equip each learner with the awareness and skills to navigate what's next.

1.2: Megatrends Shaping the Future of Work

The future of work isn't far off; in fact, it's already unfolding. According to the Future of Jobs Report 2025 by the World Economic Forum, global trends are rapidly reshaping the job market and the skills we need to succeed.

Technology is transforming every industry

Artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and digital tools are changing how we work, not just in tech, but in retail, logistics, manufacturing, hospitality, healthcare, and beyond. Routine tasks are being replaced by smart systems, and the new jobs that are emerging require a blend of technical knowledge and human creativity.

The shift to a greener economy is creating new demands

Climate change and sustainability targets are pushing governments and businesses to rethink how things are made, built, and powered. This green transition is opening opportunities in renewable energy, circular economy practices, sustainable construction, and green tech innovation, all of which require fresh skills and fresh thinking.

Global challenges are reshaping workforce needs

An ageing population, increased mobility, and ongoing social and economic disruption are influencing how countries plan for the future. Employers are re-evaluating what skills are critical, not just for profit, but for long-term resilience, wellbeing, and inclusivity.

Transversal skills are taking centre stage

As the technical landscape evolves, human skills like problem solving, critical thinking, adaptability, collaboration, and emotional intelligence are becoming essential. These are the skills that help people continuously learn, navigate change, and lead with impact, regardless of industry.

So, what does this all mean?

The world of work isn't just changing, it is diversifying; career paths are no longer linear, and jobs are changing faster than ever. From flexible jobs to purpose-driven roles, from green innovation to tech-enabled trades, the future belongs to those who can adapt, upskill, and stay open to what's next.

Career Time Machine

LEARNERS' ACTIVITY

If there's a career you've always dreamed of pursuing, how do you prepare for it? Even though some careers have existed for decades (e.g. doctor, lawyer, journalist, teacher, etc.), this does not mean that they are immune to change in the future. What can you do to prepare for a career that might change in the next 10 years? Take some time to reflect on the questions on the next page.

Dream Career:

Today:

What are the typical tasks related to this job nowadays? Do some research if needed (online or by asking adults you know who already work in this field).

E.g. In 2025, a nurse administers medication, maintains updated records and patient history, and performs physical examinations.

In 10 years:

How will advances in technology impact this job?

Does climate change affect this job?

How can I prepare for these changes?

E.g. In 2035, a nurse might need to give instructions to a robotic assistant that manages patients' medication. They might need to interact with A.I. systems that track and update medical records automatically. Continuous education will be essential to keep up to date with new healthcare technologies and medical knowledge.

1.3: Skills Forecast

The future of work is being shaped by big shifts, from digitalisation and automation to ageing populations and green transitions. According to Cedefop's 'Skills Forecast: Trends and Challenges to 2030', these changes are already reshaping job roles and skill demands across Europe. One thing remains clear: investing in people's skills is essential, but the real challenge lies in deciding which skills matter most and for which jobs. This is at the heart of conversations happening not just nationally, but across Europe and globally.

As futurist Paul Saffo puts it, 'The goal of forecasting is not to predict the future, but to tell you what you need to know to take meaningful action in the present' (Saffo, 2007, p. 1).

So, what does this mean for learners just starting out in their career or for those looking for a career change?

- **More Jobs Will Need Higher Qualifications**

By 2030, over one-third of all jobs in Europe will require tertiary-level education. Jobs requiring low or no qualifications are steadily declining.

- **Tech is a Baseline, Not a Niche**

Digital competence will be essential across almost all jobs, not just for programmers or IT specialists. Basic digital fluency will become as important as reading and writing.

- **Transversal Skills Matter More Than Ever**

Skills like communication, problem solving, adaptability, and teamwork are increasingly valued, especially as automation handles more routine tasks.

- **Lifelong Learning Isn't Optional**

Rapid technological change means that no qualification lasts a lifetime. Workers will need to update and diversify their skills continuously.

- **Green and Care Economies Are Growing**

New jobs are emerging in sectors like healthcare, green tech, and sustainable construction. These often require a blend of technical knowledge and human-centred skills.

- **Occupational Change Is Accelerating**

Around 13% of jobs in 2030 will be entirely new. The fastest-growing roles are in science, engineering, health, ICT, and business services.



(Reference: Cedefop (2020), 'Skills Forecast: Trends and Challenges to 2030')

Read the full report here: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3077_en.pdf

So, how does one stay ahead of the curve and ensure that their career is future-proof? Here are 8 practical steps to follow.

1. **Embrace Lifelong Learning**

Set yearly learning goals, whether it's learning a programming language, improving your public speaking, or getting cloud-certified. Stay updated and keep your skills current through micro-credentials, short courses, and bite-sized learning opportunities—whether via online platforms or through your employer's internal training.

2. Build a Versatile Skill Set

Blend transversal and technical skills. For example, pair project management with UX design or data analysis with storytelling. The goal is flexibility, so you can pivot if roles evolve.

3. Focus on Skills, Not Just Titles

Employers are shifting to skills-based hiring. Showcase your abilities through projects, portfolios, or freelance work. Think “what can I do?”, not just “what job title do I have?”

4. Stay Informed on Industry Trends

Subscribe to industry newsletters, join LinkedIn groups, and attend webinars or talks. Understanding where your sector is heading helps you learn the right things at the right time.

5. Develop Adaptability and Resilience

Get used to navigating change. Take on new challenges, learn to work with diverse teams, and have examples ready to show how you’ve adapted to disruption.

6. Build Your Network and Find Mentors

A strong network can guide your career, alert you to trends, and open new doors. Engage in informational interviews or attend industry events—virtual or in person.

7. Be Open to Lateral Moves

Sometimes, sideways is the best way forward. A cross-functional role or short project in a new area can add valuable tools to your career toolkit.

8. Prioritise Roles That Grow You

Don't chase titles or pay too early. Seek roles where you'll learn transferable, in-demand skills, especially in areas like data, digital, client engagement, and cross-team collaboration.

The shift to a skills-first future means you don't need to have everything figured out right away, but you do need to stay agile, informed, and committed to growth.

As the Cedefop 2030 forecast reminds us, skills, not static roles, will define success. The job market is changing, but with the right mindset and strategies, learners can not only keep up but lead the way.

Skills Inventory Chart

LEARNERS' ACTIVITY

Transversal skills matter more than ever and will continue to become increasingly important as the nature of work changes in the future. Use the following as a guide to help your learners reflect on the skills they currently have, and what they would like to improve upon in preparation for their future career.

List of skills to reflect on:

- *Communication Skills*
- *Problem Solving*
- *Listening*
- *Accepting Feedback*
- *Teamwork*
- *Confidence*
- *Flexibility*
- *Assertiveness*
- *Supportiveness*
- *Cooperativeness*
- *Organisation*
- *Punctuality*

Skill:



Example

Think of a situation where you needed to use these skills. How did you feel?

Peer Feedback

Ask your friends or a trusted adult about how they've seen you use these skills. What is their feedback?

Self-Reflection

What rating do you give yourself out of 5? Do you see any areas for improvement?

Action Plan

Think about practical ways you can improve this skill.

1.4: Helping Learners Choose: Vocational (VET) or Academic Studies?

There isn't a single "right" route. Vocational education and training (VET) and academic study are equally valid pathways to success. Our role is to guide each learner to match their strengths, interests, and ambitions to the pathway and sequence of steps that fit best.

What each pathway offers

VET (Vocational Education & Training)

- Applied, hands-on learning with clear links to real jobs.
- Faster entry into work; strong alignment to sectors like green energy, advanced manufacturing, digital infrastructure, and health/social care.
- Growing focus on digital skills, sustainability, and flexible cross-sector skills.
- Often includes apprenticeships, job shadowing, and industry-standard certifications.

Academic (General/University Pathways)

- Deep theoretical foundations, critical thinking, and complex problem solving.
- Strong preparation for research, regulated professions, and roles requiring longer study.
- Increasingly blends with work-based learning, entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary study.

Shared Reality

Employers value skills and capability—how well learners can apply knowledge in real settings—regardless of whether those skills were built through a diploma, apprenticeship, foundation programme, or degree.

Guidance Priorities (for 1:1s and Class Sessions)

Start with the learner profile: Interests, values, aptitudes (e.g. practical/mechanical, social/helping, analytical), preferred learning style, and wellbeing needs.

Showcasing the labour market: Show real roles in priority sectors; highlight local employers and typical entry routes.

Emphasise permeability: Learners can stack and switch VET to degree, degree to professional certificate, and micro-credentials along the way.

Plan a “no-regrets” skills base: Communication, numeracy, digital/data, teamwork, problem solving, and green awareness are valuable on both routes.

Use evidence from experience: Taster modules, short courses, job shadowing, internships, and career talks to test assumptions.

Engage parents/carers: Share simple comparisons, success stories, and the message that both routes lead to meaningful careers.

Success isn't tied to a label of VET or academic but to building skills, gaining experience, and staying open to lifelong learning. The route can change; the direction is forward.

1.5: Emerging Careers

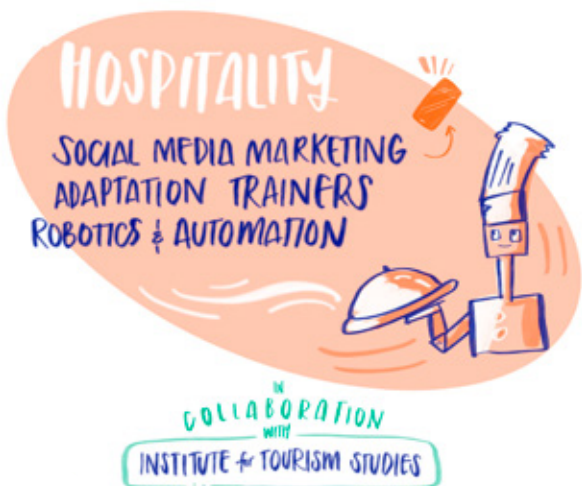
The nature of work is shifting. As digital tools become more integrated, sustainability takes centre stage, and demographic patterns evolve, new types of jobs are being created, and existing roles are being redefined. These changes are not just about technology or automation; they reflect broader shifts in how we live, work, and solve problems.

The rise of green industries, data-driven decision-making, and human-centred services is already influencing the kinds of skills employers are looking for. We're seeing demand grow in areas like renewable energy, AI and machine learning, healthcare and care roles, cybersecurity, and the circular economy sectors that didn't exist in their current form a decade ago.

This means individuals entering or progressing through the workforce today are likely to pursue careers that are still taking shape or haven't yet been invented. Staying informed about evolving job roles and the skills they require isn't just helpful, it's essential for long-term adaptability and success.



Check out the growing and emerging fields and what skills are needed by scanning the QR Code.





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ABC's of
MENTAL
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an EVOLVING ROLE

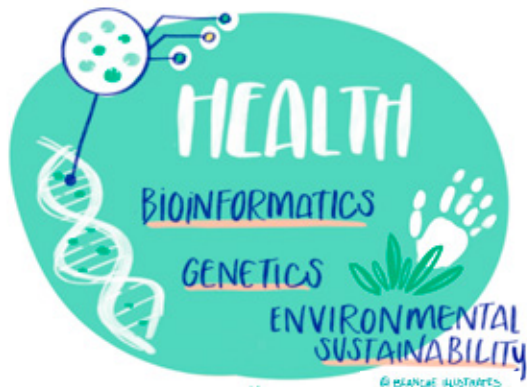
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SOCIAL MEDIA
EXPERTISE

PERSONAL ASSISTANTS
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to reach

patients

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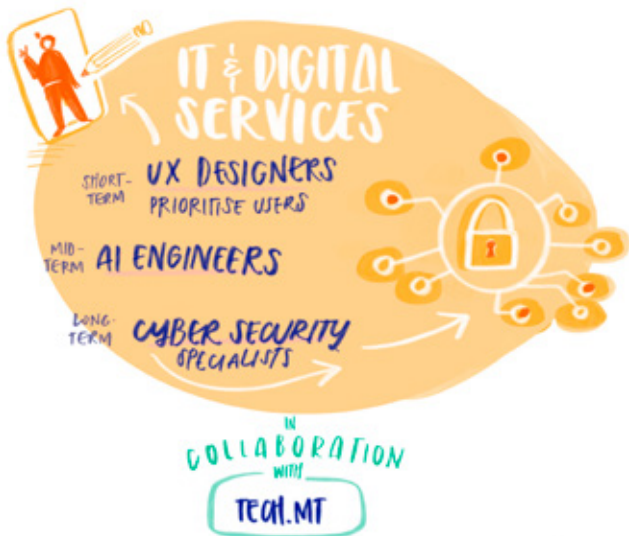
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SECTION 2:

LEARNING PATHWAYS



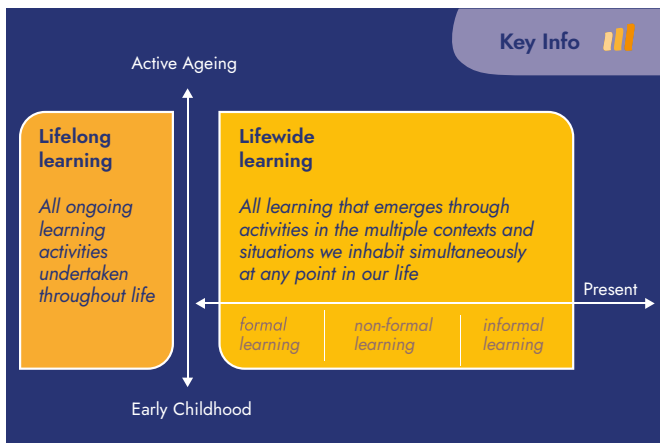
2.1: Learning Pathways

In a world where change is the only constant, learning can no longer be seen as a one-time event. It's a lifelong, evolving journey, and a learning pathway helps to chart that course. More than just a sequence of courses or qualifications, a learning pathway is a structured, yet flexible roadmap designed to help individuals gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to achieve specific personal or professional goals.

What makes a learning pathway particularly powerful is its personalisation. It takes into account where you're starting from, where you want to go, and how best to get there, whether you're upskilling for a new role, changing career direction, or deepening your expertise in a chosen field. By breaking learning down into manageable, strategic steps, a learning pathway keeps momentum going while offering clarity and purpose.

This approach is especially relevant in today's fast-moving work scope, where roles evolve quickly and transferable skills are increasingly valuable. With the right resources, feedback loops, and support structures, a well-designed pathway not only builds technical competencies but fosters adaptability, critical thinking, and self-motivation, all essential qualities for sustainable success.

Learning pathways are as diverse as the people who follow them: they might involve vocational training, academic modules, micro-credentials, workplace learning, mentoring, or even self-directed study. The common thread? Intentionality. When learning is approached with direction and design, it becomes more than a means to an end—it becomes an enabler of continuous growth and fulfilment.



2.2: How Do You Explain a Learning Pathway to Learners?

At its core, a learning pathway is a strategic sequence of steps designed to guide individuals from where they are now to where they want to be. Think of it as a scaffolded journey, structured yet adaptable, that breaks down a broader learning goal into manageable milestones. These might include formal training sessions, online courses, professional certifications, reading, peer learning, on-the-job practice, or reflective exercises.

Each step within the pathway builds upon the last, enabling learners to make steady, intentional progress. This is not just about ticking boxes, it's about developing the right skills, at the right time, in the right context.

What brings a learning pathway to life is the support that surrounds it. Resources are curated or recommended at each stage to help

the learner succeed, from practical toolkits and video tutorials, to coaching conversations and community forums. These aren't generic resources; they're chosen based on relevance, learning style, and the demands of the goal in question.

Crucially, a well-designed learning pathway also allows space for reflection and iteration. It encourages learners to assess progress, refine their direction, and recalibrate when needed. This kind of agile, learner-centred approach is what makes pathways not only effective but genuinely empowering.

Whether you're aiming to become more digitally fluent, transition into a new industry, or simply grow your confidence in a specific area, a learning pathway provides structure without rigidity, supporting you to stay focused, motivated, and continually moving forward.

Learning Pathway Case Studies

Each learner's path is unique, and there is no single ideal route to success. However, with many future careers yet to emerge, it can be hard to know which direction to take. The case studies below show how different learning pathways can lead to success in an evolving workscape.

Amy, Environmental Data Scientist

Favourite Subjects: Science, Geography, Maths

Personal Interests: Programming & Coding

During her years in secondary school, she wanted to find a way to combine these interests into her ideal career. She kept choosing subjects and courses that interested her, which led her to a Bachelor's Degree in Earth Sciences. In her free time, she

kept developing her programming skills and sought internships and learning opportunities with local environmental voluntary organisations. This is when she discovered how much data is collected by scientists and how it can help to preserve the environment with the right analysis. She pursued this career further with a Master's in Environmental Data Science.

Eric, AI & Tech Lawyer

Favourite Subjects: Languages

Personal Interests: Robotics and Technology

From a young age, Eric knew he wanted to become a lawyer. He took a traditional career path that led him to a university law degree. However, he was unsure what area he wanted to specialise in. Eventually, artificial intelligence became so widely used that legal issues started to crop up within his workplace. Who is responsible if an AI-operated system causes harm? These questions intrigued him enough to pursue a career that seeks an answer to these questions while still pursuing his dream of becoming a lawyer.

Amanda, Hydroponics Technician

Personal Interest: Nature, Hikes

Growing up in her family's farming business, Amanda was always surrounded by nature. She decided to take up VET agribusiness at school to learn more about how produce is grown and how to take care of her family's crops and fields. She continued her studies with a Diploma in Horticulture, which gave her lots of hands-on experience. This led her to learn about hydroponics and how this can be beneficial for a sustainable future. She now successfully owns and runs her own business that grows and sells a variety of produce.

Maria, Administration Executive

Personal Interest: Collecting stamps, Reading, Travelling

*Maria worked in administration for ten years before taking a career break to raise her family. A few years later, she returned to part-time work and decided to continue her studies. Instead of starting from scratch, she applied for Recognition of Prior Learning, which in Malta is part of the **Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)**. Through this process, her previous work experience and the skills she gained on the job were recognised, allowing her to fast-track her studies. Maria completed her diploma on a part-time basis while working, which opened new opportunities for her career growth.*

Mark, IT Specialist

Personal Interests: Scouting, Gaming

*Mark started his career in IT support and continuously invested in developing his skills. Alongside his work, he obtained several industry-recognised certifications such as CompTIA and Microsoft, and he also completed **LinkedIn Learning courses**, collecting digital badges that verified his skills online. When applying for a new role, these certifications and badges highlighted his commitment to continuous learning and gave him a competitive advantage.*



nscmalta.gov.mt

info.nsc@gov.mt | +356 77103890