

CAREER CHANGE CHECKLIST

A practical step-by-step checklist to help you assess your current career, explore new opportunities, prepare for the transition, and move toward your next career with a clear plan.

How to use this checklist

Work through the stages in order. Check each item when completed, add notes where useful, and revisit earlier sections as your goals become clearer.

Stage 1 — Clarify Your Career Change

- ☐ Define why you want to change careers.
- ☐ Identify what you like and dislike about your current career.
- ☐ List the factors you want in your next career.
- ☐ Define your preferred work environment.
- ☐ Consider your desired income range.
- ☐ Consider your preferred location or work arrangement.
- ☐ Identify your long-term career goals.
- ☐ Write down the non-negotiables for your next career.

Stage 2 — Assess Your Strengths

- ☐ List your current skills and areas of expertise.
- ☐ Identify your strongest transferable skills.
- ☐ Review your professional accomplishments.
- ☐ Identify skills that could transfer to another industry or role.
- ☐ Identify interests that could support a new career direction.
- ☐ Review feedback you have received from managers, colleagues, or clients.
- ☐ Identify areas where you need additional development.

Stage 3 — Explore Career Options

- ☐ Identify several potential career paths.
- ☐ Research the responsibilities of each target role.
- ☐ Review typical qualifications and experience requirements.

- ☐ Research salary expectations.
- ☐ Research employment demand and opportunities.
- ☐ Review job postings for your target roles.
- ☐ Identify common skills employers are requesting.
- ☐ Compare your current qualifications with the requirements.
- ☐ Narrow your options to your strongest career paths.

Stage 4 — Identify Skill Gaps

- ☐ Compare your current skills with your target-role requirements.
- ☐ Identify technical skills you need to develop.
- ☐ Identify professional or soft skills you need to strengthen.
- ☐ Determine whether certifications or formal education are necessary.
- ☐ Find relevant courses, training, or learning resources.
- ☐ Create a realistic learning schedule.
- ☐ Gain practical experience where possible.
- ☐ Build examples that demonstrate your new skills.

Stage 5 — Build Your Career Transition Plan

- ☐ Select your primary target career.
- ☐ Define your target job titles.
- ☐ Identify target industries or employers.
- ☐ Set a realistic career-change timeline.
- ☐ Break the transition into monthly or weekly milestones.
- ☐ Determine whether you can transition directly or need an intermediate step.
- ☐ Review the financial implications of changing careers.
- ☐ Establish a financial buffer if needed.

Stage 6 — Prepare Your Professional Brand

- ☐ Update your resume for your target career.
- ☐ Rewrite your professional summary around your new direction.
- ☐ Highlight transferable skills.
- ☐ Quantify relevant achievements.
- ☐ Update your LinkedIn profile.
- ☐ Review your LinkedIn headline and About section.
- ☐ Add relevant projects, certifications, or training.
- ☐ Prepare a concise explanation of your career transition.

Stage 7 — Build Your Network

- ☐ Identify professionals working in your target field.
- ☐ Reconnect with relevant professional contacts.
- ☐ Join relevant professional communities.
- ☐ Attend industry events or online sessions.
- ☐ Request informational conversations where appropriate.
- ☐ Ask experienced professionals about their career paths.
- ☐ Learn about opportunities that may not be publicly advertised.

Stage 8 — Start Your Job Search

- ☐ Define your target job criteria.
- ☐ Identify suitable job boards and company career pages.
- ☐ Create a targeted job-search strategy.
- ☐ Customize your resume for important applications.
- ☐ Write focused cover letters when appropriate.
- ☐ Track applications and follow-ups.
- ☐ Prepare for interviews.
- ☐ Practice explaining your career change positively.
- ☐ Evaluate opportunities against your career goals.

Stage 9 — Evaluate Offers

- ☐ Compare compensation.
- ☐ Review benefits.
- ☐ Evaluate job responsibilities.
- ☐ Consider growth opportunities.
- ☐ Assess company and team culture.
- ☐ Consider work-life balance.
- ☐ Evaluate location and work arrangements.
- ☐ Consider long-term career potential.
- ☐ Confirm that the opportunity supports your broader career goals.

Stage 10 — Make the Transition

- ☐ Confirm your new role or next career step.
- ☐ Review your resignation and notice requirements.
- ☐ Prepare a professional transition from your current role.
- ☐ Organize important documents and responsibilities.
- ☐ Communicate appropriately with colleagues.
- ☐ Prepare financially for the transition period.
- ☐ Establish priorities for your first 30-90 days.
- ☐ Continue developing the skills required for your new career.
- ☐ Review your progress after the transition.

Career Change Notes

Use this space for your target career, key decisions, deadlines, contacts, or other notes.

Next Step

Once you complete the checklist, turn your priorities into a practical career transition plan. Define your target career, identify the skills you need to develop, and set milestones for moving forward.