

Investigating Specific Post-School Options

60 minutes

Strand 1.2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities

Applying

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.PROG.5

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Students apply previous research to one named post-school option. They produce a structured fit assessment (Specific Option Fit) in the Strand 1.2 Digital Portfolio folder that examines entry requirements, content alignment with their personal statement, likely outcomes and the actual costs of taking that route. The entry feeds the Career Progression Plan later in the strand and can support Portfolio in Action evidence.

HANDLE WITH CARE

- Real cost can surface family financial stress. Signpost SUSI, Citizens Information and the school guidance counsellor. Do not require public disclosure of personal money detail.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S2.PROG.5	investigate education and training opportunities available to students post-senior cycle.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Deepen investigation into one specific HE, apprenticeship, FET or school-leaver intake option
- Assess fit against entry requirements, personal statement alignment and outcomes
- Include real cost honestly in the fit judgement

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Fit assessment	A clear yes-or-no judgement on one named option. You check entry, day-to-day content, where it leads, and what a year really costs against your own plans and who you are.	A half-page on one named PLC course covering points, modules, where graduates go, and what a year would really cost you
Entry requirements	The hard conditions you must meet before you can take up a place: points, subjects, interview, portfolio, age, or prior qualification. Always check the named course or intake page, because rules vary by provider.	Often five Leaving Certificate passes including English for many FET courses, or a stated CAO points range for a degree, but the course page is the source of truth
Real cost	What you would actually pay to take the option for a year once fees, travel, materials, rent or living costs, and any grant support are counted, not the headline fee alone.	A free or low-fee ETB course that still costs bus fares and lunch every week, or a HE place where SUSI may help with maintenance or fees but rent is still due

BEFORE THE BELL

- Issue a blank Specific Option Fit template (digital or print) with the four headings already on the page: Entry / Content alignment / Outcomes / Real cost.
- Prepare printed versions of the worked example fit assessment for students without screen access.
- Ensure students have physical or digital copies of their prior pathway investigations and personal statements (Provider Comparison, Strand 1.1 personal statement, FET / HE / apprenticeship investigations).
- Confirm each student has one named option . Block vague titles such as "something in business". They need a real course code, apprenticeship title, FET programme or employer intake. Aoife's example names no college, so say plainly that a student version must name the actual provider and the actual course or intake title, otherwise the entry and cost lines cannot be checked against anything.
- On screen this lesson: worked example.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Build Your Fit Assessment
10 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open by asking who already has a named option in mind from their recent work on pathways. Anyone stuck can reuse the option from their Provider Comparison or FET / HE / Apprenticeship investigation. Stress that today's job is depth on **one** option, not another shortlist.

For a student who arrives with nothing usable, the files worth opening are the Provider Comparison, the personal statement written earlier in the course, and any FET, HE or apprenticeship investigation already sitting in the Strand 1.2 folder. If none of those exists, have them pick one concrete option from Careers Portal in the first two minutes of the writing step rather than starting a fresh shortlist, because a shortlist will eat the period.

5 min Key Terms

Two or three minutes is enough here. Flag that **real cost** is the line students most often skip, and that a fit assessment without it is incomplete. Keep course charges, living costs and grant support as separate lines so SUSI is not treated as a magic fee wipe-out for every route.

35 min Build Your Fit Assessment On screen: worked example

SUGGESTED TIMING

- **12 minutes:** walk the worked example on the board, moving through the annotations yourself. Pause before each reveal and ask the class what makes the line strong.
- **23 minutes:** students write their own Specific Option Fit.

LOOK-FORS

- Entry checked against the student's own subjects or predicted grades and against the named course page
- At least one concrete module, placement or duty linked to the personal statement
- Outcomes from a named source, not a brochure slogan
- Cost as a figure, with course charges, living costs and grant support kept distinct, including the "what if funding fails" line

DIFFERENTIATION

If research access is limited, students may deepen an option already investigated in lessons on apprenticeships, FET, HE or providers. The new work is the four-part fit judgement, not a fresh search for its own sake.

SUPPORT ON MONEY

Students worried about funding can follow up privately with the guidance counsellor or check SUSI and Citizens Information. As you circulate, do not ask a student about their family's money in front of others; if a cost line looks unrealistic, say so quietly at the desk.

10 min Think About It

Keep this as paired talk. If you gather anything from the room afterwards, take volunteers only and keep it to the kind of figure that changed a mind, for example travel, rent or the risk of a grant not coming through, rather than anyone's own household numbers. Do not put a student on the spot about what they can afford. Remind them the optional honest sentence belongs at the bottom of their Specific Option Fit document, not on this page.

5 min What you covered

Spot-check that Specific Option Fit exists and names a real option. Note anyone whose cost line is still vague for a one-to-one nudge next lesson. No new homework beyond finishing any unfinished half-page.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- "I already hold predicted passes in English and four other subjects" - Entry against real grades - She checks the requirement against her own predicted results, not against a hopeful version of herself. A fit assessment that skips this line is guessing.
- "rework my Strand 1.1 personal statement for the interview" - Uses work she already has - The personal statement is treated as living evidence, not a separate essay. That is how Strand 1.1 material earns its keep in Strand 1.2.
- "noticing people, listening carefully, and wanting structured training" - Content meets the person - She quotes the spine of her own personal statement and holds it against named modules and a placement. Fit is argued, not asserted.
- "better than a broad first-year Arts degree would at this stage" - Honest comparison - She names what this option beats for her right now. A fit assessment that never compares is only a summary of a prospectus.
- "Careers Portal both list progression into Higher Education social care" - Outcomes from a real source - Destinations are checked on a named source. Brochure photographs do not count as outcomes.
- "Rough full-year cost if I stay home: under €1,000" - Cost as a figure - Real cost is written as numbers: travel, lunch, materials, rent at zero. Course charges and living costs stay distinct. A line that only says "affordable" fails this beat.
- "If funding does not come through, I need a written backup" - What if the money fails - The strongest cost lines include the bad case. Funding hope without a backup is how fit assessments quietly lie.

TEACHING MOVES

- Walk through the worked example with the class yourself, pausing to discuss what makes each part strong. Keep that facilitation in your notes, not in student copy.
- Circulate during the writing activity to support real-cost calculations, keeping course charges, living costs and grant support as separate lines.
- Facilitate paired discussions; keep any whole-class harvest opt-in and content-focused so family money detail is not cold-called.
- Use the summary to confirm all students have named a specific option in Specific Option Fit inside the Strand 1.2 Digital Portfolio folder.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Omitting specific cost figures: prompt students to list actual expenses such as travel or materials.
- Treating SUSI as an automatic fee wipe-out for every route: keep ETB/PLC course charges, living costs and grant eligibility distinct.
- Using vague outcomes: require reference to real graduate destinations from the provider page or Careers Portal.
- Failing to link to the personal statement: ask students to quote or reference their statement in the content section.
- Copying Aoife's generic "local ETB college" wording: student versions must name the actual college or provider and course title.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: provide the four-heading template with sentence starters for each section of the fit assessment.
- Extension: challenge students to add a brief comparison with an alternative option.
- Support: allow paired work for the Think About It discussion to build confidence.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Specific Option Fit: half-page fit assessment of one concrete option