

Starting Your Career Progression Plan (ALT 2)

60 minutes

Strand 1.2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities

Applying

Feeds ALT 2

Outcome LCW.M1.S2.ALT2.1

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Students start ALT 2 by building the spine of a career progression plan: starting position, five-year position, first long-term SMARTER goal, and milestones grounded in named Strand 1.2 work, with education and work on one route.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S2.ALT2.1	create a career progression plan that incorporates various education, training and workplace opportunities and outline how it aligns to their personal statement.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Say what a career progression plan is: SMARTER goals with education and work on one route
- Set your starting position, five-year position and first long-term SMARTER goal
- Name the Strand 1.2 work each part of the plan rests on

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Career progression plan	A living map that uses SMARTER goals to join where you are now to where you intend to be, with education-and-training and workplace pathways crossing rather than running in parallel.	A five-year plan that pairs a QQI Level 5 Early Learning and Care PLC with weekend hours in a community crèche, then aims for entry to year two of a related Level 6 course so each step makes the next one possible
SMARTER pathway	A route built from goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound, Evaluated and Revised, so the plan can be checked and changed rather than quietly abandoned.	By the end of a two-year QQI Level 5 Healthcare Support PLC, hold the Level 5 award and at least eight logged care-assistant hours a week in a nursing home; review each term and revise the placement if the setting no longer matches the five-year aim
ALT 2	Applied Learning Task 2: your Career Progression Plan, aligned to the personal statement from Strand 1.1, and a major portfolio artefact that feeds the Portfolio in Action.	A spine document naming your start point, a five-year field and level, one long-term SMARTER goal, and milestones tied to named Strand 1.2 notes, ready to expand into the full Career Progression Plan

BEFORE THE BELL

- Ensure all students have access to their Strand 1.2 folder and synthesis planner notes from earlier in the unit (often S1.2/pathway_synthesis).
- Prepare blank paper grids for any students needing a physical alternative to the digital planner.
- Students need access to their Strand 1.2 folder and, if they have it, the earlier synthesis planner (look for S1.2/pathway_synthesis or the unit's synthesis/milestones note). Have a few blank paper grids ready for anyone whose device will not load the interactive.
- On screen this lesson: pathway planner.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Build the Spine of ALT 2
10 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open by saying plainly what ALT 2 is: the Career Progression Plan each student is assessed on, begun today and drafted in full over the next few lessons. Today they build the start point, the five-year point and one long-term SMARTER goal, and everything they write later grows out of those three things, so it is worth a minute to say so.

If anyone is missing the synthesis planner from earlier in this unit (often saved as **S1.2/pathway_synthesis** or similar in the Strand 1.2 folder), pair them briefly with someone who has it, so they can see how the grid was filled before they build their own.

5 min Key Terms

A few minutes is enough here, because the terms are on screen for students to read themselves and they will keep the definitions beside them while they build. The definition that really matters is the intersecting pathways point: education and work are not alternative tracks, they cross on the same route.

Mention as well that ALT 2 must eventually line up with the personal statement each student wrote in Strand 1.1, so nobody is surprised later. Do not work on that alignment today, though, because a whole lesson later in the strand is given to it and students need the spine on the page first.

35 min Build the Spine of ALT 2

On screen: pathway planner

SUGGESTED TIMING

- **0-3 min:** remind the room that education and workplace rows must both carry something; a single-track plan is a wish list. Point them at the transfer step: open the earlier planner, copy defendable milestones only.
- **3-18 min:** pathway planner in explore mode on the board and on devices. Circulate for empty 1-year columns and for five-year boxes that only name a job title with no level or setting.
- **18-35 min:** writing ALT 2 Source Material. Non-negotiables before the bell: sections 1 to 3 (start, five-year, first-pass SMARTER). Section 4 may finish for homework. Watch for students who invent milestones with no Strand 1.2 anchor; push them back to a named document they already hold. Point stuck writers at the seven-line scaffold and the model shape.

LOOK-FORS

- Starting position names real evidence, not personality adjectives.
- Five-year position is specific enough that a stranger could picture the setting.
- Long-term SMARTER goal has a checkable measure and a revision line.
- Every milestone names a Strand 1.2 source, or honestly admits it still needs one.

TEACHING TIPS

If a student freezes on the five-year end point, have them write the *field and level* first (for example "qualified early-years practitioner in a community setting") and leave the exact employer blank. Exact employers are not required today.

ALT 2 is now live. Note who finishes a usable spine; next lessons draft the full plan from this document.

10 min Think About It

Short pair-share. Listen for plans that live only on the education row, or only at the five-year end. Invite two students to name a gap without fixing it for them; the gap is useful data for the full draft.

5 min What you covered

Confirm every student has an ALT 2 Source Material document before they leave. Anyone with only planner notes and no write-up should finish sections 1 to 3 for homework at minimum; the next lesson needs this spine on the page. Section 4 may also be homework if the room ran short.

TEACHING MOVES

- Emphasise that education and work pathways intersect on the same route rather than running parallel.
- Circulate during the main activity to support students in linking current position to future goals and in using the SMARTER scaffold.
- Facilitate the pair discussion to help students identify gaps without providing solutions.
- Model how to write clear ALT 2 Source Material that can be understood by others.
- In-class non-negotiables: sections 1 to 3 camera-ready; section 4 may finish for homework.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Plans focus solely on education: remind students to include work elements that intersect with education steps.
- Goals lack connection between start and end points: check that milestones create a clear bridge.
- Source material is too personal: ensure each line makes sense to someone unfamiliar with the student.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Provide sentence starters for writing the ALT 2 Source Material sections; point at the seven-line SMARTER scaffold.
- Support: Allow paired work for students who need help organising the pathway planner.
- Extension: Challenge students to add an additional milestone or evaluate a potential revision to their plan.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- ALT 2 Source Material: start, five-year position, long-term SMARTER goal and milestones