

Explore



Decide



Prepare



Apply



Develop



Reflection
and
Resilience



Confidence Clarifier

A self-help tool

Introduction

Feeling confident that you can do something, and that it will work out plays a hugely important role in achieving your goals. While it is possible to have a go even when you are a bit unsure, overall, confidence really does make success more likely. Indeed, researchers have identified it as a key component of behavioural change (Michie et al., 2011).

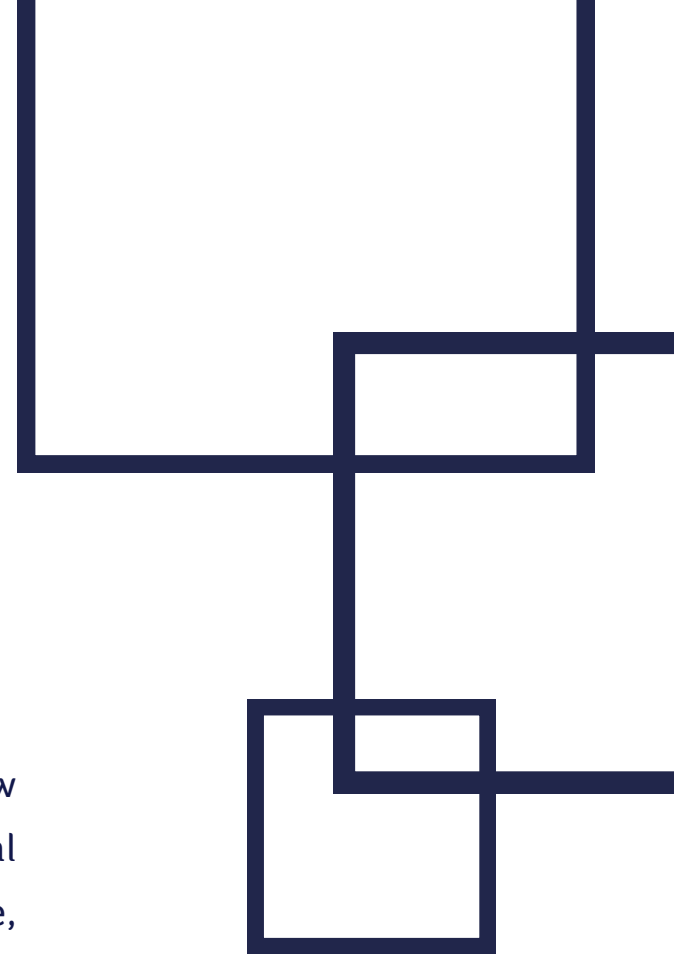
But what if you feel that a lack of confidence is holding you back? This is a surprisingly common feeling. In fact, most people feel they sometimes lack confidence.

Confidence has two equally important components which interact:

- How you feel about doing something (a subjective, element).
- How capable you are of doing something (a more objective element).

So, what can you do? The first thing is to understand specifically where and how lack confidence. Although we often talk about confidence as though it is a general mood, actually confidence is mostly specific to particular situations. For example, we might feel confident about booking an Uber but unsure about hopping on the bus.

This tool is inspired by the widely used '5 W Questions' (Wikipedia) and will help you to be clear where a lack of confidence is affecting you, as well as suggesting some ways you can become more confident.

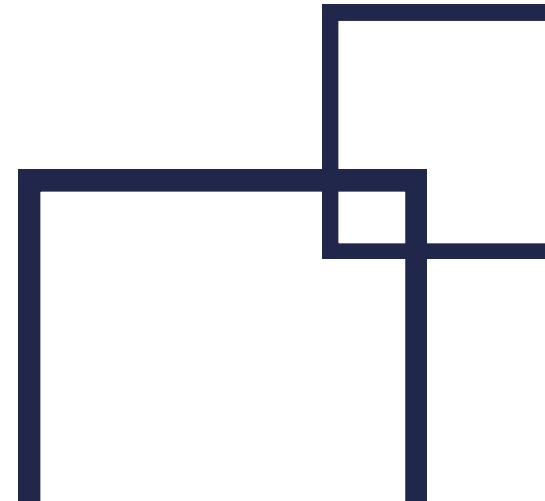


This tool is designed to...

- Help you be clear where a lack of confidence is affecting you.
- Show you which parts of a challenge you are confident / unconfident about.
- Quantify the level of your confidence / lack of confidence.

Consider using this tool if you...

- Feel that a lack of confidence is holding you back.
- Want to gain a realistic view of your confidence levels.
- You have decided you want sort out a challenge and want to approach this with confidence.



How to use this tool

The 5 'Ws' are ancient questions which have been traced back to Aristotle (Wikipedia, 2023). These questions are useful to clarify any situation and can be used by businesses for problem solving (Adobe, 2018). We've adapted them for reflecting upon confidence.

First, think about the challenge you feel a lack confidence about. Ask yourself:

1. What aspects do I feel unconfident about?
2. Where would these aspects occur (what sort of situation)?
3. When would these occur? (Is it only in certain circumstances?)
4. Who would be there (and in how do they affect your confidence)?
5. Why do you feel you lack confidence about this? (And how well based is this? Have there been times when you haven't found this aspects so difficult? Is because of a lack of information about X? Or, is it more to do with understanding how do something well?)

You may need to repeat these several times to unpack all the aspects that you feel you feel unconfident about.

For instance, someone may feel unconfident about settling into a new work role. Using the 5 questions, they break this down into three aspects shown in the table on the next page. In this case, the person finds that their vague sense that they lack confidence relates to quite specific situations which are likely to get resolved fairly quickly after they have started.

Give yourself a separate confidence rating for each specific aspect using 1-5 where 1 is low and 5 is high.

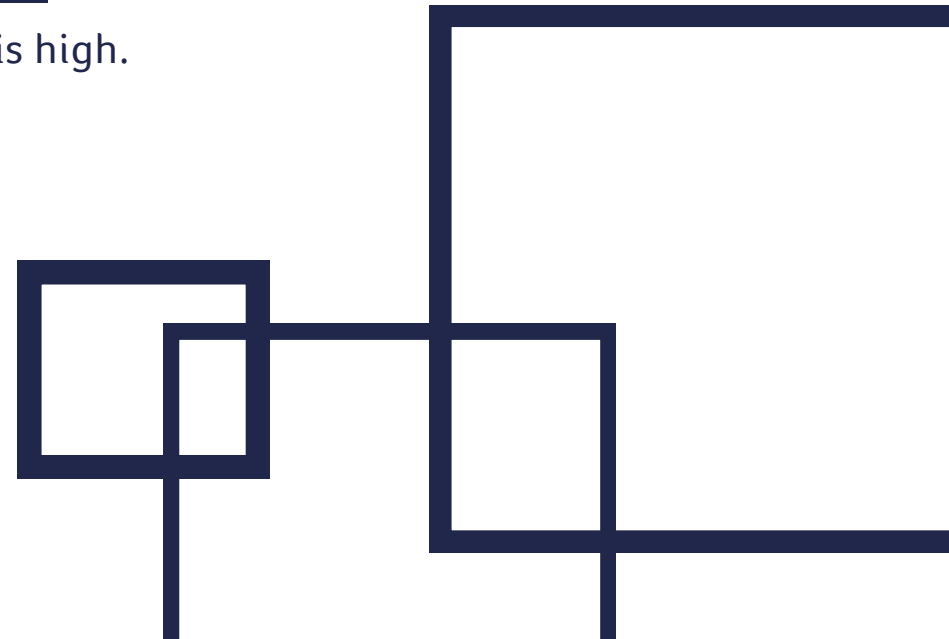
Question	Aspect 1	Aspect 2	Aspect 3
1. What aspects do you feel unconfident about?	Clothing	Lunch time arrangements	How will I know how to use the IT systems?
2. Where would these aspects occur (what sort of situation)?	In the office	In the office	Remote working and office
3. When would these occur?	First few days	First week or two, then I'd work out a plan.	First few weeks until I got the hang of them.
4. Who would be there (and in how do they affect your confidence)?	Co-workers (would they be friendly?) Manager (would be supportive)	Co-workers (would they be watching me?)	Co-workers (actually I could ask them) Manager (would be supportive)
5. Why do you feel you lack confidence about this? (And how well based is this?)	I'm unsure what the dress code would be and remember feeling awkward in my first day of work experience. (But perhaps I could ask my manager beforehand).	Will I feel self-conscious eating my packed lunch (maybe I can find somewhere to go out to lunch instead)?	I find IT systems tricky (but this will be covered in my induction pack).
Confidence Rating	3	2	1

Second, think about the challenge you feel you lack a confidence about.

Ask yourself:

1. What aspects do I feel more confident about? It is important that you identify these to get a balanced view of the situation.
2. Where would these aspects occur (that is what sort of situation)?
3. When would these occur?
4. Who would be there (and in how do they affect your confidence)?
5. Why do you feel more confident about this aspect?

You may need to repeat these several times to unpack all the aspects that you feel you feel more confident about. Give yourself a separate confidence rating for each specific aspect using 1-5 where 1 is low and 5 is high.



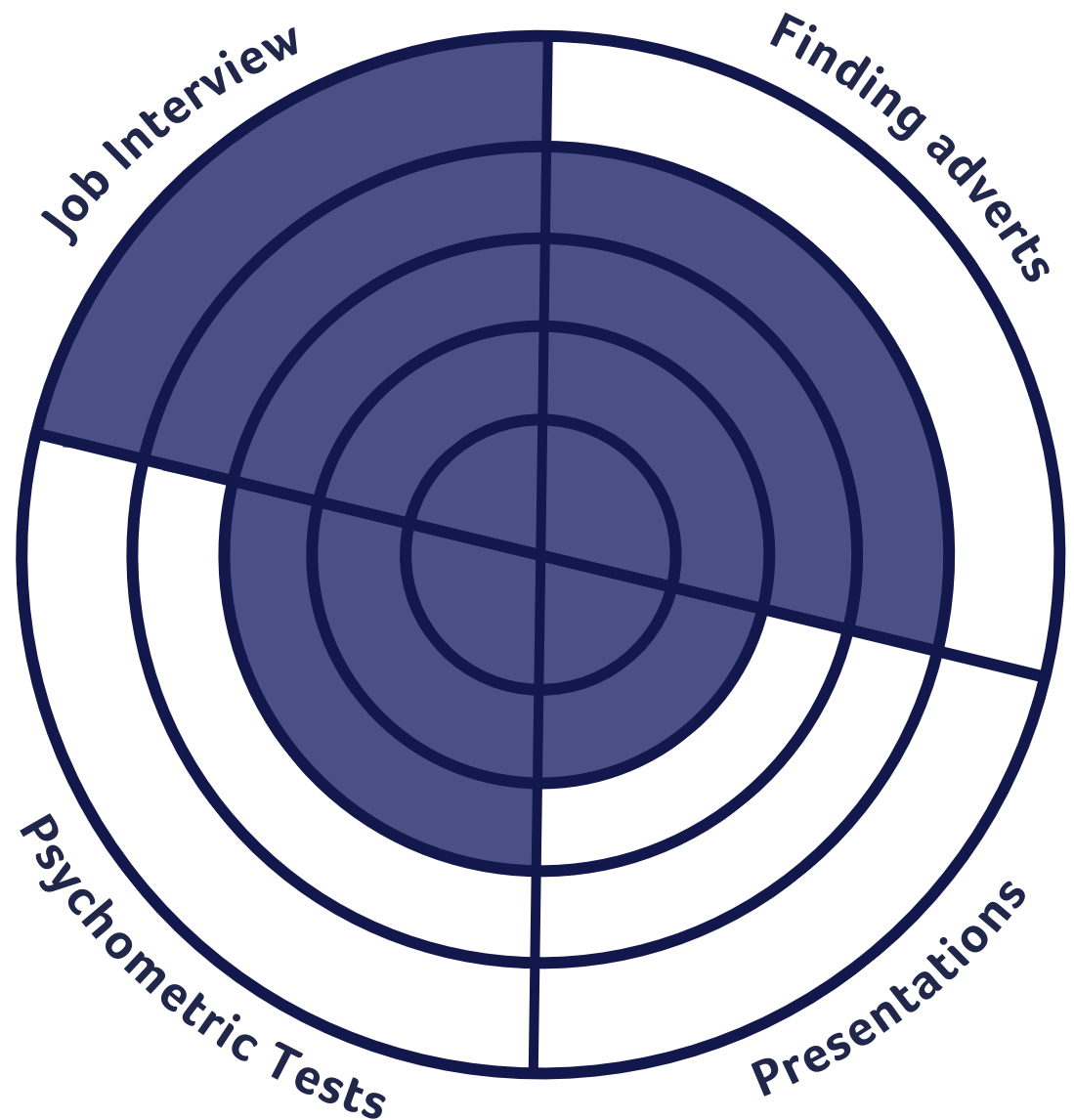
Third, transfer your ratings onto coaching wheel diagram like the one shown here.

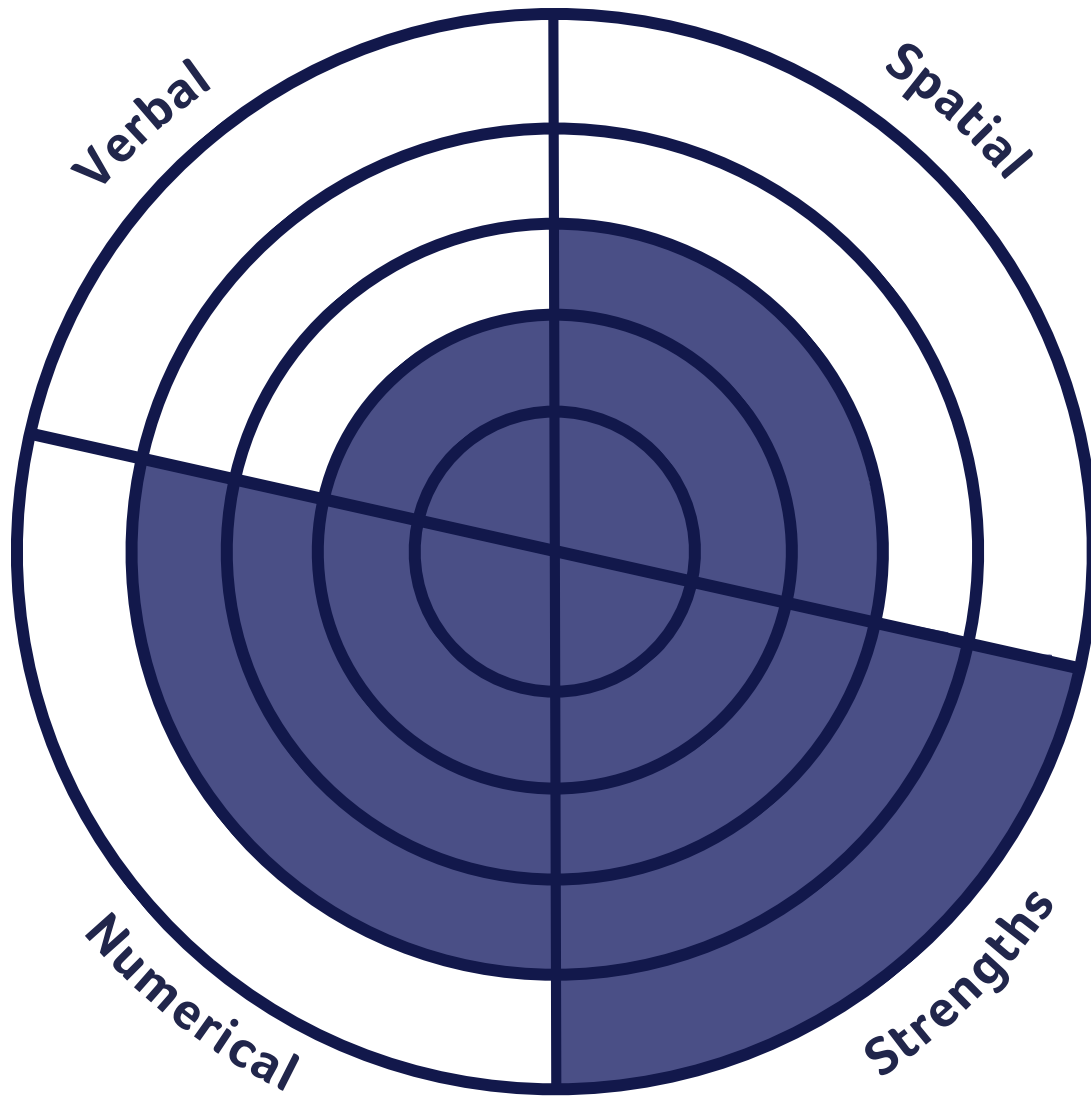
This should have 5 concentric circles.

Draw a segment for each of the aspects you have just identified (positive and negative). You can have as many segments as you like.

Then shade in the circles moving from the centre of the circle (1 = not very confident) to the outer ring (5 = very confident) showing how confident you feel about each aspect.

In this example, the person is very confident about how they will perform in job interviews and fairly confident about presentations, but less confident about finding job adverts and quite unconfident about doing psychometric test.





You can also use this tool to drill down into particular areas - for example, the different sorts of psychometric test.

Using this approach, the person in the example can see that while there are aspects of job seeking they feel unconfident about, there are a lot of aspects that they do feel rather confident about, which helps them feel more confident!

Pause, Reflect, Act

You can use this to identify the low scoring areas which are priorities for you to address. These might be areas to seek help with from the Careers Service. Ask yourself:

- Which areas are priorities for me to address to start feeling more confident about what I need to do?
- For these priorities, do I need to work more on
 - learning how to do something well?, or
 - feeling more confident about the abilities I already have?

Take some time to notice the aspects where you are more confident. These are a good basis to build on. Can you make these better and can you do more to focus on these to overcome your challenges. 'Playing to your strengths' can sometimes work as well, or better, than fixing your weaknesses. In the example above the person might choose to do practice psychometric tests to improve their scores, or, alternatively, apply for jobs with employers where this isn't part of the selection process.

- What practically do you want to do now to take forward the insights from this exercise?
- Who could help you with this?
- Which other self-help tools would you like to look at next?

Because everyone is different, no one solution is a magic bullet, so please also look at our other self-help tools as well and use the ones that work best for you.

References and Resources

- Adobe Project Team. (2018, July 5). *Questions of Every Project*. Adobe Experience Cloud Blog. <https://business.adobe.com/blog/basics/project-management-101-the-5-ws-and-1-h-that-should-be-asked-of-every-project>
 - Michie, S., van Stralen, M.M. & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Sci*, 6(42). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-6-42>
- The 5 Ws. (2023, January 5th). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from
- https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Five_Ws&oldid=1131700481

If you are a member of staff from another educational organisation and want to use a limited number of our self-help tools with your students, we'd love to hear from you and share good practice. We'd ask that you retain references to University of Huddersfield as a matter of courtesy and acknowledge the other sources we've used. Thank you.