

RESOURCES FOR STUDENT MUSICIANS

Conceptualising music careers I

ACTIVITY

Think about your colleagues, all the people who have graduated from your institution, all the teachers you have ever encountered - in fact, all the musicians who have existed since time began. Your music career will be different from that experienced by any of them. This is partly because of your context but mostly because of the decisions you make.

This resource will help you to work out what you want your career to look like. It encourages us to think about career as a multifaceted concept rather than simply a '9-till-5' role. What we term 'objective facets' of career include: (1) the time spent on different activities; and (2) the proportion of income generated from these activities (recognising that these may well be different). What we term 'subjective facets' include: (3) how people identify themselves (how they see themselves), and (4) their vision for the future. You can find out more about this in Chapter 1 of [Life in the Real World: How to Make Music Graduates Employable](#).

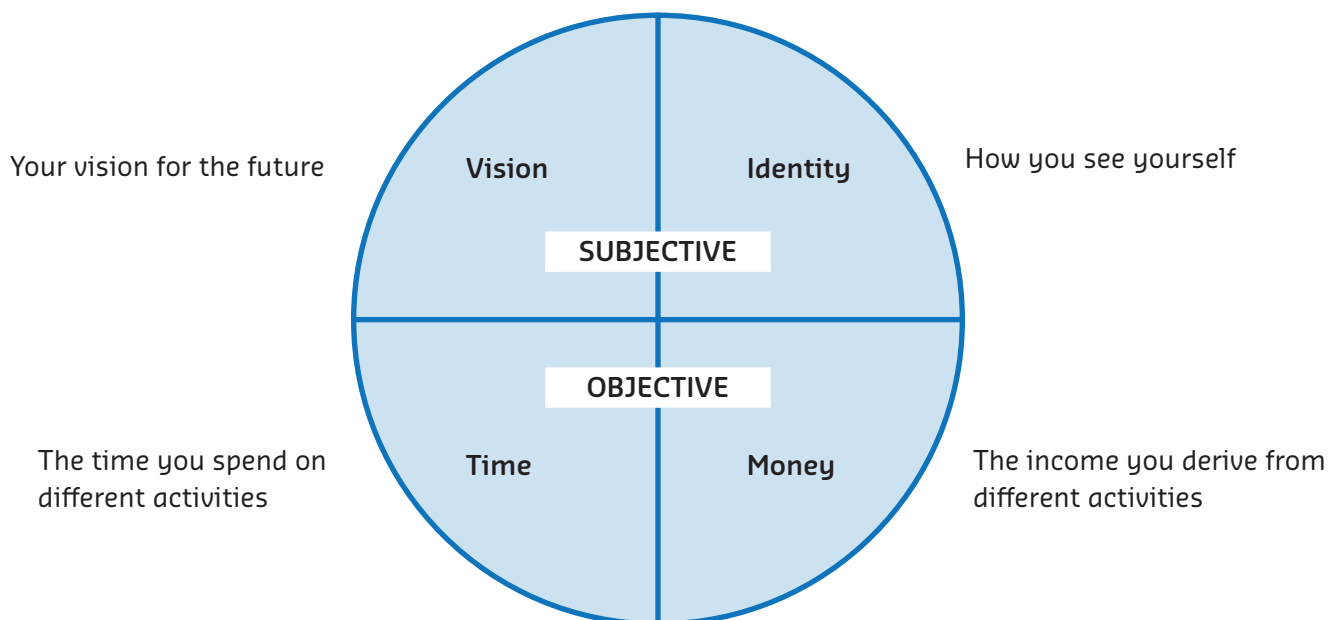


Figure 2 Conceptualising 'career' for musicians (Mills, 2004)

Take a moment to consider these four elements in relation to their career. You may like to use the following questions as a guide or as questions to discuss with peers:

VISION:

- What are your aims for the future?
- Where would you like to be in five years' time? In ten years' time?
- Why do you want to achieve these things?
- For how long have you wanted to achieve these things?

IDENTITY:

- How would you describe yourself? Why would you describe yourself like this?
- How do you think others see you as a musician? How would you like to be seen?
- Where do you see yourself fitting in the music profession?
- What makes you happy?

TIME:

- How do you spend most of your time?
- What different (musical or non-musical) activities do you do?
- How is your time divided across the week? Are you satisfied with this?
- How do you imagine spending your time when you graduate?

MONEY:

- Are you taking paid music work, or earning money from teaching or other activities? If so, how does this reflect the time you spend doing the activity? Why do you do this?
- Do you feel that your time is well rewarded?
- How do you imagine earning your living when you graduate?

Thinking about the answers to these questions may help you to see your career in a new light, and will equip you to bring together what you do (your objective career) with what you want to do and identify with (your subjective career).

Don't be too worried if you struggle to answer some of the questions; just thinking about the questions and your responses to them can be useful. Return to the questions regularly, taking note of (or recording) your answers so that you can see if and how these change over time. This will help you to track your professional aims and aspirations and how they fit with your thinking as an individual and as a musician.



This resource comes from Life in the Real World: How to Make Music Graduates Employable, published by Common Ground in 2012. Purchasers of the book are permitted to download all of the tools and resources.

If you have yet to purchase the book, please order it from [here](#).

This resource was contributed by Rosie Perkins.

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