



Career development handbook

Career development handbook

Prepared by:

National Meat Industry Training
Advisory Council (MINTRAC)

on behalf of

Meat & Livestock Australia
Locked Bag 991
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Contents

About this handbook	4
Setting career goals	5
Positions in the meat processing industry	5
Career goals in your department	5
Positions in human resources – an example	6
Positions in other areas – maintenance department example	7
Mapping current skills, knowledge and attributes	8
Recognising your skills	8
Skills	9
Attributes	9
Planning a career pathway	10
Flow charting	10
Identifying education and training opportunities	12
Educational pathways	12
Qualifications and pathways	12
Experience counts	13
Finding possible courses	13
Choosing the right level	13
Course focus and job focus	14
Course delivery models	14
Training plans	14
Preparing an evidence portfolio	15
Evidence portfolios	15
Gathering the evidence	15
Deciding how your skills and knowledge were developed	15
Education and training	15
Work experiences and responsibilities	16
Life skills	16
Applying for courses	17
Selecting the course	17
Supporting information	18
Preparing for successful study	19
Time management	19
Study skills	19
Isolation	19
Too much study	19
Resources	20
Selecting appropriate courses	20
Study skills programs	20
Professional associations	20
Human resources	21
Engineering	21
Quality Management	21
Food science	21

About this handbook

This handbook is primarily for meat industry personnel wanting to plan a career pathway in the industry.

This handbook will help individuals:

- set career goals in the human resources area
- identify their existing skills and knowledge in human resources
- plan a career pathway in human resources
- identify appropriate education and training opportunities
- prepare an evidence portfolio to support entry into a chosen course or qualification
- prepare for successful study.

The handbook can also be used by human resource managers working with company personnel to develop career pathways, develop training plans or as part of the performance appraisal and management process.

Setting career goals

Positions in the meat processing industry

There is a vast range of jobs available in the meat processing industry. Not all of them involve processing meat. Wherever you start in the industry – perhaps as a labourer, an apprentice fitter or turner, a packer or cleaner – you can set yourself career goals and work towards them. With planning, training and experience you may end up as a QA officer, the maintenance manager, human resources manager, marketing and sales officer, boning room team leader or production manager. To move on, you need to set yourself some goals.

Career goals in your department

Start with where you are now, then think about where you would like to be in the future. A company's structure will change over time, so don't think of the current positions as the only ones the company will want. Your own interests and experience can add to any role and change its focus or depth, and the company may already be planning new roles or positions. Your goals will also change over time as you develop new skills and gain experience.

Simple steps to career goal setting:

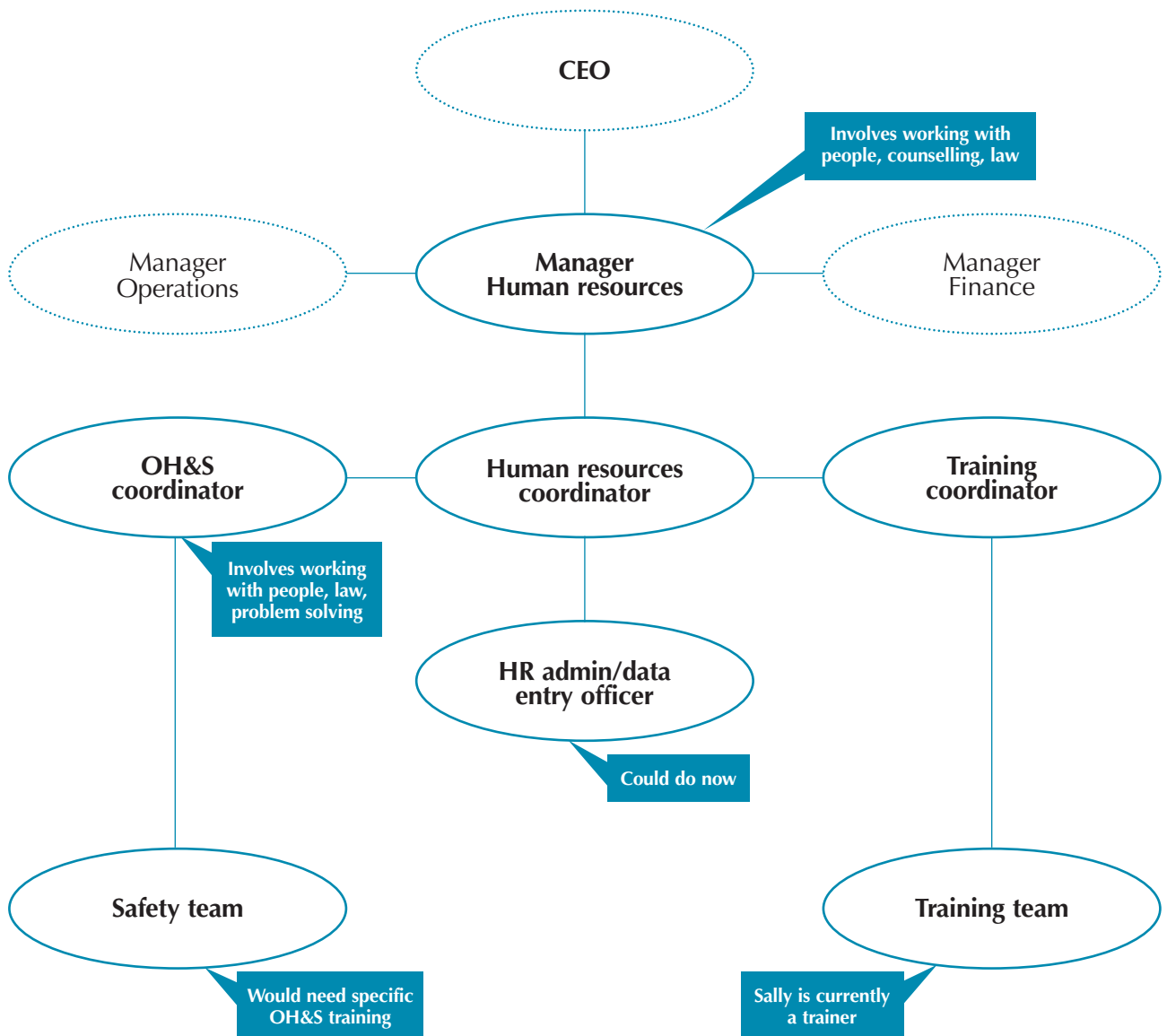
1. think about the type of job you would like to do. What are you good at, what roles interest you?
2. draw a map of those roles in the company – what is their focus and where are they in the organisational structure?
3. mark where you are now
4. mark the other positions that you think you can do now and those you would like to do in the future
5. identify the reasons you would like these new roles – more interesting or challenging, more money, more status, a change but in an area that you enjoy, to learn more...
6. talk with company management about company plans and priorities for the department, and compare your goals with company goals
7. set yourself a goal to achieve a specific position.

Career goals are not always tied to 'positions' in terms of seniority, money or status. You can build your skills and knowledge within the job you already have. In the short term, you might want to stay in your current position but set a goal to work on an aspect of your job that you think needs developing or improving. Perhaps you are an automotive mechanic and would like to learn more about automotive electronics or as a boning room supervisor you may be interested in quality assurance in your department.

Positions in human resources – an example

Human resources systems include a broad range of roles and functions. People in the human resources area have a range of responsibilities which are often described as training, occupational health and safety, employee relations, personnel, recruitment and workforce planning, industrial relations.

Human resources positions can be general or have a specific focus. For example, a plant human resources manager has general and overall responsibility for most or all the functions listed above, while a training manager may have specific responsibility for managing traineeships and apprenticeships.



Sally likes working with people, solving problems. Since school she has been interested in the legal side of things.

After working as a boner for three years she worked as an on-the-job trainer, completed the Cert IV in Training and Assessment and is now involved with off-the-job training and assessment.

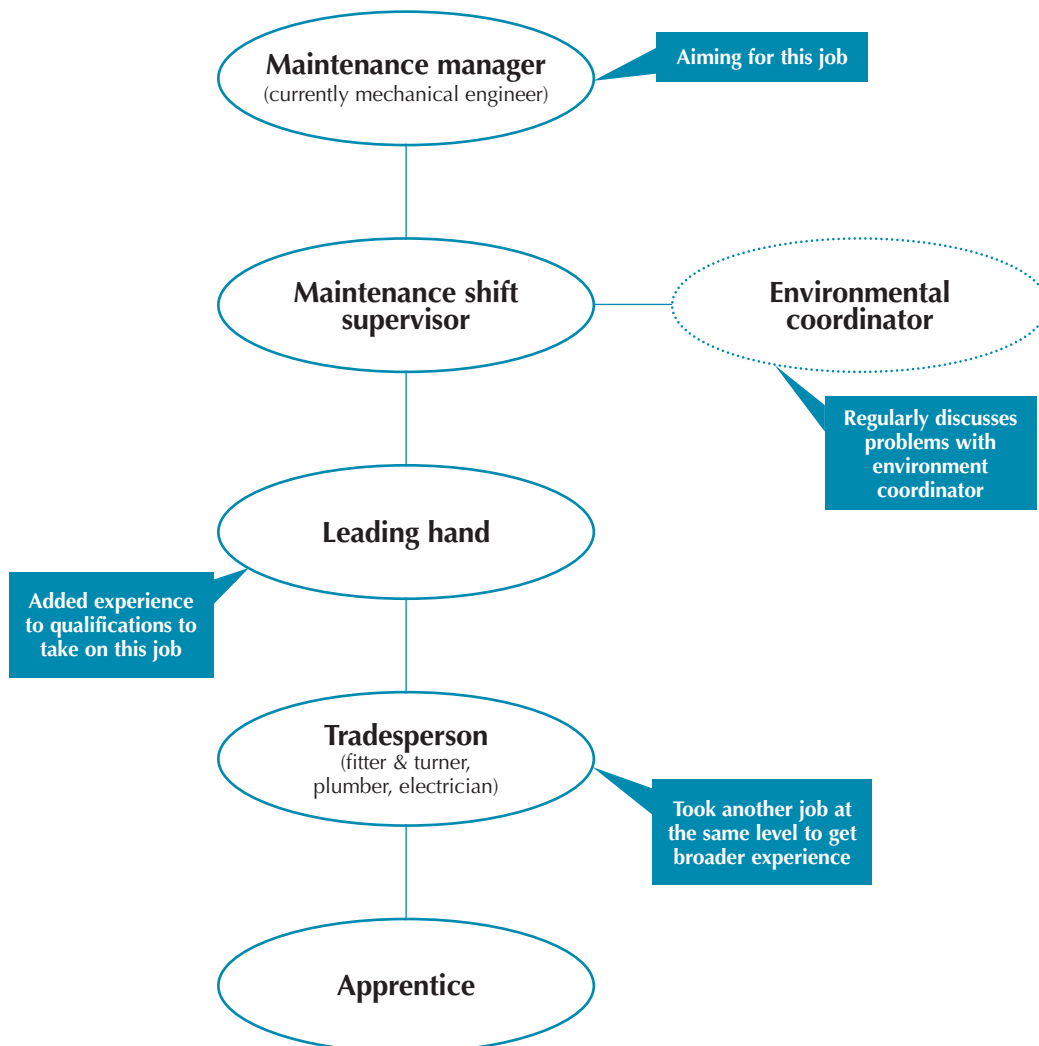
Sally has three ways to go – through the training department, by moving across to the safety team, or by moving into the HR team. She will need more training and more experience whichever way she goes – but all could take her to HR goal.

Positions in other areas –maintenance department example

The maintenance department of a large processing plant might include apprentices, tradespeople and engineers with positions including supervisors, team leaders, coordinator, manager or chief engineer. The trades might include, plumber/gas fitter, boiler maker, fitter and turner, electrician, automotive mechanic, mechanical engineer or refrigeration engineer.

Smaller plants might have a smaller maintenance team with a maintenance coordinator and perhaps a tradesperson responsible for the boilers or an engineer.

Plants of all sizes work with a range of engineers including mechanical engineers, refrigeration engineers, electrical engineers and environmental engineers.



Dave started at his first plant as an apprentice fitter and turner. Two years after he qualified he moved to a bigger plant to have a broader experience at the same level. He was later promoted to leading hand. He enjoyed the management aspects of this job. After five years and some short courses with the APESMA (the engineers professional association) Dave was promoted to maintenance shift supervisor.

Dave likes solving problems, is interested in all the mechanical aspects of the plant – the boilers, the chain, the rendering plant, and the refrigeration system – and takes pride in the quality of his work. He gets on well with other people and enjoys working in a team.

Now he is aiming for the job of maintenance manager and wants to improve his technical and management skills.

Mapping current skills, knowledge and attributes

A key step in achieving your goal is knowing the skills, knowledge and attributes that you already have. Knowing this information will help you decide the steps you need to take to reach that career goal.

Recognising your skills

For most people the trick is in using the best words to describe your work. Because we are so close to it we think that the work we do is ordinary, normal and sometimes 'nothing much.'

If you work in human resources and your job description has something like... 'responsible for recruitment processes' you need to think about what it really means.

You could come up with things like:

- advertising
- selection
- record keeping.

Some one else could come up with:

- developing recruitment procedures and processes
- analysing the company's business plans and talking with supervisors and managers to work out the personnel and skills that the company needs.

A quality assurance officer's job description might include... 'ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and quality manual.' This really means:

- determine whether products meet specifications and quality standards
- make recommendations for improvement
- train and assist operators to carry out their quality assurance functions
- compile reports.

To map your existing skills, start by looking at your position description and writing down the 'big picture' or general areas of responsibility that you have. For the HR officer it could be:

- advertising
- selection
- record keeping

Then take each area and break it down. As you break it down, add a verb.

- advertising
 - writing the advertisements
 - negotiating and placing the advertisements
 - monitoring the advertising budget
- recruitment
 - setting up selection panels
 - participating in selection panels
 - notifying applicants of interview processes and outcomes
 - writing up selection panel reports.
- record keeping
 - opening and updating personal files
 - implementing security procedures and privacy policy
 - maintaining filing system, archiving etc
 - maintaining interview register including schedules, reports, outcomes, correspondence.

The QA officer's breakdown would have a different set of responsibilities such as:

- determining whether products meet specifications and quality standards, that is
 - following and implementing the quality manual
 - recognising differences in product specifications and customer requirements
 - overseeing sampling and testing
 - analysing data
 - taking corrective action
 - compiling reports
 - following up on corrective action reports.

Skills

Next group these skills together. In human resources the grouping might be:

Organising skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> setting up selection panels notifying applicants of interview processes and outcomes maintaining the filing system placing the advertisements
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysing the company's business plans talking with supervisors and managers to plan for staff for the new boning room
Team skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participating in selection panels working with supervisors and managers
Communication and people skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participating in selection panels negotiating placement of advertisements and rates notifying people of interview results
Problem solving skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resolving staff shortages

When the skills of a QA officer are grouped together, they could look like this.

Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing sampling plan Studying product specifications Planning corrective action and following up
Team skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in a team with lab assistants/technicians, other QA officers and the QA manager
Communication and people skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating with supervisors and managers to identify and correct problems.
Administrative skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiling reports
Analytic/problem solving skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreting, sampling and testing results analysing data taking corrective action

Attributes

Attributes are qualities and are not easily measured. Attributes are added to the skills and knowledge that you have, to make you the person the company wants to employ.

Attributes could be listed as:

HR manager	QA officer	Maintenance supervisor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard working • problem solver • team player • thinks ahead • an eye for detail • analytical • recognises their own limits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good communication skills • team player • can work independently • eye for detail • methodical and systematic • enjoys problem solving • looks for answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard working • problem solver • lateral thinker • efficient and careful • analytical • practical • team player • sense of humour

Planning a career pathway

In the old days of promotion based only on seniority, you progressed just by staying around. Things have changed. Now you need to take responsibility for reaching your goal.

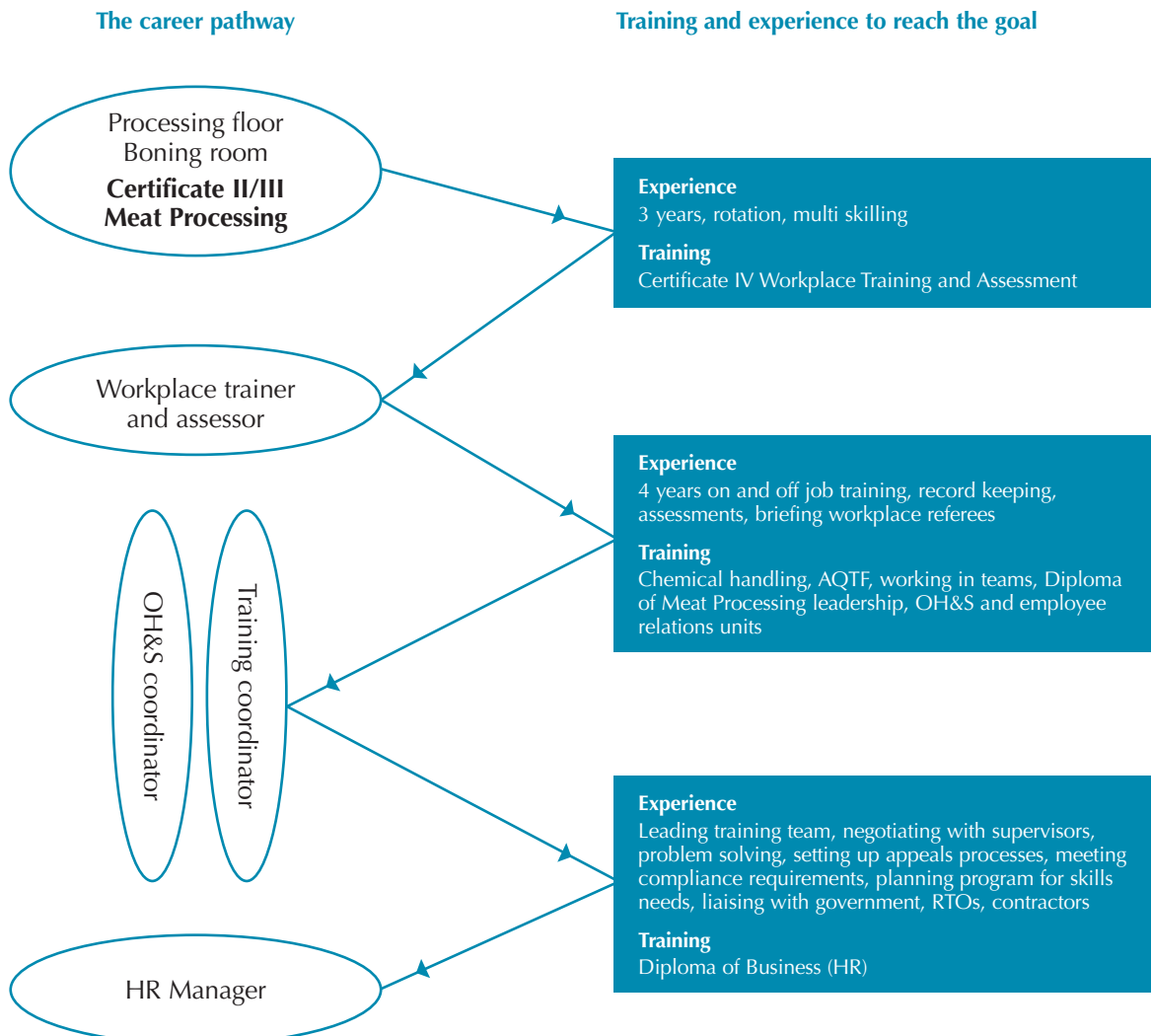
Flow charting

Start your planning by developing a flow chart. Start the chart where you are now and finish where you want to be. Show the steps along the way. The steps may not be along a clear or direct route. There may be decisions to make and alternatives to choose from.

When you flow chart your career development pathway think about:

- any gaps in skills or knowledge you might have and how you can fill these gaps perhaps being a rep on the safety committee or working with the environment manager on a project
- the positions or jobs that you might need to take on along the way e.g. promotion pathways
- any sideways moves that might add to your experiences and capacity to achieve your goal e.g. from training coordinator to OH&S coordinator
- small things you can do as part of your job e.g. participating in networks, accessing the MLA research data base, discussing issues with the current HR manager or production manager
- courses that will build your skills and knowledge.

Example one: Flow chart from the floor to training coordinator and HR manager



Example two: Mapping a pathway from the floor to OH&S manager

Gerry

Gerry has worked for the company as a slaughterer and then foreman. For the past four years he has been responsible for planning and overseeing training. OH&S has been a big issue and Gerry is picking up more responsibility in this area. He has training qualifications and many years ago completed the union's OH&S training but would like to gain some formal OH&S qualifications. He sees increasing his responsibility for OH&S as the next step in his career with the company. Gerry's options could include:

Training

- completing the OH&S unit in the Diploma of Meat Processing
- applying for recognition of his current knowledge and skills for units in a diploma in OH&S and completing the diploma with the local TAFE
- completing a rehabilitation co-ordinator program
- in a few years, enrolling in a graduate certificate in OH&S management with the uni.

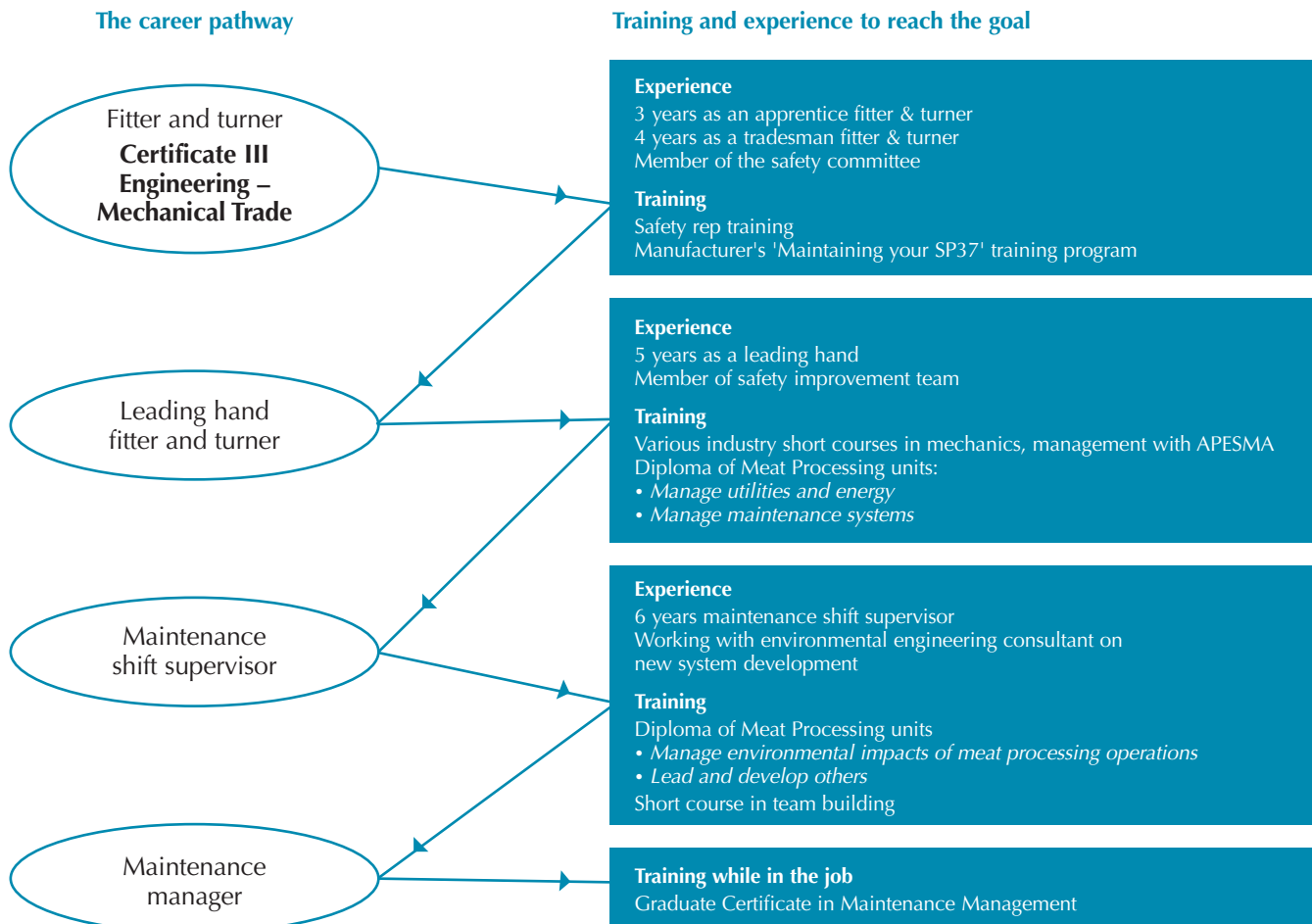
Professional development

- attending the industry's national OH&S conference
- representing the company at the state industry OH&S network
- taking on some OH&S projects in the plant e.g. developing and implementing a risk management program for manual handling issues with offal tubs
- using the MLA members site, searching the web
- participating in some short courses for different aspects of OH&S
- talking with the OH&S managers of other food processing companies
- becoming more involved with identification of suitable duties and graded return to work programs
- learning more about workers compensation – levy calculation, insurance rates, associated costs

Jobs along the way

- production area OH&S coordinator
- plant OH&S coordinator
- OH&S manager

Example three: Flow chart from apprentice fitter and turner to maintenance manager



Identifying education and training opportunities

Educational pathways

The meat industry uses the vocational education and training system to effectively train operational personnel including labourers, slaughterers, boners and slicers, renderers, supervisors, smallgoods operators, cleaners, drivers, clerical staff, quality assurance and meat safety officers. Vocational education and training can also be used to give technically qualified and experienced people (like boners or slaughterers) the skills and knowledge to take on and succeed in new areas such as HR or in leadership positions.

The industry also recruits graduates from the higher education (university) system to middle and senior management and technical positions such as finance managers, accountants, food technologists and engineers.

Traditionally the educational pathways have meant that meat industry practice has not been part of the training. Sometimes this has meant that highly qualified people have not been able to apply their skills and knowledge effectively in the meat industry. It has also meant that experienced meat industry personnel have gaps in their knowledge of alternative and current methods and ideas.

This section shows how to use the range of vocational qualifications to help move along a chosen career pathway and meet the needs of the enterprise and the industry.

Qualifications and pathways

There are two kinds of educational qualifications.

General qualifications include senior secondary qualifications and bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees from universities. These qualifications provide a broad base of knowledge, with little or no practical application to any workplace situation or job.

Vocational qualifications include Certificates I-IV, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas. Vocational qualifications are closely tied to particular areas of work and have high levels of application to workplace situations and jobs. Vocational qualifications are available in every type of work – security guards, packers, plumbers, slaughterers, office admin workers, nurses, safety officers, managers, quality assurance officers, canteen cooks, waiters, cleaners, doctors, engineers, trainers.

Schools	Vocational education and training (TAFE, RTO)	Higher education (University)
Senior Secondary Certificate of Education	Certificate IV Certificate III Certificate II Certificate I	Doctoral Degree Masters Degree Graduate Diploma* Graduate Certificate* Bachelor Degree Advanced Diploma* Diploma*

*advanced vocational qualifications

In some companies, personnel with a degree might be required to complete a vocational qualification to give them specific skills for the job or the meat industry. For example, an engineer may complete the Diploma of Meat Processing to understand how engineering knowledge and skills are applied in the meat industry. Someone with a degree in food technology might be asked to complete the Certificate IV Meat Processing (Quality Assurance) or (Meat Safety) to develop practical and meat related skills for their job as QA manager.

QA Manager's education and training pathways

Example one:

Bachelor of Science (Microbiology) + Certificate II Meat Processing core + Certificate IV Meat Processing (Quality Assurance) = QA Manager

Example two:

Certificate II Meat Processing core + Certificate IV Meat Processing (Quality Assurance) + short courses in micro, statistics + Graduate Certificate Food Technology = QA Manager

Experience counts

People without qualifications but already in the workforce want a vocational qualification to build on their work experience. One option is to take up a vocational education and training qualification such as the Diploma of Meat Processing or Diploma of Business.

Workplace experience is considered very valuable for vocational education and training. For many vocational courses workplace experience will give you recognition of prior learning or RPL and entry into Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma courses.

This experience is also valuable for entry into vocational courses at universities. Many universities will recognise substantial industry experience in the subject area of the course and first line/middle management level experience. Although they will not issue a qualification based on experience alone, many will recognise the experience to grant entry to a person who does not have a degree. This is the case for many Graduate Certificate courses.

Experience and training pathways

Example one: OH&S Manager

6 years boner/boning room supervisor + short courses + 2 years training officer + 4 years OH&S/training coordinator + Graduate Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety = OH&S Risk manager

Example two: Maintenance manager

3 years fitter and turner apprentice + 3 years fitter and turner tradesman + 6 years foreman + APESMA short courses in leadership and mechanics + Graduate Certificate Mechanical Engineering = Maintenance manager

Example three: Human resources manager

6 years boner/boning room supervisor + short courses + 2 years personnel officer + 4 years OH&S/training coordinator + Graduate Certificate in Human Resources Management = HR manager

Finding possible courses

Start with a general career guide to research your career and find out the types of courses that are available in your area of interest. Some useful websites are:

- www.myfuture.edu.au
- <http://jobguide.dest.gov.au>

For vocational education and training programs such as apprenticeships, certificate two, three or four courses, diplomas and advanced diplomas, TAFE institutes produce handbooks and have useful web site. The Australian National Training

Authority has information about vocational courses and its website (www.anta.gov.au) has links to other useful sites.

The good universities guide to universities and private colleges has general information on each university and the courses they offer. Each university also produces handbooks and each has a web site with course information and contacts.

The good universities guide to postgraduate and career upgrade courses has information on graduate certificates, masters and other post graduate courses. Both these guides are usually available at newsagents and are updated each year.

Professional associations also provide short courses. For example, APESMA provides courses for people working in the engineering and manufacturing industries and the Australian Human Resources Institute runs seminars, conferences and workshops for people working in human resources.

There is also a range of short courses available through unions, employer organisations, government departments and authorities.

Choosing the right level

Your career pathway planning will show where you are now and the next level you will need to achieve. Remember that vocational areas usually start with traineeships and, in trade areas, apprenticeships and other certificate courses. The level of training builds up to masters degrees and doctorates.

Human resources example:

Human resources qualifications start at Certificate IV. As well as Certificate IV courses in Workplace Training and Assessment, Business (Human resources) and Occupational Health and Safety offered by TAFEs, there is also the:

- Diploma of Training and Assessment Systems – provided by TAFE, community providers
- Diploma of Business (Human Resources) – offered at TAFE and universities
- Graduate Certificate of Human Resource Management – university course
- Graduate Certificate of Industrial Relations – university course
- Graduate Certificate of Training and Development – university course.

The graduate certificate courses lead on to higher degrees including masters degrees.

Short courses run by professional associations and government agencies include rehabilitation coordination, personal effectiveness, report writing, team building and effective recruitment.



Course focus and job focus

All the courses listed are *vocational* courses. This means they are designed to provide skills and knowledge in a particular area of work – e.g. training, OH&S, human resources generally, plumbing, boning, tanning, auto mechanics, engineering.

Certificate IV courses and Diplomas provide practical information to be used hands on almost straight away. They also give some theory to make sense of and improve day to day practices.

Graduate Certificates give a bigger picture of a particular vocational area. They cover the latest trends, thinking and theories from around the world. They provide a much deeper understanding of the area of work under study rather than looking at day to day detail. They give experienced people frameworks for what they do everyday.

Course delivery models

Universities, particularly regional universities, are offering more and more of their vocational programs by distance education. Support for students in these programs includes 'lecture' notes, readings, books and articles, access to on line and postal library services, and tutor support via email, on line forums, phone and fax. Some also offer study skills support. However, some universities only offer face to face programs, part and full time.

Public and private providers of Certificate III and IV and Diploma courses offer these courses full and part time, face to face. Some TAFE institutes specialise in distance education programs, with material distributed by post, some web based work and some telephone/email support.

Training plans

Once you have flow charted or mapped your career pathway, and identified the appropriate qualifications or short courses, you need to develop a training plan. A simple training plan will document the course, the units or subjects and include a time frame for completion. The training plan will help keep you on track for reaching your career goal.

Example of a training plan for Steve, who wants to be the HR manager

Cert IV Workplace Training and Assessment	All units	Sept 2003
Working in teams		Sept 2003
AQTF compliance workshop		Nov 2003
Internal auditing		Feb 2004
Diploma of Meat Processing	Lead & develop others	June 2004
	Manage OH&S systems	April 2005
	Manage employee relations	Sept 2005
Graduate Certificate in HR		Dec 2010

Jane's training plan as a QA officer and maybe future QA manager

Food safety plans – local government workshop		Sept 2003
HACCP principles – industry seminar		Sept 2003
Basic microbiology techniques in the meat industry – short course		Nov 2003
Cert IV Meat Processing (Quality Assurance)	All units	Mar 2003
Diploma of Meat Processing	Units: develop, manage and maintain quality systems	Apr 2005
	Design and manage the food safety system	July 2005
Graduate Certificate in Food Technology		Dec 2010

Preparing an evidence portfolio

Evidence portfolios

Evidence portfolios are collections of information about an individual's experience. They can be used for RPL or to gain entry to vocational university and TAFE courses. An evidence portfolio is more than a résumé or a CV (curriculum vitae.)

A résumé or CV describes your work history, skills, knowledge, attributes and interests. An evidence portfolio provides examples of your skills, knowledge, attributes and interests.

Evidence portfolios can be used to support job applications but are more commonly used to gain entry into courses or for recognition of prior learning.

Gathering the evidence

Deciding how your skills and knowledge were developed

Before you gather the evidence of your skills and knowledge, you need to work out how your skills and knowledge were developed.

The skills and knowledge that are used at work are not all developed at work or through training. They can also be developed in other areas of life. The mix of training, work experience and skills and life experience and skills is different for each person. How your skills and knowledge were gained will influence the type of evidence that you collect.

Paul is a 'people person'. He is friendly, calms people down, gets to the core of the issue and helps sort things out. People go away satisfied that they have been heard and fairly treated. Paul gained these skills largely through travelling around, trying his hand at everything, chalking up the years, being president of the rugby club, and working. For him, the short courses that he did were less important than his life experiences. This table shows how he gained his skills and knowledge.

People skills negotiation • communication		
Education and training 10%	Life experience 60%	Work experience 30%

Jean is also a 'people person'. She is able to get people to see the other side of an argument. She helps them work through the issue until they can reach agreement. The way she shows people that compromising does not mean 'losing' usually means that issues are resolved before they start. Jean used training to develop the skills she gained as a parent, assistant football coach for the under 15s and work in the industry. This table shows how Jean gained her skills and knowledge.

People skills negotiation • communication		
Education and training 30%	Life experience 30%	Work experience 40%

Education and training

Providing evidence of qualifications and training is a routine task. First list all the qualifications by the correct title, the institution (maybe a TAFE, a uni or a private organisation like AusMeat) and the date.

Most TAFEs and universities want to see an official record of your past qualifications. Do not send the original certificates with an application form. Ask the TAFE to provide a certified copy or statement of results. This will usually have a stamp saying 'certified copy' with a signature and date. If you have an original qualification, you could photocopy it and have it certified as a copy of the original by a justice of the peace or relevant person.

Most TAFEs and universities are more interested in a statement of results because they can see the subjects that you have studied. Courses may have the same title but may not have the same subjects. It is the subjects that are important if you want RPL or recognition for past training. Course workbooks, subject outlines or assignments can be useful to show the real nature of the course.

Work experience and responsibilities

Work and employment experience should be presented as more than a list of jobs or positions. The TAFE or university wants to know what the jobs have involved and the level of responsibility.

When starting to gather your evidence think about what you do. Your first response will probably be pretty general – I am the plant HR officer. Try to think of examples of specific situations or specific products.

Then think about what evidence you have which will show what you do, in a specific situation and for what product or process.

What do I do?

I am the HR officer for 245 processing personnel and 17 management and admin staff.

What are some specific situations?

I develop and coordinate recruitment and induction procedures for personnel, in consultation with supervisors and senior management.

What evidence do I have?

Procedures or documents that I have developed:

- company handbook
- questionnaires re induction process
- induction plan for trainees
- probation review procedure for trainees/other personnel
- letters of offer
- selection criteria for new recruits
- file notes/memos

Employer verification:

- letter or statement outlining responsibilities
- position description
- performance appraisal
- pay slip or employment contract attachments

A maintenance supervisor's evidence might look like this:

What do I do?

I am the maintenance supervisor

What are some specific situations?

I coordinate the maintenance work including setting up maintenance teams, allocating tasks and setting timelines. I work with the maintenance manager to plan the three year equipment maintenance and replacement plan.

What evidence do I have?

- three year responsive maintenance plan, including costings, that I have prepared
- work instructions that I have updated to reflect maintenance procedures on the floor
- proposal to management team to use maintenance teams which include someone from the floor to help solve maintenance issues e.g. timing, modifications, for the floor.

Employer verification:

- position description
- statement from the environmental manager on project we worked on
- article in Feedback magazine, talking about the savings we made in preventative maintenance due partly to planning and my idea for using maintenance teams, the use of teams, performance appraisal
- minutes of safety committee talking about maintenance issues being fixed.

Life skills

It is often much harder to find evidence of the skills and knowledge you have developed through life experiences. In most cases it will not be necessary.

Thinking laterally will throw up very useful 'evidence':

- an article in the local newspaper, talking about your involvement in the rugby club
- a letter from the council thanking you for your work as a volunteer at the senior citizens or library.

Applying for courses



If further training is in your career flow chart, apply early. Most TAFEs and universities expect you to apply at least the term before you plan to start. Different providers have different academic years and terms e.g. two, three or four terms or semesters a year. This means different starting times. If the course starts in January, February or March you probably need to apply in October, November or December.

Selecting the course

Contact a range of providers to see what courses are available. Initially pick one or two courses. Although there are many providers, the courses do not change very much.

First, ask the provider to send you information on the course – including entry requirements, subjects, delivery modes (distance or face to face), locations, term times and closing dates for applications. Double check the closing dates – sometimes the brochures that arrive in the mail are out of date and have the wrong dates.

Think about how you learn, what your concentration span is like. Do you learn from reading and memorising, taking notes, talking about things? How will you go if the course is by distance learning, using notes and writing essays? Would you learn better if you had face to face classes? Can you use the internet to find study materials and send essays?

Then, ring and talk to the course advisor. Check that the course and the subjects offered are going to help you to reach your goal. What are they about? What sort of experience are you expected to have before you start? What is the assessment like – assignments, essays or exams?

Ask about the entry requirements. This is especially important if you do not have formal qualifications like a Certificate IV, a diploma or a degree. Will alternative 'qualifications' or 'experience' be accepted?

Finally, if the course and the delivery mode match what you want, complete the application forms very carefully. Make sure you have all the supporting documents. If you are not sure of any part of the form or the information you have to supply, ring the admissions officer or enquiries number.

Supporting information

Always provide some supporting information when you apply, especially if you are not sure that you meet the entry requirements.

If you are applying for RPL for a Certificate IV or a Diploma, you will be sent a guide to fill in. It will tell you the evidence that you will need.

If you are applying for entry into a Certificate IV, a Diploma or Graduate Certificate course include a supporting letter. Use the evidence guide as a framework. Outline the job roles you have had or currently have, giving specific situations and examples.

13 November 2003

**Admissions Officer
Eastern University
PO Box 123
Geebung NSW 2099**

Dear Madam

I wish to apply for the Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management.

I have been employed in varying capacities with Queensville Meat Processors over the past nine years and for the past five have been the Human Resources Manager.

During this time I have been responsible for:

- recruitment and terminations
- Occupational Health & Safety
- remuneration
- performance development and appraisals
- training.

I also played a key role in successfully negotiating the first enterprise agreement for the plant. This required me to understand and apply industrial, equal opportunity and OH&S laws and regulations, establish positive relations with all stakeholders, organise meetings and consultations. Since then I have been responsible for establishing a joint management-union employee relations committee to look at rewards and profit sharing models to be incorporated into the next enterprise agreement.

Since my appointment as Human Resources Manager I have successfully completed Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment and a short course in injury management and rehabilitation programs.

What I do

'Evidence' – details of tasks, responsibilities can be supported by employer statement, minutes of meetings, correspondence between company and union etc

Specific situation – negotiating an EBA

Preparing for successful study

Studying and working is a lot harder than it seems – especially if you want a life!

The greatest difficulties to overcome are:

- time pressures
- rusty or non-existent study skills
- isolation and limited access to resources
- taking on too much study.

There are strategies that make life as an adult student much easier.

Time management

Schedule time for work, family/social life and study and stick to it. Setting a fixed time for study, particularly when there are no interruptions, helps you get into the swing of the study. Choose a time when you can unwind and put work out of your mind. Before work may be better than after work, and weekends better than week days. Studying when you are tired or thinking about something else doesn't work.

This will mean that you will have to decide priorities, particularly in your work. You may need to delegate some tasks or responsibilities to other people.

Plan your study time. Decide what you will do in each block of study time. For example, 'skim chapter two', 'write three paragraphs.'

Space out the work needed for each subject. Don't leave the work until the week before the assignment is due because this creates more pressure and stress.

Study skills

If possible, take a study skills course before you start. TAFE institutes, community centres and private providers all offer study skills, or academic reading and writing, or essay writing or efficient reading courses very cheaply. They are usually held in a friendly environment and the trainers give individual support.

Almost every TAFE and university has a learning skills or support centre. These centres will run group sessions or individual support. This is usually free for enrolled students. Follow their advice. They know about the experience of hundreds of students.

Look at study skills resources on the web and download the free material. There is a list of websites in the resources section.

Isolation

Working and living in a regional area or country town often means isolation. Local libraries often do not have copies of the text books, mail services often take longer than in the cities, and no one else in town is studying the same distance education course.

So plan ahead. Organise to order library books before you need them and let the university know that assignments arrive late (and therefore will probably be returned late), due to the mail services.

Make use of the on line forums and chat rooms that the universities have, to share problems and concerns, to raise issues and to find out if any of the other students are living or working nearby.

Ring or email your tutor or coordinator regularly. A quick word with them will often solve a problem and help you to understand.

Too much study

Most TAFE institutes and universities have an 'ideal' number of subjects and units that students should take at any one time. If you are returning to study after a long time away, if your life is full or if you have a high pressure job, think about enrolling in only one subject at a time.

It is usually possible to vary the number of units according to your work and personal needs. For example, take one unit in the first and second terms, until you are used to studying again. If most people complete four units a year, you might complete only three, because one term coincides with the busier production period. You can complete the fourth unit next year. Each institute or university has rules about how you can vary the number of subjects and the time you can take to finish the course. When you change the subjects around, make sure that you complete any prerequisite units before you enrol in the new subject. If you don't complete the prerequisites, you may not be able to continue at all!

Resources

Selecting appropriate courses

To find the courses required and available for your career choice

www.myfuture.edu.au

<http://jobguide.dest.gov.au>

For university programs

The good universities guide to universities and private colleges (2003 edition), Hobsons Australia, Melbourne

The good universities guide to postgraduate and career upgrade courses (2003 edition), Hobsons Australia, Melbourne

University web sites – all universities have one

For vocational education and training programs

National Training Information Service www.ntis.gov.au

Australian National Training Authority www.anta.gov.au

Study skills programs

www.csu.edu.au/division/studserv/learning/

www.csu.edu.au/division/studserv/learning/links

startup.curtin.edu.au/study_skills/

hsc.csu.edu.au/study

www.services.unimelb.edu.au/lisu/

learnline.ntu.edu.au/studydkills/

Local libraries, adult learning centres, community houses, TAFEs and schools often have short courses in study skills, academic reading or writing or preparing for study.

Professional associations

Most professional areas have an association which provides advice on careers and professionally recognised qualifications, networking opportunities and information to keep up to date with professional thinking and trends. These include engineering, quality, food science/food safety, environment, accounting, marketing and all areas of human resources.

Human resources

Australian Human Resources Institute
Head office: ph 1300 656 746
www.ahri.com.au

Australian Institute of Training and Development
Head office: ph 1300 138 862
www.aitd.com.au

Safety Institute of Australia
Head office: ph 03 9890 6304
www.sia.org.au

Industrial Relations Society of Australia
Head Office and to contact societies in all states:
GPO Box 1557
Sydney, NSW 2001
www.irsa.asn.au

Engineering

Engineers Australia/Institute of Engineers
www.ieaust.org.au
Details on location of state headquarters can be found
on the website.

APESMA – Association of Professional Engineers,
Scientists and Managers of Australia
www.apesma.asn.au
Phone: 02 8833 6400
GPO Box 1272L
Melbourne, VIC 3001

Quality management

QSA – Quality Society of Australia
www.qsanet.com.au
Phone: 02 8833 6400
PO Box 203
Parramatta, NSW 2124

Food science

AIFST – Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology
www.aifst.asn.au
Phone: 02 8399 3997
Suite 2, Level 2, 191 Botany Road
Waterloo, NSW 2017



Level 1, 165 Walker Street,
North Sydney NSW 2060
Ph: +61 2 9463 9333
Fax: +61 2 9463 9393
www.mla.com.au

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