



— FREE RESOURCE · GUIDE 5 OF 5

Essay 4 – Career Plan and Impact

Building a medium- and long-term impact plan that is specific, measurable and genuinely tied to what Chevening supplies.

ABOUT THE EXAMPLES.

All names, institutions, programmes and statistics below are anonymised and reinvented versions of successful essays, changed to show technique. Yours must be real.

THE LIVE QUESTION (2026).

Outline your medium and long-term career plans. Please relate your answer to a key challenge or priority facing your country.

- What impact do you intend to make in your home country?
- How does your career plan connect with your course of study and the challenge or priority you identified?
- What barriers or obstacles might you face, and how will you overcome them?
- How will being a Chevening Scholar help you achieve your ambitions?

WORD LIMIT:

Minimum 100 / Maximum 300 words.

WHAT IS BEING SCORED.

A clear, realistic and achievable post-study plan with measurable goals, and a genuine willingness to collaborate with the UK on shared challenges.

WORD PLAN AT 300 WORDS.

Impact intent 60, medium term 70, long term 70, barriers 55, Chevening 45.

ON TIMEFRAMES.

The question anchors on medium and long term. Your first year back belongs in Essay 3. Repeating it here wastes seventy marked words. If you need a short-term clause to make the sequence intelligible, keep it to a clause and make it an action rather than a job hunt.

Part one: four rules that decide this essay

Rule one: capabilities, not job titles

"I will become a minister within five years" is unfalsifiable and slightly alarming. Assessors cannot verify a future title, and titles are awarded by other people for reasons you do not control. What they can assess is whether a capability plausibly follows from the one before it.

TITLE THINKING	CAPABILITY THINKING
"I will be Director of Policy."	"I will build the evaluation function the directorate currently outsources."
"I will lead a major NGO."	"I will be running multi-country programmes, which means managing consortia rather than projects."
"I will be a senior partner."	"I will be the person clients call when a regulator changes the rules."
"I will join a UN agency."	"I want to work where the comparative evidence is generated, because our reforms keep being designed without it."

Rule two: ambition is not the problem, the missing route is

Almost nobody is rejected for aiming too low. Applicants are rejected for naming a destination with no road to it. For every goal, the next clause should answer "through what?": which institution, which partner, which evidence, which committee, which budget line. If you cannot write that clause, it is a wish rather than a plan.

Rule three: aim high enough, and show altitude increasing

The warning against overclaiming makes applicants overcorrect. A plan in which you are still a mid-level officer in a decade is as weak as one in which you are a minister in two years, because neither describes growing influence.

Use the scaling axis. In the medium term you should move from individual contribution to institutional influence: leading larger work, building partnerships, mentoring professionals, securing funding, publishing, scaling something that worked in one place. In the long term you should be affecting the system: the standards, the framework, the institution, the body of expertise. If both paragraphs describe the same level of influence, the plan is flat.

This also completes the ladder across the four essays. Essay 1 sits at village or clinic level, Essay 2 at coalition and official level, Essay 3 at the university, and Essay 4 at a national institution with regional reach.

Rule four: name real organisations

"I will work for an international NGO" tells an assessor you have not looked. Name the ministry, the directorate, the regulator, the agency, the regional body, the donor programme. Naming proves the plan is researched, makes the route checkable, and gives an interview panel something concrete to ask about.

The same applies to what you align with. A plan connected to a named national development plan, a specific target, or a stated UK priority in your region is far harder to dismiss than one connected to development in general. Use the funder's own vocabulary where it exists.

Part two: naming, in this essay

Name the institution you will join or build, and the one you will build it inside.

Name the delivery partners, and let at least one of them be somebody from Essay 1 or Essay 2. The recurring cast is what makes the four essays read as one professional life rather than four arguments.

Name the strategy your goal already sits inside, by its title. This is the difference between a plan you invented for the application and a plan the country is already trying to execute.

Name the UK counterpart institution in the Chevening paragraph: the agency, the regulator, the service that built what you intend to build.

Name the fund or programme you will apply to, where one exists.

Give the long term a date. By 2035, not "in the long term". A year is falsifiable, which is why it reads as serious.

Part three: writing it, paragraph by paragraph

Paragraph one: impact intent, tied to a national challenge, around 60 words

Name the challenge as a challenge, not a topic. "Education" is a topic. "Children sit national exams in a language they were never taught to read in" is a challenge.

Variant one, the implementation gap.

"Our Social Assistance Act is well drafted and badly delivered. Entitlements exist on paper for 4.1 million people, and nobody in the Ministry can say how many actually receive them. I intend to build the function that can."

Variant two, the resource collapse.

"Katiba, the province that used to feed the country, is drawing groundwater faster than it recharges, and the cropping pattern that caused it is the one our subsidy schedule still rewards."

Variant three, the capability vacuum with scarcity.

"Antimicrobial resistance is treated here as a hospital problem, but 70 per cent of antibiotic volume moves through agriculture, where there is no surveillance at all. The National Action Plan commits to farm-level monitoring and has never had anyone able to build it."

Variant four, the misallocation.

"We spend more on building rural roads than on maintaining the ones we have, and 31 per cent of what we build is impassable within five years. The problem is not the budget. Nothing in the system rewards maintenance."

Anchor it externally. One clause tying the goal to something verifiable: a named national strategy, a bilateral framework, a stated UK priority in your region. It is the cheapest way to show the plan was not invented for the application, and it doubles as evidence for the collaboration criterion.

Paragraph two: medium term, three to five years, around 70 words

What capability, where, with whom, measured how. The measurement instrument is what separates a plan from an aspiration, and it is the commonest omission.

Weak, a direction of travel only:

"I will broaden my research from registration to the wider administrative barriers keeping families out of public services."

Better, target and instrument named:

"I will pilot the training in Katiba with 50 participants drawn from district councils and civil society, measuring change through pre- and post-training assessment of advocacy skills, then scale to five provinces at 500 a year."

Best, because the institutional door is named too:

"I will move from the Institute for Public Administration into the National Civil Registration Authority and build its first evaluation unit, running a matched-comparison study of the notification protocol across four provinces and publishing the first cost-per-registration figure the Authority has ever held."

The third tells the assessor which door you walk through, which is the part most applicants leave to the imagination.

Paragraph three: long term, eight to ten years, around 70 words

The systems-level version: the institution you build, the framework you install, the thing that outlives your involvement. Dated, with a metric somebody else could check.

"By 2035 I want that unit to run quarterly national monitoring of registration coverage, disaggregated by district, sex and disability finely enough that failures cannot be averaged away, and feeding directly into the Authority's budget allocation."

"By 2034 my objective is a third of district council seats held by women, with the curriculum embedded in party and public administration training, measured by council composition and by how many graduates reach elected office."

Aim for a lasting capability rather than a senior position. The strongest long-term visions describe something that keeps producing value after you move on: a research centre, a training system, a policy mechanism, an institutional partnership, an accreditation route, a data infrastructure, a body of expertise.

"I want to become a senior manager" is a destination for you. "I want to build the thing that outlives my post" is a destination for your sector.

Indicators you can legitimately use. People trained, professionals mentored, institutions engaged, partnerships established, research published, programmes designed, grants secured, policies influenced, communities served, coverage extended, costs reduced, waiting times shortened. Use what your work genuinely produces and never invent one.

Close the loop with Essay 3. One clause somewhere across these two paragraphs making the course link explicit: "using the evaluation design taught on the course".

Paragraph four: barriers, around 55 words

This is where most applicants write "there will be challenges, but I am determined" and lose the marks outright.

Use the full sequence: barrier, then strategy, then the resource or partnership that makes the strategy possible, then the expected outcome. Most drafts manage the first and stop.

Barriers worth considering. Funding constraints. Institutional resistance from people whose incentives run the other way. Skills shortages in the team you inherit. Data or infrastructure limits. Legal barriers. Fragmented collaboration between agencies. Weak institutional capacity. Competing political priorities. Staff turnover destroying institutional memory.

Incentives pointing the wrong way.

"Registrars are assessed on volume rather than coverage, so disaggregated data makes them look worse. I will pair the monitoring with a revised performance measure agreed with the Authority's HR directorate, so the data helps them rather than exposes them."

Institutional fragmentation.

"Veterinary and human health authorities hold separate mandates and budgets. I will use the National Action Plan's existing joint committee as the institutional home rather than building a rival one."

Succession and turnover.

"The unit I am joining has had four directors in six years, so any reform tied to one champion dies with them. I will write the method into the standard operating procedure and train two people in every regional office."

The barrier about you, fused with Chevening. This is the most sophisticated move available in this essay. The strongest barrier answers are not about money. They are about the applicant's own standing, and they resolve into the scholarship.

"Reform proposals from practitioners rather than economists are routinely dismissed in our ministry as anecdotal. I expect that, and I will meet it with a matched-comparison study, the Ashcombe Centre as

a named research partner, and the institutional credibility a Chevening scholarship carries into a room where I currently have none."

That sentence answers the barrier sub-question and the Chevening sub-question at once, which is worth doing at 300 words.

Paragraph five: what Chevening unlocks, around 45 words

Not "it will enhance my career prospects". Name the mechanism, choose one or two, and say what you will do with it.

- **The alumni fund**, to scale something you already run.
- **A named donor or FCDO programme** in your sector, as a partner.
- **A named UK institution that already built what you intend to build.**
- **Access and standing**: the meetings you currently cannot get.
- **Specific alumni**, by role, sector or country, for a defined collaboration.
- **Exposure to a different professional system**, where the contrast is the point.

"The UK's General Register Office moved to continuous population registration in the 1990s and documented every failure on the way. I intend to use the alumni network and that institutional contact to learn the design directly rather than reinvent it, and to apply to the Chevening alumni fund to extend Kalima into Molo."

The test for this paragraph. What in your plan becomes impossible, or substantially slower, without Chevening specifically? If the honest answer is "nothing, it would just cost more", you have described a funding source rather than an accelerator.

Part four: two full sample answers

Sample one, civil registration (299 words)

All names anonymised and reinvented.

Fewer than half the children in Katiba Province hold a birth certificate, and the National Development Plan's commitment to universal registration by 2030 has no monitoring function behind it. Nobody in the National Civil Registration Authority can say which districts are failing which groups. Building that capability is what I intend to spend my career on.

In the medium term, three to five years, I will move from the Institute for Public Administration into the Authority and build its first evaluation unit. Using the evaluation design taught on my course, I will run a matched-comparison study of the notification protocol across four provinces with the Katiba Midwives' Association as delivery partner, and publish the first cost-per-registration figure the Authority has ever held.

By 2035 I want that unit running quarterly national monitoring, disaggregated by district, sex and disability finely enough that failures cannot be averaged away, and feeding directly into the Authority's budget allocation rather than sitting in an annual report.

The obstacle is incentives. District registrars are assessed on volume rather than coverage, so disaggregated data makes them look worse, and reform proposals from practitioners rather than economists are routinely dismissed in our ministry as anecdotal. I will pair the monitoring with a revised performance measure agreed with the Authority's HR directorate, and I will meet the second problem with a matched-comparison study, the Ashcombe Centre as a named research partner, and the credibility the scholarship carries into rooms where I currently have none.

The UK's General Register Office made this transition decades ago and documented every failure on the way. I intend to use that contact and the alumni network to learn its design directly, and to apply to the Chevening alumni fund to extend Kalima into Molo.

Sample two, health security (298 words)

Antimicrobial resistance is treated in my country as a hospital problem, but 70 per cent of antibiotic volume moves through agriculture, where there is no surveillance at all. The National Action Plan on AMR commits to farm-level monitoring and has never had anyone able to build it. That is the gap I intend to fill, and it sits inside a shared UK priority in health security.

In the medium term, three to five years, I will move from the National Reference Laboratory into the AMR Coordination Unit and build the first farm-level surveillance pilot across Katiba and Molo. Success is a sentinel network of 40 poultry farms reporting quarterly, validated against laboratory isolates, and a published baseline that does not currently exist. I will build it with the Veterinary Services Directorate and the Poultry Producers' Association, using the epidemiological modelling taught on my course.

By 2036 I want that network to be a permanent national One Health surveillance system covering poultry, dairy and aquaculture, feeding the annual prescribing guidance. That is the point at which we can show whether resistance in food-producing animals is falling, and act when it is not.

The obstacles are real. Farmers have no incentive to report, and the Veterinary Services Directorate and the Ministry of Health hold separate mandates and budgets. I will make reporting worth doing by returning free susceptibility testing to participating farms, and I will use the Action Plan's existing joint committee as the institutional home rather than building a rival one.

Chevening matters here for access. The UK Veterinary Medicines Directorate runs one of the longest-standing integrated surveillance systems in this field, and I intend to use the alumni network and that contact to learn its design directly rather than reinvent it.

What both samples do. They open on a challenge with an exact figure, anchored to a named national plan. They name the institutional door for the medium term and the delivery partner, and the partner recurs from earlier essays. They date the long term and give it a metric somebody could check. They name two barriers, one structural and one about the applicant's own standing, and resolve the second into the scholarship. They close on a named UK institution and one specific mechanism.

Part five: dos and don'ts

Do

- Name a challenge specific to your country or region, with an exact figure
- Anchor it to a named strategy, framework or programme
- Describe capabilities and institutions rather than job titles
- Name the institutional door you will walk through
- Give the medium term a target, a named partner and a measurement instrument
- Give the long term a date and a checkable metric
- Let at least one partner recur from Essays 1 or 2
- Show influence expanding from medium to long term
- Make the course link explicit in a clause
- Name a barrier about your own standing, and resolve it into Chevening
- Run every barrier through barrier, strategy, resource, outcome
- Name the UK institution, fund or programme, and what you will do with it

Don't

- Promise a job title on a timetable
 - Say "there will be challenges but I am determined"
 - Repeat the first-year plan from Essay 3
 - Frame the master's as a step toward a PhD
 - Write "an international organisation" where you could name one
 - List every possible benefit of the network
 - Set a goal requiring resources you will never have
 - Aim so low that a decade produces no growth in influence
 - Use "leave a lasting legacy"
 - Invent an indicator
 - Introduce a career direction Essays 1 to 3 never hinted at
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Part six: common mistakes, and the fix

MISTAKE	WHY IT COSTS MARKS	THE FIX
"I will become a minister within five years."	Not a plan, and not credible.	Describe the capability and name the institution.
"I will improve education in my country."	No target, no method.	Add the pilot, the partner and the measurement instrument.
"There may be challenges but I am determined."	Leaves a scored sub-question unanswered.	Name one resistance and one counter, with the resource attached.
Only structural barriers, none about you.	Misses the strongest move available.	Add the barrier about your own standing and resolve it into Chevening.
"Chevening will enhance my career prospects."	Any applicant could write it.	Name the fund, the programme, the institution, the access.
"I will join an international organisation."	Shows no research and cannot be checked.	Name the body, the division, and why that one.
Long-term goal is a senior job title.	A destination for you, not your sector.	Describe what you will build that outlives your post.
No date on the long term.	Unbounded ambition reads as unserious.	Attach a year and a metric to that year.
Medium and long term at the same altitude.	The trajectory is flat, so there is nothing to fund.	Individual contribution, then institutional influence, then systemic change.
A decade of steady mid-level work.	Reads as lack of ambition rather than realism.	Show what widens: scope, partners, mandate.
No link to any national plan.	The plan appears self-generated.	Anchor to a named strategy or stated priority.
Invented indicators.	The first thing a panel will test.	Use a real qualitative outcome instead.
Repeating Essay 3's first-year plan.	Wastes seventy marked words.	Start at three to five years.
No partner recurring from earlier essays.	The four essays read as four arguments.	Bring one named partner forward.

Part seven: checklists

While drafting

- ☐ A named national or regional challenge, with an exact figure
- ☐ Anchored to a named policy, strategy or stated priority

- ☐ Medium term with target, named partner, measurement instrument
- ☐ The institutional door named
- ☐ Long term institutional, dated, externally checkable
- ☐ Influence visibly expands between the two horizons
- ☐ Every goal followed by the route to it
- ☐ One structural barrier and one about my own standing
- ☐ Each barrier run through strategy, resource, outcome
- ☐ One or two concrete Chevening mechanisms, each converted into an action

Before submitting

- ☐ All four sub-questions visibly answered
- ☐ The course link explicit in at least one clause
- ☐ No repetition of Essay 3's first-year plan
- ☐ At least one named partner recurs from Essays 1 or 2
- ☐ The altitude is higher here than in Essay 1
- ☐ Nothing contradicts Essays 1 to 3 or my work history
- ☐ Every organisation named correctly and spelled consistently
- ☐ Something in the plan becomes impossible or much slower without Chevening
- ☐ I could defend every target, date and figure at interview
- ☐ A colleague in my sector would nod rather than wince
- ☐ Within the word limit shown next to the box



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