

# Career Guide for Health and Wellness Office Administrative Professionals, 2nd Edition

# CAREER GUIDE FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS, 2ND EDITION

ELLEN DILGERT

NANCY WEATHERHEAD

Conestoga Open Learning  
Kitchener



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# INTRODUCTION

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This open educational resource (OER) aims to help and guide college students as they embark on their career journey. It takes readers through the steps of finding and keeping their dream job through developing professional attitudes and behaviours, persuasive career documents, dynamic networks, and effective interview techniques. While some content is specific to Canadian office work environments, many of the tips and suggestions apply to various career paths across geographical locations.

When the textbook we were using for the career development course in Conestoga College's Health Office Administration and Medical Office Practices programs was discontinued, I decided to provide students with an open-access resource based on an excellent existing OER. The first edition of this resource was an adaptation of [\*Algonquin College's Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students\*](#).

In this second edition, we have streamlined the content and improved accessibility. As you read the chapters, take advantage of the interactive exercises to enhance and test your learning and be sure to download the job search tools to help you along your career development journey.

I wish you success and welcome your questions, feedback and suggestions as you use this resource to guide your career path or support your students.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Land Acknowledgment

At Conestoga College, we would like to acknowledge that in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Brantford, we are located on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Haudenosaunee people of Six Nations, which includes six miles on either side of the Grand River. This is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples. Recognizing the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose environment we reside in and a way of honouring the Indigenous people living and working on the ground for thousands of years.

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- Michelle Grimes – Executive Dean, School of Business
- Lil Premsukh Singh – Dean, School of Business
- Mona Nouroozifar – Dean, School of Business
- Amanda Di Battista – Chair, School of Business

## Open Learning Team

- Kimberlee Carter, MA, BEd, OER Consultant
- Juliet Conlon, MLS, Scholarly Communications Librarian
- Olu Oke, MA, BEd, OER Project Coordinator
- Simone Larin, MScM, Administrative & Quality Assurance Officer
- Daleara (Dela) Hirjikaka, MA, Instructional Designer — OER
- Cecile Michniewicz, MEd, Instructional Designer — OER
- Rachel Stuckey, MA, Instructional Designer — OER

## Student OER Assistants

- Silvana Morales Cortes

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Thank you, Kimberlee Carter, Open Educational Resource Consultant, for advising and getting me started on this undertaking, and for showing me the importance of OERs in our college system.

# ATTRIBUTIONS

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## Adaptations

The second edition of [Career Guide for Health and Wellness Office Administrative Professionals](#) by Ellen Dilgert is a revision of the first edition, which was originally adapted from [Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students & Grads](#), copyright © 2021 by Lindsay Bortot and the Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College, and licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted. Specific attributions are included on each page, as appropriate.

The changes and revisions made to the first edition are summarized below.

### Summary of Adaptations

Second Edition Chapter	First Edition Chapter	Overview of Changes
Unit 1: Professionalism 1. Appropriate and Respectful Conduct 2. Responsible and Ethical Conduct 3. Competence and Self-Improvement 4. Organization 5. Communication 6. Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills 7. Professionalism Beyond the Job Search	Unit 1: Discover Your Career Self 1. Professionalism	First edition Chapter 1 has been subdivided into seven chapters that align with professionalism appraisals used in the relevant course and student placement practicum; H5P activities added; content from first edition Chapter 42 has been integrated into Unit 1
II. Unit 2: Get to Know Your Career Self 8. Identify Your Interests, Values, and Skills	2. Get to Know Your Career Self	No changes
9. Set Goals	3. Set Goals	Added H5P
Unit 3: Career Documents and Tools	Unit 2: Career Documents and Tools	n/a
10. Purpose of a Resume	4. Purpose of a Resume	Minor revisions to text
11. Resume Types	5. Resume Types	No changes
12. The Power of Keywords	6. Keywords, Action Verbs, and Scope and Accomplishment Statements	First edition Chapter 6 was divided into two chapters
13. Resume Sections	7. Resume Sections	Content updated to reflect current best practices
14. Scope and Accomplishment Statements	6. Keywords, Action Verbs, and Scope and Accomplishment Statements	First edition Chapter 6 was divided into two chapters
15. Sample Student Resumes	n/a	New chapter with more current samples at the appropriate career stage
16. Resume Checklist	8. Resume Tips and Samples	Content updated to reflect current best practices and avoid duplication
17. Purpose of a Cover Letter	9. Purpose of a Cover Letter	No changes
18. Cover Letter Types	10. Cover Letter Types	Content updated to reflect current best practices

19. Cover Letter Contents and Sample	11. Cover Letter Sections	Minor revisions to text; sample added
20. Cover Letter Checklist	12. Cover Letter Tips and Sample	Content updated to reflect current best practices; sample moved
21. Purpose of References	13. Purpose of References	No changes
22. Reference Types and Examples of People to Ask	14. Types of References	Minor revisions to text; H5P added
23. References Instructions and Template	15. References Tips and Template	Content updated to reflect current best practices and avoid duplication
24. Purposes of a Career Portfolio	16. Purpose of a Career Portfolio	Content updated to reflect current best practices
25. Portfolio Types and Tips	17. Portfolio Types 19. Portfolio Tips	Combined first edition Chapter 17 and 19
26. Portfolio Sections and Content	18. Portfolio Sections and Content	Minor revisions to text
27. Using a Portfolio	20. Using a Portfolio	Minor revisions to text
IV. Unit 4: Networking	III. Unit 3: Networking	n/a
28. The Hidden Job Market	21. The Hidden Job Market	Links update
29. Searching for Jobs Online	22. Online Job Search Websites 23. Online Job Search Safety	Combined and revised first edition Chapters 22 and 23
30. Preparing to Network: Networking Tools	24. Preparing to Network	Health office example added; networking card information and example added
31. Networking Methods	n/a	New chapter
32. Networking Method 1: Personal and Professional Contacts	25. Method 1: Personal and Professional Networks	No changes
33. Networking Method 2: Social Media	26. Method 2: Social Networking Websites	Reorganized content, updated links
34. Networking Method 3: Career Fairs & Events	28. Method 4: Career Fairs and Events	Reorganized content
35. Networking Method 4: Gain Practical Work Experience	29. Method 5: Gain Experience	Reorganized content

36. Networking Method 5: Conduct Informational Interviews	30. Method 6: Informational Interviews	Reorganized content
37. Networking Method 6: Cold Contacting	31. Method 7: Cold Contacting	No changes
38. Networking Method 7: Recruitment Agencies	32. Method 8: Recruitment Agencies	Minor revisions to text
39. Perseverance in Your Job Search	33. Managing Your Job Search	Content updated to reflect current best practices
40. Job Search Checklist	34. Job Search Checklist	Links update
Unit 5: Job Interviews	Unit 4: Job Interviews	n/a
41. Interview Types	35. Interview	No changes
42. Before the Interview: Plan and Prepare	36. Before the Interview: Plan and Prepare	Content reorganized; content added from first edition Chapter 37; H5P added
43. During the Interview	37. During the Interview: Answering and Asking Questions	Questions moved to Chapter 42
44. After the Interview: Show Appreciation and Evolve	38. After the Interview: Show Appreciation and Evolve	Reorganized content; minor revisions to text
45. Interview Checklist	39. Mock Interview Checklist	Minor revisions to text
Bonus Feature: International Job Seekers & Job Seekers with Disabilities	Bonus Feature: International Job Seekers & Job Seekers with Disabilities	n/a
46. International Job Seekers	40. International Students or Job Seekers	Content updated to reflect current best practices; reorganized content; headings added
47. Job Seekers with Disabilities	41. Students or Job Seekers with Disabilities	Content updated to reflect current best practices; reorganized content; headings added

## Artificial Intelligence Disclosure

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originality. We are committed to transparency and believe that the use of AI can contribute to the quality and accessibility of resources. For more information, [Conestoga's Evolving AI Guidelines](#) provide a thorough description of how faculty and staff can use AI.

# ACCESSIBILITY

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Conestoga College Open Learning is committed to producing open educational resources that are accessible to as many learners as possible. We encourage our authors and other contributors to adopt a [universal design for learning approach](#) and aim to comply with the accessibility standards of the AODA and WCAG.

If you experience challenges accessing this resource or have suggestions for how we might improve accessibility in our OER, please contact us at [openlearning@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:openlearning@conestogac.on.ca).

For more information about how we strive to meet accessibility standards, please review the [Conestoga College Accessibility Statement for OER Projects](#).

## Disclosure Regarding Citation Practices

This resource uses APA Style, 7th edition, for the format of citations included in the publication. As a digital-first publication, however, citation rules have been adapted according to the APA recommendations for web accessibility by [using descriptive links in APA Style](#).

## Multiple Formats Available

This OER is available in multiple formats, including PDF. To download, select the format from the [“Download this book” dropdown menu beneath the cover image on the title page](#).

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## Ellen Dilgert, BSc, BEd, RTMR, RTNM

Ellen Dilgert is a professor in the health office administration and medical office practices programs at Conestoga College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning. Ellen's own career transition from medical radiation technologist (nuclear medicine and MRI) to college professor gave her a fresh awareness of the elements required to secure that elusive *dream job*. She began teaching a college career development course in 2017 and continues to learn alongside her students as the employment market evolves. Career development is one of Ellen's favourite courses to teach because of its real-life application to every part of the career journey, including developing professionalism, creating effective career-search tools, and delivering a successful interview.

## UNIT I

# UNIT 1: PROFESSIONALISM

### Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will:

- Examine the facets of professionalism and identify areas for self-improvement.

Do you want to *get a position in your chosen field?*

Do you want to *keep your job?*

Do you want to *get promoted?*

Do you want to *experience pride and satisfaction in your job?*

## Develop Professionalism

As you read through each characteristic of professionalism in the next few chapters, ask yourself the questions after each paragraph. Answer honestly and realize that everyone has areas that require growth and development.

1.

# APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL CONDUCT

---

## Be Appropriate

**Avoid oversharing personal or family information with your coworkers or boss.**



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=198#oembed-1>

2dreaming bear. (2025, January 28). [Why oversharing at work hurts you: Tips you need](#) [Video]. YouTube.

**Be careful what you say and post about work** (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). A best practice is avoiding discussing work-related issues with people outside your closest family and friends; even then, you should be cautious. Word can spread like wildfire, and you wouldn't want to lose your job over hearsay. **Refrain from complaining about work and posting negative work-related content on social media.** Despite your privacy settings, you can't be sure that that information won't get back to your employers or colleagues.

## Be Presentable and Dress Appropriately

Always maintain a level of professionalism through your work attire, hygiene, and visual presentation (Piccirilli, 2018). Take note of the workplace dress code; until you have a better idea of what it is, take a conservative and simple approach to dress. Even if your workplace is more casual in nature, it is important to come to work clean, neat, and well-groomed. If you are representing yourself professionally, you are also helping the employer to be seen in a professional light.

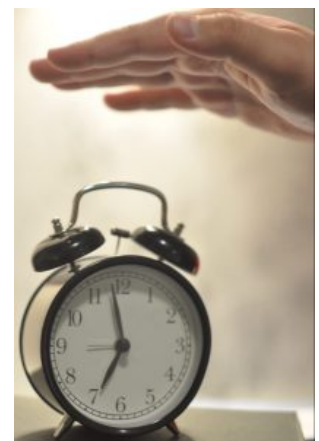


### Reflection Questions

- Do you take time to prepare yourself before work (showering, wearing deodorant, grooming)?
- Are you able to identify work-appropriate clothing in your wardrobe?

## Be Punctual and Respectful

Consistently showing up for work and showing up on time indicates that you're serious about your job. It's important not only to be punctual about arriving at work but also to be on time for meetings and follow the prescribed times for breaks or other scheduled work gatherings. If you know you will be late, be courteous: pick up the phone or email and let your employer know when you will be there (always offer to reschedule



if that is more convenient for others). When you are able to meet your commitments, it tells an employer that they can depend on you.

## Reflection Questions

- Are you often late for work or meetings, or do you take longer breaks?
- Do you generally take a lot of sick days?

## Stay Calm in Stressful Situations and Manage Disappointment

Emotional intelligence is a highly-valued trait in both the career world and everyday life. Read [this article](#) to learn how to improve your emotional intelligence. Robert Half (2016) mentions a number of practical applications of this highly-valued trait, such as **accepting the fact that life is not fair** and finding joy in your coworkers' successes instead of coveting them.



The Mind Tools Content Team (n.d.) explains that two vital components of emotional intelligence are becoming more self-aware to understand your own emotions and using active listening skills to learn empathy.

*Resilience is closely related to emotional intelligence.*



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MindToolsVideos. (2018, September 29). *Emotional intelligence in the workplace* [Video]. YouTube.

## Chapter Review

Try this drag-and-drop activity to check your learning.



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## Chapter References

Mind Tools Content Team. (n.d.). *Professionalism meeting the standards that matter*. Mind Tools. <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/professionalism.htm>

Piccirilli, G. (2018, January 2). *Knowledge center: 10 characteristics of professionalism in the workplace*. AAPC. <https://www.aapc.com/blog/40477-10-characteristics-of-professionalism-in-the-workplace/>

Robert Half (2016, March 4). *30 character traits of mentally strong people*. <https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/management-tips/30-character-traits-of-mentally-strong-people>



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## 2.

# RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

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## Be a Person with Integrity and Strong Ethics

### Ethical Responsibilities in Health Care

- Confidentiality
- Commitment to quality
- Consideration of employer's and College's reputation



### Why Be Ethical?

As a member of the health care team, you have a responsibility to:

- Your profession: to uphold excellence in all clinical and administrative duties.
- The public: to practice in a competent, responsible, and respectful manner.
- Your employer: to be faithful, accountable, and adhere to the principles of the workplace.
- Your colleagues: to recognize their rights and treat them as you want to be treated.

### Why Do Employees Do Unethical Things?

- Lack of integrity
- Job dissatisfaction-employees feel they are overworked or underpaid (they feel they will get their money's worth one way or another, so they make long-distance calls at work, take home supplies, etc.)

- Financial reward-make a little extra money by padding expenses
- Pressure to meet goals
- May not know or understand the code of conduct

## What Types of Unethical Behaviour Exist in the Workplace?

Misuse of technology: Using office computers for personal reasons, using cell phone during work hours.

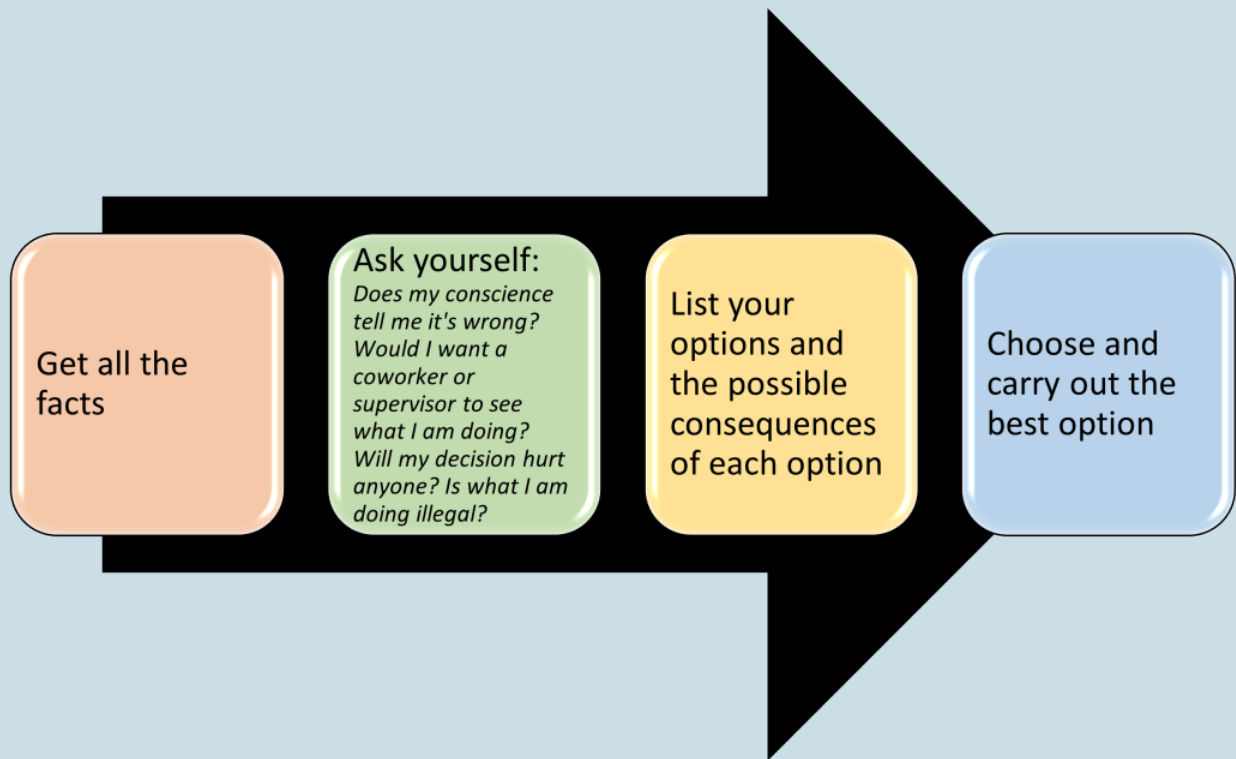
Abuse of privilege: Misusing the rights and power given to you by your position for personal benefit or at the expense of another person.

Conflict of interest: Situations in which a person's own interests/desires/needs could influence decisions they have to make in their role as an employee.

Preferential treatment: Treating one person or a certain group of people better than you treat everyone else.

## How to Handle an Ethical Dilemma

**Figure 1** *Four Steps to follow when making an ethical decision at work.*



Note: [\[Image Description\]](#)

## Follow Through on What You Say

Be a person of your word. If you can be relied on to do what you say you will do, an employer will eventually see you as their go-to person (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). When your words match your behaviours, it makes it easier for an employer to trust you, and they will ultimately be more likely to recommend, praise, and invest in you. On the contrary, not actively following through on what you say can paint an employer a negative picture of you; they may assume you are undependable or even uninterested in the job.



## Reflection Question

- Do you tend to follow through on your promises in your personal and professional life?

## Be Honest and Own Your Mistakes

It's not the end of the world if you make a mistake on the job, it just makes you human. The worst thing to do is to lie about it. If you take responsibility for your mistakes and avoid making excuses, it will show a great deal of maturity (Half, 2016). Employers will appreciate your honesty and your ability to handle a situation like this. If you show them that you're willing to learn the proper way to do something and to avoid this happening again in the future, you will be more likely to build a trusting relationship (Piccirilli, 2018).



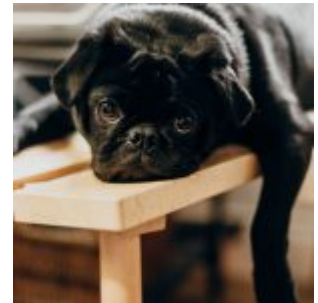
"I came to you, Doc, so I could learn to take responsibility for my own actions. So far, you haven't helped a bit."

## Reflection Questions

- Are you scared to admit when you make a mistake out of fear that you might get in trouble?
- When an error has occurred, do you make excuses or find a way to shift the blame?

## Be Self-Motivated

Just like many workplaces, health and wellness workplaces are busy and employers value employees who can work with little-to-no supervision. This type of person sees what needs to be done and does it. They never sit idle and find ways to keep themselves busy by helping their colleagues or catching up on work that was left undone.



## Reflection Questions

- What do you usually do when work is a bit slow?

- Can you find things to do without having to be told?
- When you have questions about your job, do you try to find the answers yourself before running to your supervisor?

## Be Visible, Show Initiative, and Offer to Help

Take opportunities to volunteer for upcoming projects or committees. The more visible you are in the work activities you're taking part in, the more valuable you will be seen to your employer. Likewise, employers appreciate when employees offer to help and recognize when something needs to be done without having to tell them to do it (Half, 2016). Look for opportunities to show your initiative by doing something you think may be helpful for the company, to improve a process, or assist a colleague, and your employer is guaranteed to be impressed.



### Reflection Questions

- Do you ever volunteer to be part of different opportunities that come up at work?
- Do you have the confidence to suggest different ways of doing things, in order to increase productivity, accuracy, or efficiency?

## Chapter Review

Try this quiz to check your learning.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=200#h5p-6>

## Chapter References

Mind Tools Content Team. (n.d.). *Professionalism meeting the standards that matter*. Mind Tools. <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/professionalism.htm>

Piccirilli, G. (2018, January 2). *Knowledge center: 10 characteristics of professionalism in the workplace*. AAPC. <https://www.aapc.com/blog/40477-10-characteristics-of-professionalism-in-the-workplace/>

Robert Half (2016, March 4). *30 character traits of mentally strong people*. <https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/management-tips/30-character-traits-of-mentally-strong-people>

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Figure 1. Four Steps to follow when making an ethical decision at work. © Copyright Ellen Dilgert, [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).



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## Image Descriptions

**Figure 1** This SmartArt graphic indicates four practical steps to follow when faced with an ethical dilemma. The steps are:

1. Get all the facts.
2. Ask yourself: Does my conscience tell me it's wrong? Would I want a coworker or supervisor to see what I am doing? Will my decision hurt anyone? Is what I am doing legal?
3. List your options and the possible consequences of each option.
4. Choose and carry out the best option.

[\[Back to Figure 1\]](#)

3.

## COMPETENCE AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT

---

### Know and Understand Your Role and Your Scope of Practice, and Ask for Help When Needed

Many of us make the mistake of wanting to prove we can do something on our own, or sometimes we're just scared to ask for help because we think it might be seen unfavourably by our managers (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.). The opposite of this is true; employers want you to ask questions and ask for help when you're unsure of how to do something. Employers would rather you ask the questions you need to do the job correctly than potentially costing them time and money on careless, easily preventable mistakes. That being said, if you have a number of questions, collect them and schedule a time to meet with your manager to discuss them all at once – this will eliminate multiple interruptions.



#### Reflection Questions

- Are you reluctant to ask questions about tasks you are unsure of how to do?
- Do you feel comfortable approaching other colleagues or your supervisor for help?

## Activity

Try this activity to test your problem-solving abilities. Place the 3 sentences in order to show the best approach for solving this problem.



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=202#h5p-4>

## Be Competent and Knowledgeable and Develop Yourself Professionally

Be open to learning new things; employers want skilled and knowledgeable workers. By showing your commitment to continual learning, you're showing them that it is important for you to be able to do your job well, which reflects positively on the company (Piccirilli, 2018). By training in something that makes you a subject matter expert, you will make yourself a valuable team asset.

Employers are often impressed when employees show an interest in growing their skills; concrete professional goals can be developed from these ideas.



## Reflection Questions

- Do you take advantage of professional development opportunities when they present themselves?
- In your previous jobs, have you taken the time to identify what you wanted to get out of your experience?

## Activity

Try this quiz to review the purpose of professional development.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=202#h5p-3>

## Chapter References

Mind Tools Content Team. (n.d.). *Professionalism meeting the standards that matter*. Mind Tools. <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/professionalism.htm>

Piccirilli, G. (2018, January 2). *Knowledge center: 10 characteristics of professionalism in the workplace*. AAPC. <https://www.aapc.com/blog/40477-10-characteristics-of-professionalism-in-the-workplace/>

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## 4.

# ORGANIZATION

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## Be Organized

Organization skills are important in every aspect of life and are absolutely essential to the workplace. Being organized decreases stress, saves time, and increases productivity. Piccirilli (2018) suggests keeping a tidy workspace and using a planner.



Read [“11 Effective Tips for Work Organization and Productivity”](#) on the Indeed Career Guide website to learn more about and improve your organizational skills.

## Reflection Questions

- Do you often spend valuable time looking for things that have been misplaced?
- Have you missed important deadlines, due dates, or appointments in the past?

## Activity

Do you want to improve your organizing skills? Use this activity to learn valuable organization tips.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=206#h5p-2>

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Herrity, J. (2024, July 2). [28 tips on how to be organized in the workplace](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-be-organized). Indeed. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/how-to-be-organized>

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## 5.

## COMMUNICATION

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### Clarify Expectations and Ask for Feedback

Sometimes an employer may not have the time or resources to review your job expectations with you in detail. To ensure you're performing adequately at your new job, review your job duties very carefully, then identify your main responsibilities and how much time you should be spending on each. This is a fail-proof way to ensure you're on target with what your employer expects, however, if you are unclear about what this looks like, don't hesitate to clarify at any time. Along the same lines, if you want to make sure you're on the right track, set up a time to meet with your manager and ask for feedback on your progress so far (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

#### Being Professional During a Performance Appraisal

**Figure 2** *Tips for actively and professionally approaching a performance appraisal: This SmartArt graphic lists attitudes and actions to take in order to successfully navigate a performance appraisal. Listed beside each of these actions or attitudes is the aspect of professionalism demonstrated through that action or attitude.*



Take on the attitude of a learner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive attitude.</li> </ul>
Listen actively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing respect.</li> </ul>
Take notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking feedback, accepting, and learning from feedback.</li> </ul>
Control your reactions and emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying calm</li> </ul>
Expect constructive criticism or negative feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking responsibility for your own actions</li> </ul>
If the reviewer brings up something that you know is untrue, politely ask for an example or a further explanation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking appropriate questions.</li> </ul>
Accept constructive criticism, even when you think that the person giving may be wrong!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking to grow and learn new skills.</li> </ul>
Be an active participant in the process. Discuss your goals, ask for advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing initiative and confidence</li> </ul>

Note. Adapted from Indeed Editorial Team, 2021. [\[Image description\]](#).

## Reflection Questions

- When you start a new job, can you clearly identify your roles and responsibilities (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021)?
- Do you wait to be told you're doing something wrong before asking for feedback?

## Activity

Are you prepared for a performance appraisal? Complete this drag-and-drop activity to review what you have learned.



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadminze/?p=208#h5p-1>

## Chapter References

Indeed Editorial Team. (2021, July 20). [17 performance review tips for employees](https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/performance-review-tips-for-employees). Indeed. <https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/performance-review-tips-for-employees>

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Figure 2. Tips for actively and professionally approaching a performance appraisal. © Copyright Ellen Dilgert, [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

## Image Descriptions

**Figure 2** This SmartArt graphic lists attitudes and actions to take in order to successfully navigate a performance appraisal. Listed beside each of these actions or attitudes is the aspect of professionalism demonstrated through that action or attitude.

1. Attitude: Take on the attitude of a learner. Aspect of Professionalism: Positive attitude.
2. Action: Listen actively. Aspect of Professionalism: Showing respect.
3. Action: Take notes. Aspect of Professionalism: Seeking feedback, accepting and learning from feedback.
4. Action: Control your reactions and emotions. Aspect of Professionalism: Staying calm.
5. Attitude: Expect constructive criticism or negative feedback. Aspect of Professionalism: Take responsibility for your own actions.
6. Action: If the reviewer brings up something that you know is untrue, politely ask for an example or a further explanation. Aspect of Professionalism: Asking appropriate questions.
7. Attitude: Accept constructive criticism, even when you think that person may be wrong. Aspect of Professionalism: Seeking to grow and learn new skills.
8. Action: Be an active participant in the process. Discuss your goals, ask for advice. Aspect of Professionalism: Showing initiative and confidence.

[\[Back to Figure 2\]](#)

## 6.

# TEAMWORK AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

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Before reading this chapter, learn more about how well you relate to others by taking this [Interpersonal Communication Skills Test on the Psychology Today website](#).

## Strengthen the Team by Developing Positive Workplace Relationships

There are so many benefits to developing strong relationships among your team members. When you are able to get along with your colleagues, work gets done more effectively and efficiently. Don't get caught up in water cooler conversations or office gossip. Remember to show respect to all members of your team, and listen attentively without interrupting. Your employer will be relieved when they don't have to spend their valuable time resolving petty interpersonal issues.



### Reflection Question

- Do you have strong relationships with your work or school colleagues?

## Be Self-Aware

Be honest with yourself (and others!) about your strengths and your challenges. **Realize that you are not perfect and that every person needs to grow and learn continually throughout their careers.** Self-evaluate regularly and set specific goals for yourself that are both measurable and achievable. When you experience conflict or misunderstandings, ask yourself what you could have done differently. When you receive constructive criticism, consider ways in which you can improve.



### Reflection Questions

- What strengths do you bring to your job and to the team?
- Which of your personality traits have sometimes caused difficulties for you or another person?
- What skills do you need to develop to be a more valuable employee?

## Be a Problem Solver and a Peacemaker

Regardless of the job, we can't escape day-to-day problems, whether they are personality differences between colleagues or roadblocks in our daily tasks or projects. What's important for an employer to see is how you're able to handle it when the situation is appropriate. An employer is seeking those that can **manage conflict through effective negotiation and communication skills in a diplomatic, respectful, and calm manner**. Furthermore, when you are able to manage unforeseen problems by identifying a plan and proposing possible solutions, you are taking this off the employer's plate and allowing them to spend their time managing more pertinent concerns (Half, 2016). When an employer has to frequently intervene in these situations it can take away from how competently they view you in your role.



### Reflection Question

- Are you able to effectively manage conflict without calling on the assistance of your superior?

## Demonstrate a Positive Attitude

You may have experienced working with someone negative in the past, which is why it's so important for employers to want their employees to exhibit positivity. If you have a bad attitude this may impact how well you do your job or how you communicate with other people. People tend to remember the bad things; you certainly don't want your employer to remember you as the complainer.



**Positivity is a highly sought-after quality on the job, as it tends to be a morale booster and increase the enjoyment of a work environment significantly.**

### Reflection Questions

- Do you find it difficult to show enthusiasm about the work you're doing?
- Do you catch yourself complaining about things on the job?

## Adapt to Change

With changes happening all around us, you're bound to experience a number of work-related changes in your time. Being flexible and open-minded to those changes will help to reduce the amount of stress you are experiencing and allow you to navigate unexpected changes in your work environment in a more positive and constructive way. Work changes can take their toll on morale, when employees are more adaptable, they will help set the tone for a more seamless transition across the team.



### Reflection Questions

- Do you get flustered when faced with change?
- Is it hard for you to get back on track when things fail to go according to plan?

## Chapter Review

Try this quiz to check your knowledge about interpersonal skills.



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it*



online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=210#h5p-8>

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Psychology Today. (n.d.). *Interpersonal communications skills test*. Psychology Today.  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/tests/relationships/interpersonal-communication-skills-test>

Robert Half. (2016, March 4). *30 character traits of mentally strong people*.  
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*Nothing endures but change* by [Brett Jordan](#), 2020. Used under the [Unsplash License](#).

7.

## PROFESSIONALISM BEYOND THE JOB SEARCH

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At some point, your hard work will finally pay off, and you will have landed yourself a job! Hopefully, you will take some time to bask in the glory of this amazing accomplishment and be proud. You will be standing on the edge of something great, but this job search puzzle has one last piece left.

Buckle down, be proactive, and **determine what you need to do to increase your chances of keeping this job.** The art of finding a job is just as vital to your long-term career success as being able to remain in a job. Being able to keep a job does not mean that you will be in the same job for the rest of your life (this isn't even a realistic option anymore); it simply means that you have the knowledge and skills that will help you to remain in a job until your next opportunity comes around!

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“Remember that maintaining your professional impression doesn't stop after passing an interview and accepting a job offer; it becomes a regular expectation of you in your everyday professional life.”

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### Benefits of Retaining Work

There are tremendous benefits associated with being able to keep a job. Take a minute to reflect on some of the reasons and let them be a driving force for your motivation in maintaining employment.

- **Financial security:** The most obvious benefit of maintaining your employment is bringing home a regular paycheck. Being financially secure can directly impact you, your family, and your surroundings; therefore, when you have a steady income, your

risk of financial stress significantly decreases. Financial security also gives you the freedom to enjoy activities outside of work that may add to your overall fulfillment.

- **Confidence and purpose:** Knowing how to do and perform your job well increases your confidence in your skills and abilities. For many of us, our work identities give us purpose, so contributing your skills to a greater team, teaching others, and using your strengths will make you feel proud of what you can do. When you lose your job or leave your job, a large part of your purpose and sense of accomplishment will go with it.
- **Skills development and career advancement:** The longer you remain at a company, the more opportunities you will have for skills development or additional training. Similarly, if you have invested time in your employer, your employer will likely invest time in you. Showing your loyalty and hard work over a period of time will often result in promotions or opportunities for growth.
- **References: Putting in your time at a company and making a lasting impression on your employer is important in today's job market when jobs are becoming more and more short-term.** If you've maintained good rapport and shown your commitment to your role and to the company, it's much more likely that you will have a glowing reference from your employer. Having known you longer, the employer can also speak more directly about your on-the-job skills and is more likely to reference positive workplace examples.

## SERVICE SHOUT-OUT!

If you have a personal problem that is impeding your ability to obtain or maintain employment, such as child care, housing, transportation, family or relationship conflict, or mental health concerns:

- Reach out to the services available on myWellness to develop more effective coping strategies and identify community resources.  
[myWellness – Student Success | Conestoga College](#)
- Make an appointment with myCareer career services to discuss appropriate ways of discussing these issues with your supervisor.  
[myCareer – Student Success | Conestoga College](#)
- Inform someone close to you and ensure you have a support network in place.

## UNIT II

# UNIT 2: GET TO KNOW YOUR CAREER SELF

### Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will:

- Identify your interests, values, and skills to help direct your job search.
- Learn to set effective career-related goals.

Are you a student just starting out in a program and wondering if this is the right fit for you?

Are you completing a placement and trying to identify what areas of the field you are most interested in

Are you a job seeker who is struggling to understand why you don't enjoy the career you've been doing for years?

Have you been laid off and now using this opportunity as a second chance to pursue something new?



Wherever you are in your employment and career journey, the path always starts with YOU. The first step to reaching your ultimate success and job satisfaction begins with a process of self-discovery.

By taking the time to explore your own interests, values, skills, work preferences, and accomplishments, you will not only become more self-aware and self-assured in your career decision-making, but you will also be able to articulate your strengths to employers in the future.

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8.

# IDENTIFY YOUR INTERESTS, VALUES, AND SKILLS

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## Interests

Throughout your varied life experiences, you have the opportunity to identify and explore your likes and dislikes. You learn about yourself by evaluating patterns of what captures your attention and awakens your curiosities – these become your interests.

### Reflection Questions

Ask yourself:

- What do you enjoy doing?
- What courses or school subjects have interested you the most?
- What motivates you to get out of bed in the morning?
- What jobs or volunteer opportunities have you enjoyed the most and why?

## Values

From an early age, you develop ideas from your family, culture, education, religion, and society as to what you believe is right and wrong and it is these beliefs that often dictate your behaviours. While many of these ideas will change over time, many of them stay

with you, and will become your personal reference as you go through life; these are your values. Our work values are directly correlated to our job satisfaction. Consider the following work values:

- **Achievement**

- Do you enjoy using your strongest abilities to accomplish your tasks?
- Do you like being challenged and doing interesting work?
- Do you like learning and gaining new skills?

- **Independence**

- Do you enjoy working on your own and making decisions?
- Do you enjoy finding new ways to do things and being creative?

- **Recognition**

- Is it important for you to advance and have opportunities for leadership positions?
- Do you desire to direct and influence those around you?
- Is it important for you to have a prestigious job?

- **Relationships**

- Do you need to provide service to others and work with co-workers in a friendly environment?
- Do you want to work with diverse people of many cultures and backgrounds?
- Do you feel a need to help and care for other people?

- **Support**

- Is it important for you to have the support of your boss to get your job done?
- Do you feel more effective when you have access to the right tools, training, and resources needed to do your job?

- **Working Conditions**

- Are job security and good working conditions a priority for you?
- What kind of workspace do you prefer?

- How important is it for you to be paid well and have good benefits?
- Do you need variety in your daily work tasks?

## Reflection

Place these six work values in order of importance in your life:

Achievement, independence, working conditions, support, relationships, recognition.

## Skills

Over the course of your life span, you will develop many different skills and abilities. Before diving headfirst into your job search, you will want to know what skills you have and how to describe them. This will allow you to know exactly what you have to offer and will help you communicate it to employers in interviews while networking, and through your resume, cover letter, and other job search tools. Some of these skills you will have learned from navigating everyday life situations, and some will be learned more purposefully through education, training, work, and volunteer experiences. There are two main types of skills that you should be able to identify:

- **Technical or Industry-Specific Skills (Hard Skills):** These skills are specific to your industry and the type of jobs to which you are applying. For example, administrative assistants require knowledge of how to use Microsoft Office software to prepare and format business documents, such as correspondence, reports, statements, forms, presentations, applications, etc.
  - Identify the Industry Specific Skills you have learned in college by reviewing the Learning Outcomes section on your program's website, as well as your course descriptions.



- Make a list of the tasks that were required in your previous jobs and list the skills that were associated with them.
- **Essential Employability or Transferrable Skills (Soft Skills):** These skills are more general and considered essential to succeed in any job or industry. You develop and utilize these skills through a variety of experiences and everyday tasks. For example, these could include verbal and written communication, interpersonal, problem-solving, and time management skills.
  - Identify these skills by thinking of tasks and responsibilities you performed effectively in your jobs, volunteering, school projects, and extra-curricular activities, and then identify what skills you used to perform them.

## Reflection

Review these resources and make a list of your strongest hard and soft skills.

- [Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development – Essential Employability Skills](#)
- [The Ultimate Transferable Skills List: 50+ Transferable Skills for Your Resume](#)

## Other Assessment Methods

We recognize that it can be particularly difficult for you to identify some of your own personal strengths. That being said, there are a number of other methods of assessment you can use in order to assist you with this. For example:

- **Online Assessments:** Consider using integrated online tools such as the [Competency Test](#) or the [Jung Personality Test](#) or [personalityperfect's free](#)

[personality test](#) to help you better understand yourself and identify matching careers.

- **Peer Assessments:** Ask those who are closest to you, such as your friends, family, classmates, and coworkers to point out what they think your strengths are.
- **Formal Assessments:** Contact [myCareer](#) (current students) or [Conestoga Career Centre](#) (graduates and job seekers) to inquire about completing formal career assessments that may provide more concrete insights.

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9.

## SET GOALS

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### Set Goals and Create a Plan

Did you discover that you need to improve some of your hard or soft skills before you land the job you desire?

Set long- and short-term goals at different intervals of your journey. These goals might relate to a skill you need to develop or a change you want to make in your life.

Instead of setting a plain, old, boring goal, set a **SMART** goal! SMART is an acronym for smart, measurable, achievable, relevant or realistic, and time-bound.

Watch the following video to learn more about SMART goals.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadminze/?p=46#oembed-1>

Responsive Classroom. (2020, October 14). [Setting SMART goals](#) [Video]. YouTube.

Here is an example of a plain, old, boring (*and probably useless*) goal: **I want a job where I make enough money to buy a house.**

If you really want to achieve your goal, you need a **plan**. So, transform it into a SMART goal:

- **Specific:** *I want to find a full-time job in a hospital where I earn at least \$50K yearly.*
  - (quite specific!)
- **Measurable:** *I will keep track of all my efforts to achieve this by keeping a journal.*
  - (this is how I can accurately measure my progress and figure out when I have

achieved my goal)

- **Achievable:** *I will search for jobs on several websites every day and apply to at least 3 jobs each week.*
  - (this is what I will need to do to achieve the goal)
- **Relevant:** *This goal is relevant because it will allow me to be independent and provide for my family.*
  - (this is why I want to achieve this goal)
- **Time-bound:** *I will achieve this goal 1 year from today.*
  - (this is when I hope to have achieved it)

## Chapter Review

Before trying to write your own SMART goal, try this short quiz to check your understanding of the components of a SMART goal.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=46#h5p-9>

## Reflection Activity

Try it! Set a career goal that is SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, RELEVANT, and TIME-BOUND.

- **S**pecific:
  - What would I like to accomplish?
  - Where?
- **M**easurable:
  - How will I measure my progress towards this goal?
  - How will I know that I have reached it?
- **A**chievable:
  - What steps do I need to take?
  - What resources do I need to have in order to accomplish this goal?
- **R**elevant/**R**ealistic:
  - Why and how is this goal relevant to my life/career/future plans?
  - Is it realistic for me to pursue this goal considering factors like time, money, and family responsibilities?
- **T**ime-bound:
  - Set an approximate deadline for completing this goal.

## UNIT III

# UNIT 3: CAREER DOCUMENTS AND TOOLS

### Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will:

- Identify the importance of using industry-specific and job posting keywords in your career documents.
- Write strong scope statements to highlight the transferable skills you learned at other jobs.
- Prepare an effective and targeted cover letter and resume.
- Collect and document appropriate references.
- Describe the benefits and uses of portfolios.

10.

## PURPOSE OF A RESUME

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Think of your resume as a **marketing tool** and imagine yourself as the product you are marketing. This is your opportunity to **sell yourself and your skills to create a strong, memorable, and confident first impression by strategically emphasizing your**

A prospective employer will usually see your resume before they see you.

**Your resume needs to impress the hiring manager enough for them to want to meet with you in person and invite you for an interview.**

Hiring managers may only spend a few *seconds* looking at a resume (Indeed Editorial Team, 2024). Your resume must be **clear, concise, and targeted to the job**, with the most important information on the first page.

Finally, remember that your resume is a living, breathing document and must be **continually updated** as you change, learn, and grow.

An effective resume will:

- Include **keywords** from the job posting.
- Demonstrate your ability to **organize and present ideas clearly and professionally**.
- Show your attention to detail by being **free of errors**.
- Provide details of your **relevant experience and education** credentials.

## Chapter References

Indeed Editorial Team. (2024, February 13). [How long do hiring managers look at a resume?](https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-long-do-employers-look-at-resumes). Indeed Career Guide. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-long-do-employers-look-at-resumes>

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11.

## RESUME TYPES

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First and foremost, there is no single “right” way to do your resume. Every resume should be strategically designed to represent your individual circumstances and best highlight your “fit” for the position you are applying for. Some resume styles are more appropriate for specific occupations or fields than others, and some industries may be more accepting of a shorter or longer resume depending on their needs, time, and resources. If you are unsure which format to use, read the explanations below and consider going straight to the source by having people in the field you are targeting or the companies you are interested in working for offer you feedback and input.

- **Chronological:** This common format focuses on work experience and education and places less emphasis on the skills section of the resume. Experience is featured on the first page of the resume, listing it in reverse chronological order (most recent first). This format is best used by job seekers who have significant work experience and education related to the job. It lets the reader see career stability and career progression and includes details about each job held.
- **Functional:** This format is sometimes recommended to those with minimal experience, career-changers who are transitioning from one area of expertise to another, and individuals with gaps in their work history. This format focuses more on skills and less on experience. Keep in mind that this format may make it difficult for employers to see where your experience has been gained.
- **Combination:** This format combines the skills and experience section from a functional format with the details of a work experience section found in a chronological format. The combination format allows students and new graduates to highlight skills gained through their education as well as emphasize their practical experience obtained from field placements, co-op, applied research, and team projects.

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12.

## THE POWER OF KEYWORDS

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For your resume to be effective in clearly demonstrating that you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential duties of the role, it must be targeted to each job by including **keywords** from the job posting.

### Use Keywords

**Keywords describe the type of person, skillset, education, and experience the employer seeks.**

**Omitting keywords from your resume and cover letter may result in your documents getting discarded before anyone reads them.**

**Examples of soft skills keywords:** work ethic, dependability, willingness to learn, teamwork, self-motivated, ability to work with little or no supervision, critical thinking, creativity/innovation, verbal and written communication, organization, flexibility, time management, calm and compassionate, accurate, attention to detail, multitasking, positive, cheerful, outgoing, friendly, helpful, professional, courteous

**Examples of hard skills keywords:** typing, speaking another language, MS Office, clinical information software/EMR, transcription, billing (OHIP/private), payroll, financial reports, accounting, medical terminology

**Examples of knowledge keywords:** Health Office Administration diploma, medical

terminology course, or equivalent experience preferred

### Prepare To Create Your Resume

1. Find a job posting that interests you and identify all the **keywords**.
2. List the keywords from the posting that match your own skills and use these in your resume and cover letter for that job.

In addition to resumes targeted to specific jobs you desire, you will need a **general resume** for job fairs and other networking events. To find keywords to use in a general resume, follow the steps below.

1. **Look up job postings** you are interested in applying for and identify the **keywords** listed in the posting that match your skills, knowledge, and experience.
2. **Use labour market information** resources such as [the Job Bank – Explore Careers website](#) to review various career and occupational profiles and understand the required duties and responsibilities. You could also use the [government's National Occupation Classification Codes website](#), which provides Canadian occupational information and organizes occupational titles according to skill levels and skill types. This can be used as a guide to inform you of all the various tasks and duties associated with different jobs.
3. **Refer to your program learning outcomes** – For each program at Conestoga College, learning outcomes are identified so that you can understand what abilities you will reliably be able to demonstrate upon graduation. The learning outcomes were developed by employers and industry professionals prior to the creation of your course and offer industry-specific language that you can apply to your resume.

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13.

## RESUME SECTIONS

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Your resume should be organized into clearly labelled sections to make the information easy to locate. This chapter lists the essential resume sections and provides suggestions for each section's content.

### Contact Information

Create a professionally-formatted letterhead that includes these elements:

- **Your full name**
- **Your home address (City and province is sufficient).** Include your address when you're applying for local positions, and remove your address if you are looking for jobs in different cities or countries.
- **Your phone number.** Your phone number should lead to a professionally-worded voicemail message.
- **Your email address.** Your email address should reflect your professional image. Avoid using a humorous or inappropriate email address.
- **Links to your LinkedIn profile, online portfolios, or websites** (if applicable).

Use the same letterhead for all your career documents, including your cover letter, resume, page of references, and post-interview thank you letter.

## Profile or Objective Statement

This section is a brief 1-3 sentence summary of your qualifications and experience as they relate to your overall job goal or job posting for which you are applying to.

- The profile can be written in point form, in a short paragraph, or in combination. Highlighting the number of years of experience or the program you are studying will give you a robust introduction.
- This section can also emphasize personal skills requested in the job posting (e.g. adaptable, innovative, quick learner, positive etc.).
- Many of you may be more familiar with the **objective statement**. Although this may have been appropriate when seeking interim employment, employers prefer the Profile to the Objective at a career-level search as it focuses more on what a candidate can contribute rather than just stating what they want.

## Summary of Qualifications

This section must contain **keywords** from the job posting, as well as other related professional skills and experiences you gained through your studies, work, and volunteer activities.

- Include your strongest soft skills, such as interpersonal, communication, organization, problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork, as well as hard skills, such as computer skills and other relevant technical skills, and describe how or where you demonstrated them.
  - To list skills that match the job posting's keywords, use the exact wording found in the job posting.
  - When listing other qualifications, use occupation-specific language/terminology and wording from educational program learning outcomes and course outlines.
  - List these qualifications in order of importance according to the job posting.
- Include required or asset certifications, such as First Aid, WHMIS, Health and Safety, etc.

## Education

- In this section, include a list of your education in **reverse chronological order** (most recent information first), including **diplomas/degrees/certificates**, the **year in which you obtained them**, or the **dates in which you are currently completing them**, the **school you attended**, and **the locations**.
- Using bullet points:
  - List relevant courses using the correct course titles, especially courses that relate closely to the job requirements.
  - Briefly describe practical projects, labs, assignments, work placements, and co-op experiences you completed during your studies.
  - Include your GPA if it is notable, e.g. above 3.0 / 4.0.
- Include your secondary school information if it is your only other educational experience.

## Work Experience

- In this section, list your work experience in **reverse chronological order** (most recent information first), stating the job title, company name, and dates clearly and visibly.
- Under each entry, your job descriptions should be written effectively as bullets, using **scope and accomplishment statements** (see next chapter) and strong **action verbs** (listed below) to highlight your relevant **transferable skills**.
- If you have relevant academic and applied projects, work or clinical placements, co-op, part-time, summer, and volunteer jobs, you can consider separating your work experience into “Related Experience” and “Other Experience.” The “Related Experience” would be presented first and would make a stronger connection to your current job goal. If you don’t necessarily have the experience that relates, you can simply place all of your experience under “Work Experience.”



## Resume Action Verbs

When writing your resume, try to avoid using the same verb multiple times; instead look for a more precise verb that accurately describes your work or accomplishment.

### COMMUNICATION

Arranged  
Authored  
Collaborated  
Communicated  
Consulted  
Corresponded  
Debated  
Defined  
Discussed  
Drafted  
Edited  
Explained  
Interacted  
Interpreted  
Interviewed  
Joined  
Listened  
Marketed  
Mediated  
Moderated  
Negotiated  
Observed  
Participated  
Persuaded  
Presented  
Publicized  
Reported  
Responded

Translated

Wrote

## MANAGEMENT

Administered

Analyzed

Appointed

Approved

Assigned

Attained

Authorized

Chaired

Coordinated

Designed

Delegated

Directed

Established

Executed

Led

Managed

Motivated

Organized

Oversaw

Planned

Prioritized

Reviewed

Scheduled

Supervised

## TEACHING/HELPING

Advised

Aided

Answered

Assisted

Clarified  
Coached  
Contributed  
Demonstrated  
Educated  
Encouraged  
Evaluated  
Explained  
Facilitated  
Guided  
Helped  
Individualized  
Informed  
Instilled  
Instructed  
Motivated  
Persuaded  
Resolved  
Simplified  
Supported  
Taught  
Trained  
Tutored  
Volunteered

## FINANCIAL

Administered  
Adjusted  
Allocated  
Appraised  
Audited  
Balanced  
Budgeted  
Calculated  
Estimated

Forecasted

Netted

Projected

Purchased

Qualified

Reconciled

Reduced

## CLERICAL

Arranged

Catalogued

Classified

Collected

Compiled

Filed

Organized

Prepared

Processed

Recorded

Scheduled

## RESEARCH

Analyzed

Collected

Compiled

Filed

Organized

Prepared

Processed

Recorded

Scheduled

## CREATIVE

Arranged  
Acted  
Composed  
Created  
Customized  
Designed  
Developed  
Directed  
Established  
Fashioned  
Founded  
Illustrated  
Invented  
Modeled  
Originated  
Performed  
Shaped  
Solved

## TECHNICAL

Adapted  
Applied  
Assembled  
Built  
Computed  
Debugged  
Designed  
Developed  
Engineered  
Installed  
Maintained  
Operated

Programmed  
Remodelled  
Solved  
Standardized  
Tested  
Upgraded

## Optional Resume Sections

Other possible resume sections include:

- Volunteer Experience
- Certifications
- Professional Development or Training
- Awards
- Memberships
- Activities

## What Not to Include on a Resume

- Personal information, such as age, date of birth, marital status, ethnicity, religion.
- Photographs or graphics, with the exception of art, media or design related occupations.
- Information that is out-of-date (typically more than 10 years old) or that is not relevant to the position.
- Certifications that are expired or not relevant to the job that you are applying to.

- Your references.

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14.

## SCOPE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

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No previous experience in the field? No problem!

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Scope and accomplishment statements show the employer you have the skills and abilities they seek.

Everyone knows that a cashier operates a cash register and that a customer service representative provides customer service. Do **NOT** waste valuable space on your resume listing *obvious* job duties. Instead, use scope and accomplishment statements to highlight the **transferable skills** you learned and used in previous jobs or volunteer positions.

### Scope Statements

Using scope statements to describe what you did at each job or volunteer position can set you apart and make your resume stand out. **You may feel that your experience is limited or unrelated and that it's not worth describing your tasks in detail; however, oftentimes, we are actually gaining and using transferable skills without even realizing it.**

Focus on including the following components in your descriptions:

- Task: Identify the day-to-day activities you were expected to complete.
- Skill: Decide which transferable skills you used to perform the tasks.
- Outcome: State the outcome of the task.



Even in your part-time and volunteer jobs, you've gained many applicable transferable skills, take a look:

- Interacted with customers (Task) by listening carefully (Skill) to answer questions about store products (Outcome).
- Sold store merchandise (Task) by upselling product benefits (Skill) to meet daily sales goals (Outcome).
- Handled cash (Task) accurately in a busy environment (Skill) to ensure store till was balanced before closing (Outcome).

## Accomplishment Statements

Employers highly favour accomplishment statements because they provide tangible evidence of what you can bring to the workplace and substantiate the skills or competencies you present on your resume. **Accomplishment statements also demonstrate why you would be the best candidate for the position** and can be used by employers to help differentiate you from other applicants who may have had similar experiences.

Start by brainstorming the tasks and activities you performed well in your past or current experience. Typically, these are characterized by occasions where you recognized a problem or a situation that could have been improved, you acted or responded to it, and it resulted in recognition or a positive outcome. When thinking about each experience, ask yourself the following question: How was my performance measured in this position, and what value did I bring to this workplace or organization?

It can be helpful to list your experiences to date (work, volunteer, education, academic projects, assignments, and presentations) and identify achievements for each of these. Think of significant contributions, individual or group projects, recognition from a formal performance review, or informally from coworkers, team members, customers, professors, and supervisors. Accomplishments can also include awards or any contributions you made that positively impacted your workplace.

- Add value, provide tangible evidence, and increase credibility by including numbers, statistics, percentages, or figures and using strong accomplishment statements and action verbs when describing your experiences.

- Accomplishments can include awards and formal recognitions, as well as any contributions you made that positively impacted your workplace.

## Reflection Questions

What are your accomplishments? Ask yourself these questions:

- Have you received praise from managers, supervisors, instructors, or clients?
- Have you ever been assigned a task that you could do better than others
- Have you ever been asked to train anyone?
- How did you distinguish yourself or set yourself apart in your last job? What did you do to show your initiative?
- When did you go above and beyond your job duties to complete a task and/or satisfy a customer?
- Have you ever been promoted, recognized, awarded, or thanked by your coworkers?
- How did your work affect the strategic business operations?

## Writing Accomplishment Statements

To write your own accomplishment statements, watch this video or follow the **STAR** method described below.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadminze/?p=293#oembed-1>

The University of British Columbia. (2012, September 17). [Resumes 101: Accomplishment statements](#) [Video]. YouTube.

## STAR Method

### (S) Situation + (T) Task + (A) Action + (R) Result

Start by describing the **situation or task**, followed by the **action** you have taken and the **result** you have achieved. Use strong [action verbs](#) to make the most impact. Don't forget to quantify the results or actions as much as possible. Be specific but concise. You can additionally vary the focus of your statement by choosing what actions you highlight.

Take a look at the following example:

**Situation/Task:** Orient new employees to the job.

**Action:** Prepared department's first operations manual; researched and analyzed best practices and surveyed staff on what they thought should be included.

**Result:** Orientation went faster, department used fewer staff resources, new staff members remembered more, and both new employees and manager had a record of what was covered for future reference; obtained good feedback from new employees, coworkers, and manager.

#### **Accomplishment Statement (starting with an action):**

Created the department's first operations manual, which increased the effectiveness of the new employee training and significantly reduced the expenditure of time and resources.

#### **Accomplishment Statement (starting with a result):**

Increased effectiveness of the new employee training while reducing the expenditure of time and resources by creating the department's first operations manual.

Accomplishment statements demonstrate value, provide the "so what" factor, and add credibility and strength to your resume. Including Accomplishment Statements in your resume and cover letter is an effective job search strategy that will make you stand out from other candidates and impress potential employers. Here are a few more examples:

- Prepared over 10 accurate, well-researched, concisely written, and properly cited reports, 10 + pages long on average, in a two-month period.
- Led a team of five to deliver a final research project one week ahead of the deadline through careful coordination of tasks and effective resource and time allocation.
- Consistently achieved daily sales targets by demonstrating interest in customer needs and actively interacting with them in a friendly, non-invasive manner throughout their visit.

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15.

## SAMPLE STUDENT RESUMES

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The image on this page provides a clear, concise, and targeted sample student resume, including tips in red font. Use the button below the image to download an accessible Word file of this sample.

# Jacquie Chan

299 Doon Valley Dr., Kitchener, ON, N2G 4M4 | (519) 748-5220  
hoastudent@gmail.com | [LinkedIn Profile](#)

## OBJECTIVE:

Enthusiastic and mature student in the Health Office Administration Diploma program seeking the Health Records Clerk position at Sunnybrook Hospital. *(Include the actual position and employer from your job ad)*

## SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS: *(Include keywords from your job ad)*

- In-depth knowledge of medical and dental anatomy, physiology, and terminology
- Comprehensive understanding of health insurance claims management practices
- Computer literate with well-developed EMR and MS Office skills, keyboarding 66 WPM
- Skilled with physician-order transcription
- Well-developed skills in customer service, teamwork, communication
- Strong multitasking and time management skills
- First Aid, CPR & AED for Health Care Practitioners (Level C - HCP) certification

## EDUCATION:

2022-2024 **Conestoga College, Kitchener, ON**  
*Health Office Administration Diploma expected April 2024*

- GPA 3.6 *(Include GPA if higher than 3.5)*, Dean's Honour Roll
- Key courses: Health Care Terminology, Business Computing Applications, Hospital Unit Administration

2017-2021 **Victoria Park Secondary School, Toronto, ON**  
*Ontario Secondary School Diploma*

- Key courses: Grade 12 English, Families in Canada, Nutrition and Health, Computer Science

## EXPERIENCE:

2021-present **Lawson Packaging, Waterloo, ON**  
*Warehouse Associate*

- Use strong verbal communication and teamwork skills to safely load and unload trucks under tight time constraints. *(Use scope and accomplishment statements instead of a simple list of duties)*
- Apply the ability to learn new skills quickly to cross-train in multiple departments, providing seamless coverage for absences.

2016-2021 **Little Tots Daycare, Toronto, ON**  
*Kitchen Assistant*

- Used excellent attention to detail to efficiently prepare nutritious food for children, following strict food safety guidelines, food allergy restrictions, and company policies.
- Applied effective multitasking and organization skills with competing demands, including food preparation, serving, cleaning, and responding to children's needs.

Download Sample Student Resume [opens a Word document (.docx)]

Read [“7 Steps for Creating a Student Resume \(with Example\)”](#) on the Indeed Career Guide website to see another sample resume and learn more about formatting your own resume.

16.

## RESUME CHECKLIST

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Before sending out a resume, use the checklist below to give yourself the best chance at getting an interview.

- **Customize your resume to match the job requirements.**
  - Each resume you send out must include **keywords** from the job posting.
- **Create a strong first impression.**
  - Keep the format simple and professional.
  - Use 11- or 12-point font size and web-friendly fonts.
  - Avoid using graphics, multiple styles of bullets and fonts, tables, and columns.
  - Use subheadings and a space between sections to ensure your resume is clear and easily read.
  - Ensure that your formatting is consistent throughout. For example, bullets and dates should be aligned in all sections, and dates should be presented consistently as full months or abbreviated months.
  - If possible, make your resume fit onto **1 page**. Do not tell your life story; highlight the skills, education, and experience that make you a good fit for the job. The reader needs to find the essential information quickly, as often, resumes are read or scanned in only 30-60 seconds.
- **Keep it error-free!**
  - Never use the words **I, my, myself, me** on a resume.
  - Demonstrate your attention to detail by being free of grammar and spelling



errors.

- Proofread your resume; do not rely solely on spellcheck.
- Have a second person proofread your resume.
- Bring your resume or cover letter to a drop-in session at [MyCareer](#) for a resume review.

- **Focus on compatibility.**

- Submit your application in the file format suggested in the posting; however, submit it in Microsoft Word or as a PDF if it is not otherwise specified.
- Avoid using unique fonts and bullets that may not be compatible across different word processing software.
- Be cautious when using resume templates, tables, or columns, as **Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)** may not be able to read them properly.

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17.

## PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER

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Why should you create a targeted cover letter to accompany your resume?

- Preparing a well-thought-out, personalized, customized, and compelling cover letter is an effective job search strategy that can give you an **advantage over other applicants** and increase your chances of getting an interview.
- Your targeted cover letter allows you to show the potential employer **why you are the right person for the job** by emphasizing, expanding, and complementing several key points related to the employer's needs.
- A professional, well-crafted, interesting, and impressive cover letter **demonstrates your written communication skills** and should **persuade the employer to want to read your resume** and meet with you to further explore your qualifications.

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18.

## COVER LETTER TYPES

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There are two types of cover letters that you can prepare:

- **Targeted:**
  - A targeted cover letter is the most commonly used type of letter in response to a specific job posting. You **customize the content of your letter to match the job requirements listed in the advertisement by including keywords from the posting**. Your cover letter should provide concrete examples from your education and work experience of how you have demonstrated the qualifications listed.
- **Generalized:**
  - A generalized cover letter can be used when you apply to a company but are unaware of the positions they are hiring for. This type of letter might be **used when attending a career event** where multiple employers are present, but the available jobs are unknown. You can also prepare a generalized cover letter for when you find yourself in an unplanned networking situation; your letter will provide your contact with information highlighting your professional accomplishments.

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19.

## COVER LETTER CONTENTS AND SAMPLE

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### Parts of a Cover Letter

The different parts of a cover letter are described below.

#### Your Contact Information (Letterhead)

- Your first and last name, current address, phone number, email address and link to your LinkedIn profile.

**Match your resume letterhead's format to show consistency in your branding.**

#### Date of Submission

- Date you are applying and submitting your application for the position, written out in long form (ex. March 31, 2021).

#### Company Name, Department Name, and Address

- Hiring manager's name and title.
- The name of the company and/or department listed on the job posting.
- The company's full address.

**If the name of the hiring contact and address are not on the posting, try to research this information for yourself. Check the company's website or LinkedIn, or call the company directly to obtain the name of the person in charge of hiring for the position or the company's address.**

## Subject of the Letter (Re:)

- Exact job title and posting number, if one has been provided.
  - For example: Re: Part-time Medical Ward Clerk, Day Surgery, Posting #35546.

## Greeting

- Personalize your greeting to say, “**Dear** *First Name Last Name*.” (Translation Bureau, 2015).
  - For example, if the person’s name is **Jackie Chan**, your greeting is “**Dear Jackie Chan.**”
    - **NEVER use:**
      - “Dear Mr. Chan,” “Dear Ms. Chan,” or “Dear Mrs. Chan.”
      - “Dear Jackie” or “Dear Chan”

**Do not use a generic greeting such as “To Whom it May Concern”.**

## Introduction

- The introduction should tell the reader why you are sending this letter.
  - **What:** the job title and company (If this is a generic cover letter, describe what type of job interests you) for which you are applying.
  - **Where:** Indicate where you found out about this position. State whether you are responding to an advertised position, wish to be considered for a prospective opening, or if you were referred to the company by a friend or a colleague.
  - **Why:** Explain briefly why you would like to work for this employer. This paragraph lets the employer know that you have written this letter specifically for them and demonstrates your knowledge of the company. By stating your knowledge of the company and emphasizing your interest, you are setting yourself apart from other candidates.
    - **Instead of telling the employer what this position can do for you, state what you will bring** and how this makes you a strong fit for the organization. For example, if you are applying for a job because the hours or location are convenient for you, do **not** state

this in your letter.

- **Do your research!** Read through the “About Us” page on the company’s website, mission statement, and social media sites to get more information and insight into the company. **Find something there that appeals to you and state, in your letter, how this attracted you to the position.** This is also good preparation for the common interview questions, such as: “What do you know about our company/organization, and why do you want to work for us?”

## Body of the Letter

- Promote yourself; summarize your relevant education and work experience and how they meet the employer’s needs, e.g. work placements, co-op, applied research, previous employment, years of experience, etc.
- Use descriptive, positive action verbs to describe what you can do and **keywords** from the job posting.
- Highlight your strongest skills and provide further or more in-depth details about a significant accomplishment or an example that pertains to the job.
- **Don’t duplicate your resume.** Avoid presenting information not covered in the resume, but at the same time, do not restate your resume word for word. Rather, summarize your most relevant skills and experiences as they relate to the employer’s needs.

**If the job posting lists a skill you lack, do not draw attention to this skill. Do not apologize for it or even mention it in your letter**

## Conclusion

- In closing your cover letter, briefly summarize what you will contribute to the company.
- Mention your enclosed resume.
- Thank the employer for their consideration.
- Provide your contact information and remind them how you can be reached most

easily; you can also clarify which times of the day you are most reachable if you have other obligations.

- Clearly and politely ask for an opportunity to meet or discuss your qualifications further and let them know you will follow up with them after a specified time.

## Signature

- Complete your letter by writing “Sincerely” underneath your last paragraph.
- Skip several spaces and type out your first and last name.
- Several applications can be downloaded that allow you to create an importable image of your handwritten signature, offering a nice professional look to finish your letter when submitting your applications online.
- At the very bottom, add: **Encl.** or **Enclosure** (this alerts the reader that there are more pages to read, ie, your resume)

## Sample Cover Letter

**(At the top of the page, insert the same letterhead you used for your resume, including your name, contact info, and LinkedIn profile link.)**

June 28, 2021

Paolo Monroe

David's Tea

339 Richmond Road, Unit #1

Ottawa, ON K2A 0E7

**Re: Tea Guide Position, Job ID #1234**

Dear Paolo Monroe,

I am writing to apply for the position of Tea Guide posted on Indeed on October 24. I believe that my enthusiastic attitude and ability to engage customers will make me an effective David's Tea team member. Your company is known for friendly and above-and-beyond customer service, quality, and variety of products. Delivering a high

standard of service is important to me, and I look forward to working for an organization where passion for customer experience is valued and rewarded.

With over five years of varied retail experience, I demonstrated my dedication to exceeding customer expectations by providing friendly, fast, and efficient service and helping customers find and discover the products that best match their needs and interests. One of the key strengths I rely on is strong product knowledge by first gaining accurate and detailed information about the products and continually keeping my knowledge up to date. When working at Millennium One Solutions as a Call Centre Representative, I demonstrated my enthusiasm and the ability to learn company service details quickly. My team also regarded me as a resource for company services and pricing questions. With that strong product knowledge, I was successful at upselling additional features by educating customers as to the benefits they would receive.

Other personal qualities that I possess include being a flexible team player who can organize their time effectively to meet assigned goals. In my present position at Loblaws, I hold a record of consistently maintaining the largest section of the store to the store's quality standards while also properly and attentively directing customer questions. I am also currently studying Business Administration at Algonquin College, where I have gained a sound understanding of project planning, professional communication, and marketing basics. These skills will be an asset to your team, where I can contribute to the collection and analysis of data to improve customer engagement, communicate with vendors or larger business clients, and deliver suitable customer solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss how I can make a positive contribution to your team. Please review my enclosed resume and contact me at 519-123-4567 or [travisbooth@email.com](mailto:travisbooth@email.com). I will follow up with you regarding my application in a week's time.

Sincerely,

**(add your signature)**

Travis Booth

Encl.



## References

Translation Bureau. (2015, October 15). [\*Gender-inclusive writing: Correspondence \(linguistic recommendation from the Translation Bureau\)\*](#). TERMINUM Plus. Public Works and Government Services Canada.

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20.

## COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

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### Use This Checklist to Refine Your Letter

Be consistent with your format and presentation.

- Write your cover letter in a business letter format.
- Use the same letterhead, font type and size as your resume.
- Stick to plain paper and avoid graphics.

Be concise.

- A three to four-paragraph, **one-page** cover letter is perfect.

Be aware of organization and flow.

- A disorganized and poorly written cover letter can be tiresome to read. Ensure that the content of your letter flows well and that you aren't bouncing back between ideas.
- Limit the amount of "I" sentences and run-on sentences; focus on using transition words like "additionally and furthermore" to make your writing flow more easily.

Follow the employer's instructions found in the job posting.

- Many job postings require you to quote a **job number** in your cover letter.
- The posting may also indicate the **preferred file format** to submit your document.
- Some companies are challenging the more conventional cover letter formats. Your job posting may have specific, unique content requirements for the cover letter.

## Proofread.

- Have a second set of eyes read through your cover letter for mistakes. One grammatical error may mean that your application will not be considered.

### Target your letter to the job posting!

If you build off of previously saved cover letters, ensure you have changed all the pertinent information (date, company, hiring manager, position, keywords).

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## 21.

## PURPOSE OF REFERENCES

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At the end of a job interview, if your interviewer(s) are interested in moving to the next step, they will typically request that you provide them with a list of references. This is a list of people who have supervised you, worked closely with you, or know you personally and can speak about you in a professional or personal capacity, or both. References allow employers to verify that the information on your resume is true and it gives them the opportunity to ask questions to determine whether or not you will be a good employee.

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22.

## REFERENCE TYPES AND EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE TO ASK

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You will need to identify three to five people who know you and can speak positively about you to a potential employer. Usually, employers expect three references; however, this may vary from company to company.

Types of references and examples of each type are listed below.

You must **ask permission** before you use someone as a reference.  
If they decline or do not respond to your request, do **NOT** use them as a reference.

Most employers prefer **professional** (employment) references, but current students, recent graduates and others with limited working experience may use **personal** (character) references.

- **Professional or employment references** can speak about your specific employment experience.
  - Examples:
    - current or past supervisors or managers
    - co-op employers
    - field placement, practicum, or internship supervisors
    - coworkers
    - people for whom you have performed paid or voluntary activities, including babysitting, lawn mowing, or other odd jobs

- **Character or personal references** can attest to your character and your abilities outside of work.
  - Examples:
    - teachers
    - professors
    - neighbours
    - community members
    - roommates or friends

Do **NOT** use family members as references.

If you haven't had much experience and therefore have limited references, consider volunteering in the community, at your place of worship, or at your school. If a job interview opportunity comes up before this, be honest; let them know you haven't had much professional experience and offer up some long-time personal contacts.

## Activity

Try this activity to review what you learned about references.



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=78#h5p-10>

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23.

# REFERENCES INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE

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## Create Your Page of References

1. Ask your references for their preferred contact method (email or phone) and include **only that method** on your reference list.
2. To create your references page, copy and paste the template below and replace the text with your own information.
  - **Use the same letterhead (with your contact information) as you used for your resume and cover letter.**
3. List your references in the order you want them to be contacted.

## References Template

**(At the top of the page, insert the same letterhead you used for your resume, including your name, contact info, and LinkedIn profile link.)**

### REFERENCES

#### **Reference 1's first and last name**

Title of this person's current job position

Name of the company where this person works

Relationship to You (how this person knows you)

Phone number (if the person prefers this contact method)

Email address (if the person prefers this contact method)

#### **Reference 2's first and last name**

Title of this person's current job position

Name of the company where this person works



Relationship to You (how this person knows you)

Phone number (if the person prefers this contact method)

Email address (if the person prefers this contact method)

**Reference 3's first and last name**

Title of this person's current job position

Name of the company where this person works

Relationship to You (how this person knows you)

Phone number (if the person prefers this contact method)

Email address (if the person prefers this contact method)

[Download References Template \[opens a Word document \(.docx\)\]](#)

## Using References

- Unless otherwise specified by the employer, **bring your references page to every interview and offer it to the interviewer at the end of the interview.**
- Contact your references beforehand to let them know they may be called on.
  - If someone agreed to be a reference for you in the past, confirm that you still have their permission and have their updated contact information.

**Do not list your references on your resume.**

- Thank your references.
  - Whether you are successful or not in getting the job, always take the time to thank your references. This will help you maintain a positive relationship with your references and may allow you to continue using them.

## Reference Letters

- Letters of reference may be acceptable in certain circumstances; however, most employers prefer references they can contact by phone or email.

- If your reference has moved or retired, and employers cannot contact them directly, you can provide written letters you have received in addition to your reference list.
- Reference letters are also a valuable addition to include in your professional portfolio.

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24.

## PURPOSES OF A CAREER PORTFOLIO

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A portfolio allows you to organize **artifacts** that showcase your skills and accomplishments in a visually appealing, professional, and creative way to make a strong impression in a job interview.

### **A portfolio reinforces your personal brand and sets you apart.**

- Your portfolio demonstrates evidence of your qualifications and showcases your accomplishments in an organized and interesting way that reflects your personal brand. Showing pieces of your portfolio to a hiring committee in an interview can set you apart from other candidates.
- **Using a portfolio item to help answer an interview question is far more impressive and memorable than just a verbal answer.** For example, if the interviewer asks you about your experience with MS Excel, you could show them a spreadsheet you created to manage your family budget.

### **A portfolio helps you to prepare for an interview.**

- Reviewing the documents you have included in your portfolio can be a good way to prepare for an interview. Reading over your portfolio and referencing your many accomplishments will help identify supportive examples when answering interview questions.
- **A portfolio builds confidence.** Seeing everything you've achieved will make you feel proud and more aware of your strengths. Your sense of accomplishment will translate into positivity and confidence when interacting in an interview and networking setting.

- **A portfolio keeps you organized.** Having all your documentation in one convenient place allows you to easily and promptly reference or provide employers with the information they seek before, during, or after your interview.

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## PORTFOLIO TYPES AND TIPS

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There are two main types of portfolios; both types offer different advantages, and both are beneficial in setting you apart from the rest of the crowd. The two major portfolio types include print and digital.

### Print Portfolio

In a print or hardcopy portfolio, materials are presented in physical form, typically in a binder or folder. Individual pieces can be referenced directly in an interview setting.

- Ensure your portfolio is neat, organized, accessible, and easy to navigate. Use a binder, section dividers, and page protectors.
- Use a folder or 3-ring binder to hold all your documents.
- Use labelled dividers to identify each section of the portfolio. Recommended sections are discussed in the next chapter.
- Sheet protectors will allow you to neatly store several copies of each document that can be given to the interviewers as required. You can also add or remove items easily when updating or targeting each job.
  - Prepare to leave copies of specific documents with the interviewer, if appropriate. Make several copies of each document in advance and have backups of your electronic files. Do not leave the originals with the interviewer.

### Digital Portfolio

In a digital portfolio, electronic copies of your documents are housed on an online platform, such as a website, blog, or USB flash drive. Including a link on your other job search documents will allow employers to research you further.

- Ensure a professional presentation. A visually appealing and well-organized web

layout will draw the reader's attention.

- Use text that is easy to read, separate your sections in a logical manner and use crisp and vivid imagery.
- Use clear and consistent formatting throughout your portfolio:
- Indicate appropriate headings
- Don't overuse bold, italics, and underline
- Use the same font type and size throughout
- Balance white space appropriately

## Online Portfolio Platforms

Research your options thoroughly when selecting an online platform to house your portfolio. Ideally, you want a platform that:

- will allow for changes to be uploaded quickly
- has a cloud-based backup and portability
- is user-friendly and easily navigated
- can handle multiple multimedia formats
- can be viewed on mobile devices

Several online services, some of which are free of charge, allow you to create your own customizable website or portfolio. Explore some of the following sites before getting started:

- **Free alternatives:** [Padlet](#), [Google Sites](#), Microsoft Sway, Microsoft One Note
- **Free website builders:** [Weebly](#), [Wix](#)
- **Digital portfolios:** [bulb](#), [mahara](#), [carbon made](#)
- **Blog:** [WordPress](#)

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## PORTFOLIO SECTIONS AND CONTENT

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For your portfolio to be impressive and useful, it must be well-organized and easy to navigate. Include the sections listed below and clearly identify each section.

When choosing items to include, **target your approach**. Focus on keeping your portfolio relevant to your career goals. Selectively choose items from your portfolio to strategically strengthen your points related to **keywords** from the job you're interviewing for.

### Title Page

Include a cover page with a title (for example, *Career Portfolio*), your name, and your contact information.

### Table of Contents

List all the sections of your portfolio and separate each section with dividers. This will allow you and the person viewing your portfolio to quickly and easily access the relevant information.

In your digital portfolio, hyperlink your table of contents.

### Profile

- **Career Goals, Professional Development Plan:** Include your career-focused **SMART** goals. Consider writing a short biography, a mission statement explaining who you are, or a professional philosophy about your vision of the future in this industry. **How about using your 30-second elevator speech here?**
- **Cover Letter and Resume:** Include copies of your most up-to-date documents.



## Education and Training

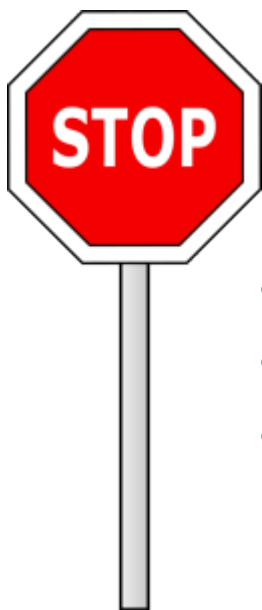
- Diplomas, Certificates, and Degrees
  - **If you have not yet completed your program of study, make a placeholder page that indicates the *program, credential and expected completion date*.**
- Transcripts
- Scholarships
- Professional Development Documents (certificates of completion)
- Licenses
- Memberships

## Skills

- **Work Samples:** Artifacts *you have created* that demonstrate a specific skill. Examples include:
  - team projects
  - presentations
  - written reports
  - webpages
  - blogs
  - volunteer and community service
  - images and graphics
- **Acknowledgments:** Artifacts that demonstrate certain skills through recognition *by another individual* or company. Examples include:
  - letters of recommendation from community service or volunteer experience
  - certificates acknowledging performance at work
  - thank you letters/notes or appreciation emails from clients or supervisors
  - reference letters from previous employers

- employer evaluations
- awards
- customer satisfaction surveys

**Add a caption to each item in your SKILLS section, clearly indicating the transferable skills it demonstrates.**



There are certain items or pieces of information that should not be included in digital/electronic portfolios that are available on public platforms.

**Do not include the following information:**

- your full address or student number on any item
- another person's name or contact information on any item
- assignments you have completed at Conestoga College or other educational institutions. Sharing such assessments on third-party sites is considered a breach of Conestoga College's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

## References

Include a copy of your references list.

**Keep your portfolio up-to-date.**

Regularly update your portfolio over the course of your education and career so you will be prepared to showcase your skills whenever the next opportunity presents itself.

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## Media Attribution

[Stop Sign](#) by davidblyons is available in the [public domain on Open Clipart](#).

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# USING A PORTFOLIO

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## Before the Interview

### Prepare to Use Your Portfolio

- Review the job description and common interview questions.
  - Consider which items in your portfolio demonstrate some of the skills the job requires.
  - For hardcopy portfolios, make extra copies of these items so that you can leave them with the interviewer.
- Indicate that you have a professional portfolio on your resume or cover letter, and provide a link if your portfolio is accessible online.
- If you have a digital portfolio, bring your laptop to the interview and ask if you can use the Wi-Fi during your interview.
- Practise answering interview questions using your portfolio. Remember that **showing a quality portfolio item says a lot more than a verbal answer.**

## During the Interview

### Use Your Portfolio in One of the Following Ways

- Option 1: To answer an interview question better **during the interview.**
  - *For example, the interviewer asks: “**What do you see as your strengths?**”*
  - *You answer: “**One of my strengths is using MS Office to create presentations and documents. I have an example in my portfolio. May I show it to you?**”*
- Option 2: At the **end of the interview.**
  - If the interviewer asks, “**Is there anything else you want to share with us?**”

You can show an item you feel incredibly proud of from your portfolio.

- Option 3: At the **end of the interview**.
  - If your portfolio items did not seem suitable to answer any of the interviewer's questions, you can say: "**Can I share an item from my portfolio with you?**"

## Tips and Advice

- Keep the focus on you, not on the portfolio. Your portfolio items should be part of your verbal answer and should not replace answering a question verbally.
- **Ask the interviewer's permission** before showing items from your portfolio.
- Use your portfolio strategically; **you do not need to reference it for every question**.
- If appropriate, provide copies of individual items to the interviewer(s), and **avoid giving over your whole portfolio**.

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## UNIT IV

# UNIT 4: NETWORKING

### Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will:

- Learn how and where to look for a job.
- Understand the value of using multiple methods of job searching.
- Create and utilize an effective networking strategy.
- Use online profiles to expand your network and increase your job search success.
- Identify ways of gaining practical experience.
- Recognize how to manage your job search and reduce your stress.

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## THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

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Many people find jobs through the **hidden job market**. How can you tap into this extensive resource?

According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2022), many employers do not advertise job positions publicly. Instead, they rely on referrals from people they trust, they hire people they know who fit the role, or they promote a current employee. This saves the employer from wasting valuable time interviewing and hiring people who may not be the right fit for the job or the company.

Read [“Navigating the Hidden Job Market \(With Definition and Tips\)”](#) on the Indeed Career Guide website to learn more about how the hidden job market can work for you!

### References

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022, June 21). [Looking for jobs in Canada](#). Canada.ca

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# SEARCHING FOR JOBS ONLINE

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## Online Job Search Safety

Before you begin your search, review this safety information carefully to protect yourself from financial loss, identity theft, wasted time, and energy.

### Learn to Recognize Employment Scams

Be an informed and proactive job seeker. Research and assess every job posting, company, and employment agency you apply to. Contact them directly if necessary. If you have doubts about the job posting, company, or any interactions with an employer, proceed cautiously!

- Do not accept a job offer without being interviewed in person, over the phone, or via video call.
- A legitimate employer typically requests personal information only after an interview has been completed, references have been verified, and an offer of employment has been made and signed. Personal information includes SIN number, date of birth, driver's license or health card, and banking information.
- Do not use your own money to pay suppliers or transfer funds.
- Never accept payment before starting a job or for services that have not been completed.
- Sounds too good to be true? Seek advice from a trusted source, such as a parent, a professor, or MyCareer at Conestoga College.

Read ["BBB Study: Looking for a job? Be careful! Job scams increased post-pandemic"](#)



on the Better Business Bureau website to learn more about how to protect yourself from job scams.

## What to Do if You Suspect a Job Scam

- End all communication with the employer, and if personal information was disclosed, change all your passwords and monitor your accounts to be safe.
- If you have sent money to a fraudulent employer, contact your bank or credit card company immediately for further instructions.
- Gather all records of the fraud and contact the police to report it: [Waterloo Regional Police Service: Fraud and Identity Theft](#) and/or [RCMP – Reporting Scams and Frauds](#).

To learn more, take a look at the following sites:

- [Consumer Protection Ontario](#)
- [The Little Black Book of Scams](#)

## Online Job Search Websites

### Employer Websites

Make a list of target employers and visit their websites often. Employers often receive so many resumes that they don't always need to post their positions on a job board to attract interest. Therefore, by creating a list of employers you may be interested in working for and frequently visiting their "Careers" section, you will ensure that you see any available positions. If their websites have a resume bank, upload your resume. There are several different resources to help you develop a list:

- Business directories, such as the [Yellow Pages](#)
- [LinkedIn Company Directory](#)
- [Conestoga Library's Company Research Guide](#)
- Professional associations

Don't forget to check hospital websites, educational institutions like Conestoga, government websites, and insurance company websites.

List your top organizations and keep track of their information. Use a spreadsheet or a table with the following headings to record your notes:

- Organization
- Contact Name
- Date Contacted
- Where did I hear about the company
- Notes/Follow Up

## Online Job Boards and Search Engines

Although online postings are among the most highly populated job search methods job seekers use, they only account for a portion of available jobs. Once you have entered a site, you would typically use a search engine to find advertised jobs by inputting a keyword and location. Most of these online sites allow you to post your resume directly with the idea that an employer or recruiter may match you to a position and contact you directly. Review the following recommendations to improve your response rate:

- While setting up and receiving targeted email alerts may be helpful, ensure that if you've posted your resume, you are updating your information regularly, as many recruiters are looking at resumes according to how recently they were posted.
- Jobs are often listed by various titles; remember to change your search criteria

frequently to maximize your search results. For example, a health office administration position may go by other titles such as **Medical Secretary, Medical Office Administrator, Medical Receptionist, and many more.**

- Lastly, don't wait until the closing date to apply. If looking to fill an opening immediately, employers may start reviewing applications before the position closes.
- Here is a list of common [job-posting websites](#). (Because hyperlinks may change over time, you can Google "*Job Search Ontario*" to find your own list of sites.)

**When using and creating profiles on multiple sites, it can be overwhelming to remember all the information.**

Record your profile information in a safe space on your computer in a spreadsheet or other document with the following headings:

- Website
- User name
- Password
- Security questions
- Answers
- Comments

[Download Tracking Logs \[opens an Excel file \(.xlsx\)\]](#)

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## PREPARING TO NETWORK: NETWORKING TOOLS

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Want to turn a random encounter in the coffee shop lineup into a fortuitous networking opportunity? Create a personalized business card and a 30-second “elevator” speech.

### Networking Cards

Giving someone your networking card is a great way to leave a lasting impression (and contact information!!) at chance meetings, job fairs, networking events, conferences, educational opportunities, and coffee-shop lineups.

- You can make free business cards using MS Word, [Canva](#), or other websites.
- Be creative, select colours and styles that match your personality and your industry, and add a logo or design to emphasize your brand.
- Print your cards on cardstock using a colour printer, if possible.
- Printshops also have software that allows you to design and print business cards for a cost.

### What to Include on a Networking Card

- Your **NAME** in *a large, bold font*
- Your **PHONE NUMBER**
- Your **EMAIL ADDRESS**
- Your title, diploma, or expected graduation date

- A few of your strongest skills (be sure that they are relevant to the type of job you seek)
- A link to your LinkedIn profile, digital portfolio, or another personal website (optional)



## The 30-second Elevator Pitch

[See image description.](#)

Suppose you were riding in an elevator with someone you were interested in working for. Could you effectively convince the employer of what you can contribute in a way that will make them want to hire you or learn more about you, all in a 30-second timeframe?

Your elevator pitch can be used in many situations, including job interviews (if asked the question: *Tell me about yourself*), cold-contacting, career fairs, employer information sessions, online and in-person networking, and even running into someone at the grocery store! This is a very strategic way to impress your connections, and it shows that you're prepared by articulating who you are, explaining what you can offer and describing your goals.

To prepare your pitch, ask yourself the following questions:

- **What do you do?**
  - Introduce yourself by first and last name.
  - Provide a brief overview of your present situation, i.e. what program you are taking and what level you are in, or what your current position is.
- **What are your greatest strengths and qualifications?**
  - Explain accomplishments from your experiences and what skills you bring to the table. Use examples from your academic, employment, placement, and volunteer experiences.
- **What are you looking for or looking to do?**
  - Make a connection between your skills and what you can offer the company.
  - State your relevant career aspirations or goals.
- **What are your next steps?**

- Mention your desire to connect with this person, whether it be to email your resume, set up an information interview, or add them as a contact on LinkedIn.

## Elevator Pitch Examples

### Example 1:

As a Conestoga College student working towards my certificate in Medical Office Practices, I have in-depth knowledge of medical terminology and electronic medical records (EMR). In my current/previous position as Crew Member at McDonald's, I developed skills such as teamwork and multitasking. I pride myself on being compassionate and flexible and look forward to contributing to a health office position using my Office 365 and verbal communication skills.

### Example 2:

Hi my name is Ada Mohamed. I recently graduated from the Business Accounting program at Conestoga College. I have a wealth of international field experience from my home country. Recently, I was reading that your company has businesses all around the world and you are considered a global leader in accounting and payroll solutions. I would be interested in speaking with you further about some of my ideas, as I feel that my diverse perspectives on effective international business practices would be an added benefit to my next employer. I have some questions about your organization, would you have time to schedule a brief meeting to discuss this further?

### Example 3:

Hi, my name is Kristy Goodwin. I am in my graduating semester at Algonquin College in the Early Childhood Education program, and I am so excited about a career where I can support children in such an integral time in their development. Recently, I completed my third field placement at the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, and my supervisor was impressed with my ability to naturally incorporate play-based learning into my interactions with the children. Seeing as I am committed to fostering curiosity through exploration, I look forward to expanding on these ideas in the next company I work for. I really enjoyed speaking with you today; can I send you an invitation to connect on LinkedIn?

**Practising your elevator pitch frequently will make you feel more comfortable in an unfamiliar or unplanned situation and, ultimately, more confident about your skills.**

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Sample networking card. © Ellen Dilgert, [CC BY-NC-SA](#).

## Image Description

### Sample Networking Card

A text-based diagram illustrating the typical design of a networking card, with the following text on a light blue rectangular background:

Jeffery Singh

Health Office Administration Diploma April 2021

- Verbal communication
- MS Office & EMR
- Teamwork

Jeffery.singh@internet.ca



Kitchener, ON  
(519) 123-4567

[\[back\]](#)

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## NETWORKING METHODS

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Now that you have prepared your networking tools, the following chapters identify different methods to use your 30-second elevator pitch and business cards. The methods you will learn about include:

1. Personal and Professional Contacts
2. Social Media
3. Career Fairs and Events
4. Gain Practical Work Experience
5. Conduct Informational Interviews
6. Cold Contacting
7. Recruitment Agencies

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## NETWORKING METHOD 1: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS

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There is no better place to start building your professional network than with the people who already know you.

Create a list of network contacts, including family, friends, neighbours, classmates, professors, current and previous coworkers and managers, and people you have met through various extracurricular, social, religious, and business activities. Talk to the people in your network on a regular basis, inform them that you are looking for work, and let them know what kind of work you are looking for.

### **Here are some ways that you can utilize your existing networks:**

- Ask your network contacts for information or referrals to companies, industries, and job leads.
- Request an introduction from your network contacts. Ask if they can call or email people within their networks to introduce you.
- Research your network contacts' connections and inquire about people who interest you.
- Always inform your contacts of how they have helped you, and thank them often for their efforts.
- Help your network, too. Share any contacts, advice, or job leads that would be of interest to them.

Originally adapted from [Method 1: Personal & Professional Networks](#) in [Be the Boss of](#)

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## NETWORKING METHOD 2: SOCIAL MEDIA

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What is your social media telling (*and showing!*) people about you? Do they see a skilled, professional job seeker who would be an asset to their organization?

### Using Your Social Media to Build Your Career

LinkedIn, Instagram/Facebook, and Twitter are among the most common social media sites. With these and all the other social media options, managing your web presence and **maintaining a professional digital footprint** can directly impact your chances of finding employment.

Ensure that your information is up-to-date and that the images and content you publicize across your social media platforms reflect you positively and professionally. Spend time virtually **cleaning up** your accounts *before* you start your job search!

**Googling an applicant can be a very quick and easy method to prescreen and learn about that person's professionalism or lack thereof.**

There are many ways to take advantage of social media and use it as an effective career-building tool. For example:

- Connect with people you don't know and build mutually beneficial career-based relationships.
- Search for jobs that are being advertised and apply directly through the platforms.
- Research companies and people of interest.
- Reach out to your networks, exchange information, and maintain regular contact.
- Post status updates or send messages that indicate you are looking for work or

information.

- Create and post content, and participate in discussions or follow companies and groups.

## LinkedIn

[LinkedIn](#) is a social networking website with the **largest** online professional network in the world, with the fastest-growing demographic being students and recent graduates. LinkedIn provides you with the resources to access various professional networks, key decision-makers, recruiters, and learning opportunities to help you search for meaningful work. Just having a LinkedIn account will not guarantee you a job, however, many recruiters have successfully hired using a social network and, the largest percentage hired using LinkedIn. As this tool continues to evolve, creating a captivating profile is essential to effectively self-market, generate connections, identify leads, grow your brand, and make a professional online impression.

**Many employers use LinkedIn to prescreen and research applicants.**

See [How to Create and Set Up LinkedIn Profile: A Complete Beginner's Guide for 2025](#) on the Jobright website for detailed steps on setting up your LinkedIn profile.

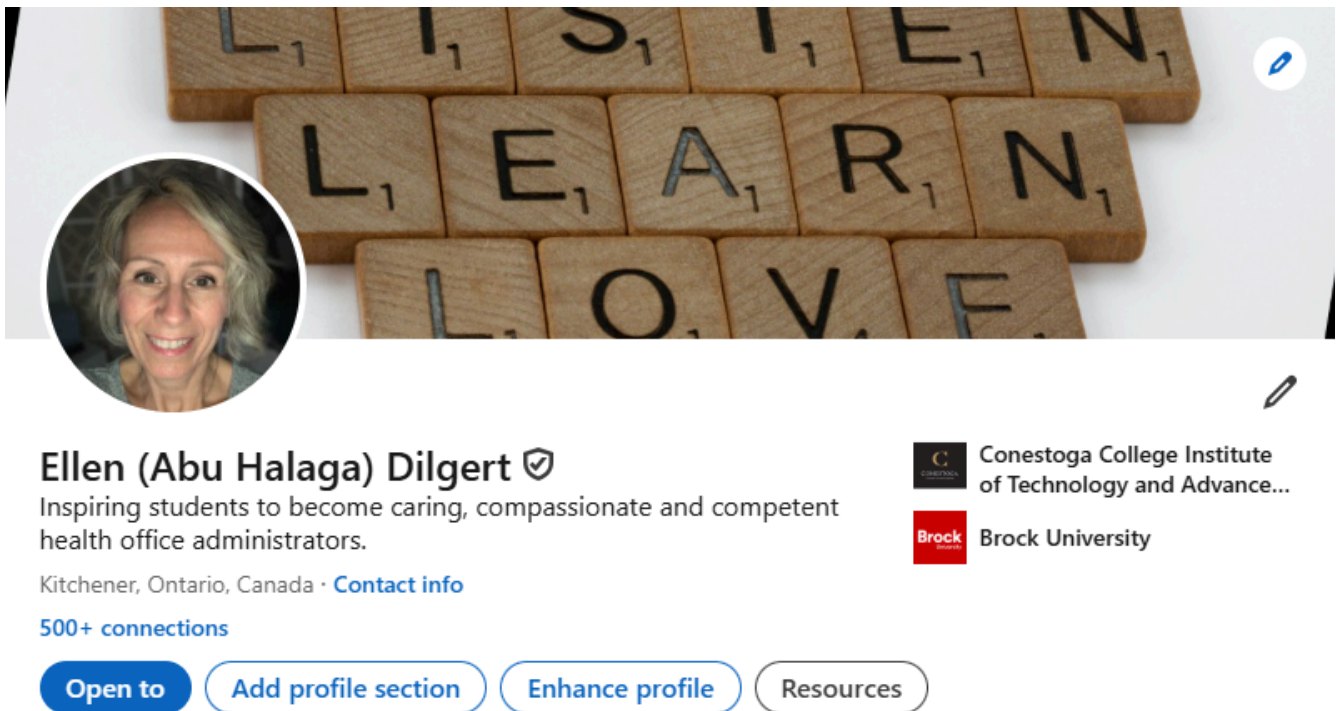
## LinkedIn Profile Essentials

Ensure you have completed all the suggested sections to generate an [All-Star rating](#), increasing your visibility and encouraging other professionals to connect with you. If you want to be 40x more likely to be viewed, pay attention to your *Profile Completion Meter*.

Use the following tips to create an effective profile that will help you stand out:

### Headline

Grab the reader's attention by writing a targeted headline describing who you are and what you are looking for. Try to be rich with keywords when possible and clear, intentional, and succinct to fit within the 120-character limit.



## Photo

Take a professional-looking headshot, following these guidelines:

- Include only your head and shoulders.
- Ensure that the quality of the image is clear, that you are in a well-lit space, and the background is not distracting.
- Look directly at the camera and smile.
- Avoid wearing accessories like hats or sunglasses.
- Dress appropriately for your career goal.

## About

Ask yourself what you want your target audience to know about you. A well-crafted “About” summary allows you to highlight your skills, experience, and future career aspirations while characterizing elements of your personality in the tone you are writing in. When writing your summary, consider:

- Write in the first person. Use “I,” “me,” “my,” and “mine.” Consider adapting your

30-second elevator pitch and using it here.

- Incorporating industry keywords to be more visible in recruiter searches.
- Including information on your background, what you can offer, your professional goals, and a call to action.

## Experience

Use scope statements from your resume to showcase the transferable skills developed at your jobs. In addition, emphasize the skills you gained in your day-to-day tasks and include details of your various accomplishments from your paid or unpaid part-time, full-time, or summer work experience. Listing in bullet points is the preferred format.

## Education

List all of your *post-secondary* education and relevant coursework. Typically, after completing post-secondary, you would not need to list your high school education here. Include relevant courses and notable accomplishments such as a high GPA.

## Skills

List as many skills as you have learned throughout your academic, volunteer, and work experiences to paint a picture of what you can offer a recruiter or an employer. As you develop more skills, update your profile to reflect this. Identify both soft skills that are transferable from one field to another and hard skills that you learned during formal training or on the job and ensure that they relate to your job goal.

- **Ask people for endorsements and recommendations and endorse and recommend others.**

There is no better way to build your credibility than to have your connections attest to what you can do. Ask your connections for endorsements and recommendations, and **always offer to do the same for them**. Having others authenticate your skills and qualifications makes you a more credible professional in your network. When requesting a recommendation, you should be polite, personalize your invitation, and provide ideas for what you want them to write about. Always send a thank you note afterward to show your appreciation.



## Connections

Build your connections through common interests and community. Don't wait until you graduate to build up your connections; spend time increasing your contacts now. You can connect with friends, classmates, professors, or people you've volunteered and worked with. Be proactive in your approach, and you can start by syncing your email contacts to create a list of suggested connections. Only send invitations to those you are comfortable connecting with; avoid randomly adding people you don't know. Keep up-to-date with your contacts and help each other through recommendations and information about relevant opportunities.

- **Customize your LinkedIn invitations and connect promptly.**

Always send a personalized message when you're interested in connecting with someone. If you've met them before, place yourself by reminding them of when and where you've met. If you haven't met before, let them know why you would like to connect (i.e. *I see that you are a graduate from the same program, and I was wondering what advice you might have for a new graduate looking for work in the field?*). After meeting someone, don't wait too long before sending an invitation; your timeliness will ensure that they remember you and show your interest.

## Optional Profile Sections

### Accomplishments

Add additional sections to showcase some other accomplishments that might set you apart from your competition.

- Including information on additional certifications or awards received can be impressive.
- Highlight your project work. Describe the practical experience you gained so readers can see how this translates into on-the-job skills. You can provide a relevant URL to the project and connect your team members who are also LinkedIn members.

## Additional Tips to Make Your Profile Stand Out

- **Personalize your URL.** When you start your LinkedIn account, you are given a public URL by default. With the increase in LinkedIn's popularity, you may want to use your

URL to promote yourself in the signature of your email address, on your resume, and your business networking cards. Personalizing your URL makes it shorter and more memorable and ultimately enhances your personal brand.

- **Be reachable.** Include other ways you'd like to be contacted, such as an email address or phone number. You can sync your account if you are active on other social media platforms like Twitter. If you have your own website, also indicate this in the Contact and Personal Info section.
- **Know when to go public.** You want to show your readers as much as possible to entice them to view your profile and make a connection. Ensure you have adjusted your settings to show your readers the most important information. If you're revamping your profile and want to launch when it's complete, consider going into private mode until you've made the changes.
- **Include multimedia.** Add photos, videos, or slideshow presentations to make your profile more visually appealing. This allows a reader to see examples of your work, similar to an online portfolio.

Read [Rob Humphrey's post "3 Awesome LinkedIn student profiles" on LinkedIn](#) for more advice on making your profile stand out.

## Using LinkedIn to Develop Your Career

- **Search for jobs.** Look through **LinkedIn's job bank** and search for jobs of interest; some employers post exclusively on LinkedIn. Note any existing connections that you have that work at the company you are applying to. Pay particular attention if you are connected to a hiring manager. For instance, are they a 1st or 2nd-degree connection? If so, contact them to show interest in the role and learn more about the job and company. Use the knowledge gained from your connections to tailor your job application and make yourself stand out. Under the Jobs tab, don't forget to set your career interests and let recruiters know you're open so recommendations will be more tailored to your goal.
- **Find alumni.** Narrow your search by date and program and explore where other graduates work and what jobs they are in. This can be a good way to identify

companies that have hired previous graduates from your program. Reach out to alumni to connect and ask them to provide you with advice on how they were successful in finding work in their field.

- **Conduct a people search.** Use LinkedIn to find professionals and track their career paths before they started working at the company that you're interested in. This information might give you a better idea of what kind of experience or skills the company wants in a new hire.
- **Follow companies.** Search for and follow companies of interest to learn more about a company and its employees. Company Pages give you an excellent overview of an organization, list job openings, and indicate products and services. For instance, the "Careers" tab lets you see job postings and testimonials from current employees. This is a great way to get an "insider's perspective" on a particular company. By following a company, updates about new jobs, products, or events will appear in your news feed on your LinkedIn home page. Use the company pages to help prepare you for your next interview.
- **Stay active.** It's not just about who you know; it's about who knows you. Stay on your network's radar by **updating your LinkedIn status often**; you can talk about what you're reading, working on, and more. Additionally, you can create original content and publish articles on LinkedIn Publisher, you can actively post status updates that are relevant to your target market, and engage in conversations with your network about all kinds of different topics. React to other people's posts, share, and like regularly.
- **Don't be a passive participant.** LinkedIn is meant to be a conversational platform where information and advice can be shared freely. When you create a post or share an article, engage with your network by posing open-ended questions that they can respond to in the comments section. Continue the conversation by replying to as many messages as possible. People want to get to know you, and when you engage with them, your visibility will increase and result in more followers. Similarly, spend time reacting and responding to other people's content and thank them for sharing.
- **Join Groups.** The obvious benefits of joining groups include sharing knowledge and learning from other professionals with similar interest areas or expertise. A useful "Groups" feature is that group members can message each other for free without being connected (except in certain privacy settings). In building rapport with group members by participating in collaborative discussions, you can invite them to connect on LinkedIn and continually grow your network.

- **Stay connected with the apps.** Most of LinkedIn's website traffic comes from their mobile apps. In addition to the LinkedIn Mobile app, they include other apps that help you target your approach. Here are some that may be helpful:
  - Job Search – Search and apply for jobs
  - Lookup – Find, learn about, and contact coworkers
  - Learning – Personalized recommendations and courses taught by industry experts
  - SlideShare – A selection of presentations, infographics, and videos about any topic
  - Groups – Access to groups of likeminded individuals
  - Pulse – Top industry news

## Additional LinkedIn Resources

- [Help Centre](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Student Jobs](#)

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## NETWORKING METHOD 3: CAREER FAIRS & EVENTS

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Attending career fairs, employer information sessions, and networking events is an effective way to connect with employers and other professionals.

### Career Fairs

A **career fair** is an event where many employers gather at the same venue to promote their organizations and recruit candidates. To get the most out of a career fair, follow these tips:

#### Before Attending a Career Fair

- Decide which employers you want to speak with and research these companies.
- Bring copies of your resume, general cover letter, and networking/business card.
- Practice your elevator speech/30-second interview.
- Have engaging, open-ended questions prepared.

#### At the Career Fair

- Present yourself professionally, as though you were attending a job interview.
- Get contact information from the employers that you are interested in.

## After the Career Fair

- Follow up with the employers you connected with.

## Employer Information Sessions

An **employer information session** is when one employer delivers a presentation about their organization to a group of interested candidates; this is often followed by a question and answer period, a networking session, or a brief interview. Make the most of these events by following these tips:

### Before Attending the Information Session

- Research the company.
- Bring copies of your resume, general cover letter, and networking/business card.
- Practice your elevator speech/30-second interview.
- Have engaging, open-ended questions prepared.

### At the Information Session

- Present yourself professionally, as though you were attending a job interview.
- Find out how to apply to the company.

### After the Information Session

- Follow the instructions provided in the session to apply to the company.

## Networking Events

A **networking event**, which can be general or industry-specific, offers a platform for making new connections and the opportunity to speak with other industry professionals in a more formal setting. In a world that has turned mostly online, getting out and meeting people face-to-face, where the expectations are already set out for you, offers great value in your job search.

Employers are prepared to speak with you directly about your experience and skills; it becomes the perfect opportunity to network and set yourself apart from your competition. As you will be one of many attendees, the pace may be very quick, so understand that you won't have much time with each employer.

Prepare for these events as you would prepare for a career fair.

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## NETWORKING METHOD 4: GAIN PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE

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Practical work or volunteer experiences provide several important career-building benefits.

- They build your resume and your professional reputation
- They help you refine your career goals
- They provide opportunities to obtain valuable industry advice
- They expand your professional references
- **They provide you with a solid network of contacts**

### How to Gain Practical Work Experience

#### Part-time and Summer Employment

Employers look past the knowledge and skills you've gained in school and are interested in seeing that you have obtained real-world experience. Securing a summer or part-time job while completing your studies will demonstrate to the employer that you have developed the employment readiness skills they seek. Gaining experience in different interest areas will also help to solidify your career goals and expand your connections.

#### Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is an opportunity to observe working professionals in their environment throughout their typical work day or week. This allows you to process information about



an occupation and clarify your job goal. You can see how your learned skills translate into a particular work environment and job. Contact people in your network or companies of interest to inquire about job shadowing opportunities.

## Volunteering

Volunteering your time allows you to directly impact your community, meet new people, learn new valuable skills, advance your career, and increase your confidence. Additionally, volunteering introduces you to different environments and roles within an organization that will help you identify your interests within the field. You have the chance to cultivate valuable leadership opportunities through rewarding experiences. If you are interested in volunteering, contact people in your network or companies of interest, search company websites, or connect with community volunteer organizations.

## Mentorship

A good way to gain quality advice and industry know-how is by finding yourself a mentor. A mentor willingly shares their skills, knowledge, expertise, advice, and professional contacts with you throughout your career journey. A mentor can assist you in setting realistic career goals and making smart career decisions. Their wisdom can be beneficial, from finding a job after graduation to moving up the company ladder. Look within your current network for a mentor, such as a professor, work or volunteer supervisor, or a family friend.

## Experiential Learning

Depending on your program, experiential learning can be an optional or mandatory part of your course curriculum and a prime opportunity to gain relevant experience. Experiential learning supports students in gaining practical, hands-on learning opportunities that help them transition more fluidly to employment once they graduate. Typically, you are placed in a structured, simulated workplace environment and exposed to the real-life demands of the job. You apply concepts you've learned in your program and gain employability and interpersonal skills required to succeed in the workforce.

Here are some examples of common experiential learning opportunities (Click on each type to read more about it):

### **Apprenticeships**

You are sponsored by an employer to complete on-the-job and in-classroom training in the skilled trades.

**Example:** Students are sponsored by an employer as part of the cabinetmaker trade program.

### **Clinical placements**

You receive hands-on training and supervision in a clinical setting.

**Example:** Nursing students receive practical training at local health centres.

### **Co-ops**

You complete alternating periods of academic study and work experience in business, industry, or government fields.

**Example:** Computer engineering students complete four-month paid work terms with technology companies.

### **Field placements**

You receive hands-on training and supervision in a field-related organization.

**Example:** Social Service Worker students are offered field placements in social services or victim services agencies.

### **Applied research projects**

You participate in a research project where you apply the latest knowledge and technology to create useful products, services, and processes.

**Example:** Students are approached by a fitness company to create a virtual personal training app to track workouts.

## Practicums

You integrate theory and practice and receive supervision in a work setting.

**Example:** Early Childhood Education students complete practice teaching courses to gain in-class experience in a public school.

## Workplace simulations

You practice knowledge and skills in a simulated workplace environment.

**Example:** Students in the Dental Hygiene program practise on life-like patient models in a simulated clinic.

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## NETWORKING METHOD 5: CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

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Informational interviewing involves speaking to people who work in the field you want to learn more about.

To be clear, you are **NOT** interviewing for a job; you are interviewing an employer to gather more insight about the field you are interested in.

Informational interviews will allow you to make more informed career choices, gather the information necessary to write more effective cover letters and resumes and be better prepared for future job interviews. Many people in the workforce are open to sharing information about their careers – especially if it can help someone else map their career path. If you leave a good impression, your name may later be passed along to someone else who is in a position to interview you; however, don't go in expecting this to happen.

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Informational interviews can also be a great way to make valuable industry contacts.

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You must be prepared and act professionally to leave the best impression possible. Here are some steps to consider before, during, and after your informational interview:

## Before the Interview

- Update your resume and general cover letter so they are ready if you are asked to provide them.
- Research different companies or individuals and identify who you would like to interview.
  - Call or email them explaining why you are interested in setting up the interview and what you hope to gain from it.
    - Begin with a professional salutation.
    - Briefly introduce yourself, your program or credentials, career interests, and goals.
    - **Be clear about what you're requesting, such as more information about a job or profession.**
    - Inform them you are available to meet them in person, by video chat, or by phone and tell them how much time you'll need, for example, 15 to 20 minutes.
    - Ask them to recommend other people or sources of information if they can't speak with you directly.
  - If they agree to the interview, confirm the time, place, and name of the person you will be meeting.
    - Conduct background research on the person you're interviewing, the organization they work for, and their work. Request an informational interview and explain how you obtained their information.
    - Prepare a list of questions you would like to ask about the company. **Click here to see a list of possible questions to ask in an informational interview**
      - What suggestions do you have for someone trying to get a job in this field?
      - What are the personal qualities of people who are successful in this field?
      - What are the core skills you look for on a resume?

- What education and training are needed? What kinds of backgrounds do people in this organization have?
  - How would you describe a typical week in terms of percentages spent on different duties?
  - What do you enjoy most about this position or organization?
  - What are some tasks or projects that you are currently working on?
  - What skills can I focus on to help me prepare or excel for work in this field/industry/job?
  - What would entry-level work involve in this field?
  - How does one advance in this field? What does the typical career path look like?
  - What advice would you give someone with my educational/professional background?
  - What is the work culture like in your organization/industry?
  - Are there any resources, such as websites, industry associations, or organizations, that I should use?
  - What is the most effective way to stay connected to current events and industry news?
  - What kinds of experience, paid or volunteer, would you recommend for someone pursuing a career in this field?
  - Can you suggest any other ways to obtain relevant experience?
  - Given my background, is there anyone else or any other organizations that you would recommend that I talk to?
- Questions can include information on qualifications, job duties, organizational structure, industry trends, work culture, and other advice. **Since your meeting is intended to be brief, select around five questions in advance that reflect the information you are most interested in gaining.** Keep track of the time in your meeting and use your discretion on how many questions you ask.

## During the Interview

- Similar to an actual interview, arrive early and dress in professional attire.
- **Be clear that you only want information;** you can discuss your skills and experience, but do not fish for opportunities; let the employer initiate any conversations regarding available opportunities.
- Manage your time and respect their time; only take as much time as you've scheduled.

## After the Interview

- Send a thank you letter right away (see Unit 5 for a sample).
- Reflect on what worked well and what you will change for next time.
- Connect on LinkedIn, reach out to your contact, and let them know how they assisted you.

## Informational Interview Request Examples

### Example 1

Dear Ms. Grayson,

Hello, my name is Gary Patterson and I am conducting informal interviews with employers in my field to gain information on the industry. We met briefly at the Career Networking Fair, hosted by Conestoga College, and you provided me with your business card.

I recently graduated from the Office Administration program at Conestoga College and I feel that your organization would be a good fit with my career interests.

I was wondering if there would be a convenient time to meet with you for 15-20 minutes, either in person or over the phone, to discuss a few questions I have.

Thank you for your time, I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,  
Gary Patterson

## Example 2

Dear Mr. Rodriguez,

My Name is Chen Lee, a mutual acquaintance of ours, Phyllis Parker, has recommended that I call you to speak with you about your position as a Developmental Service Worker with Partners in Parenting.

I am currently studying to become a Developmental Service Worker at Conestoga College. Recently, I have been researching your organization, as I am very interested in working with at-risk youth in the foster care system, but there is only so much you can learn without talking to someone who is actually doing the job.

I'd really appreciate it if you could answer some questions I have about what it is really like to do this job on a day-to-day basis. Would you have 15-20 minutes to speak over the phone or meet in person?

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
Chen Lee

## What to Say When an Informational Interview Is Declined

"Thank you for taking my call. I realize I've caught you at a bad time. Would there be a more convenient time when I could call back?" or "Would there be anyone else I could speak with?"

If they give you the name of someone else, you can ask "Would you mind if I tell them that you suggested I call?"

If there are no other leads, reiterate your thanks again.

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## NETWORKING METHOD 6: COLD CONTACTING

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Career networking via cold contacting means getting in touch with someone you have not previously met to find out information.

Cold contacts can be made in person by stopping by and asking to speak with the Hiring Manager. Cold contacts can also be made both over the phone and by email to inquire about potential job opportunities. This method can increase your effectiveness greatly, as calling 30 companies to find out if they are hiring is much more efficient than visiting them. Cold contacting is more useful in some industries than others; the art of cold calling can be particularly intimidating and is often accompanied by a fear of rejection. To account for this, have an idea of what you would ask about and what you can offer. Don't be discouraged if your efforts only result in a few positive responses; that's likely all you need to secure an interview. You can prepare for cold contacting by:

- Introducing yourself.
- Asking about any potential job opportunities.
- Providing information on what you can offer, your background, and your experience.
- Proposing a possible meeting.

## Example Cold Calling Script

### Introduce Yourself

"Hi there, my name is Amina Burleson. Could I speak to the Manager or the Shift Supervisor?"

### If Your Conversation Continues

"I noticed that your restaurant recently opened up in my neighbourhood and I am wondering if you are hiring any servers at this time. I have over two years of experience in customer service environments and previous experience serving. Is there a time that I could meet with you to discuss this opportunity or drop off my resume and introduce myself in person?"

### If the Company Is Not Hiring

- "Thank you very much for your time."
- "Are there specific times of the year where you hire more?"
- "Would you mind if I called back in a few weeks to see if there are more opportunities available?"
- "Is there anything you can advise me to do to increase my chances of securing work with your company?"

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## NETWORKING METHOD 7: RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

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A recruitment agency connects job seekers with employers who are looking for suitable candidates to fill their positions.

Companies that want to reduce the time and resources spent on finding suitable candidates to hire may use recruitment agencies to help fill positions.

There are many different agencies that you can use; some may be specific to a certain type of work (i.e. engineering, legal, administration, and labour). A common practice for many agencies involves meeting you one-on-one, conducting a brief interview to set up a profile, and then informing you if and when an opportunity matches your profile.

Some agencies will suggest that you apply to their openings online. They are bombarded with new clients every day, so it is essential to make sure to gain a contact name within the agency and follow up frequently when you see positions that match your skill set.

During your job search, do not rely on recruitment agencies alone; consider them as one of the networking tools you can use.

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## PERSEVERANCE IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

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The job search process can feel like you are riding an emotional rollercoaster.

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While there may be times when you receive a positive response and feel excited, it is more common and normal that you will experience frustration, anxiety, or general disappointment.

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These feelings can result from a lack of responses, failing to meet your expectations for yourself or the expectations that you feel others had for you, or the weight of being continually rejected.

When you experience negative feelings associated with your job search, you become less productive, and negativity can seep into your interactions with employers. Fortunately, you can use some useful strategies to maintain your motivation and better manage your stress throughout your search.

### Motivation Strategies

#### Set Short-Term Goals

It can be difficult to maintain momentum in your job search. To ensure that you stay motivated, consider setting daily and weekly goals. Set goals for different job searching efforts, for example, “I will aim to submit two online job applications per day” or “I will make two to four new connections on LinkedIn each week.” Setting and meeting daily goals will help you believe that you can find a job, and breaking down tasks will help you feel less overwhelmed.

## Schedule Regular Job Search Time

Additionally, it can also be helpful to create a job search routine by scheduling specific times during your day or week that are dedicated specifically to searching for work. You should focus on the hours of the day when you have the most energy and the least distractions. While you do want to commit yourself to a reasonable block of time, avoid staring at the computer for too long or you may notice your productivity declining.

## Stay Organized

Document your job search efforts as you go. Write down the jobs you've applied to, and the dates on which you applied, and save a print or electronic copy of the job postings in case you need to refer to them in the future. Similarly, when attending job fairs or networking events, gather the names and contact information of those you spoke with. It is often helpful to use a spreadsheet to track the details of all of the information so that you can follow up. Not only is it good as a point of reference, but it creates a level of accountability. By tracking your efforts, you will notice that you've done a lot of work, making you feel proud and fueling your motivation. On the other hand, it might also give you an indication that you haven't been doing as much as you should and make you more responsible in getting back on track.

Keep track of your online applications in spreadsheet or document with the following headings

- Job Title
- Company Name
- Contact
- Date Submitted
- Phone #
- Email
- Date Submitted
- How Submitted
- Application Deadline

- Status of Application

Create a similar spreadsheet or other document to record your networking contacts with the following headings

- Name
- Job title
- Contact information
- Date contacted
- Comments

## Troubleshoot and Seek Advice

People often spend months job searching and wonder why they aren't receiving a response. If you're not generating responses, there is probably something about your current strategy that isn't working. Evaluating your strategy and trying something different might be the answer you are looking for. Ask those around you for constructive criticism, identify where you are struggling, and improve it. Take advantage of your resources; book an appointment with the [Conestoga Career Centre](#) to discuss and evaluate your current approach.

## Practice Self-Care

Looking for a job can be draining. Make sure you maintain a healthy diet and get enough rest to maintain your drive. You will reduce your stress and increase your positivity by making time for things you like to do, whether this is playing sports, reading a book, watching a movie, or anything else that keeps you motivated.

## Seek Emotional Support

When you're feeling really defeated, don't bottle up your job search stress. Instead, share your experiences with a close friend or family member. Chances are they have been in a position where they can relate to your experience. Sometimes a trusted friend can help you challenge your negative beliefs by offering encouragement and support, which can

boost your confidence in yourself and the job search process.

[Download Tracking Logs \[opens an Excel file \(.xlsx\)\]](#)

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## JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

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Use this checklist, or the downloadable Word version below, to track your progress and ensure you have completed all the necessary job search steps.

### Job Search Preparation Essentials

#### JOB/CAREER GOAL

- Do you have a clear and realistic goal?
- Have you researched the labour market in your field [Job Bank](#), [Ontario's labour market](#)

#### RESUME/COVER LETTER

- Have you tailored your documents to include keywords?
- Have you had your documents reviewed?
  - [Book an appointment](#) with Conestoga's Career and Employment Advising department on the Student Success Portal.

### Job Search Essentials

#### ONLINE JOB BOARDS

- [LinkedIn Jobs](#)
- [Indeed](#)

- [Eluta](#)
- [Workopolis](#)
- [Monster Canada](#)
- [Glassdoor](#)
- [Charity Village](#)
- [Job Bank](#)
- [Government of Canada jobs](#)

## RESEARCH EMPLOYERS

- Generate a list of employers that interest you
- Visit company websites to see if they have jobs posted that are not advertised on online job boards

## NETWORKING

- Brainstorm a list of your contacts
- Keep in contact with previous professors, program coordinators, supervisors, and colleagues
- Connect with professionals for informational interviews
- Attend events relevant to your field
- Expand your network through social groups: [Eventbrite](#), [Meetup](#)

## ONLINE NETWORKING/SOCIAL MEDIA (LINKEDIN)

- Complete your LinkedIn profile
- Follow companies that relate to your field of interest
- Connect with professionals for informational interviews

## JOB FAIRS

- Check with your college's career centre to find information about upcoming events

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Ask employers that interest you if they are looking for volunteers

## COLD CONTACTS (in person, by email, or by phone)

- Use business directories, business journals, and professional associations to generate a list: [Yellow Pages](#)

## RECRUITMENT AGENCIES (temp or permanent opportunities)

- Register and follow up regularly (if applicable)

## Interview Essentials

### INTERVIEW

- Have you scheduled a mock interview?

### REFERENCES

- Have you contacted your references?

[Download Job Search Checklist \[opens a Word document \(.docx\)\].](#)

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## UNIT V

# UNIT 5: JOB INTERVIEWS

## Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will:

- Identify the various types of interviews and interview questions.
- Understand what is required before, during, and after your interview.
- Learn about professional interview attire.
- Recognize and prepare effectively for common interview questions.
- Prepare a thank you email to send out after an interview.

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## INTERVIEW TYPES

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Congratulations, your resume, cover letter, and job search strategy worked! You've landed a job interview. You're excited, and maybe even a little nervous, as you ask yourself, now what? How do I ensure I have the best possible chance of coming out ahead of my competitors?

This section will provide you with a thorough understanding of what you need to know at every stage of the interview process. We will explain the different types of interview formats and provide you with sample questions and answers that will be crucial in increasing your chances of securing your next job. Remember that the interview is a chance for the employer to learn more about you, your skills, and your experiences, but it is also an opportunity for you to learn more about the company and whether or not this opportunity will be a good match for your current goals and future career aspirations.

There are two major categories that employers are looking to evaluate in a candidate during an interview.

- **Qualifications:** Do you have the required credentials, skills, and abilities in order to perform the job?
- **Personal and career fit:** Do your personal qualities, attributes, and career goals match with what the company is seeking?

## Types of Interviews

Many different types of interviews are being used in today's job market. Understanding the most common interview formats will help you better manage your expectations and prepare.

- **Structured or formal:** This type of interview is very common and is used as a standardized method of comparing multiple candidates. The candidate is invited to attend a face-to-face meeting with the hiring personnel. In this format, an employer develops questions that will help assess the skills and experiences they are seeking to fulfill the requirements of the position. Many employers will have a rubric or scoring system for each question. A score is given based on the appropriateness of the candidates' answers and then these scores are compared as a method of determining the most suitable candidate.
  - **Panel:** In a panel interview, a group of interviewers, typically two to five people from various positions and roles in the company, will take turns asking questions to one candidate. By having multiple opinions involved in the hiring decision, the employer will have a broader, more objective viewpoint when making a decision on which candidate will be most suitable. During your interview, it is important to engage all of the panelists, therefore, as you answer each question, ensure that you are shifting your eye contact to address each one of them.
  - **Group:** Often the group interview is used in order for an organization to save on time and resources by screening a larger number of candidates at the same time. The structure of a group interview may look different from employer to employer, but typically includes a series of questions to observe how candidates communicate, interact with people, and react under pressure.
- **Unstructured or informal:** This type of interview is more casual, and may have some prepared questions, but is typically less structured. The questions may be determined or changed depending on the candidate's responses or the direction of the conversation. In this method, the candidate can discuss their skills and qualifications more openly, emphasizing what they feel is important.
- **Prescreening, video, or telephone:** In an attempt to narrow the candidate pool, a telephone or video interview may be used for initial screening purposes. This interview format may also be used to interview candidates who don't reside in the

same area. When taking part in a video or telephone interview, always remember to ensure your technologies are working and are charged in advance. Remove any distractions from the background. Dress and prepare as you would for an in-person interview.



Preparation is essential to being successful in the interview process. Your research will show the interview committee your initiative, interest, motivation, and resourcefulness.

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- **Performance, testing, or presentation:** This type of interview can be arranged during a separate time or as part of a face-to-face interview. During this time, an interviewer asks the candidate to perform specified tasks related to the job within a limited timeframe. Employers cannot always make a hiring decision solely based on interview performance, therefore, depending on the job requirements, they may decide to test an individual's ability as part of the hiring process. For example, for an administrative assistant position, you may be tested on your ability to use Microsoft Excel, for a hairdressing position you may be asked to perform a haircut, or for a teacher you may be asked to give a presentation.

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42.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: PLAN AND PREPARE

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### Plan Your Interview Look

Your professional image and visual presentation weigh heavily on an employer's impression of you. It is important to note that different employers and environments will have differing expectations of formality regarding dress codes; for example, a construction company may be much more casual than a law office. As a general rule, **dress one step above what you would wear to work**. This may involve researching the company beforehand or asking the person who has called to schedule the interview what the dress code is.

### Activity

Complete this drag-and-drop activity to learn more about what to wear and what not to wear.



*An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/careerguidehealthwellnessofficeadmin2e/?p=132#h5p-13>

Dressing like a professional does not have to be expensive.  
Visit your local thrift or second-hand store to find affordable clothing.

## Prepare for the Interview

Preparation is essential to being successful in the interview process. Your research will show the interview committee your initiative, interest, motivation, and resourcefulness. Before your interview, consider the following five suggestions to properly prepare.

Click on each heading for more details.

### **Confirm all the details**

- Verify the details of your interview, ensuring that you have recorded the correct date and time.
- Map out the location and address of the interview in advance to ensure that you will arrive on time.
- Record the names (with correct punctuation) and the titles of the people you will meet and research them beforehand, when possible.
- Ask about the amount of time being allocated for the interview.
- Inquire about whether there will be employment tests and the duration of these tests.

### **Review the job description and understand the job requirements**

- **Understand the job requirements and be able to demonstrate how your skills and experiences match these requirements.**
- Review the Scope Statements on your resume and prepare additional examples of achievements from previous work, volunteer, or academic studies related to the job requirements.

### **Research the position and the company**

- **Use the company's website to learn about and understand their mandate, mission, vision, values, products, services, and market and be able to relate this to why you want to work with them.**

- Use news sources and social media (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn) to research the recent organizational activity and view discussions and updates from the company.
- Familiarize yourself with the facts: How long have they been in operation? Who is their clientele? What are their products? Are they a local or international organization?
- See if you know anyone who works at the company, or ask people in your network if they know about the organization.

### **Review sample questions, prepare answers, and rehearse**

- **Plan and practice your answers as well as your delivery in advance.** It will increase your confidence, allow you to articulate more clearly, and make you more comfortable overall during the interview process.

### **Build your confidence and reduce your anxiety**

- Before your interview, practice visualizing yourself performing well, imagine that the interviewers are impressed by your professionalism and ability to answer the questions easily and competently.
- Sit up straight, put your feet flat on the floor, breathe deeply, and exhale through your mouth to slow your heart rate down, this will allow you to focus more clearly on your answers while reducing your nervousness.
- Use positive self-talk, and believe in yourself by repeating to yourself things like, “I’m prepared,” “I’m the best candidate for this job,” and “I can do this.”

## **Interview Questions Types**

Preparing your answers to common interview questions and practicing with a friend or in

front of a mirror will help you be more confident and professional during your interview. This next section provides many examples of common interview questions, and some suggested responses.

## Introductory Questions

Introductory questions allow you to describe yourself and your accomplishments as they pertain to the job you are applying for. These questions are used to assess your background, your experience, and your organizational fit. Such open-ended questions allow you to **sell yourself**.

### Activity

Click on each question below for a suggested answer.

#### **Tell me about yourself.**

**Use your 30-second elevator speech!** (See [Chapter 30 Preparing to Network: Networking Tools](#))

Focus on describing your related education, experience, and personal traits, and emphasize your interest in this position or company.

**AVOID** being too general, and don't go into irrelevant personal details.

Example answer:

*"As a Conestoga College student working towards my certificate in Medical Office Practices, I have in-depth knowledge of medical terminology and electronic medical records (EMR). In my current/previous position as Crew Member at McDonald's, I developed skills such as teamwork and multitasking. I pride myself on being compassionate and flexible and look forward to contributing to a health office position using my Office 365 and verbal communication skills."*

#### **What are your strengths?**

This question tests your self-knowledge. The interviewer is looking for you to describe some of your core skills or traits that would make you an excellent candidate for this job.

Clearly and directly identify your strengths as if you were a product that you were trying to sell to the employer.

**Focus on identifying three strengths that relate to the job requirements and providing concrete examples from your work, school, or volunteer experiences.**

Example answer:

*"In all of my past jobs, I've always considered myself to have a strong work ethic. For example, I remember a situation that occurred during my Culinary Management field placement when I was working with a chef who had my team on a strict timeline. Unfortunately, there was some confusion, and we did not receive a delivery of vegetables that we needed to prepare for an upcoming event. After calling the supplier, we learned that the shipment would arrive later that evening, after the time at which everything should have been ready to go. Rather than go home, I volunteered to stay late and finish everything, ensuring that we would be prepared well before the event started."*

**What are your greatest weaknesses?**

We all have weaknesses, that is why an interviewer will ask you about yours to see if you have a realistic picture of your own limitations. A thoughtful response shows **self-awareness** and **initiative** in overcoming your weaknesses.

In your response, **discuss a weakness that does NOT directly affect your ability to do the job you are applying for and then follow up by demonstrating what you are doing or have done to improve upon this weakness.**

**AVOID** overused clichés, such as "I work too hard" or "I am a perfectionist."

Example answer:

*"When delivering presentations to large groups of people or speaking in front of crowds, I sometimes feel nervous, and I have a hard time getting my words out. However, while completing my Diploma Program, I have taken many opportunities to voluntarily present information during my group projects, which involved speaking in front of 30-40 classmates. As a result, I feel more comfortable*

*presenting, however, I know I need to continue to improve my skills further – this is why I have decided to attend a Toastmasters group once a week.”*

### **Why should we hire you?**

This question provides you the opportunity to give your sales pitch. Reiterate to the employer what benefits they can expect from you.

This is your opportunity to show your confidence and highlight what differentiates you from other candidates to an employer.

Example answer:

*“I believe there are many reasons why you should hire me. For one, I meet the education and experience qualifications you are seeking for an individual to succeed in this role. I understand that there are likely other candidates that meet those criteria too, which is why I want you to know what sets me apart is my passion and commitment to motivating my team members to achieve their goals. For example, in my past work experiences, I have always exhibited a positive attitude and made it a point to lend a helping hand whenever opportunities presented themselves. My relationships with my team members have always been extremely collaborative and, as a result, we were more productive and efficient in completing our daily tasks.”*

### **Where do you see yourself in the next five years?**

This question is asked to address what your future goals or career aspirations are and how you intend to achieve them.

**Employers want to get a sense of your long-term commitment to their organization.**

**AVOID speaking about unrelated ideas or ideas that would make the employer question your interest in working for them, such as mentioning your real goal is to start your own business or return to school full-time.**

Example answer:

*“In the next five years, I would like to become the very best Computer Programmer*

*your company has on staff. I would like to take opportunities to learn and grow so that I can become the expert that others rely on in the future. I aim to learn from this company's talented team of professionals. In the long-term, I feel like this will prepare me to take on greater responsibilities as those opportunities present themselves."*

### **What is your target salary? What do you feel this position should pay?**

The interviewer is asking if you have a realistic expectation of your salary based on your skills and experiences and whether or not your expectation fits within what the company can realistically offer you.

Make sure to conduct your own research and show your flexibility by providing a salary range rather than a concrete number.

You can research this information ahead of your interview using the following resource:

- [Government of Canada Job Bank](#)

Example Answer:

*"In my research, I have seen salaries ranging from \$42,000 to \$46,000 based on positions requiring my education and experience. However, I am very flexible to discuss the salary that you had in mind for this position."*

Other common introductory questions include:

- **How has your education prepared you for this role?**
- **What do you know about our organization?**
- **Why are you interested in working for our company?**
- **What experience do you have that relates to this position?**

## Behavioural Questions

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Behavioural interviews are founded on the idea that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour.

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Behavioural questions will ask you to describe a specific situation or experience and require you to provide an example of how you handled it in the past. You must be prepared with specific examples or experiences to answer these questions well and completely.

To answer behavioural questions use **STAR** stories that tell about a specific experience from your life in which you demonstrated the behaviour in question.

To create a complete and concise **STAR** story (also called a *proof story*), include the following elements:

- **Situation** – Briefly describe the event or situation and include information on the who, what, where, and when.
- **Task** – Give a clear explanation of the task you had to complete and any challenges that accompanied it.
- **Action** – Speak about the actions you took to complete the task, purposefully mentioning qualities or traits that the interviewer is looking for.
- **Result** – In summary, emphasize what the result of your efforts was and quantify it when appropriate.

### Activity

This activity provides suggestions for two behavioural questions. Click on each question below for a suggested answer.

**Tell me about a time when you experienced a conflict with a coworker, supervisor,**



**or manager. How did you handle it?**

This question is often asked to see how you are able to manage conflict and work cohesively as part of a team.

Your ability to demonstrate appropriate problem-solving skills in resolving conflicts, while dealing with different personalities, will give the employer confidence that this is something you will be able to effectively deal with in the future.

**AVOID** saying that you've never had a conflict or using negative language to describe others in the situation. Your answer should not include relying on your manager to solve the problem – employers want to know that you are able to overcome small conflicts and move forward without interrupting the flow of the workplace.

Example answer: (Remember, you must answer using **an experience from YOUR life**)

**Situation:** *"When I was working as an administrative assistant with a large accounting firm, the firm was experiencing some staffing changes. I was asked to support one of the other managers I had not previously worked with. My previous manager had been very diligent in providing me with feedback on my work so I knew what was expected of me. The new manager provided less feedback, which I found challenging. This caused a few disagreements as a result of not understanding what the other person wanted."*

**Task:** *"I knew that I needed to clarify the manager's expectations of me and identify how I could support him better."*

**Action:** *"I suggested that we meet so that we could have more of a conversation about this. In the meeting, I acknowledged the disagreements and asked for specific feedback on what was and was not working. Being able to have an honest discussion regarding work styles and expectations led to a much better understanding of how we could work together more effectively. Listening and understanding each other's point of view was helpful in coming up with a solution."*

**Result:** *"After we had this conversation, we successfully worked together for several years. Since that experience, whenever I start a new job, I always take the opportunity at the beginning to discuss expectations."*

**Tell me about a time when you experienced an angry customer. How did you handle it?**

Interviewers want to see how you are able to appropriately manage conflict and use sound judgment to find a solution and maintain professionalism when faced with difficult situations.

**AVOID** saying that you've never had this happen, but rather, relate it to a situation in which you exercised conflict resolution. Show how you took the initiative to implement a solution **without** having to escalate it to your manager.

Example answer:

**Situation:** *"When I was working as a sales associate at Walmart, a customer came in looking for a specific product that was currently on promotion. Due to the fact that it was a busy time of year, we did not have any of that product left in the store. The client appeared agitated and verbalized her frustrations towards me and several other employees."*

**Task:** *"I knew that I had to calm the customer down and find out what I could do to help."*

**Action:** *"I took the customer aside, listened to her concerns, validated her frustrations, and apologized for the inconvenience. Through our conversation, the customer disclosed that finding transportation was very challenging for her and she was upset because she knew she wouldn't be able to get to another store to purchase this product. I then presented a solution by calling other stores to locate the product and offered to have the product delivered straight to her house the following day."*

**Result:** *"As a result, the customer felt understood and made sure to tell me how much she appreciated my efforts, despite her initial concerns. Later that day, my manager pulled me aside to recognize my excellent interpersonal skills and my ability to handle a difficult situation with such professionalism."*

Other common behavioural questions for which you should prepare STAR stories include:

- **Give an example of a situation where you had to deal with a conflict with a customer or coworker. How did you handle it?**
- **Describe a situation where a coworker or supervisor had expectations that you**

felt were unrealistic. How did you deal with that?

- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Describe a stressful situation at work and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake. What did you learn from it?
- Describe a situation in which you had to balance multiple priorities.
- Provide a situation in which you managed a tight deadline.
- Give an example of a time when you collaborated as a team.
- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or coworkers.
- Tell me about a time you have gone above and beyond the call of duty. If so, how?

## Situational Questions

Situational questions focus on **hypothetical** scenarios that require you to demonstrate sound judgment to solve a problem you may not have experienced before.

Examples of situational questions include:

- What would you do if you discovered your supervisor was breaking the company's code of conduct?
- As the team leader, how would you deal with the situation if you are faced with a situation where two team members are arguing?
- How would you prioritize your tasks if you had two important deadlines?

## Job Knowledge or Technical Questions

These questions typically assess the technical or professional skills and knowledge you need to perform a job. Hands-on tests, simulations, and questions are phrased to find your level of experience with specific equipment, software, processes, procedures, etc.

Examples of technical questions include:

- **Are you adept at scheduling for a multi-practitioner office?**
- **Which presentation software have you learned?**
- **How do you properly use a blood pressure monitor?**
- **Which EMR programs have you used?**
- **What is your typing speed and accuracy? (Do not lie; you may be asked to take a typing test during the interview!)**

## Illegal Questions

The law in Ontario prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of: age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status (including single status), gender identity, gender expression, receipt of public assistance (in housing only), record of offences (in employment only), sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), and sexual orientation. The Ontario Human Rights Commission protects job seekers against unlawful questions. For more information, check out the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#).

Employers' **questions must relate to the job you are applying for**. However, use your discretion when answering, as questions could be asked unintentionally. Here is how you might respond if asked an inappropriate question:

- Ask the interviewer to clarify the meaning of the question.

- Ask the interviewer in what circumstances the question applies to the job.
- Politely decline to answer.

## Your Turn! Prepare Questions to Ask the Employer

Often, the employer asks you at the end of the interview, “Do you have any questions for us?”



A lack of prepared questions may suggest to an employer that you’re uninterested in the opportunity.

Prepare a few well-thought-out and engaging questions **to show your interest and enthusiasm** for the job. The questions you ask can be about the roles and responsibilities of the job, the company’s organizational structure, general interest, or the next steps in the hiring process. Be conscientious of the interviewer’s time, and ask no more than three questions.

Examples of thoughtful questions you could ask the employer include:

- **What skills make the most successful employees here?**
- **What is the top priority of someone who accepts this job?**
- **What types of opportunities for advancement are available in this role?**
- **What does a typical day/week look like in this role?**
- **How large is the team I would be working with?**
- **Can you provide any advice to help me prepare for my first three months in this role?**
- **What is your favourite part about working for this organization?**
- **What are the next steps in the hiring process?**

- **When should I expect to hear back?**

**NEVER** ask these questions during an interview:

- **How much will I get paid? What is the salary? Is this negotiable?**
- **How many weeks of vacation will I be entitled to?**
- **What does the benefits package include?**
- **How long until I can become a manager?**
- **Can I apply for other jobs once I'm working here?**

Remember, **you are trying to show the employer what you bring to the job rather than what you can get from the job!**

## What to Bring to Your Interview

Don't come to your interview empty-handed! Below is a list of items you should bring to your interview.

- Interview details including the address, phone number, and interviewer names.
- The original job posting to review while you're waiting.
- Additional copies of your resume and cover letter.
- A pen and paper for taking notes.
- Your portfolio with samples of your work, when applicable.
- A list of prepared questions to ask at the end of your interview.
- Your references, neatly typed on a single sheet of paper.

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## DURING THE INTERVIEW

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Read this chapter for valuable suggestions on body language, verbal communication skills, and etiquette for each stage of the interview.

**Demonstrate professional non-verbal communication throughout the entire interview.**

- **Be friendly, smile, and maintain eye contact.**

Smiling creates a warm and positive impression, and maintaining eye contact will demonstrate your self-confidence, focus, and respect.

- If there is a panel of interviewers, interact with all interviewers equally.

- **Be aware of your posture.**

Sit straight with your feet flat on the floor, hands on your lap, and your back against the chair. This open position will convey interest and engagement. Poor posture, such as slouching, may come across as too casual and imply disinterest or defensiveness. Avoid closed body language, such as crossing your arms or sitting angled away from your interviewer(s).

## At the Start: First Impression

Make a positive first impression!

- **Be punctual.**

Arrive for your interview 10-15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. If you feel you might be running late, be courteous and contact the interviewer to let them know; this will allow them to reschedule if it is more convenient.

- **Be friendly.**

Smile and make eye contact with everyone you meet from the moment you walk in



the door to the moment you leave.

- **If the interviewer(s) offer to shake hands, give a firm handshake.**

Since the COVID pandemic, many people no longer shake hands. Follow each person's lead. Remember not to grip too hard or too soft. If your hands perspire when you're nervous, keep a tissue on hand to absorb the moisture while waiting to be introduced.

## During the Interview

Answer the interviewer's questions clearly, completely, and concisely.

- **Be concise.**

Long answers will make the interviewer lose interest and possibly miss the point of your answer.

- Speak with **confidence and enthusiasm**. Vary your tone and pitch of speech.
- Mention your **portfolio** and use it to give examples of your skills.
- Use **STAR stories** (proof stories) to answer behavioural questions.
- If you do not understand the question, politely ask the interviewer to repeat it.

## At the End: Finish Strong

Finish strong and leave a lasting impression.

- Ask the **one to three questions** (about the job or the company) you prepared in advance (see chapter 42 for suggestions).
- Ask what the **next steps in the hiring process** are (if the interviewer has not yet addressed this).
- If you forgot to say something important while answering questions, you can bring it up but **do not apologize for or even mention anything that did not go well**.
- **Act confident**, even if the interview did not go as well as you hoped.
- **Thank the interviewer(s)** for their time.

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44.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW: SHOW APPRECIATION AND EVOLVE

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You made it through the interview! You're almost at the finish line, but before you congratulate yourself with a big, delicious meal or night out, follow these three essential steps.

- **Send a thank you letter within 24 hours after the interview.** After your interview, differentiate yourself by showing your appreciation and reiterate your interest in the position to the employer by sending a thank you letter in an email format to those who took the time to interview you. If you have agreed to provide additional information or samples of your work, be sure to do this as soon after the interview as possible. Remember to always proofread your email to ensure no spelling or grammatical errors! A sample thank you letter is provided below.
- 



Write out the questions you were asked during the interview and use them to prepare better for next time.

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- **Evaluate and reflect.** After the interview, reflecting on your performance and considering what questions you answered well and what questions could have used more information or preparation will help you improve for subsequent interviews.
- **Ask for feedback.** If you were not the chosen candidate, don't sweat it! Look at your experience as a practice round and take the opportunity to **ask the employer for feedback on your interview.** You may find that not all employers will provide you with this specific information or that the response you receive is vague. However, if you receive feedback, this information could increase your chances of successfully

passing your next interview.

## Sample Thank You Letter

**(At the top of the page, insert the same letterhead you used for your resume, including your name, contact info, and LinkedIn profile link.)**

November 28, 2024

Pierre Schneider  
Healthy People Dental Clinic  
121 River Road East  
Kitchener, ON  
N2A 0T6

Dear Pierre Schneider,

Thank you for meeting with me today to discuss the dental receptionist position with your company. I appreciate the time you took to get to know me and hear about my skills, experiences, and qualifications. I particularly enjoyed learning more about the opportunities for advancement with your company.

After speaking with you, I am confident I would be an ideal candidate for this role, offering the quick learning and adaptability needed to succeed with your diverse clientele. In addition to my enthusiasm and strong work ethic, I would bring well-developed computer skills, empathetic communication skills, and a solid understanding of dental charting and billing.

I am very interested in working with your talented team, and I look forward to hearing from you once the final decisions are made. Please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached at (519) 123-4567 if you require further information.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Micheal Jordon*

Originally adapted from [After the Interview](#) and [Thank You Letter Sample](#) in [Be the Boss of](#)

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45.

## INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

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Use this yes/no checklist to prepare for interviews and self-evaluate after an interview.

### Image and Appearance

- Is punctual for interview
- Smiles and makes eye contact with everyone
- Professionally dressed and groomed, with good hygiene
- Offers a solid and confident handshake (when appropriate)

### Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

- Displays good posture and receptiveness (arms are not crossed)
- Facial expressions and voice demonstrate enthusiasm and interest
- Smiles and maintains eye contact
- Is relaxed and avoids fidgeting

### Answering Interview Questions

- Responds with concise, organized, and well-thought-out answers
- Uses the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) stories to answer behavioural questions
- Uses proper grammar and appropriate vocabulary
- Demonstrates research and understanding of the company and position

- Communicates program-related skills and indicates strengths

## Closing Interview

- Asks the interviewer relevant questions about the job or company
- Thanks the interviewer and identifies next steps in the hiring process

## After the Interview

- Sends thank-you email within 24 hours after the interview

At the end of your checklist, make a note of the questions you asked during the interview and other notes about the experience.

[Download Interview Checklist \[opens a Word document \(.docx\)\]](#)

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## UNIT VI

# BONUS FEATURE: INTERNATIONAL JOB SEEKERS & JOB SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES

### Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will:

- Learn about cultural adjustment as an international student or job seeker.
- Understand what Canadian employers are looking for and the differences in the Canadian job search process.
- Identify ways of disclosing a disability including if, when, and how to disclose a disability.
- Recall ways to keep the job you worked so hard to find.

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46.

## INTERNATIONAL JOB SEEKERS

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Are you an international student interested in finding employment while you study? Have you recently graduated from your program and are looking to continue residing in Canada and pursuing your career?

International students' social and cultural perspectives enrich the post-secondary experiences of learners by promoting the diversification of thought. Furthermore, international students and job seekers benefit the Canadian job market by inspiring a heightened sense of intercultural awareness, open-mindedness, innovation, and global perspectives.

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You have the opportunity to immerse yourself in a new culture while also sharing your culture with those around you.

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### Adjusting to a New Culture

#### Experiencing Culture Shock

Adjusting to life in a new country with completely different cultural expectations is challenging. Once you add studying and finding work, it's completely understandable that you may experience feeling overwhelmed, confused, and uncertain, also known as *culture shock*.

“ If you are experiencing culture shock, you may experience a range of symptoms, including boredom, homesickness, helplessness, and irritation.

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There are four phases of culture shock (Oberg, 1954), and each individual will experience these phases differently, as the process is not linear.

- **Honeymoon:** You feel very positive, are satisfied with your decision, and are excited and fascinated by your new surroundings.
- **Frustration:** You become anxious or confused because there are so many differences, and you feel as though you lack the understanding to deal with them. It is common to experience feelings of depression or even to withdraw from your surroundings, with the desire to return home where things are familiar.
- **Adjustment:** As your surroundings become more comfortable and expectations become clearer, you can manage the changes and solve cultural problems; slowly, you begin to appreciate the differences and incorporate them into your own beliefs. Adapting to a new culture does not mean losing your culture.
- **Acceptance:** You can participate in the new culture comfortably and feel a sense of belonging.

As an international student or job seeker, it is essential to understand and adapt to the major differences in the Canadian college system and the Canadian job search process to successfully pursue, maintain, and manage your career and employment success.

## Managing Culture Shock

Although it is normal for an international student to experience culture shock, it is integral that you have the appropriate coping strategies to deal with it. To manage your symptoms, consider the following suggestions:

- Keep in touch with your family and friends back home regularly.
- Stay connected to your roots by having things in your space that remind you of home.
- Interact with other international students, share your experiences, and seek their advice.
- Become familiar with your surroundings, accepting the common norms and behaviours.
- Connect to the culture, make new friends, and participate in Canadian cultural activities.
- Take care of your health by properly eating, exercising, and getting enough sleep.
- Be patient with yourself, it will take some time to adjust.

## SERVICE SHOUT-OUT!

For support in managing your cultural adjustment, reach out to:

- [Conestoga International Student Support](#)
- [Conestoga Counselling Services](#)

## Canadian Job-Search Expectations

Across cultures, there are considerable value-based differences concerning an employer's expectations. Without understanding these values, differing behaviours, and cultural norms, you may find it confusing when interacting with employers in the Canadian job market. Different workplaces, like countries, have different cultural norms and can vary from job to job. Explore the following concepts and recognize how these will impact you through the Canadian job search process.

## Soft Skills

In addition to having a well-developed set of technical skills required to perform your job effectively, Canadian employers are looking more favourably at employees who can demonstrate a range of soft skills. Soft skills are skills developed across your diverse life experiences, including communication, problem-solving, leadership, a positive attitude, adaptability, and teamwork. **When an individual can effectively describe concrete examples of how they have demonstrated various soft skills through past experiences, an employer will see the candidate as more valuable and a greater long-term asset to the company.**

## Career Planning

In cultures where a job is assigned to you, it is assumed that you will take it; there is less emphasis placed on identifying your career goals as your career is often decided for you. **In Canadian culture, you are expected to take ownership of your career decision-making and demonstrate a high degree of self-awareness toward your short and long-term career goals.**

## Job Search

In some cultures, job searching may rely more on your school, government, or family to assist you in finding work. You may identify with this scenario from your past experiences and feel the responsibility falls more heavily on the people assisting you. As detailed in Unit 4, an effective job search in Canada means that you need to use a diverse variety of methods to find employment, including but not limited to networking, online job boards, and accessing help through the [Talent Hub Career Centre](#).



In Canadian culture, the job search process is very independent; you are responsible for your own efforts and successes in finding a job.

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## Resume and Cover Letter

There are some significant differences in the information presented on resumes in Canada. Read chapters 10-16 and consider the following suggestions when developing your resume:

- Do **NOT** include personal information such as nationality, marital status, gender, date of birth, religion, social insurance number, visa status, or a photo of yourself.
- Include your Canadian residence address (you do not need to list your international permanent address).
- Personalize your resume to reflect soft skills and accomplishments from paid and unpaid experiences; do **NOT** just provide a chronological account of your work experience.
- Include your international experience and education if they relate to your desired job positions.
- Emphasize any other languages that you speak in addition to English.
- Do **NOT** include primary-level education on your resume; secondary and post-secondary are appropriate depending on their relevance to the job.
- Do **NOT** display your education in a chart format – write out the titles of your diplomas and degrees.
- Do **NOT** copy a resume from the internet or a friend or put false information on a resume – employers will question you about your experiences, so you need to be truthful.
- Include a customized cover letter, even if it is not requested.
- Have your documents *triple-checked* for language.

## Interview and Workplace Expectations

During the interview process, a hiring committee evaluates you based on several factors. These factors typically include body language, attitude, behaviours, communication skills, visual presentation, and the content and articulation of your answers. Embracing Canadian cultural values and developing intercultural skills will help you to navigate the

interview process better and adapt to the Canadian workplace. Consider the following ideas as a way to manage your own expectations and prepare yourself for success:

Click on each heading for more details.

### **Dress code, scent, and hygiene**

- You must follow the appropriate dress code when preparing for an interview or starting a new job.
- Please refer to [Chapter 42](#) to learn more about appropriate attire, and don't be afraid to ask about the dress code before starting a job.
- Many workplaces have instituted a **scent-free policy**, meaning you should not wear perfumes or strong-smelling products.
- In a professional environment, you are expected to maintain your personal hygiene by regularly showering, wearing deodorant, grooming, wearing clean clothes, and having fresh breath.

### **Punctuality**

- **Being on time is a sign of respect in Canadian culture.**
- By arriving 5-15 minutes early, you show an employer or individual that you understand their time is valuable.
- Remember that timeliness is more than just arriving early to work or a meeting; it's adapting to the pace at which you are expected to perform your tasks. This often varies by sector and organization and is something you will learn on the job.

### **Personal space, touch, and privacy**

- Personal space is important to Canadians and refers to the distance between you and another person when interacting. **Keeping an arm's length of space is seen as respectful**; pay attention to what another

person's body language is telling you.

- In some cultures, touching another person's arm or holding hands in a public space may be appropriate. Canadians may feel comfortable shaking hands at the onset of a meeting but don't usually touch while speaking to one another, especially in a business setting.
- Typically, Canadians are more private and less likely to talk about personal matters like family, income, or religion until they get to know you.
- Furthermore, respecting privacy in the workplace means discussing problems or concerns behind closed doors.

### **Making eye contact and asking questions**

- Many other cultures interpret eye contact and directness of responses with their superiors as disrespectful.
- **In Canada, eye contact and directness typically translate into honesty, interest, and engagement** and should be practised when interacting with all levels of individuals.
- **At the end of a job interview, the selection committee will expect you to have open-ended questions about the position and/or company.** Where you may feel this is imposing or rude, an employer will be impressed by well-thought-out questions and associate that with your interest in the company.

### **Self-marketing**

- In Canadian culture, you are expected to take a more direct and confident approach to **openly highlighting your own strengths and accomplishments**. Although this approach may make you feel like you are being boastful or bragging, it's seen as a needed strategy to sell your skills in a competitive job market.
- Similarly, **you are expected to take the initiative to follow up with an employer**; you may feel this is impolite, but it's seen as being responsible

and could set you apart from other candidates.

## Informality

- In other cultures, it may be considered inappropriate to sit with people who are considered to be of higher status than you. Questions or the informal exchange of information can be seen as disrespectful to the person's position.
- In Canadian culture, **talking openly in an interview environment is encouraged**. In this setting, you are expected to interact with your interviewer and share information.
- In an initial meeting, you may address a supervisor or manager more formally by using Mr. or Ms. before their name. This is respectful; however, once a relationship has been established, they may ask you to use their first name to address them. Avoid calling them by their title, as they want to be seen as working with their teams and not above them.

## Equality, power, and curiosity

- The Canadian workplace represents a wide degree of diversity; individual characteristics are not supposed to affect hiring processes or on-the-job treatment. Therefore, respect is shown across race, gender, age, and position within the company.
- Diversity in the workplace also stimulates curiosity among coworkers; respond patiently when people ask you about your culture, and don't assume they are ill-intentioned.
- Canadians generally accept differences and show interest in learning about another person's culture.

## Professional References

- If you lack Canadian experience, you likely lack Canadian references.



- If you have references you can provide from your experience in your home country, feel free to offer them as long as they can communicate in English and can be contacted. When references reside out of the country, it may be helpful to provide email addresses as a more convenient way to contact them.
- **If you are looking to gain Canadian references quickly, consider volunteering.**

### **Gain Canadian experience and get involved**

- Obtaining Canadian experience shows an employer that you can acclimate to the local employment market.
- Including Canadian experience on your resume will make you more competitive in the job market.
- Although a part-time job may offer you many benefits, experience can also be gained through **summer jobs, volunteering, or joining extracurricular activities on and off campus**. Through these experiences, you will learn more about workplace culture, practise your language skills, and build Canadian networks.

### **Understand your work permit and restrictions**

- Not all employers will be familiar with study and work permits, as well as the restrictions you may have on where you are able to work and for how many hours.
- The more you know and understand about this, the better you will be at explaining this to an employer and the more confident they will feel about hiring you as an international student.
- Please refer to the [Government of Canada website](#) for more information on the laws and regulations concerning studying and working in Canada.

## SERVICE SHOUT-OUT!

[Conestoga International](#) is your home away from home during your time at Conestoga College. They are here to offer whatever support you need to adapt to your studies and life in Canada and connect with the college community and other students.

## Job-Search Advice for International Students and Graduates

### Job Scams and Safety

- Always be cautious. Read [Chapter 29](#) to learn about online job search safety.
- **Most importantly, never give or accept money or provide anyone with personal information, such as your social insurance, before starting a job.**
- Be aware that it is not normal to be offered employment without going through an interview process first.
- If you have concerns about the offer you receive, contact the [Talent Hub](#) to discuss this in further detail.



If a job offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

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### More Tips

#### Practise and improve your language skills

- One of the major challenges that arise in improving language skills among non-English speakers is confidence. You may feel less inclined to speak when afraid of making mistakes or being judged.
- **Take any opportunity to practise your language skills**, interact with English speakers, learn by watching and listening to English television and radio programs, and rehearse your interview answers.

- Practising your language skills through mock interviews will help you better articulate what you'd like to say, help you feel more self-assured, and increase your chances of making a better first impression during your interviews.

## Use accepted styles of job-search documents

- Refer to the resources in this book to help you develop job search documents that match the content and formats that are expected among Canadian employers.

## Be prepared to address assumptions about hiring international students

- Employers may be uneducated about hiring international students, leading to common misconceptions.
- They may feel that the process is too complicated or time-consuming, be concerned with issues surrounding work permits, or fear that an international student is not interested in staying on long-term.
- Confidently addressing an employer's concern by providing them with more information and reassuring them of your commitment will help in the decision-making process.

## Focus on networking

- With so many job postings not being advertised, you must increase your visibility in the job market by expanding your personal contacts.
- As an international student, you may feel that you are at a disadvantage because your network in Canada is small. **To build up your connections, volunteer, participate in career fairs and events, connect with the Students' Association, and conduct informational interviews with employers.**

## SERVICE SHOUT-OUT!

Contact [Conestoga Students Inc.](#) or visit their website for more information on joining [clubs](#).

## Showcase your diverse benefits

- As an international student and job seeker, you bring many benefits to the Canadian job market.
  - Focus on highlighting your unique qualities and market yourself confidently when engaging with your networks and employers.
  - Aside from the transferable skills you acquired from the experience you gained in your home country, you are multilingual, able to see things from different perspectives, sensitive to multicultural environments, and knowledgeable of international markets. On top of all that, **you have demonstrated resilience and determination by adapting to and integrating into a new country.**

## Take advantage of services

- There will be roadblocks along the way, but you don't have to go through this process alone; several on-campus services are accessible throughout your studies.
  - [Talent Hub Career Services](#) is your greatest resource for receiving one-on-one support for all your career and employment-related needs as a student and a graduate.

## Be informed

- Knowledge is power; ensuring that you are informed and being treated fairly and safely in the workplace is extremely important to your experience here in Canada.
- For more information, please refer to the following resources:
  - [Employment Standards](#): Knowing what your rights and obligations are in the workplace
  - [Health and Safety](#): Understanding your rights to feeling safe in the workplace
  - [Ontario Human Rights Commission, Canadian Human Rights Act](#): Understanding that everyone will be treated equally and without discrimination

Originally adapted from [International Students or Job Seekers, Understanding and Preparing for Cultural Adjustment, Understanding the Differences in the Canadian Job Search Process, Job Search Tips for International Students and Job Seekers, and Understanding what Canadian Employers are Looking For in Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students & Grads](#), copyright © 2021 by Lindsay Bortot and the Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College, which is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

47.

## JOB SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES

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Are you a student or job seeker with a visible or invisible disability trying to find work? Are you discouraged by the process and unsure how to discuss your disability?

For anyone searching for work in today's competitive job market, finding a job can be difficult and demanding. For a person with a disability, the job search process may bring about other distinctive challenges. Persons with disabilities are uniquely valuable to employers in several ways, and an increasing number of persons with disabilities are entering the workforce.

“When an employer hires a person with a disability, they tap into fresh talent, generate more diverse perspectives, create a workforce reflective of society, increase accessibility for all, and support the elimination of barriers.”

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### Preparing for the Job Search

In this section, you will learn practical suggestions for addressing your disability-related concerns throughout the job search process. Let's ensure that your disability doesn't stand in the way of getting a job and, in turn, focus on the immense value you will bring to the workforce. Before you start your job search, consider the following strategies.

## Evaluate Yourself

Start by evaluating your feelings about this process. Reflect on the following exploratory questions and discuss them with a trusted source to work through your thoughts.

- Can you describe your disability to others, and do you feel comfortable talking openly about it?
- What limitations do you have, and can you identify the accommodations you need in the workplace?
- Are you comfortable educating your team members and answering questions about your disability, and do you have additional resources you can provide to help them understand?

When you have a clearer picture of how you see your disability in a work setting, you can start understanding what implications that might have on your daily life. Depending on your answers to the above questions, you can also start identifying what you need to do to better prepare yourself for transitioning more confidently into the workforce.

## Educate Others and Challenge Stereotypes

**The more comfortable you are about your disability, the more comfortable the people around you will be.** Advocate for yourself by educating others about your disability. Recommend information or community resources to provide them with further information. When people are more educated about your needs, they are more likely to be understanding and less likely to make assumptions or feed into stereotypes. As a skilled and productive employee, you can change people's beliefs and help them see you as the hardworking, adaptable, and intelligent person you are. This might be more challenging for some people; therefore, surround yourself with good support, and reach out to your Disabilities Counsellor at the Centre for Accessible Learning for further suggestions.

## SERVICE SHOUT-OUT!

Make an appointment with [Accessible Learning](#).

## Communicate Effectively

Throughout your work experiences, challenging situations will arise. As we previously mentioned, when people are uneducated about disabilities, they may not know how to ask questions or respond appropriately to matters concerning your disability. To navigate these situations effectively, you need to communicate well. You should:

- Avoid reacting negatively to other people's behaviours or assuming that someone is judging you, as your assumption might not be true.
- Promote disability awareness by taking opportunities to discuss your disability as a chance to teach others.
- Don't be afraid to articulate your preferences concerning how you would like to be treated and what assistance you might need.
- Be open to discussing with your employer and colleagues how their comments affect you and suggest language you prefer to use when referring to your disability.

## SERVICE SHOUT-OUT!

Check out the [Job Seekers Guide for Students and Graduates with Disabilities](#) for further support with your job search.

## Additional Strategies

Spend time reflecting on the job search methods from Unit 3, and then consider some of these additional strategies:

- **Maintain a positive attitude**

There are many fears associated with entering and re-entering the workforce with a disability, especially if you're newly disabled or you've had previous negative experiences associated with your disability. If you are feeling negative about your disability or situation, this can come across in your behaviours and attitude. In the face of your challenges, do your best to maintain a positive outlook – this will be a strong indicator of your future career success. Staying focused on the skills you can offer and your past successes will help you look at your situation in a new and more productive way.



- **Seek out companies that support diverse hiring practices**

Through networking, conducting informational interviews, working with disability employment support agencies, and researching companies directly, you can learn about different organizations and their practices around supporting persons with disabilities. By targeting companies committed to building a diverse workforce and adhering to employment equity practices, you will be more likely to receive the support and understanding you need to be successful in the workplace.

- [Canada's Best Diversity Employers](#)
- [Employment Accessibility Resource Network](#)
- [Career Edge: – Paid experience-based internship program for graduates with disabilities](#)

- **Be open-minded and create opportunities**

There are many companies out there that haven't hired a person with a disability before. If this applies to a company you want to work for, don't hesitate to reach out. Suggest to an employer the possibility of a job trial so that you can showcase your skills and abilities on the job, and they can evaluate your work performance before deciding to hire you. This also allows you to decide if this opportunity will best fit you.

- **Connect with employment-based disability service providers**

Two heads are better than one! If you don't want to go through this process alone, enlist the help of a community service provider. Some service providers are disability-specific, can offer job search support programs, and connect you with disability-friendly employers.

Research the following service providers to learn more about your eligibility and available support:

- [Acclaim Ability](#)
- [Causeway Work Centre](#)
- [CVE Inc.](#)
- [Distinct Programmes Inc.](#)
- [March of Dimes](#)
- [Neil Squire Society](#)
- [Performance Plus Rehabilitative Care Inc.](#)

- **Stay motivated**

Job searching can take a long time. When you're in the midst of your search, it's easy to lose your initial hopefulness. You must maintain your motivation to keep up with your job search activities. Stay motivated by celebrating your successes, even if you haven't obtained employment; any opportunities you have had to discuss your skills with others is an achievement. Moreover, keep track of your efforts by documenting and reviewing all that you've accomplished; this will keep you on track, and you will be able to evaluate whether or not there is anything more you can do.

- **Coordinate logistics**

Ensure that you have made the appropriate arrangements for transportation, recurring medical appointments, and childcare. These may or may not be formal workplace accommodations, but they may be aspects of your life that are impacted by your disability and should be addressed before starting a job.

- **Identify a solid support network**

**It's not always easy out there.** To help you maintain your enthusiasm, identify people in your life whom you can rely on for encouragement, support, and sound advice. Network with other job seekers and other persons with disabilities who have been successful in finding work. Find ways to support your networks, and they will find ways to support you.

## Disclosing a Disability

In the context of a job search, “disclosure” is the act of making your disability known to others. You may be experiencing many different concerns or questions about the disclosure of your disability. If you don’t take the time to consider what disclosure might look like for you, it could directly impact your self-confidence and the success of your job search. Remind yourself:

- **Disclosure is an important and personal choice**

You decide if, how, and when you would like to disclose. Don’t feel pressured by outside sources; make the decision best suited to you.

- **Disclosure is not a one-size-fits-all concept**

There is no one right way or right time to disclose your disability. When, what, and how you disclose is entirely based on your individual circumstance, and it will look completely different across every individual, employer, and job opportunity. Always use your discretion based on your current situation. Ask yourself the following questions to help you decide if disclosure is your best strategy:

- Is your disability visible or invisible? Do the risks of disclosing outweigh the benefits or vice versa?
- Will this information help or hurt your chances of getting and keeping a job?
- Do you need accommodations on the job? Without accommodations in the workplace, is your safety at risk?
- Have you disclosed your disability in the past? What was the reaction you received? How did that make you feel?
- Do you think your employer will understand your disability? If not, are you prepared to explain it?
- Are you confident in reassuring an employer that your disability will not impact your ability to perform the job?

## The Pros and Cons of Disclosing

Knowing when the best time is to talk about your disability can often be unclear; the chart below explains the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing at different times

throughout the job search process. Identify what you would feel most comfortable with based on your individual circumstances.

When to Disclose	Pros	Cons	When to Use
<b>Cover Letter, Resume, or Job Application</b>	The employer may appreciate your honesty. The employer may be actively seeking to hire diverse candidates.	Does not provide you with the opportunity to address questions or concerns. The information may be used to screen you out.	Recommended when your disability might be seen as an advantage, i.e. when an Employment Equity program is in place.
<b>Before an Interview</b>	The employer has already shown interest in you by scheduling an interview. If you need accommodations, the employer can be better prepared for the interview.	Employer may make inappropriate assumptions or stereotypes that may impact their decision to hire you. The employer may feel you were dishonest in your application.	Recommended if you require accommodations for your interview.
<b>During an Interview</b>	You can take the opportunity to highlight your skills and qualifications, positively address disability concerns and questions, and convince the employer of your ability to do the job.	The employer may react or feel you were dishonest. The employer may see the disability as a possible problem. You may not have the appropriate accommodations, making the interview more challenging or uncomfortable.	Recommended if your disability is not visible, but you can focus on your skills and abilities confidently. Be prepared to answer questions about your disability.
<b>At Time of Job Offer</b>	If your disability doesn't affect your ability to do the job, the employer will be confident in their hiring decision. The employer can onboard you more appropriately.	The employer may react poorly or feel you should have told them before making the hiring decision.	Recommended if your disability is invisible and you don't require any accommodations. In this case, you could choose not to disclose your disability.
<b>After you Start Work</b>	You can prove yourself on the job first and respond to questions about your disability with employers and coworkers.	You may feel nervous or feel that you're being untruthful by not disclosing. The employer may react poorly or feel that you were dishonest. It may change your relationships at work.	Recommended if not disclosing is causing you unnecessary stress or you need accommodations. It may also be appropriate if there are problems or concerns with your work performance or coworkers.

When to Disclose	Pros	Cons	When to Use
<b>After a Problem Occurs</b>	You have the opportunity to prove yourself on the job first.	The employer may react poorly or feel that you were dishonest. May perpetuate disability myths and misunderstandings among employers and coworkers. It may change your relationships at work.	Recommended if problems or concerns at work persist. Be prepared to educate your employer and coworkers about your disability. Ask for help and rely on your support system.
<b>Never</b>	You will not have to explain your disability. The employer and coworkers may not automatically assume work-related issues are associated with your disability.	The employer and your coworkers won't become more aware or educated about the benefits and value of hiring and working with persons with disabilities.	Recommended if your disability is invisible and you don't require any accommodations. In this case, you could choose not to disclose your disability.

## Tips for Disclosing

If you're thinking of disclosing your disability, there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself. Read through the following suggestions and decide what is helpful for you:

- **Role-play your disclosure conversations**

If you're nervous about discussing your disability, plan what you'll say, and take the time to rehearse with a family member or close friend ahead of time. Not only will you feel more prepared about what you will say, but you will also feel more confident. Keep it simple. You don't need to give all your personal details; decide how much you feel comfortable sharing and stick with that.

- **Don't present your disability as a weakness**

Focus on what you can do for the company, and don't let your disability stand in the way of highlighting your job capabilities. Focus on highlighting your skills and qualifications as they relate to the position. Give concrete examples of how you performed your job duties in the past, this will help the employer visualize you in the role. If you're comfortable, talk more about what kind of valuable contributions your disability has had in your previous environments.

- **Be able to identify your workplace accommodations**

The more you can tell an employer about the required accommodations after disclosing a disability, the more confident they will feel in knowing how to support you. It will also be helpful to provide examples or reflect on past academic or employment accommodations you've received. If you have resources you can provide to help the employer better understand your needs, leave this information with them. Research the costs and funding available for any accommodations you may need. When possible, be responsible for your individual needs by providing the software or equipment needed for your accommodation. Sharing this information with the employer is helpful and creates a sense of reassurance that you are prepared for your new work environment, and it doesn't provide an employer with an excuse not to hire you.

- **Be prepared to answer questions about your disability**

Questions are an opportunity for an employer or colleague to learn. Providing an educated and thorough answer will be an opportunity to break down perceived barriers.

- **Talk about the business case for hiring persons with disabilities**

Businesses are strongly motivated to hire employees with disabilities, which is why it is helpful to inform employers of the benefits of adding a person with a disability to their team. For example, they are diversifying their workforce, showing commitment to employment equity, broadening perspectives, building a positive image in the community, widening their talent pool, and encouraging and improving accessibility practices for everyone.

Originally adapted from [Students or Job Seekers with Disabilities Disclosure, Pros and Cons of How and When to Disclose](#), and [Disclosure Tips](#) in [Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students & Grads](#), copyright © 2021 by Lindsay Bortot and the Employment Support Centre, Algonquin College, which is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

# APPENDIX

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In [Be the Boss of Your Career: A Complete Guide for Students & Grads](#), the original creators at Algonquin College acknowledged the following organizations and resources:

Career Professionals of Canada	Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, Essential Employability Skills
Government of Alberta, Advanced Techniques for Work Search	
Government of Alberta, Employment Series for Persons with Disabilities, Tips for Job Seekers	Ontario Skills Passport, Essential Skills and Work Habits for Work, Learning and Life
Government of Alberta, Job Smart Tips for Staying Employed	O*Net OnLine
Government of Canada, Competition Bureau	Ottawa Police Service, Fraud
Government of Canada, Job Bank	Simon Fraser University, Understanding Canadians
Government of Canada, National Occupational Classification	Stanford University, Pursuing Meaningful Work: A Strategies Guide for Bachelor's & Master's Students
Government of Canada, Studying and Working in Canada	Statistics Canada
Government of Ontario, Your Guide to the Employment Standards Act	The Conference Board of Canada, Employability Skills
Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, Guiding Principles for Experiential Learning	The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), Career Readiness for the New College Graduate
Ontario Ministry of Labour, Health and Safety	Toronto Metropolitan University, Career Compass: Your Career and Job Search Guide
Global Affairs Canada, Cultural Information	University of Manitoba, Career Development Centre, Working in Canada: A Guide for International Students
LinkedIn, LinkedIn for Students	
Nelson Education, Recruitment, and Selection in Canada	Valerie G. Ward Consulting, Employment Readiness Scale
Ontario Human Rights Commission, Canadian Human Rights Act	