

Module One - Welcome to Co-op WEP

Welcome from the Director of Co-operative Education

Dear Students,

Welcome to co-operative education; you've come at an exciting time.



Camosun College's newly implemented model of co-operative education is unique in British Columbia because of its team approach to supporting your workplace learning. There are three distinct roles in this team, each chosen to capitalize on distinct areas of expertise.

Every participating School at Camosun has a Co-op and Internship Coordinator (CIC) who works closely with the appropriate faculty, chairs, and dean. One of the CIC's key roles is to ensure that the learning outcomes for work terms are closely integrated with and build upon those of the other courses within the relevant program. The CIC is your champion for workplace learning within the School and is located in one of the School's academic areas.

The Employment Facilitator (EF) is your seminar leader and your main resource as you explore your skills and abilities, develop and practice your career management and job search skills. EF's are located in both the Lansdowne and Interurban co-op offices, and each of them brings a wealth of experience in career management and employment coaching plus up-to-date knowledge of current labour market conditions and trends at the local level and beyond.

Once you get to the work term stage you'll enjoy the support of a third member of the team, the Co-op Field Instructor (CFI). Just like any other course in your program, the CFI is the instructor there to guide you and liaise with the employer to achieve the learning outcomes and help you get the most out of your workplace experiences.

Behind the scenes, you have many other members of the college and the co-op department working on your behalf. Camosun College strongly believes in promoting experiential education and our new operational model builds in more opportunities for students to participate in and be recognized for workplace learning. Whether you get involved to gain practical experience, to try out potential careers, or simply to take a proactive approach to managing your career plans and gain a competitive advantage, we are here to support your efforts.

We take your career seriously!

Gloria Darroch

View video: Director's Welcome

Introduction to the department



Co-op Workplace Education Prep (WEP) is offered through the department of Co-operative Education & Student Employment (CESE). CESE offers services to all students, staff and alumni and to employers in the community.

Our offices provide resources and coaching to help students enter the workforce, including individual help with job search skills, group workshops, career fairs and speaker panels, and employer information sessions.

Co-op and Internship programs are offered through the combined effort of your school program and the Co-op and Student Employment department. Each participant's school has a faculty member identified as the Co-op and Internship Coordinator (CIC) who leads work integrated learning activities for that school, and dedicated Co-op and Student Employment staff to facilitate career readiness and to coach and

support work term development. A faculty member, known as the Co-op Field Instructor (CFI), from the student's program will be assigned to and responsible for the actual work term Co-op or Internship course.

The staff who support co-op and internship work terms are part of the Co-operative Education and Student Employment (CESE) offices located at both campuses. The Interurban office is located in Campus Centre 251; and the Lansdowne office is in Fisher 128.

For more information about Co-op and Student Employment, contact:

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Co-op WEP Outline

The seminar is a blend of online modules and "face-to-face" workshops facilitated by our department's Employment Facilitators.

The seminar outline is as follows:

Modules

- Module 1 Welcome to Co-op WEP
- Module 2 Self Assessments

- Module 3 Building Your Resume and Skill Statements
- Module 4 Targeting Your Resume and Cover Letters
- Module 5 Job Search and the Labour Market
- Module 6 Networking Tips and Self-Marketing
- Module 7 Interviews
- Module 8 Mock Panel Interviews
- Module 9 Workplace Issues, Rights and Responsibilities
- Module 10 Completing a Successful Workterm

Workshops

- Workshop 1 Orientation to CIMS and Introduction to Resumes
- Workshop 2 Resumes and Cover Letters
- Workshop 3 Job Search & Networking *with guest employers*
- Workshop 4 Interview Preparation
- Workshop 5 Panel Interviews
- Workshop 6 Mock Interviews *with guest employers*
- Workshop 7 What to Expect on your Work term

Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING POLICY CAREFULLY. FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN AN **NC** GRADE FOR WORKPLACE EDUCATION PREPARATION AND PREVENT PARTICIPATION IN A WORK TERM.

Under normal job search conditions missing a job application deadline, an employer information session, or a job interview results in the immediate end of a candidate's potential consideration with that firm; at least for that employment opportunity. Promptness and time management are essential skills required by employers.

The Co-op WEP program is designed to simulate these same conditions as much as possible. Given the number of participants, the complexities involved in organizing the applied workshops, and the participation of internal and external individuals, we are able to provide only one workshop for each topic to students enrolled in the course. Thus attendance at all workshops is very important and is essential for achieving a COM grade. Eligibility for work terms includes this COM grade.

Students are urged to pay close attention to the workshop schedule when registering and to NOT register in a section if attendance at all workshops is not possible. In order to deal with unavoidable absences, there is a very limited make-up provision. Only one make-up per student is allowed, and a make-up will only be allowed under the following circumstances:

- The student must provide prior notification to the Employment Facilitator.
- Notification must be to the Employment Facilitator via email, voice mail, or in person.
- The forced absence must be supported by evidence (e.g. doctor note for self or child).

- For those extremely rare occurrences where contact cannot be made in advance or no documentation is available, a case by case examination of the circumstances will occur. Students must notify the Employment Facilitator of the situation as soon as possible as an unwarranted delay will result in a grade of NC.
- The Employment Facilitator will provide a package of instruction for any approved make-up.
- All make-up sessions are dependent upon the initiative of the student for successful completion and must be completed within the directed time frame.

Co-op's WEP seminar is designed to increase the time students have to actually practice skills and to create greater opportunities for interaction with local employers. One of the ways to accomplish this is to provide a blended approach. This gives students greater flexibility and responsibility for the information portion of the seminar while freeing the co-op staff to focus on creating applied workshops for practicing skill development. Students are expected to prepare for each workshop by completing all relevant and related online materials as well as successfully taking the appropriate module quizzes prior to each workshop session.

Employer feedback has enthusiastically confirmed the success of WEP's student preparation displayed by Camosun co-op and internship students in comparison to their peers from competing institutions. Through consistent attendance and active participation, you will enhance the effectiveness of your job search skills.

Grading System

The grading for this course is the Competency Based Grading System.

NC = missed more than one workshop and/or did not complete the online quizzes

COM = all workshops attended and all online quizzes completed with a minimum of a 70% score

Course Learning Outcomes

The Co-op WEP course will help you enhance your career preparation and job search skills



The Co-op WEP seminar course will help you get that first career job, and will introduce you to the expectations and assignments for your work term. By the end of this course, you will have the opportunity to:

- identify and evaluate your current and desired skills, knowledge, talents and interests to continually self-direct learning and careers;
- set specific, measurable goals for personal and professional growth;
- explore career opportunities and trends using a variety of tools and methods;
- articulate your own current skills, talents, knowledge, interests and professional goals in a variety of contexts including:
 - an effective resume
 - a targeted cover letter
 - an employment interview
 - networking events
- build and maintain a network of relationships to assist in your personal and professional growth;
- identify appropriate professional behaviours and effective communication in the workplace;
- access resources related to workplace legislation and regulations; and
- plan to maximize personal and professional contributions and learning throughout the workplace education experience.

Co-op and Student Employment Job Boards

Career Information Management System (CIMS) login procedures

As a Camosun College student you may wish to access the Student Employment Job Board to apply for work that utilizes your skills and relates to your chosen career field.

To view SE jobs

1. Visit the **CIMS website** and log in using your Camosun ID and the password you chose when signing up.
2. Click the **Job Board** link to search for jobs.
3. To view all jobs, click the **View Jobs** button. You can narrow your search by selecting specific job categories.
4. Click the title of any job listing for detailed information about that posting.

To view Co-op jobs

As a co-op or internship student you will also be granted access to co-op postings that are relevant for your program once you have met the co-op or internship eligibility requirements.

The Co-op and Student Employment (CESE) Department uses this online database to track student work term placements, accumulate information on employers and post work term opportunities. As a student, you will be given access to certain areas of this system that will allow you to:

- 1) Create, edit and update your personal information.
- 2) View information about job postings and apply to interview (online).

Please keep these instructions for future reference!

Create Your Personal CIMS Account

- 1) Click on <https://cims.camosun.bc.ca/>
- 2) Select Register.
- 3) Enter the temporary student password: (Note: CIMS is not case sensitive). Your temporary password will be provided to you at the first Co-op WEP session and is program specific.
- 4) You will now see the "Student Registration" screen, your "Program" name and you are ready to create your CIMS account by entering your personal information.
- 5) Enter your First Name and Last Name. (Be sure to follow the rule of starting with a capital letter for each name).
- 6) Enter your Student number with a capital C (i.e. C0002588). Your student number will be your Username when logging into CIMS.
 - a) Check to ensure your student number is entered correctly because it cannot be edited after you leave this screen. If you have left this screen and have entered your student number incorrectly, DO NOT create a second CIMS account by using your correct student number. Finish creating your CIMS account with the incorrect student number. After you are finished creating your account, contact your Employment Facilitator and ask him/her to correct your student number.
- 7) Enter your birth date (please use dd/mm/yyyy format).
- 8) Select your gender from the drop down box.
- 9) Select your citizenship from the drop down box.
- 10) Enter a password. The password should be something you will remember easily.

a) Confirm your password by typing it again in the Confirm Password area.

b) Make note of your username and password for future login to the database. (Remember that CIMS is not case sensitive).

11) Enter your e-mail address. (Please enter the email address you use most frequently). You will be able to add additional e-mail addresses at a later time by editing your account. (If you are using a hotmail account or a yahoo account, please remember to add @camosun.ca to your safe list or emails from Camosun will go into your JUNK Folder).

12) Please select the intake date from the drop down box. This will be September of the year a student started his/her program.

13) Enter the address where you currently live (if your mailing address is the same you do not need to enter it in the mailing address box below).

14) Enter your phone number (this number will be used by the Co-op office to contact you for interviews, etc., so please enter a number that has voice mail or an answering machine attached so messages can be left).

15) You can select preferred locations you would like to work in during a work term by selecting one or more areas. To select more than one area, hold your Ctrl key and click on the areas you wish to select.

16) You can also select languages that you speak. To select more than one language, hold down the Ctrl key and select all languages spoken.

17) Check over all the information you entered to ensure it is accurate.

18) Read the terms of use, then click the box next to "I have read and agree to the terms of use."

19) Select the Send Registration button.

20) Click the link to go to the CIMS login page.

21) Please login using your username (student ID) and the password you chose.

(If you have trouble logging in, please contact the CIMS Administrator at wendland@camosun.ca)

22) When you are finished, select logout.

Congratulations, you have successfully created your CIMS account!

[View Your Personal Profile](#)

- 1) Open Internet Explorer and go to <https://cims.camosun.bc.ca/>
 - 2) Enter your username and password. (Remember that CIMS is not case sensitive).
 - 3) Select My Profile.
 - 4) Review your personal information.
 - 5) When you are finished, select Logout.
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Edit/Update Your Personal Profile

It is very important that you update your phone number and e-mail address if there is a change in your contact information. The Co-op and Student Employment Department needs this information:

- to be able to contact you about job openings and interviews;
- so that your Co-op Field Instructor can stay in contact with you on your work term.

If you have updated this information with Registration, you will also need to update it in CIMS, as the information from Registration is not uploaded into CIMS automatically.

- 1) Open Internet Explorer and go to <https://cims.camosun.bc.ca/>
- 2) Enter your username and password. (Remember that CIMS is not case sensitive).
- 3) Select My Profile.
- 4) Make the necessary changes under the appropriate areas.
- 5) When you are finished, select Logout.

Remember: it is your responsibility to ensure all of your contact information is accurate and up-to-date.

Welcome to the Workplace Preparation Seminar Course!

Please read this important information before starting the course:

Attendance Policy: It is essential to read and understand the [Attendance Policy](#) as it applies immediately, including the first session.

Student Handbook: Please read the [Student Handbook](#) which contains vital information about the co-op process, before and during the work term.

Course Home Page: Check the news items regularly for any new information, reminders, and memos from your facilitator.

Seminar Outline: Refer to your Co-op WEP outline for the attendance policy, workshop topics, and note when employers are attending. Failure to do so may be hazardous to your grade.

Quizzes: Each group of Modules has a quiz attached to it. You must score 70% or higher on the quiz to be able to move on. You will have three attempts to reach this score. Please note that you can open a separate window and refer to the content while you are writing the quiz.

Workshops: Make sure you **check the schedule** for the workshop times and locations. You must attend all the workshops to receive a 'complete' in this course to be eligible to register for a work term.

Completion of Workshops: Remember, you must attend all workshops and successfully complete all quizzes in order to receive a 'Complete' grade for the Co-op WEP seminar course. A 'Complete' grade is one of the requirements to be eligible to pursue a work term. Please see the section of the [College Calendar](#) for your program for other criteria for work term eligibility.

Questions?: If you have any questions while moving through the material, please check the FAQ on the toolbar. You can also e-mail your Employment Facilitator or stop by the Co-op and Student Employment office.

This is a fast paced and interactive course that will take place over the next 7 weeks. Remember you are developing life skills that will help you manage your career, both now and in the future.

Assignment 1: Work Term Expectations

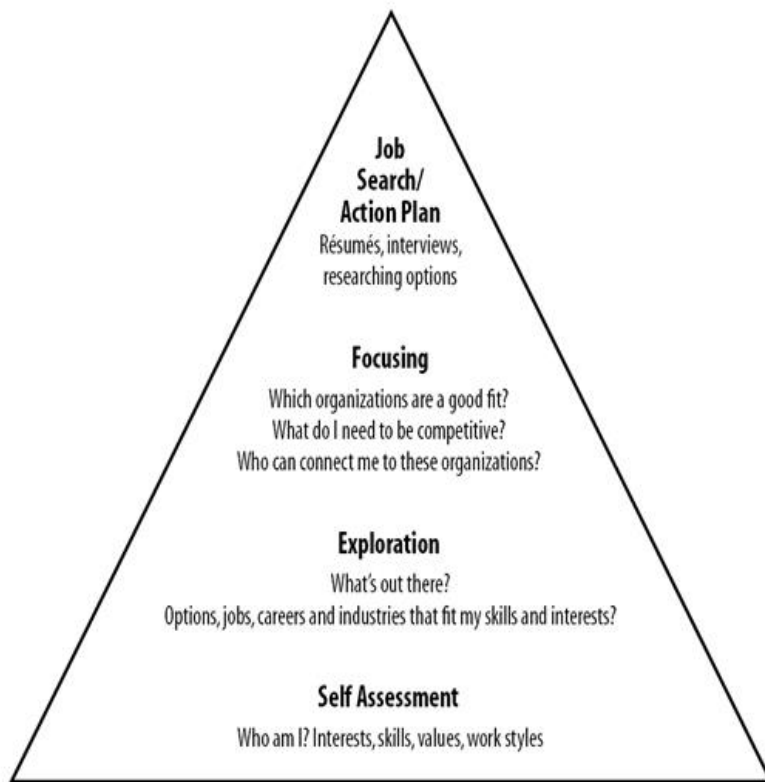
Tell your Employment Facilitator a bit more about yourself by completing the [Work Term Expectations Form](#). Please deliver the completed form to the [D2L Drop Box](#).

Also, please complete the [Registration Policy Agreement and Application Form](#). Please bring this signed form to your Work Term Expectations meeting. If you have any questions about the policy you can ask during this meeting.

Module 2. Self Assessment

Career Development Pyramid

The Job Search Process



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The pyramid above presents a model of how to conduct a successful job search where “successful” refers to getting a job that is genuinely a good fit for you. Although the process is actually dynamic and there is movement back and forth among the different stages, the model suggests that a successful job search encompasses four basic steps. It begins with Self-Assessment – knowing who you are and what you want, moves on to Exploration of what’s out there in terms of interesting industries and occupations, progresses to Focusing on specific industries and companies that appeal to you, and then culminates in the nuts-and-bolts Job Search stage, involving sending out resumes, interviewing, and negotiating job offers.

You might find it helpful to look through the following questionnaire, “Testing Your Career Fitness”. You can use this as a checklist to see how ready you currently are to conduct a successful job search, and as a guide to help you effectively and confidently prepare for your job search.

Testing Your Career Fitness

Self-Knowledge

1. I know what motivates me to excel.
2. I can identify my strongest abilities and skills.

3. I have several major achievements that clarify a pattern of interests and abilities.
4. I know what I both like and dislike in work.
5. I have some ideas about what I want to do during the next (two to three) years.
6. I can list my major accomplishments in action terms.

Knowledge of Employers

7. I know what skills I can offer employers in different occupations.
8. I can clearly explain to employers what I do well and enjoy doing.
9. I can specify why an employer should hire me.
10. When I'm ready to find a job, I will be able to identify and target potential employers.

Job Search Skills/Contacts

11. I can conduct research on different occupations, employers, organizations and communities.
12. I can write different types of effective resumes, cover letters, and thank-you notes.
13. I can produce and distribute resumes and letters to the right people.
14. I can develop a job referral network.
15. I can prospect for job leads.

Adapted from *Jobtrak Job Search Tips*

Self Assessment

At the base of our model pyramid, providing the essential foundation for the rest of the job search, is self-assessment, or knowing yourself. Thoughtful self-assessment streamlines the remaining steps of the job search: it helps you focus on organizations and careers compatible with your goals, and lets you market yourself knowledgeably and confidently. Three aspects important to consider when choosing a career are: your interests, values, and skills. Being able to clearly articulate these on a resume and at an interview will promote a good fit with potential employers.

Employability

So Just How Employable Are You?



Optional Activity: Complete this [Employability Skills 2000+ Checklist](#) from Service Canada. Visualize yourself at your most recent job, or even as a student on campus today. The list will help you rate how you measure up on a range of interpersonal and technical skills, as well as attitudes and behaviours. It shouldn't take you more than five minutes to complete, and can provide you with some "food for thought" on areas you should work on when you make your next career move.

Interests

Interests

Our interest in the work we do is a key motivating factor for work. If we are interested in our work, we will find it more enjoyable, be more motivated to learn about it, develop relevant skills, work hard, and persist through difficult challenges, all of which increases our chance of success and job satisfaction.

What are your interests? Think broadly when you answer this question - include work, academics, and volunteer and leisure interests. Consider subject areas as well as activities. For example, subjects might include biology, math and economics while activities could be research, design, and coordinating projects or events.

Below are two exercises that can help you identify some of your interests. It is recommended that you do at least one (but preferably both!) of the exercises and print off the results. Keep these in a career management e-portfolio, all of these will help you later on as you create your resumes and cover letters, and prepare for the all-important job interviews.

The [Holland Code Quiz](#) from Rogue Community College

The **Data, People, Things Quiz** from Service Canada. Note: it's a free quiz, but you will need to create an account before being able to access their career quizzes.



Personal Work Values Assessment

What Do You Value?



In planning your career, it is important to consider what you value most about your work. What qualities and activities must your work have in order to make it rewarding for you? What kind of responsibilities do you need? Do you want to work with people or work alone? The answers to these questions and others may depend on your personal work values.

The following exercises can help you define your work values. Again, do at least one of these exercises, and print off the results for your future reference.

Personal work values self-assessment

In planning your career, it is important to consider what you value most about your work. What qualities and activities must your work have in order to make it rewarding for you? What kind of responsibilities do you need? Do you want to work with people or work alone? The answers to these questions and others may depend on your personal work values. The following exercise will help you define your work values.

What does a job have to be like in order to be satisfying to you? Look at the following list of work values. Think of any career or job that you would like to have and rate each value in terms of its importance to you and your job satisfaction. Click here for a [downloadable](#) version of this form in MS Word.

Work Value Very Important Moderately Important Somewhat Important Not Important

Pleasant surroundings
My own office
Working by myself
Working with a group
See a product at end of day
Creating something
Regular travel
Flexible work hours
Being my own boss
Opportunity for overtime
Helping others
Running my own business
No overtime

Working in projects as a team member
Being supervised by someone I respect
Good benefits package
High salary
Little or no supervision
Work in a large office with many colleagues
Helping society
Regular hours
Working for a large organization
Work in a city
Different tasks each day
Regular routine
Work close to home
Work at home
Never have to work weekends
Never have to bring work home
Work that does not interfere with my home life
Job security
Work with my hands

Work involving writing
Low job pressure
Work majority of time on a computer
Meeting new people
Convincing others to do or buy something
Supportive co-workers
Chance to change jobs within organization
Social activities after work
Dynamic environment
Paid holidays
Professional development activities
Company pays me to go to school
Make a commitment to one organization and stick to it
Have the skills to move from one organization to another easily
Union environment
Work outdoors
Work indoors
Work involving travel
Physical work

Work at a desk
Intellectual work
Work with few immediate but potential long-term results
Work that takes a project and follows it through
Work that can be completed at end of day
Social service work
Government work
Work in education
Work in business
Non-smoking environment
Own office space
Work primarily outdoors
Work that suits my moral values
Other

Now look back at your assessment of work values and particularly at those you checked as being very important. List them in the space below:

1.	6
2.	7
3.	8

4.	9
5.	10.

Of the very important work values you've listed above, put a check mark next to those work values that you feel are most important for your career and job satisfaction. Check at least five (more if you wish).

Knowledge-Based Skills

Knowledge-based skills are acquired through education, training and industry specific on-the-job experience. For example you may be knowledgeable about creating an Excel spreadsheet, balancing daily cash sheets, or programming in C++. To think about your knowledge-based skills, ask yourself "what do you know a lot about?"

Consider academic, work, vocational activities. Which do you enjoy? There are a number of sources you can use to gather information about courses you have taken. The [Camosun College Calendar](#) provides general information about course content. Course outlines provide details about topics studied, assignments, and learning outcomes or objectives.

Here are some samples of knowledge-based skills which are usually acquired through courses, or previous work or volunteer experience. These skills are often specific to a topic of study and/or are technical in nature.

On the left is the type of knowledge-based skill, and on the right is a sample of an experience from a course, job-related experience, or volunteer situation which you can then develop into a skill statement for your cover letter and resume (more information on skill statements is upcoming in Module 3).

Knowledge-Based Skill	Sample Experiences (next step - develop into an expanded skill statement)
Ethical practice for criminal justice practitioners (Criminal Justice 200 - Professional Practice)	Delivered a presentation on ethical practice to classmates
Case study on consumer behaviour (Economics 205 - Managerial Economics)	Analyzed a case study on the behaviour of automobile consumers
Small craft operation	Used marine charts, tide tables and current tables to navigate local waters

Desktop publishing	Created layout of multiple-page documents using Adobe InDesign	Recommended Activity: brainstorm about your knowledge-based skills. Think about knowledge you have gained from previous jobs, volunteer positions, as well as
Website design	Built a website using HTML, CSS and Adobe Dreamweaver	
Excel spreadsheet creation	Used Excel to compile and compare data and conduct statistical analysis of laboratory results	

knowledge you have gained from your courses. Try capturing this knowledge in a chart like the one above using the [word template for skill capturing](#). This will be very useful in writing skill statements for your cover letter and resume. Complete the template, print or save it to your Career Management Portfolio.

Employability Skills



Employability Skills 2000+ was developed by the Conference Board of Canada's Corporate Council on Education. The profile outlines **academic, personal management and teamwork skills** that form the foundation of a high-quality Canadian workforce both today and tomorrow.

Employability skills are the generic skills, attitudes and behaviours that employers look for in potential employees. In the workplace, as in school, the skills are integrated and used in varying combinations, depending on the nature of the particular activities. Progressive and motivated employees will continue to enhance their employability skills throughout their lifetime through a variety of means including formal education, on-the-job training, conferences, seminars and community education.

As you read through the Employability Skills Profile, you will probably find that you have already acquired many skills through your own life experiences; these are **transferable skills**. Consider how you have demonstrated

and validated your skills through application in previous employment, sports and recreation, community involvement, home life, volunteer work, and school achievement.

How do you rate yourself in the range of skills that employers are looking for? Try the [Employability 2000+ Skills Quiz](#) from Service Canada.

Print off your results and save your results in your career portfolio (we will review this in Module 7) for future use.

Transferable Skills



Transferable skills can be both knowledge-based skills and employability skills. They are skills that you have actually demonstrated and are unique to your skill set. Transferable skills are those attitudes, abilities, and personal qualities which are used to accomplish one task yet can be applied to different tasks. In order to assess your transferable skills, you need to examine your previous jobs, projects and achievements in terms of individual tasks and the skills you applied to those tasks.

For example, if one of your recent projects was helping to raise money to buy new computers for a school, you could break that project into the specific tasks you performed to get the job done. Tasks such as: maintained effective communication with committee members; worked with a team to generate ideas; delegated tasks; made face-to-face and telephone presentations to members of the business community; wrote brief update reports for the school newsletter ... all are transferable skills that could be applied to a number of other jobs or projects.

Here are some samples of transferable skills which you may have gained in previous jobs, at school or in volunteer situations.

On the left is the type of transferable skill, and on the right is a sample of an experience from a work, school or volunteer experience. Later, you can develop these into skill statements for your cover letter and resume (there will be more information on skill statements in the next section).

Transferable Skill	Sample Experience (next step - develop an expanded skill statement)
Communication	<p>Trained new co-workers</p> <p>Gave status updates to supervisors</p> <p>Shared fundraising ideas with volunteers</p>
Computer Skills	<p>Took a course in MS Office</p> <p>Used a Point of Sale System</p> <p>Wrote Excel formulas</p>
Customer Service	<p>Gave product information to customers</p> <p>Responded to customer complaints</p> <p>Recommended solutions to customers</p>
Financial and Cash Handling	<p>Did cash out</p> <p>Made bank deposits</p> <p>Completed a financial statement in accounting class</p>
Organizational	<p>Planned a retirement party</p> <p>Created an electronic filing</p>

	<p>system</p> <p>Took information from teammates and organized into a group paper</p>
Presentation	<p>Presented a class project to 30 students</p> <p>Volunteered at library to read stories to children</p> <p>Explained ideas for increasing sales to co-workers</p>
Leadership/Supervisory	<p>Gave instructions to co-workers</p> <p>Delegated tasks to team members for a class project</p> <p>Implemented new procedures in the workplace</p>
Team Work	<p>Worked with a volunteer team to organize an event</p> <p>Did team assignment to create a business plan</p> <p>Helped co-worker who was serving a large group of customers</p>
Time Management	<p>Set time estimates to complete school assignments</p>

	<p>Readjusted work priorities</p> <p>Created a timeline for tasks for a volunteer event</p>
Writing	<p>Wrote a technical report for a class project</p> <p>Wrote a brochure to advertise an event</p> <p>Wrote an article for a volunteer newsletter</p>

Think about the transferable skills you have gained from your work, volunteer and school experiences. Create your own chart using the [Transferable Skills Template](#), and save the results as you may find it useful to place them in your career portfolio which we will discuss in Module 7.

Module 3. Building Your Resume and Skill Statements

Resumes

A Crucial First Impression



In today's labour market your resume and cover letter is often your only opportunity to make a positive first impression to a prospective employer. Your resume is a marketing tool, with **you** as the product. Its purpose is to spark enough interest in the employer to secure an interview.

Whether you are responding to an advertisement in a newspaper or on the Internet, or simply 'prospecting', you can be sure that your resume is not the only resume the employer has received. In fact, yours may well be one of hundreds that the employer must sift through and evaluate. A resume prepared with considerable thought and care that represents the skills, experience, training and attitude that you have to offer is essential to your work search.

Your resume does more than describe you. The design, layout and wording of your resume *shows* a prospective employer how you do things. First, it demonstrates how well you have mastered written communication, one of the key employability skills we discussed in the previous module. Secondly, your resume is a personal presentation of how you think and feel about yourself. Finally, your resume demonstrates what kind of time and effort you are willing to put into a job. Have you taken the time to carefully format and prepare your resume? Have you proofread it carefully? Has it been updated?

As a crucial tool for marketing your skills, experience and attitude to prospective employers, your resume should be regularly updated. Here's a checklist to follow:

Format

- Appropriately formatted for the industry to which you are applying (full pages, attractively laid out)
- Responsive to the preferences and practice of your career field
- Organized and easy to read
- Most important information is on the top third of the first page
- No more than two pages in length (references may be on a third page)
- Put your name, address, and phone number at the top of the first page, with your name and page number on the second page (using a consistent header on your resume and cover letter will make it look more professional)
- Choose topic headings that match the main functions of the job(s) you are applying to
- Use a consistent tense of either past or present throughout resume (e.g. past tense: experienced, performed, worked)
- Arrange items in reverse chronological order in each category (most recent should be first)
- Positive in tone and action oriented, using points and short phrases beginning with action verbs
- Free of gaps in time which may cause an employer to question your honesty or reliability
- Organize bullet points from most-to-least or least-to-most important
- Free of spelling and grammatical errors (use spell check, have an objective person read through your resume, read it yourself from bottom up or leave it and come back after a day)
- Use white space so important information stands out and pages will be easy to scan electronically and visually
- Ensure even margins and well balanced pages

- Font size should be 10-12 points
- Typed and laser printed on 8 1/2" x 11" good quality bond paper
- Be available in a variety of electronic formats (i.e. pdf, text, rtf, word)
- Use a universal font style (i.e. Arial, Times New Roman)

Content

- Put your name, address, and phone number at the top of the first page, with your name and page number on the second page (using a consistent header on your resume and cover letter will make it look more professional)
- Choose topic headings that match the main functions of the job(s) you are applying to
- Use a consistent tense of either past or present throughout resume (e.g. past tense: experienced, performed, worked)
- Arrange items in reverse chronological order in each category (most recent should be first)
- Positive in tone and action oriented, using points and short phrases beginning with action verbs
- Free of gaps in time which may cause an employer to question your honesty or reliability
- Organize bullet points from most-to-least or least-to-most important

Presentation

- Free of spelling and grammatical errors (use spell check, have an objective person read through your resume, read it yourself from bottom up or leave it and come back after a day)
- Use white space so important information stands out and pages will be easy to scan electronically and visually
- Ensure even margins and well balanced pages
- Font size should be 10-12 points
- Typed and laser printed on 8 1/2" x 11" good quality bond paper
- Be available in a variety of electronic formats (i.e. pdf, text, rtf, word)
- Use a universal font style (i.e. Arial, Times New Roman)

In order to conform to the current Human Rights Code, your resume should NOT:

- State religious or ethnic affiliations
- List personal information such as height, weight, age, marital or health status
- State your social insurance number

The method of preparing a resume that we will cover in this module may take more thought, effort and time than methods that you have used in the past, but it may also produce a much more effective and professional result.

Guidelines for an Effective Resume Format

Three Formats Will Be Considered



Just as individual job applicants vary widely, so do resume layouts. In this section, we will discuss three standard resume formats: 1. **Chronological**, 2. **Functional**, and 3. **Combination**, and the particular situations where each of these formats would be most suitable. Regardless of the format chosen, every effective resume should include the following essential information:

- Personal Data: name, address, and telephone number, a message telephone number if appropriate, and an e-mail address. *A resume should NOT include such personal data as marital status, birth date, height and weight, photograph or social insurance number!* Note: your email address *must* be business appropriate.
- Employment Objective (if included): type of employment desired and areas of employment interest.
- Education: name and year of the program in which you are currently enrolled; diplomas or degrees previously received; relevant courses, certificates or seminars; dates (including month and year).
- Experience: work experience including summer, part-time and volunteer work – emphasize skills developed and utilized.
- Activities, Awards and Scholarships: student organizations; professional organizations; campus activities; sports; special projects and committee assignments, particularly those related to your career goals. *A resume should NOT include information about organizations or activities indicating political, religious or ethnic affiliations!*
- References: a minimum of three references, (past employers, instructors, or others who could adequately assess your skills, character and work ethic). Do NOT list relatives as references!

As pages of a resume may become separated, or a resume may be sent by fax, be certain that your name appears at the top of each page of your resume. An employer looks over a resume in much the same way as a person scans a newspaper, taking in headlines and choosing which sections to read in more detail. An effective resume should therefore be laid out in such a way as to facilitate scanning – with sufficient white space, bold headings, and borders and bullets where appropriate.

A resume **MUST** be free of spelling, typing and grammatical errors! Mistakes in a resume indicate inattention to detail and a careless attitude to a prospective employer. Regardless of the format you choose for your resume, be certain that you carefully proofread all of your material! Do not simply rely on your computer's 'spell check'.

Chronological Resumes

The Pros and Cons of a Chronological Resume

The Chronological resume format details work history beginning with the most recent job and working backward in reverse chronological order. Job titles and companies are emphasized along with skills and accomplishments associated with the titles.

Advantages:

- ✓ Emphasizes continuity and career growth through the positions held
- ✓ Highlights names of companies for which you have worked
- ✓ Easy to follow

Best Used:

- ✓ When your work history is directly in line with your career objective
- ✓ When companies you have worked for are well-known and have a good reputation in your field
- ✓ When you have had long, stable periods of career-related employment

Best Avoided:

- ✓ When you have had many jobs that you stayed in less than one year
- ✓ When you performed similar duties in all of the jobs you have held
- ✓ When you have little or no work experience directly related to your job target
- ✓ When your most recent jobs are at a lower level than earlier jobs.

Sample Resume #1: Chronological Resume

Terry Pullman

1234 Robin Hood Crescent
Sherwood, BC V0S 2R8
Telephone: (250) 555-1234
E-mail: terrypullman@shaw.ca

OBJECTIVE:

A civil engineering technology co-op position in a land development firm enabling me to contribute and further develop surveying and drafting skills

HIGHLIGHTS OF SKILLS:

- Currently enrolled in Civil Engineering Technology at Camosun College—GPA 8.
- Familiar with AutoCAD Civil 3D and Land Desktop software.
- Use Theodolite, Total Station, and Electronic Level surveying equipment.
- A self-motivated, strong communicator with eagerness and willingness to learn.
- Demonstrated research, time management, and organizational skills; able to work under limited supervision and in various weather conditions.

EDUCATION:

Civil Engineering Diploma Program

Camosun College, Victoria BC Expected graduation: Mar 2014

Sep 2012-present

Dogwood Certificate of Graduation

Sherwood Senior Secondary, Sherwood BC

2008

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Surveyor's Helper

Sherwood Land Surveying Services (Co-op work term)

Jun-Sep 2013

- Accurately surveyed building lots in a new 10 acre subdivision using EDM, Theodolite, and Autolevel equipment, supporting timely start of projects
- Clearly laid out points for roads, with and without elevations, using a Total Station
- Used LDD to produce accurate topographical maps of Sherwood Public Park
- Made detailed drawings of subdivisions and buildings using AutoCAD

Construction Labour

Hayes Construction, Sherwood BC

Jun 2009-Aug 2012

- Framed new houses, following blueprints and carpenter's instructions to produce the highest level of quality
- Efficiently built and poured strong concrete walls and footings
- Prepared and landscaped grounds, accurately following design plans
- Operated equipment and small machines, i.e. bobcat, compactor
- Acknowledged by foreman for being reliable and bringing a good attitude to work

Employment History continued-**Outside Sales Representative**

Jun-Oct 2008

Walker's Professional Painting, Sherwood, BC

- Prepared and presented paint contracting estimates for homeowner and business clients
- Advised clients on painting products and choices to meet their specific needs
- Ensured that painting contracts were completed in a timely manner
- Supervised exterior painting work crews assigned to clients

Busperson

Sep 2005-Jun 2008

Bucaroo's Family Restaurant, Sherwood, BC

- Co-operated with host and serving staff to maintain high standards of cleanliness
- Served beverages and condiments to guests in a courteous and timely manner
- Trained 12 new bussing employees
- Received Employee of the Month Award 6 times over 2 years

MEMBERSHIPS:*Registered student member of the Association of Technologists and Technicians of BC***AWARDS:***ABC Construction Association Award for top academic standing 2012***COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEER WORK:**

Active participant, Sherwood Valley Recreational Hockey League

2010-present

Team Member, Sherwood Secondary School "Reach for the Top" team

2008

Beaver Group Co-Leader, Sherwood Boy Scout Troop #5

2006-2008

REFERENCES

Joe Miller, Foreman

Hayes Construction

Sherwood, BC

Telephone: (250) 222-4321

E-mail: jmiller@hayes.ca

Moe Ryan, Manager

Walker's Professional Painting

Sherwood, BC

Telephone: (250) 222-3690

E-mail: mryan@tricolourpaint.com

Dave Despins, Professional Land Surveyor

Sherwood Land Surveying Services

Sherwood, BC

Telephone: (250) 222-7631

Email: ddespins@SLSS.com

Functional Resumes

The pros and cons of a functional resume

The Functional resume highlights major areas of accomplishment, strength and skill, allowing you to re-organize them in an order that best supports your work objectives and job targets. Actual titles and work history are in a subordinate position.

Advantages:

- ✓ Gives you considerable flexibility in emphasis
- ✓ Allows you to highlight transferable skills from seemingly unrelated jobs
- ✓ Eliminates repetition of duties and accomplishments
- ✓ De-emphasizes a choppy work history

Best Used:

- ✓ When you are changing or redirecting your career
- ✓ When you are re-entering the job market after an extended absence
- ✓ When you have no employment history
- ✓ When you wish to emphasize particularly strong areas of ability or transferable skills

Best Avoided:

- ✓ When your chronological work history and education illustrate a stable, directed, progressive path toward your job target.

Sample Resume #2: Functional

Kim Francis Smith

1234 Cherry Tree Lane
Victoria, BC V1N 1A2
Telephone: (250) 555-4444
E-mail: kfrancis@yahoo.ca

Career Objective

To develop a career in environmental education with a focus on the development of solutions to environmental problems.

Education Background

Environmental Technology Program
Camosun College, Victoria BC

Sept. 2012 - present

Completed 2 years toward a Bachelor of Science
University of Victoria, Victoria BC

Sept. 2010 - May 2012

Skills and Experience

Organization and Communication

- facilitated high energy, participatory workshops in service excellence
- implemented an outdoor activity schedule for Outdoor Leadership training camps
- demonstrated excellent communication skills through interaction with restaurant guests and tree planting work crews
- produced clear and concise technical reports

Technical

- performed water, air and soil sampling in field courses
- prepared and processed plant samples for chemical analysis
- possess broad-based knowledge of environmental issues from course work, personal interest, conferences and association memberships

Computing

- experienced in word processing (MS Word, Word Perfect, and Word for Windows)
- produced scientific reports using databases and spreadsheets (ACCESS, EXCEL)
trained in ARCINFO GIS fundamentals

Employment History

Server/Staff Trainer

Block and Tackle Restaurant, Victoria, BC

May 2010 - present

Tree Planter Summers

FIWA Re-Forestation, Prince George, BC

2008-2010

Outdoor Leadership Trainer

Mammoth Lodge Education Centre, Morningside, BC

May 2006 – August 2008

Activities and Interests

Mountain biking, rock climbing, swimming, and creative writing

References

Marina D. Rey, Manager
Block and Tackle Restaurant
Victoria, BC
Telephone: (250) 555-2222
E-mail: mrey@b&t.com

Sherman Peabody, Instructor
Environmental Technology Program
Camosun College
Victoria, BC
Telephone: (250) 555-9876
E-mail: speabody@camosun.bc.ca

Joe Pullman, Owner
FIWA Re-Forestation
Prince George, BC
Telephone: (250) 444-1111
E-mail: jpullman@fiwa.com

Yogi Smith, Director of Training
Mammoth Lodge Education Centre
Morningside, BC
Telephone: (604) 333-6789
E-mail: yogi@mammothlodge.ca

Combination Resume

The Pros and Cons of a Combination Resume

A Combination resume details your work history, skills, job titles, and companies while allowing you to highlight specific qualifications and experience directly related to your job objective.

Advantages:

- ✓ Markets skills first and provides sufficient detail of the positions you held
- ✓ Relates how you demonstrated your skills
- ✓ Features related experience and job related qualifications

Best Used:

- ✓ When you wish to emphasize skills and experience which relate directly to your job objective
- ✓ When you possess relevant education & training but do not have related work experience yet
- ✓ When you do not have directly-relevant experience

Best Avoided:

- ✓ When you do not have job specific qualifications you wish to highlight
- ✓ When your work history is in direct line to your job target

Sample Resume #3: Combination

Jade Lavesque

1234 Tolmie Street
Victoria, BC V6L 2X2

Ph: 250-385-6778
jadel@yahoo.ca

Objective: An entry-level position in a small local accounting firm where I can contribute skills in general office administration, while developing and practicing accounting skills.

Summary of Qualifications:

- 4 years' experience providing a high level of customer service in office and restaurant settings
- Experienced with accounts payable, receivable, federal and provincial tax calculation and have basic manual and computer accounting skills
- Proficient using MS Office: Word (70 wpm), Excel, Access, Outlook & Internet Explorer;
- Recently learned Simply Accounting in term course work—received 92% in final exam
- Bring an energetic, enthusiastic, happy and organized attitude to work

Education:

Business Administration Diploma—Accounting 2012-2014 (Expected graduation)
Camosun College, Victoria, BC

Grade 12 Diploma 2011
Hillside Secondary School, Victoria, BC

Skills:

Accounting & Financial

- Accurately processed 35 bi-weekly staff time and expense sheets for timely submission to payroll department
- Received incoming invoices, checked against purchase orders, calculated GST and PST, and forwarded to accounting department for timely processing of accounts payable
- Received and recorded incoming client payments and trustee deposits, supporting timely cash flow
- Reconciled bank statements against electronic and paper deposits, and cheques issued; accurately prepared bi-weekly bank deposits and delivered to bank

Client Service

- Greeted often distressed clients arriving for appointments, offered coffee and made comfortable while respecting privacy
- Frequently hand delivered legal documents to other law and accounting offices
- Was voted "Employee of the Month" by co-workers and customers

Organization

- Scheduled meetings and appointments for lawyers and paralegal staff in busy office; used MS Outlook to track appointments and ensure that clients were seen at their earliest convenience
- Successfully organized law firms' annual family picnic for 75 persons, including food, beverages, and entertainment, contributing to a strong team atmosphere
- Efficiently oversaw scheduling of 120 students for individual and group photo sessions over 3 day period

General Office & Computing

- Received, date stamped and sorted incoming mail; metered outgoing mail and prepared packages for courier pick-up, ensuring timely communication of critical information
- Accurately maintained confidential client files and client contact information in database to support smooth business operations
- Filed legal documents, invoices in client files; purged outdated files and arranged for storage

Work Experience**Legal Secretary Assistant**

2011-2012

Jones, Dunn and Smith Law Inc., Victoria, BC

- Performed reception and general office duties for a 35 person team of lawyers, paralegals and legal secretaries in a busy downtown law office
- Earned firm "Character of the Year" award for ability to bring a smile or laugh to the workplace

Barista

2010-2011

Starbucks Coffee, Victoria, BC

Worked part-time in grade 12, then full time after graduation in busy Mayfair Mall location

- Provided friendly, fast customer service that contributed to the store winning an award for increasing repeat customers over a three month period
- Processed cash, debit and credit card payments; sold Starbucks Cards

Customer Service

2008-2010

McDonalds Restaurant, Saanich, BC

- Worked part time during school year and full time in summers in busy restaurant that was in ranked in the top 10% of sales in western Canada
- Took and filled customer orders, processed payments, prepared food, cleaned kitchen, customer area and bathrooms

Community Involvement:**Volunteer Camp Leader** (1week/summer)

2008 - 2010

*Camp Good Times
Langley, BC***Dog Walker**

2007-present

*SPCA, Saanich Branch***Team Member:** Hillside Secondary girls' basketball, volleyball and school swim team

References:

Jinny MacDonald
Office Manager
Jones, Dunn and Smith Law Inc.
1234 Fort Street
Victoria, BC
250-388-1919

Gord Hanson
Manager
McDonald's Restaurant
4556 W. Saanich Road
Saanich, BC
250-474-9000

Sally Field
Program Manager
Camp Good Times
12345-200th Street
Langley, BC
604-488-2399

Employment Objective

Key Questions



To begin your resume you have the option of including an employment objective for a work term or your post-graduation career, or a combination of the two. It is optional to include an employment objective. In fact, a badly done employment objective is worse than none at all. Regardless of whether you include an employment objective or not, the following exercise can be useful as a starting point for constructing a cover letter or targeting your resume.

Use your answers to the following questions to formulate two sentences: one that addresses your short-term objectives and how it fits with your career (long-term) objective. Remember to tie into a specific skill set that you can offer that meets the needs of the employer.

1. What do I want to do?
2. Where?
3. With whom?
4. At what level of responsibility?
5. Under what special conditions, if any?

An effective employment objective adds value and is well written, focusing on the skills you bring to the position and what these skills can do for the employer. Because an objective is position and employer focused, it must be updated to match each new application. The following exercise can be useful as a starting point for constructing a cover letter or targeting your resume. Use the following chart to craft your objective. The information for the chart can be gathered from the job advertisement and by researching the company.

THE POSITION	Key skills	BENEFIT TO EMPLOYER
<i>Engineering Assistant</i>	<i>Surveying, data collection and customer service</i>	<i>To support various municipal projects</i>
<i>Designer/draftsperson</i>	<i>Drafting and design using AutoCAD and Solidworks</i>	<i>To contribute to the return of the famed de Havilland twin otter plane</i>

<i>Website Designer / HTML coder</i>	<i>CSS, HTML, Macromedia Dreamweaver, Adobe Photoshop</i>	<i>To design usable and creative websites</i>
<i>Electronic product assembler and tester</i>	<i>Soldering skills and demonstrated experience with CAD-based design and layout software</i>	<i>To support the project-oriented team environment</i>

Here are some examples:

1. Civil engineering technology co-op student ready and willing to contribute surveying, data collection and customer service skills to support municipal engineering projects.
2. To contribute AutoCAD and Solidworks drafting skills to the de Havilland twin otter plane redesign and upgrade project working as a mechanical engineering co-op student.
3. A website designer/HTML coder co-op opportunity requiring CSS, HTML, and other web design skills for the design of usable and creative websites.
4. A co-op opportunity as an electronic product assembler and tester where I can contribute my proven experience in soldering, CAD-based design, software layout and team work.

Hint: If you are self developing a job and there is no job ad, researching the company and doing information interviews will assist you to develop an employer focused job objective for your resume and cover letter.

Building Your Resume and Skill Statements

Skill Statements



Really effective resumes cut right to the heart of the matter. Without wasting words or space, they highlight crucial skill statements that target the position you're applying for. These statements describe your skills -- *transferable, knowledge and employability skills*-- that fit the position and will benefit the company. If you chose a functional or combination resume, the skills are captured in a "Skills" section. For the chronological format, the skills are captured in the "Work Experience" section. (See "Guidelines for an Effective Resume Format" earlier in Module 3).

Now, using the material you've compiled on your transferable, knowledge and employability skills, take a stab at creating some short phrases that begin with action verbs.

Action phrases should do the following:

Quantify: Tell how many or how often. Describe tangible products and results.

- *"supervised 10 people"*
- *"produced 16 consecutive issues of a 16 page newsletter"*
- *"achieved top add-on sales for three consecutive months"*

Be explicit: Use strong statements to create mental pictures, using as few words as possible. Avoid the use of slang. Try to vary your word choices, though, rather than repetitively using the same ones.

- *"received incoming invoices and calculated HST"*
- *"delivered effective PowerPoint presentations to new staff"*
- *"applied excellent typing and formatting skills"*

Reflect level of responsibility: Employers are looking for evidence of how much responsibility you held in the jobs you are describing.

- *"tutored 30 high school students in computer programming"*
- *"managed all scheduling details for six basketball tournaments"*
- *"trained 14 new servers for the summer season"*

Generate as many "action phrases" describing your skills and accomplishments as you can. Don't worry about their relevance to your career goals at this stage. You will narrow down and select your choices later. Use these **action verbs** to assist you in generating action phrases.

Still not sure how to begin? Visit [Quintessential Careers](#) and jog your memory using their "Accomplishments Worksheet." The questions listed should help you generate some descriptions of the successes and accomplishments you've achieved over the years.

How Do We Perceive Ourselves?

Describing Your Skills



When describing your skills, it pays to think of yourself in terms of the concrete actions you've taken to solve problems and challenges on the job. Select a few of the action verb statements you listed in the previous exercise, and write about your experience in the following **STAR format**. Describe each experience in terms of your demonstrated skills and accomplishments:

1. Describe the **situation**, project, the context, and job
2. Be specific about the **task** you did

3. What **activity** did you do?
4. What were the **results**, outcomes, benefits?

Example:

Situation: At Tim Horton's the processing time of orders was taking too long between receiving the order and delivering it to the customer. Orders were getting backlogged, customers were complaining and the backlog was creating problems in the food preparation area.

Task: As the shift manager, I needed to increase efficiency in getting the orders out and reducing customer wait time. Since the problem involved three different teams (drive-in sales, front counter sales, and food preparation), it presented logistical and communication challenges. I initiated a review of the food preparation system.

Action: Monitored, compiled and analysed data on food preparation and order completion times, solicited staff input, researched alternative preparation systems, presented findings and recommended solutions to management. Organized training for 26 staff on new system.

Results: Changing food preparation systems resulted in a 20 percent increase in productivity and a 2 minute reduction in order to delivery time. Was selected as employee of the year by staff and management.

Skills are described as concrete actions, avoiding words or phrases such as: "learned" or "contributed" or "gained experience in" or "assisted in". (The employer needs to know what you did with the skill, not that you learned the skill.) Here are some skills sentences for the example above:

- **Monitored, compiled and analysed** data for a fast food preparation system.
- **Recommended** streamlined processes that increased productivity by **20%** and decreased order to delivery time by three minutes.
- **Organized** training schedule and trained **26** shift employees on new system.
- **Received** *Employee of the Year* **award** for exceptional performance.

Because numbers stand out and demonstrate accomplishments, quantify the results of your actions by stating the amount of dollars saved, the number of clients served, the percentage increase in productivity or improved efficiency.

You can use the [STAR Template](#) for preparing STAR statements.

Here are more examples of skills statements created from Employability Skills, and samples of how to stress your skills.

Sample 1

BEFORE:

Victoria Performing Arts Centre (VPAC), Victoria, BC. Theatre Marketing Intern.

Responsibilities included coordinating artist press releases, compiling tracking sheets based on information from reservations and box office attendants, handling photos and press release mailing to media, assisting in radio copy writing and performing various other duties.

AFTER:

Victoria Performing Arts Centre (VPAC), Victoria, BC. Theatre Marketing Intern.

- Coordinated artist press releases that contributed to an increase in annual sales by 10 percent.
- Compiled and maintained a mailing list of 10,000 customers, VPAC's largest ever.
- Organized photo and press releases to XYZ Television and Victoria Daily News.
- Contributed to the copy writing of promotional radio commercials for five events.

Sample 2

BEFORE:

Bright Consulting Group, Vancouver, BC

Marketing Analyst, June - July 2005

I analyzed competitive strategies for clients in the bio tech industry. Data gathered assessed profitability of strategies.

AFTER:

Bright Consulting Group, Vancouver, BC. Marketing Analyst.

- Assessed profitability of expansion strategy in the biotech industry. Results were used by client to make market entry decision.
- Gathered data, as part of three-member team, by interviewing over 100 potential customers and presented the results to the clients.

Using the STAR Strategy To Describe Your Skills

Situation:

(Describe the problem you faced).

Task:

(Describe what you needed to do to deal with the challenge or overcome the obstacles).

Action:

(Describe the actions you took using active verbs).

Results:

(Explain what happened as a result of your actions. For example, benefits to the organization, customers, co-workers in quantifiable or measurable terms such as dollars saved, percent improvement, or promotions, awards or commendations received).

Skills:

(Describe the skills you used to achieve the results).

¹¹ Modified with permission from Alberta Employment and Immigration. For more career, learning, and employment information visit the Alberta Information Service (ALIS) website at alis.alberta.ca.

More on References

Listing References is Optional



There are pros and cons to listing references on your resume.

The advantages are:

- The potential employer reading your resume may know your references.
- It saves you from having to remember to create an additional reference sheet to provide to a potential employer at the time of an interview.

The disadvantages are:

- Your references may be contacted before you are called for an interview.
- Your reference's contact information is being circulated without your being certain that you are being considered seriously for a position that you have applied for.

When listing references, ensure the following:

- Always ask the person prior to listing them as a reference. It's a good idea to give references a heads-up that they may be called after you interview for a position.
- References should be relevant; if possible, provide a current work reference.
- Provide the reference's full name, position title, company name, phone number, address and e-mail address.

Answers to Tough Resume Questions

1. How do I account for the year when I wasn't employed?

Tell it in a positive way. Refer to what you were doing rather than what you were not doing.

2. What if I took time to manage a household or my experience is from a long time ago?

Choose a Functional or Combination resume format and translate your day-to-day experiences in the home, community or volunteer work into skills and abilities, using the terminology of the workplace. Don't try to disguise a long absence from the work place by omitting dates of past employment. Dates should always be included in your employment history.

3. What do I do about dates on my job history when I had two or three little jobs with a month or so in between?

Delete very short-term jobs or combine several short jobs in one description. Consider using a functional resume format if most of your recent work history has involved seasonal, short-term, or contract positions.

4. What if I don't have any work experience in the job that I want to do now?

Both your resume and your cover letter should demonstrate your confidence that you have, or could quickly acquire, the skills to be able to do the job successfully. Choose a Functional or Combination resume format in order to focus on transferable skills you have gained through work, school and community involvement that are applicable to your current goal. Demonstrate a credible progression from where you have been to where you want to go.

5. How long should a resume be?

An effective resume should be no more than two pages long, although references may be included on a third page. A prospective employer doesn't need to know your entire life history, only the essential points that make you qualified for the job.

6. What if I was fired or laid off?

It is not necessary to include your reason for leaving a job in your resume. Be prepared to address your reasons if asked in an interview.

7. Who should I include as references?

Previous employers, teachers or instructors who are familiar with your capabilities, and/or a person in your chosen career area who knows you well. If you have not included your most recent employer, be prepared to discuss the reason in the interview.

8. How far back do I need to describe my work experience on my resume?

Ten years. Beyond ten years is considered by most employers to be irrelevant or out of date, especially for computer experience.

Resume Checklist

	Yes	No
First Impressions		
Is the resume appealing at first glance?		
Is this an example of the author's very best work?		
If this resume were one of 50 on your desk, would you be encouraged to put it into the "read" pile?		
Format		
Is the resume clearly broken into sections with easily recognized headings?		
Is the white space adequate without looking too sparse?		
Does the print look appropriate?		
Is the resume free of all spelling, grammatical, punctuation and typing errors?		
Information and Qualifications		

Is the contact information for the references (if included) complete?		
Is the tense consistent when describing skills?		
Do the skill statements use action words?		
Is the education and work experience listed in reverse chronological order? (From most recent to least recent)		
Is the education and training listed relevant to the career objective?		
Are the activities, skills, honours and achievements included relevant and noteworthy?		
Are the activities included free of references to religious or political affiliations?		
Has the author avoided extensive use of personal pronouns?		

Mock Job Postings

Targeting Your Resume and Cover Letter



Your Employment Facilitator will provide you with a job posting to target your resume and cover letter for Module 4. This "mock" job posting will be the same one you will use for the panel and mock interviews.

Suggested Activity

Review the charts you have developed that include your knowledge-based, employability and transferable skills. Choose **three** of the skills that are the most relevant to your future career direction. Using the STAR template create STAR statements for each of these three skills. Have a classmate, friend or family member review the statements and provide you with feedback. Use this feedback to help you continue to create powerful skill statements for your resume and cover letter.

Module 4. Targeting Your Resume and Cover Letters

Targeting Your Resume and Cover Letter

In Module 2 you reflected on your interests, work values and skills. In Module 3 you were introduced to three resume formats, presentation requirements and you started to build the content components to be included in an effective resume.

Now you are ready to put it all together to prepare a resume and cover letter that will be perfectly targeted to the job you want!

Listen to what some of our co-op employers say about what makes a cover letter and resume stand out!



Tori Klassen,
BCCampus

[Click here](#)



Paul Butterfield,
District of Saanich

[Click here](#)

Cover Letters: Setting The Stage For Your Resume

The following steps will help you prepare a resume and cover letter to match the employer's requirements with your skills, experience, education and training. By taking the time to target your application you assist the employer to easily see if you meet the basic requirements of the job, and it saves them time. It also sends a message that you are well organized and have a work attitude focused on the employer's wants and needs rather than just your own.

Step 1 – Identify a Suitable Job Posting

Obtain a job ad from a Camosun College job board, other job board, company website or newspaper. You can also research a company and ask for a position description if they are not advertising a vacancy. For the Co-op WEP course your Employment Facilitator will provide you a mock job posting to use in order to create a targeted cover letter and resume.

Step 2 – Analyse the Job Description for the Obvious and Not Obvious Skills

It's important to thoroughly understand the job requirements, and the company. To do this, analyse the job ad to determine the required qualifications, including skills, experience, education, and training.

Next, research the company to determine its organizational culture, values and corporate structure. While you are at it, identify something about the company that particularly resonates with you—their mission, product, current projects. This will be useful when it comes time to prepare your cover letter.

While some requirements are obvious from the job description, watch for the not-so-obvious requirements that you find by "reading between the lines." For example, if the company requires you to make deliveries, you need to include in your documents that you have a driver's license, even if it isn't asked for. Or, some may not specify certain employability/soft skills (attitude, conflict management) but yet it is obvious these would be necessary for excellent performance in the role.

Step 3 – Identify Your Qualifications

Prepare a table (or T-chart) listing all the company's requirements on one side and on the other side write your matching qualifications, including skills, experience, education, and training. Consider how your values and personal mission match those of the company.

Skill/Qualifications Required	My Qualifications (include course work, past paid work, and volunteer experience)
1.	1.

2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
etc...	etc...

Step 4 – Develop Action Verb Skill Statements That Describe Your Qualifications

Referring to your completed T-chart, write one or more skill statements that start with an action verb and contain a result or an accomplishment that will demonstrate how you used that skill. Include your employability skills and keep in mind that an employer will only know what you can do for her/him based on what you are able to describe from your experience.

Example: Job requirement: cashier and customer service duties

Skill Set: Customer Service and Sales

Skill Statement 1: Balanced cash of up to \$3000.00 and closed the store at the end of the day.

Skill Statement 2: Managed counter duties including handling cash and providing effective customer service.

Skill Statement 3: Received Crew Member of the month award for fast and friendly service for 3 months running.

Step 5 – Choose a Resume Format and Prepare a Draft Resume

- Review the three resume formats introduced in Module 3 to determine which format will best showcase your qualifications for the job. Remember to keep employer preferences in mind as some industries or large employers may be known to favour certain styles.
- Prepare a draft resume matching the qualifications the company is seeking to your relevant qualifications.
- If you have additional/bonus qualifications that you have determined would add value to the company, make sure to mention these in the cover letter.

Video Resumes

It's not for everyone, but if you're sure of your ability to communicate your skills online, check out this [how to clip](#) from ABC News on creating a video version of your resume.

Guidelines for an effective cover letter

Content tips to consider before starting:

- Demonstrate that you have done some research into the company and can see their point of view, (interest, priorities, and current problems). An employer wants to know that you want to work for their company, not just any company, and that you have compelling reasons for making that choice.
- Convey your enthusiasm and commitment - or even passion - for this line of work.
- Balance formality with personal warmth and friendliness.
- Don't broadcast your lack of research or initiative by using such phrases as "To Whom It May Concern."
- Avoid using trite, say-nothing phrases such as "I want to apply" (you are applying!) Do not use slang or abbreviations.
- Identify at least one thing about you that is unique. Choose something that goes beyond the basic requirements of the position that distinguishes you and is relevant to the position. Why should this employer hire you instead of one of the other 50 applicants?
- Outline specifically how you are the answer to their specific needs.
- Be as brief and focused as possible. A cover letter must be one page in length.
- Avoid the use of bullets or point form. Write in complete sentences. A paragraph is a minimum of two sentences.
- As with your resume, pay attention to grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Make sure to include a sentence asking that the employer contact your Employment Assistant if they wish to coordinate an interview.

Cover Letter Template

Your Name
Your Street Address
City, Province Postal Code
Email: Phone:

Month, day, year

Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Contact Person
Title or Position
Company Name
Street Address
City, Province Postal Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name

Paragraph #1: WHY YOU ARE WRITING. State what job you are applying for and where you heard of the opening, (online posting, newspaper advertisement, etc.). State in one or two strong sentences the benefits you bring to the employer and what interests you in the organization.

Paragraph #2: WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER. Highlight areas of your skills, experience and accomplishments that relate directly to the job description and qualifications. Tip: take a piece of paper and draw a line down the center lengthwise. On one side, write down all the job duties/responsibilities, qualifications and personal qualities stated in the job description. On the other side of the page, write examples of how you have developed, or can demonstrate the skills and knowledge listed. **Base the writing of this paragraph on this list.** DO NOT apologize for areas in which you are lacking. DO suggest ways in which you can acquire the necessary skills if appropriate. Whenever possible, use the employer's own words from the job description. Document your qualifications by themes and prove points by using examples.

Paragraph #3: WHY YOU WANT TO WORK FOR THIS COMPANY. This is your opportunity to demonstrate that you have researched the employer, and to communicate what you know about the organization.

Paragraph #4: FOLLOW UP. Close your letter in a professional and respectful manner by thanking them for their time and consideration of your application. Invite them to contact you to arrange a convenient time for an interview; or indicate how you will follow up on your application – whether by phone or email – to discuss your qualifications.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Attachment

Sample Cover Letter

Jane Smith
2314 Miller Place, Victoria, BC V8N 2L5
Telephone: (250) 475 1125 Cell phone: (250) 216 5698 E-mail: janesmith@shaw.ca

January 11, 2011

Ms. Susan James
Human Resources Director
The Banff Centre
107 Tunnel Mountain Drive
Banff AB T1L 1H5
Canada

Dear Ms. James:

I'm very interested in applying for the current co-op posting, food and beverage server. To enhance my interest in the hospitality industry, I am currently enrolled in the Hospitality Management program at Camosun College in Victoria, BC. As a worker I am reliable, energetic and I possess all of the skills necessary to perform the duties of a Server at The Banff Centre.

Currently I have a BC Food Safe Certificate as well as Serving it Right and Super Host. My communication skills are exceptional and I am able to speak clearly and in a concise manner addressing stressful situations quickly and professionally. Having taken Super Host training I learned to interact with customers and how to address their concerns. With one year's experience in food and beverage operations I believe that I possess a well rounded knowledge of this industry that will be an asset to The Banff Centre.

Working for the Banff Centre would be a great experience. For over 70 years the Banff Centre has been globally recognized for their continual efforts in the development of art, culture and education. Your service standards are very high and your employees are skilled and motivated, which is why I think that I would fit in well with your food and beverage team.

Thank you for accepting my enclosed resume. Please contact Sally Swanson, Co-op Assistant, at (250) 370-3425 or swanson@Camosun.bc.ca who would be pleased to coordinate an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

Attachment

Cover Letter Checklist

Seek a Second Opinion

Now that you have crafted your cover letter, ask at least two people to objectively review it against the following criteria.

	Yes	No
First Paragraph		
Does the author state what position is being sought?		
Does the author state how s/he heard about the position?		
Body		
Does the author summarize, highlight and match his/her skills, experience and capabilities to those required in the job description?		
Does the author mention any job related special skills, qualifications, or personal characteristics that might distinguish him/her from other applicants?		
Does the author demonstrate some knowledge of the company and explain why s/he wants to work for this company?		
Closing Paragraph		
Does the author indicate interest in receiving an interview to further discuss his/her qualifications?		
Does the author indicate how s/he can be reached or when s/he will contact the employer?		

Format		
Is the letter balanced on the page?		
Has the author provided current contact information?		
Is the letter dated and left aligned?		
Are the inside address and salutation formatted correctly?		
Is the cover letter free of all spelling, grammatical, punctuation and typing errors?		
Is the letter signed?		
Overall Impression		
Do you feel the author of this letter knows something about this particular company and job and is sincerely interested in this position? Why or why not? Any suggestions?		
Comments:		
Do you feel any of the information included in this cover letter is negative or gives the wrong impression? If so, what?		
Comments:		
What improvements can you suggest to increase the possibility that the employer reading the letter will be encouraged to read the enclosed resume?		
Comments:		

Suggested Activity

Using the mock posting provided by your Employment Facilitator, cut and paste the job description into a Word Cloud software to generate key words that you will then use in your resume and cover letter (this is one step that will help you to target your resume and cover letter). Go to <http://www.wordle.net/create> and paste the words into the box.

Assignment 2

For this assignment you are tasked with creating the following documents:

- A T-chart based on the mock posting you have selected
- A draft targetted cover letter and
- A draft targetted resume to the mock job posting you selected.

Please submit these documents to the **drop box** so that your Employment Facilitator may review them and provide feedback. Save all three (T-chart, cover letter and resume) as one document. Then name the file as your last name.

Module 5. Job Search Methods and Labour Market Information

Labour Market Information

What is Labour Market Information?



You come across labour market information (LMI) every day without even knowing it. When you hear about a new store in the mall opening up, or a government office downtown that's about to downsize, that's labour

market information. If you hear reports on the news about minimum wages going up, or how many people became unemployed last month, that's labour market information too. Any piece of information that tells you about the workplace - its present state, and / or how it's going to change in the future - is labour market information.

Why Do You Need LMI?

The Federal Government's [Labour Market Information Advisory Panel](#) sums it up best in the following way:

"Young people need good LMI to help them to choose the education and training that will help them to plan their careers to take advantage of labour market opportunities. Unemployed workers benefit from LMI in helping them to find a job appropriate for their education and skills or in deciding on appropriate upgrading. (Employed) workers still need information on employment opportunities to improve their positions and to develop better career management skills. Prospective immigrants need reliable LMI to determine their opportunities in Canada... In a market economy, everyone will do best if they can base their decisions on the best LMI."

You may be surfing job postings online or in the papers, trying to figure out what the "hot" jobs are, or your best prospects for long-term jobs in the future, but to get there – to make the most informed decision possible - you need LMI.

[WorkBC](#) has a section on their website describing the Labour market in our province. (Please make sure that you download and read B.C.'s Labour Market Outlook report - there may be quiz questions drawn from the content.) It identifies how Labour market information can help job seekers make comparisons when looking for a job or moving to a new place. It can also help business owners identify new markets for their service or product, or to decide where to expand if theirs is a business that requires a high number of workers or workers with a particular skill set.

Where Can You Find LMI?

National LMI: If you're thinking about work that may take you across the country, and you're wondering how work opportunities measure up in different regions of Canada, you would do well to look at a couple of the following resources and analyze data that deals with our nation as a whole.

- [Statistics Canada](#)
- The Government of Canada's [Labour Market Information](#) site
- [Industry Canada](#)

Provincial LMI: You may want to know how BC is doing as a whole, and you may also want to know how different regions of the province are faring in comparison to each other. In either case, the following are excellent sources of provincial LMI.

- [WorkBC](#). Look in particular under the "Labour Market Statistics" section, and you'll see subsections that detail labour market trends, future projections, and wage and salary information.
- [BC Jobs Plan - Learn about the Economy](#)
- [BC Stats](#)
- [BC Stats - Labour Market Information Gateway](#)

Local LMI: Wouldn't it be great if every city in Canada had its own LMI publication that told us how your town was faring in the labour scene? Unfortunately, few such publications exist, whether in print or online. According to Making Career Sense of Labour Market Information, the Government of Canada's Labour Market Information is currently your best portal for finding local labour market information.

Aside from this though, your most accurate view of your city will be found by hitting the pavement and finding it in person. Look up your local Chamber of Commerce, comb through your papers, and talk to local employers using an informational interview to get a first-hand impression of the trends affecting employment in your town. (More on networking and information interviews will be covered in Module 6.)

The Traditional Job Market

Approach	Purpose
Newspaper Classifieds	Identify general employment openings in your career field which have gone beyond the "hidden job market" to the stage of advertisement.
Newspaper Career Pages	Identify supervisory management and career positions targeted to "career seekers" rather than "job seekers."
Trade Publications	Identify industry specific openings.
Internet	Allows the use of specific search vehicles to identify job openings in specific fields, companies, or areas of expertise.

The Hidden Job Market

Approach	Purpose
----------	---------

Networking

Gain exposure to a wide circle of individuals who may assist you in developing employment opportunities.

Informational Interviewing

Meet with employees or employers in your career field to gain information about current and future employment opportunities without the pressure of a real interview.

Employment Proposal

Create an employment opportunity that doesn't exist yet.

Most job openings are never advertised. Advertisements cost money and can sometimes lead to an overwhelming number of resumes for an employer to process. Take the time to explore the Hidden Job Market where most of the jobs actually exist - up to 70-80%.

Job Search Methods

Effective Job Search Methods



Ryerson University has an excellent [online tutorial](#) that walks you through most to least effective job search methods. It's interactive, but only takes a few minutes to do, so visit the link and answer the questions.

Now let's add it all up. The most popular methods of finding work may involve combing through job postings either online or in newspapers – i.e. the traditional job market. It's the easiest one to do, but also the least effective. Most employers will fill positions by using known / internal candidates, and after that, seeking referrals from trusted colleagues and friends – i.e. the hidden market. It's now time to delve into that market, using the best tools at hand: networking and self-marketing.

Electronic Job Search

The Internet continues to open up new possibilities for those who are searching for employment opportunities. It is an amazing resource for researching employment trends, searching for employment opportunities, and researching companies and organizations. It has become a necessity to be able to use the Internet as part of your work search activities. It provides information about companies all over the world and in your home city or town. Having a personal work search plan is one way to help you succeed in a co-op or internship work experience and the Internet is a valuable tool to help you.

Job Search Sites

1. <http://www.employment.gov.bc.ca/> BC Public Service
2. <http://www.viatec.ca/> (business directory and job board for all technologies)
3. <http://www.indeed.ca/> Search engine all occupations
4. <http://www.eluta.ca/> Search engine all occupations
5. www.wowjobs.ca Search engine all occupations
6. <http://www.jobserve.ca/> Search engine all occupations
7. <http://www.nicejob.ca/default.aspx> Search engine and alert for all occupations
8. <http://www.dice.com/> "Career Hub for Tech insiders"
9. <http://bcjobs.ca/?ti=%24%26M%5B%26C%20%20%20%0A>
10. <http://www.extremejobs.ca/index.php> Extreme Jobs
11. <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/> Canadian wide job board all occupations
12. <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/fswep.shtml> Federal Student Work Exp.
13. <http://www.cten.ca/> Canadian Technical Employment Network for ASTTBC members
14. <http://www.workopolis.com> Job search plus lots of job search information
15. <http://www.monster.ca/> Job search plus job search information
16. http://www.jobserve.ca/British_Columbia_Jobs.htm
17. <http://www.recrutech.ca/> Engineering jobs
18. <http://www.skilledworkers.com/> Energy jobs, oil & gas jobs, Engineering jobs
19. <http://www.careersinoilandgas.com/jobseekers/jobs/job-boards.cfm> Oil & Gas Industry jobs
20. <http://www.engcen.com/> Engineering Central—check out Job Search

Self-Developed Work Terms

We've discussed how many jobs are "hidden" (80-85%). In other words the jobs are not advertised and instead are filled by word of mouth. This makes your networking ability a valuable skill. You can tap into the "hidden" job market and expand your work term opportunities by not only watching CIMS, and other job boards, but by also contacting employers proposing that you do a work term with them. This is called a self-developed work term and there are many advantages to taking this proactive approach.

You can:

- Target a specific employer, industry or geographic location
- Tailor the work term to your interests thus making the most of your learning opportunities
- Not compete with other students for CIMS postings. You're the only "applicant"
- Gain valuable skills in approaching an employer and "selling" him or her on the advantages of hiring "you"

Employers appreciate the fact you're choosing to target them and are usually more than happy to try to accommodate you if they can. Some things to research and consider before "pitching" yourself as a valuable addition to an employer's company can be:

1. How do your goals and skills set fit with the company and its enterprise?
2. What skills do you want to contribute and further develop?
3. What new skills do you want to learn?
4. How will your proposed position save or make money for the company?
5. Will the position give the company a competitive edge, expand the customer base or does it improve the company image?

Before contacting employers, discuss your plans with your EF to ensure what you are planning will meet the requirements of your work term. If necessary, your EF can involve the CIC at this point to make sure you are on the right track. Ultimately, each job description must be approved by the CIC for your School; this includes self-developed jobs.

Some students use the work term as an entrepreneurial opportunity to start their own business, perhaps doing freelance or contract work with clients. This requires a more detailed proposal to the CIC but the results can be very rewarding. Some items you will need to consider include how you will be evaluated in lieu of an employer assessment and the way you will keep track of your hours.

If you think you may want to pursue a self-developed entrepreneurial term but are unsure of your direction, the following questions can help you discover what might be a good "fit" for you.

1. What skill, talent and/or ability can I offer an employer or client?
2. What skill, talent and/or ability do I want to develop or learn more about during my work term?

-
3. What needs could be met with this skill?
 4. Who might have these needs?

As with all self-developed work terms, involve your EF or CIC as soon as possible so they can offer input.

Steps to developing a work term position with an employer:

1. Identify the skills you want to apply.
2. Conduct career and job research through information interviews, web research, the Career Resource Centre, career fairs.
3. Identify professional organizations in your field. Join as a student and/or attend association events in order to develop contacts to add to your network. You can call upon these contacts in your job search and also ask them to refer you to additional contacts.
4. Identify types of companies you are interested in working for – private, public, large, small – and then identify specific organizations to target. Be flexible to a variety of types of positions and companies.
5. Go to your network – let people know what you’re looking for and ask if they have suggestions of companies and/or contacts.
6. Make a list of contacts to call or companies to find contacts for.
7. Do further research on the companies you have targeted. Brainstorm how your skills might meet the company’s needs. This will help you to be better prepared in your phone conversation (sample script) with your targeted employer.
8. Call your list of contacts. Use this [sample telephone script](#).
9. If a contact does not have a posted position but has expressed a potential need to have a project completed, or service provided, prepare an Employment Proposal. A comprehensive process for developing a proposal for employment is provided on the [Service Canada](#) website.

Be careful not to “jump the gun” and agree to working for an employer before your proposed job has received final approval.

Follow this link to the [Self-Directed Job Search Worksheet](#) for information on the steps you can take to create your own co-op or internship opportunity.

From Proposal to Co-op Work Term

Once you and a prospective employer agree that you could pursue a work term together, your CIC needs to give his or her final approval. A proposal to your CIC needs to include:

- Start and end dates of the work term
- Number of hours to be worked each week (this can be an approximate figure)
- Rate of pay (if applicable)
- Your supervisor’s name and contact information (phone, email, address, fax)
- The name and location of the company
- A job description clearly outlining job duties and responsibilities

-
- Description of expected learning outcomes (what you'll learn from completing this work term). Consider how this work term will incorporate what you've learned so far in your studies at Camosun, and how this will tie into your course work when you return (if applicable) and/or your future career

The proposal you present to the CIC for approval is essentially the job description for your self-developed work term, with learning outcomes as part of it so the educational value of the work term can be assessed. The CIC can approve the work term as proposed, send it back to you for clarification or reworking, or reject it. Once approved by the CIC, your self-developed job will be posted in CIMS with your name listed as the student placed. Other students can see your job, but cannot apply for it. As soon as you begin your self-developed job, all other deadlines for deliverables apply, i.e. your work term learning plan is due to your CFI within 2-3 weeks of starting your work term. Of course, you can use the learning outcomes developed in your proposal as a basis for your goals and action steps in your work term learning plan.

Assignment 3

Based on the feedback you have received so far, please revise your cover letter and resume and submit to the **D2L drop box** in preparation for your panel mock interview. In preparation for your panel mock interview print a copy of your cover letter and resume and bring it to class.

Module 6. Networking: Networking Tips and Self-Marketing

Networking

In this module we'll examine the tips and techniques of networking. First, we'll discuss how to make the most of networking opportunities. These can range from career fairs, organized meet and greets or mixers that are part of an organization's social activities, or part of a conference; to more informal situations where you've bumped into some people you'd like to get to know better. While the personal introduction can help you with what you'd like to say in any of these situations, these tips will help you make the most of "working the room."

What do some of our co-op employers say about the benefits of networking!



Tori Klassen,

BCCampus

[Click here](#)



Paul Butterfield,

District of Saanich

[Click Here](#)

In module five we encouraged you to get some **business cards** made up. This can be an essential way to market yourself at networking events. If you have a website that showcases your work (an electronic web portfolio) be sure to include the link.

Branding Yourself



A brand is a **name, term, symbol, design** or a combination of these intended to identify the goods and services of the seller and to differentiate them from the goods and services of competitors. Marketing and advertising agencies help clients (companies or individuals) brand their services and products. Take the concept of branding a service or product one step further and consider branding YOURSELF. Coming up with a

brand description, even a tagline, might help you subconsciously when it comes to creating your cover letter and resume.

You are the product/service. What/who are you?

- Identify your core values
- Identify your core passions
- Identify your core talents
- List the key talents/attributes to be known for
- Who are your competitors?
- Who is your target audience?
- What will be your specialty?
- Write your brand description
- Identify your brand with a tagline

Tom Peters created the term and concept of “the brand called you” in 1997 to express the idea of individuals managing their career as if they were managing a “brand.” In other words, he suggested that each of us could manage our career and future better if we worked out what makes each of us stand out from the crowd.

Here are some thought-provoking questions that need to be answered before you can build your personal brand.

What do I do that I am most proud of?

1. What have I accomplished that I can brag about?
2. In what ways do I add value to the organization I work for?
3. What do I want to be famous for?
4. What matters to me?
5. What do I do REALLY well?
6. What do I get excited about?

In his article, *The Brand Called You*, Tom Peters notes “if you want to grow your brand, you’ve got to come to terms with power—your own.” Consider your resume a “marketing brochure for Brand You.” Peters also cautions that no matter what you do your brand must always include “being a great team mate and a supportive colleague” and “having exceptional expertise in something that has real value.”

Networking and building your personal brand

Why network? It can be a rich source of job leads, referrals, and contacts. Many jobs are never advertised. Networking can help you tap the “hidden” job market. Not only will you become aware of

what's out there, potential employers will become aware of you. Networking then can be an important tool to securing your first career-related job. However, networking can be a lifelong way to keep in touch with others in your industry and it can also be the way to securing other, better jobs.

Keep track of who you've met and when. Make sure this list is kept up-to-date and keep in touch with your contacts on a regular basis, not just when you need something from them. Networking should be part of your ongoing career plan.

You can start by identifying your network. Once you sit down to think about who you come in contact with in all aspects of your life, it can start to get pretty extensive. Read [this article](#) by Catherine Ducharme about "Building Your Personal Brand Through Networking". (Hint: Make sure to read this article as some quiz questions will be based on it). Then take a few minutes to list people in YOUR network. You can include anyone with whom you have more than just a passing contact - neighbours, friends, co-workers, cousins, the barista at Starbucks, etc. It doesn't (shouldn't!) be restricted simply to people working in the career area you want to work in. You never know where you may get an important lead.

Try using this handy [chart](#) that we looked at earlier in module 6 to get started.

Your 60-Second Pitch

If someone asked you "Why should I hire you?" or "What do you do?"

What would you say?

A personal introduction is sometimes called a "a pitch." In 20-60 seconds a pitch conveys the key benefits of your personal brand. In other words, it speaks to how and what you contribute.

Example:

- I'm an exceptional problem solver and this enables me to work through complex problems quickly.
- I have strong interpersonal skills and use these skills to ensure my customers never leave dissatisfied with my service.

Some samples to guide you

One of the things I do best is...

1. One of the many things I learned with age is...
2. Ever since I was a child I have been able to...
3. If I were to receive an award, it would be for...
4. I have always appreciated my knack for...
5. My home shows that I am very...

-
6. As I get older I feel more and more qualified to...
 7. The kind of situation in which I show my truest colors is...
 8. Something I find absorbing is...
 9. The skill that I am most proud to have is...
 10. A project or undertaking that I have been most proud of is...
 11. One of the greatest lessons that the school of life has taught me is...
 12. I have always been thankful that I am...
 13. An employer would be lucky to have me as an employee because I...
 14. With age I have developed my ability to...
 15. One of the greatest things I have to offer an employer is...
 16. My last employer appreciated me for my...
 17. One of the most thrilling things I have ever experienced was...
 18. People can always count on me to...
 19. One of the things I enjoy learning about is...
 20. Things I enjoy making are...
 21. My creativity is expressed through my...
 22. Something that I am passionate about is...
 23. A time when I was deeply committed to something was...

(from "Cultivating True Livelihood: Work in the 21st Century", by Denise Bissonnette, Mill Wright & Associates, Inc. 1997)

Take a look at the "What do you say after hello?" [worksheet](#). This will help you plan to make the best of what to say at networking events.

10 Rules of Networking

1. Always wear a name tag with your name printed in clear view.
2. Start a conversation with someone you do not know, and introduce yourself.
3. Hand out and collect as many business cards as you can comfortably carry.
4. Avoid too much small talk. Converse with another person with whom you can support each other's ideas, careers, etc.
5. If a conversation gets stale, end it gracefully.
6. Don't wait for someone to suggest what they can do for you; instead, propose how you might help your new contact.
7. Don't talk to one person for too long. If the conversation is productive, make an appointment for coffee or an information interview and move on to another person.
8. Don't spend time with people you already know, except to introduce them to your new contacts.
9. Set goals for yourself. During each networking event, try to meet a certain number of new people, and set a target number of follow-up appointments.
10. Keep your contacts up-to-date. An occasional phone call or warm greeting at a future networking event will help solidify your new professional relationship.

Career Fairs * Company Recruitment Sessions * Employer Appreciation

Camosun holds college-wide career fairs; as well, individual departments or schools at the college may have their own career fair targeted to specific industry areas, or an “employer appreciation night” which often includes a mixer so students can mingle. Some programs, like Hospitality and Tourism in the School of Business, host individual company presentations or recruitment sessions on campus.

The advantage of these sorts of events, especially career fairs, is that they are organized with a list of participants and where their booths will be located. This gives you the opportunity to plan out in advance which employers you want to target and gives you the chance to do some research on the company. Your knowledge of their company always impresses employers whether it’s a networking event, an information interview, or a job interview.

At the very least, bring your 60-second pitch and your business cards. For career fairs and recruitment sessions, employers are looking to hire so bring several copies of your resume with you. While not a job interview as such, this is (like everything else in this module!) an opportunity for you to shine.

Tip list for employer events

- Bring your business cards and have your resume ready.
- Practice your 60-second pitch so it’s ready to go.
- Look over the information interview questions – many of these will be appropriate to ask at these employer events.
- Dress well! It’s always better to be overdressed than underdressed and first impressions really do count (remember your brand that you’re trying to project!)
- Make contact! Engage the employer by making eye contact, shaking his/her hand, and be ready to offer your pitch.
- Be prepared to offer your knowledge of the company and ask questions.
- Be prepared for the employer to ask questions – a common one is “Why are you here today?”
- Make sure to get a business card and contact information.
- Don’t forget to follow up thanking the employer for his/her time, either by phone, email, or thank-you card.

Social Networking

Networking Is A Two-Way Street



Social networking sites are a part of everyday life. People of all ages and stages use them, and they aren't going away anytime soon. What does that have to do with your job search? A couple of items for you to think about are discussed here.

Privacy issues are a hot topic when it comes to social networks: how much of your information is out there for everyone to see, including your future / possible employers? Career Builder gives some warning to the fact that many employers and recruiters will now look you up online to learn more about you – and what you have posted could possibly get you screened out of the selection process. Their advice? Be careful about what you post, be discreet, and be prepared to go through the internet looking for items that could be detrimental to your job search. See the [article](#) on how social networking can be hazardous to your job search. (Hint: Please read the article as there may be a quiz question drawn from the material.)

So is there a way to use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or any other networking site to your advantage? The Riley Guide gives you this important reminder when trying to network for your job search:

"Networking isn't a process of making cold-calls or sending Friend or "Join my Network" requests to people you don't know. It's connecting to people you do know through a valid connection.

*What I mean by a **valid connection** is someone who may be a member of the same professional association, a fellow alumnus of your undergraduate or graduate school (or even high school), or the friend of a friend to whom you were introduced either personally or professionally.*

*Networking does not have to be a carefully-choreographed process of meeting and greeting people. For some people it's more manageable on an informal basis, but always remember that **networking is a two-way***

street. *It must benefit both persons to be most effective, so as you ask your network for help when you are in need, be prepared to return the favor when asked."*

Contact Point also gives these 4 suggestions leveraging the power of social media. (Hint: make sure to read this article as it may also help you with the quiz.)

1. **Have a purpose:** Why are you using this particular site? Focus your message to increase the likelihood of someone being able to help you.
2. **Determine how you will measure success:** Are you looking for industry information, job leads, contacts, etc? Knowing this will help you determine if the time you spend on the network is worth it.
3. **Figure out what YOU can offer:** Think of things that you can bring to the network. Is it information on a particular industry or some of your own contacts that you can share with others? Whatever it is, make sure you have something to offer.
4. **Don't worry about the numbers:** It's not how many friends or followers you have on the social networking websites that matters. More importantly it is the *quality* of the individuals you are connected to and how you are able to leverage those contacts to help you. Remember job leads are usually beyond the first or second degree of separation.

And now for something completely different: going beyond networking sites, **Alec Brownstein** created his own Google advertisement, to contact the heads of major US corporations he wanted to work for.

Information Interviews

An opportunity to talk to people who are doing the kind of work you think you might enjoy



Perhaps one of the contacts you've made at a networking event invites you to follow up your initial contact with a visit to his or her place of work. Or maybe, now that you've got some experience speaking with others,

you're ready to target your networking efforts more specifically. The **information interview** is an opportunity for you to conduct research in your field of interest without the pressure of a real job interview. In this style of interview, you act as the interviewer. You set up the interview with an employee or employer to obtain information about current and future opportunities.

This is an opportunity to talk to people who are doing the kind of work you think you might enjoy doing. This technique can be used to clarify your career direction. It can also provide you with information regarding the current job market. But not only is it a chance for you to get information about specific jobs and employers, it's an opportunity to showcase yourself. While it's important to remember that this is NOT a job interview, you are still sending a message of interest and motivation. You are representing your "brand." If there is a future job opening, chances are the employer will remember you if you make a favourable impression. At the very least, you have now established a contact in your industry who can prove to be a valuable resource of information and potential job leads.

There are several ways to contact someone to set up an interview. It can be based on a personal contact (as the result of a meeting at a networking event, for instance) which you can then follow up with a phone call or an email confirming the meeting time, date, and location. Sometimes you can get a lead from your networking circle which, as module four demonstrated, can be very extensive. Or you may want to expand your horizons and contact someone you have never met.

In sales, this is referred to as a "cold call". Often, it's best to telephone, although an email can be useful to set up an initial request. The advantage of the telephone is that it's seen as more personal, so there is more opportunity for the person you want to interview to connect with you. As well, the telephone has an advantage in that you can adapt your conversation to the give-and-take flow of the person you're talking to.

Before calling, do some research on the person you wish to interview and the company s/he works for. This will help in the initial call, and in the subsequent interview. If possible, try to find some common ground. In the sample cold call script below, the student makes a point of introducing a reason for calling by referring to someone you both know, the neighbour who had work done by the company.

Take a look at the script below, and discuss what other ways you can be prepared before you even pick up the phone. How could this script be improved? How would you modify this script for the career area you're interested in?

Sample Cold Call Script

"Hello, Mr. Wilson? This is Lee Smith calling. I am an Electronics Engineering student at Camosun College. My neighbour, Joanne Baker, recently contracted some design work to your company and was very pleased with the work you did. She suggested that I call you because I am interested in gathering information about

electronic design and production. Would you be willing to meet with me for 10 or 15 minutes to talk about the work that your company does?"

Listen carefully to the response and gauge your reply appropriately. If the employer says that it might be possible, take the opportunity to confirm an appointment.

"What day of the week and time of day is most convenient for you?"

Be sure to have your own schedule handy to determine a mutually convenient time.

"Sure, next Thursday morning would be great. Would you like me to come to your office at 10:00 a.m.?"

If the employer agrees, thank him for his time and confirm the appointment.

"Thank you for your time, Mr. Wilson. I'll see you next Thursday at 10:00."

BUT, if the employer says s/he cannot meet with you at any time, don't give up!:

"Could you suggest anyone else I might talk to in the industry?"

Listen carefully. Be prepared to jot down names and numbers.

"Thanks for your suggestions, Mr. Wilson. I appreciate the time you've given me. Good-bye."

Remember, regardless of the result of this call, it's important to be professional. You're representing not only yourself but the program you're enrolled in and the college as a whole. And even if this person can't meet with you this time, s/he is now a part of your network and could prove a valuable contact in the future. Most employers are more than happy to share information, even act as a mentor, to people whom they feel are genuinely interested in their industry. It can be a win-win for the employer, as s/he may have a position to fill in the near future.

However, the cardinal rule in any networking or information interview situation is that you are NOT asking for a job. The person you're talking to may be sizing up your potential, but these are not job interviews – you are gathering information and meeting as many people in your career area as possible.

Tip List for Information Interviews

The Cold Call

- Have your script ready in advance.
- Ask for the person you want to meet with.
- Call back or leave a message if s/he is unavailable.

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- If available, introduce yourself and be specific about the purpose of your call.
 - Request an appointment.
 - Indicate the amount of time you would like (about 15 minutes).
 - Confirm date, time and place (make a note of it!)
 - Thank the person for the opportunity.

The Interview

- Dress as you would for a job interview.
- Take a folder with you containing pen, paper, your list of questions, and your business cards.
- Arrive 5-10 minutes early.
- Be friendly and polite with everyone you encounter in the organization.
- Introduce yourself, state your purpose and thank the person for giving you his/her time.
- Begin to ask your interview questions, letting the discussion flow naturally.
- Take notes as appropriate.
- Keep track of time and stick within the allotted time for the interview. If the interview is going longer than the allotted time, check that additional time is all right.
- Obtain a business card; make sure you hand yours out too.
- Thank the person for his/her time.

Follow Up

- Write a brief thank you note to the interviewee and the person who referred you.
- Follow up any tasks that resulted from the interview i.e.: contacting other leads, writing appropriate letters or emails, gathering further information, keeping in touch with the person you interviewed.

Sample Information Interview Questions

It's best to begin with some general "icebreaker" questions that will allow the person to open up. Open-ended questions, which will initiate a conversation, should be used. Examples of these are questions 1, 5 and 11, for instance.

1. How did you get your start in this field?
2. How could I gain more experience in this field?
3. Can you recommend any training that would be beneficial to obtain?
4. Is there an association or organization for professionals in your field? Could you give me a name or contact number, please?
5. Please describe a typical day in your department.
6. What is the most rewarding part of your job?
7. What is your most common frustration?
8. What is a typical career path?
9. What trends do you see that may affect this field in the future?

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10. What type of person does well in this field?
 11. What is the best way to learn of job opportunities in this field? How should one apply for these jobs?
 12. What might one expect in a job interview in this field?
 13. Could I job-shadow or volunteer with you to gain more experience?
 14. May I contact you in the future?
 15. Do you have names of others in the field with whom you suggest I speak? Could I get their contact information? May I use your name?

Suggested Activity

Pair up with a classmate and do a Google search of each other's names. Are there links that profile you professionally? (i.e. a membership in a professional association). Are there links that you would like to eliminate? (i.e. an old blog that is not relevant to your current situation).

Quiz 2

Please click on this quiz link to take [Quiz 2: Modules 5 & 6](#)

Hints:

- Make sure you have read each segment of modules 5 and 6 before taking the quiz
- Remember, you may have two screens open at the same time (one screen to take the quiz and a second to glance at module content)
- The first time you attain a score of at least 70%, the course will allow you to progress to module 7. The quiz has a time limit - you have 30 minutes to complete it
- You may attempt to take the quiz up to 3 times (if you should need an extra attempt please e-mail your EF to make the request)

Good luck!

Module 7. Interviews

Introduction: What To Do and Not To Do

Does the mere thought of an interview make your heart start racing? Before you read through this Module's tips on what you should do during an interview, take a look at some of the things you definitely should **NOT** do.

Workopolis' [Careers Channel](#) has a four-minute video that nicely summarizes the ways that an interview can be sent down the tubes.

Preparing For An Interview

Yes, preparing for an interview can be nerve-wracking. But solid preparation beforehand will help you minimize your nervousness, and maximize your chances of a successful outcome (i.e., landing the job).

Start getting ready by reviewing what employers generally look for in their new hires. For instance, take a look at the criteria outlined below - How Employers View Candidates - and see how you measure up in the listed categories. Take a personal inventory of yourself and come up with examples of how you've demonstrated these qualities and skills in the past. Think about how these characteristics would be valuable in the workplace you're hoping to enter.

Next, research the company that is interviewing you. Do a thorough job here: read annual reports, search for newspaper articles, and look through trade journals – and don't limit your research only to company-controlled information. Then go through the company's website and look for their mission statement, long-term goals, recent press releases, and corporate photos. Get to know the company as well as you can, so that the employer can see how invested you are in becoming a part of *their* team – not just anybody's team. All of these things can be helpful when you're thinking of questions to ask at the interview too.

Career Portfolios

What Is A Career Portfolio?



What is it? A career portfolio (a.k.a. a showcase, professional, or project portfolio) is a **visual presentation** of your mission and goals, your personal traits, experiences, accomplishments, knowledge, skills, education and training. It not only serves as an archive of **your best work**, but it shows an employer **what you can offer**.

A portfolio can also be used for your own personal and career growth and planning, as well as a tool to help in your job search.

The Government of Manitoba's "[A Self-Managed Career Portfolio Guide](#)" provides indepth guidelines for developing a portfolio for your career and for job search.

Why Should You Have One?

You may be thinking "I just put all that work into my resume and cover letter. Now you want me to do *what?*" Keep a few things in mind before you dismiss the idea of making a portfolio altogether.

First, you won't regret how valuable the process is. As you assess your previous work and accomplishments, you'll reinforce in your memory all the positive attributes about yourself that you can market to the employer.

Second, portfolios DO get you the job. Few job seekers take the time to make them, and employers will be influenced by impressive portfolios! Students report that employers tell them, "Your portfolio got you the job – the other applicants either did not have portfolios of work, or they were poorly presented." By taking time to create a neat and consistent visual identity (or "look"), your portfolio won't appear that it was thrown together at the last minute: it will show the effort and care you took into making a great product for the employer to see. In a nutshell, it reflects well on your organizational, design, and presentation skills.

And, your portfolio should be updated regularly; this way you will be ready to showcase your continuously developing skills and experiences when opportunity knocks!

What Do Portfolios Look Like?

View this online portfolio from [Florida State University's Career Centre](#). It shows the work of a Communications and Business Student.

What Can You Put In Your Portfolio?



In addition to samples of work (in their own sections), portfolios can include:

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Personal Statements: mission, values, goals (this is the opportunity for you to demonstrate your personal “brand” as reviewed in Module 6)
- Resume
- References
- Experience and skill sections: tabbed areas
- Samples of course work i.e. projects, reports
- Achievements and Awards
- Community Service
- Professional Affiliations
- Personal Interests and Hobbies
- Summary Pages
- Captions/Reflections

The Government of Alberta’s [Learning Information Service](#) has a comprehensive list of the types of things you might put inside a portfolio. Don’t get overwhelmed by the number of items listed! Your job isn’t to find one of everything they suggest. Pick and choose the contents that will reflect your work best.

Presenting Your Portfolio

How Do You Present Your Portfolio To An Employer?

Use a quality binder or portfolio holder for your portfolio pieces. Make sure your pieces are safely and neatly kept in plastic sleeves or sheet protectors, or the appropriate pouches (i.e. CD holders for CDs). Make sure CDs or DVDs are attractively and accurately labelled.

In addition to (or instead of) a hard copy portfolio, you can post your work online in an e-portfolio. The decision to use a physical or e-portfolio (or both) is a personal one and may be influenced by certain industries’ common practice (this would be a good question to ask at an information interview).

Having an e-portfolio can be a useful way of demonstrating your skills if you’re not interviewed in person (i.e. a phone or Skype interview). Include the link on your resume and your business cards (see Module 6). Keep your e-portfolio up-to-date; and create clear, easy-to-navigate links on your home page to each content area. Check the links from time to time to troubleshoot any problems.

Got any other presentation tips?

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1. **Don't include your precious original documents** in your portfolio! If you only have one original of an awards certificate, make a copy of that and include it in your portfolio. You don't want to risk losing your only copy if an employer asks to keep your portfolio to look at it, and then something happens to it.
 2. **Bring your portfolio to all interviews** even if the employer has not specifically asked for it. If s/he doesn't notice that you've brought it, try to weave it into the conversation tactfully, so the employer will look at it.
 3. **Customize your portfolio** depending on the type of job you're applying for. Pay attention to the job description, and remember your audience! Providing a sampling of all your skill areas can be useful as it shows off your range of abilities, but make sure that your portfolio highlights your *most relevant* skills first. This [article](#) (Credit: University of Victoria Co-operative Education Program and Career Services) provides some useful guidance in having a 'master' portfolio and a 'presentation' portfolio.

Dress Code For Interviews

What Am I Going To Wear?



"What **am** I going to wear?" Basically, it's common sense. You can start by asking yourself "*What kind of company will I be interviewing with?*" If it is a Fortune 500 company, obviously you should wear a traditional suit. But maybe you will be seeing a funky, upbeat software company and you heard the recruiter showed up for interviews last year in a tie-dye shirt, sandals and beads. Use your own discretion, but we suggest you **dress the way you would if you were giving an important presentation** at the company or **attending a business meeting**.

Men

- Suits—A traditional suit is preferred to a blazer. The colour should either be a dark blue or gray in either a solid or invisible plaid with a pressed long-sleeved (even in summer!) white dress shirt. If you buy or borrow one, a conservative sports coat and dress slacks are best.
- Shirts—White shirts are always your first choice. Solid blue is an acceptable alternative. If you don't own either, you should really go buy one. Get plain or button down cotton material. Polyesters and nylon are out.
- Grooming—Avoid heavy cologne or aftershave.
- Socks—Dark, neat and preferably over the calf. White athletic socks are a big “no-no” unless you are interviewing to be a summer camp counsellor at a sports camp.
- Shoes—Clean and polished leather lace-up black or dark brown shoes are best. Avoid shoes with a run down heel.
- Neckties—Conservative silk ties are best. Be sure the tie coordinates with the suit, is solid or has small neat patterns. Be sure the knot is neat and centered on your neck. The bottom of the tie should just reach your belt.
- Belts—Wear a black or brown belt, one inch wide, no large buckles.
- Hair—Men: Clean well-groomed and professional looking. Remember, the choice to cut your hair is yours, but the choice to hire you is the interviewer's. Be sure beards and moustaches are neat and trimmed.
- Accessories—No flashy cuff links, rings or gold chains. Wedding or college ring is fine. No earrings. Not even one small one. No visible body piercing or tattoos.

Women

- Suits—Skirted suits are almost always preferable. A solid navy, grey or black suit with a solid or light coloured blouse is recommended for most positions. Avoid brown, green or pastel suits. Business dresses are acceptable in fields that are less formal and less conservative. Avoid frilly collars and cuffs.
- Shirts—A light coloured blouse is ideal.
- Makeup—Natural looking and conservative. Avoid bright colours. Use a neutral or clear nail polish on clean and manicured nails. Avoid heavy perfumes.
- Hosiery—Light, natural colour, plain style (no patterns).
- Shoes—Should be conservative and complement the colour & style of the interview suit. Low to medium heels are ideal. Basic pumps, toes should be closed, no strappy shoes, and avoid multi-coloured trim.
- Hair—should be freshly cleaned and neatly styled. Long hair should be worn as conservatively as possible.
- Accessories—One conservative, non-dangling earring per ear, one or 2 rings per hand. No dangling or distracting bracelets. Avoid purses of any size – carry a portfolio or briefcase instead. No visible body piercing beyond earrings, and no visible tattoos.

Adapted from MIT Global Education and Career Development, *Career Development Handbook*, 2006 – 2007

Get the picture? If you're still not sure, read through CareerBuilder.com's article [What Not To Wear To An Interview](#), and make sure you haven't forgotten anything important.

What Happens During The Interview?

Most Interviews Fit A General Pattern

The interview process can be scary if you don't know what to expect. To make it easier on you, keep in mind that most interviews fit a general pattern. Most interviews will last 30-45 minutes, although some may be longer. A typical structure is as follows:

- 5 minutes: greeting and small talk
- 15 minutes: a mutual discussion of your background and credentials, as they relate to the needs of the employer
- 5 minutes: you have an opportunity to ask questions
- 5 minutes: wrap-up/discuss next steps in the process

As you can see, you don't have a lot of time to state your case. When you do respond to questions or ask your own, your statements should be concise and organized, without being too brief. This could be your last chance to market yourself to the employer, and you want so be sure you send them a clear message of the skills you have to offer.

The Greeting, First Impressions and Small Talk

It's a good idea to arrive at least 10 to 15 minutes before your scheduled time. You can use the time to relax, organize your thoughts, and even wipe your sweaty palms with a handkerchief, if necessary. Be polite to anyone you encounter in the building, from the administrative assistant at the front desk, to other people walking through the office. First impressions count, and what you say and do while you're waiting will surely make its way back to the employer for evaluation too.

The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified and continues to evaluate you in every way. For example, s/he is analyzing the way you shake hands upon being introduced. Be firm, it shows confidence. Do not be afraid to extend your hand first. This shows assertiveness.

Also, address the recruiter and other interviewers as Mr. or Ms. Only use first names if they ask you to.

Here are some tips to ensure your first impression is a positive one:

Appearance counts. When you look good, you feel good. Make sure you look groomed and professional. Your clothes and accessories should be neat, conservative and neutral. Your clothes are your packaging and should not take attention away from the product.

Nonverbal communication sometimes conveys a stronger message than verbal communication. According to one UCLA study, 93 per cent of a person's communication effectiveness is determined by nonverbal communication. Eye contact and smiles can indicate a confident and upbeat attitude. Have a firm (but not too strong) handshake and moderate your voice to sound calm and assertive.

During the “settling in” stage of the interview you may engage in brief small talk. This is a good opportunity to demonstrate your social and interpersonal skills as well as your excitement about the opportunity for which you are interviewing. The words you choose will say something about you, as well as your knowledge of the industry. It is important to use “their” words and talk “their” talk.

To highlight these points, here’s a two-minute video from Advantage Training Solutions on [How to Present Yourself During a Job Interview](#). (There’s a quick advertisement that you’ll need to view first before the video plays.)

Strategy for Discussing Your Credentials

To put you at ease, the main part of the interview will start with the interviewer initiating small talk about common interests like the weather, hockey standings, or other current but safe topics. The interviewer may also discuss the organization and the job, briefly, before asking some questions regarding your past experience related to the position for which you are interviewing.

Your main task when getting ready for an interview is to **prepare for potential interview questions**. Based on the job posting and your research about the company, think about what the recruiter will be trying to find out about you when they ask certain questions. For example, if you are asked to discuss a time when you had a conflict with a colleague, the recruiter is probably looking for someone who is confident about his or her own beliefs, but open to other people’s ideas as well - a team player. Most likely, he or she is looking for your ability to collaborate and compromise.

Typically, there are two types of questions asked in an interview: **common interview questions** and **competency based** or **behavioral interview questions**. Always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer thoroughly, but concisely. Give only the essential background information and get to the point! Consider using the formulas provided in the following sections to develop the most relevant and effective response.

How To Answer Common Interview Questions

The Purpose Of Any Interview Is To Exchange Information



The organization wants information about you, and you want information about it. Here is a list of **Sample Questions** that employers typically ask during an interview. You can help yourself by taking time to prepare for these types of questions. Doing some thinking about your answers beforehand will help put you at ease and make for a better interview.

When answering questions, consider using one of the following two formulas:

a. **PAWS – Personal, Academic, Work, Skills**

Consider these four areas when you are answering. For example, in answer to the question "Tell me about yourself" you could say:

*"I was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, and six years ago I moved to Victoria where I attended Belmont Secondary (**Personal**). Because I thought I might like to get into engineering as a career, I took some construction courses along with math and physics (**Academic**). During the summer I worked for a construction company and discovered that I really like seeing how a building goes together from the foundation to lock-up. Although I was mostly doing clean-up, I got to help the carpenters and they showed me how to read a blueprint (**Work**). This year I've learned to use AutoCAD (**Skills**) so when I saw your co-op position on the Camosun website, I felt excited about the job because I know it is exactly the kind of work I want to do."*

b. **A = Skill + Benefit/Example**

Whenever possible, answer the question by indicating at least one benefit that your skills, background, or knowledge can have for the employer. Another option is to include examples to indicate the relevancy of your experience to the company's needs or interests. For example, to answer the question "Why do you want to work for us?" you could say:

"I read on your website that Kiewit Corporation is one of North America's largest and most respected construction and engineering organizations and hires people who take on new challenges, explore new ideas,

*and excel at their work. This excites me because whether it is in school, at work or in sports, I thrive on new challenges and ideas. Because I am willing to take on new jobs and responsibilities, I have always provided benefit to my employers. For example, when I worked for Canadian Tire I was able to work in any area of the store, assist customers and set up displays to maximize sales **(Benefit)**. When I played hockey, I was acknowledged for my leadership in suggesting new plays and strategies that helped the team work together better, and win the division title **(Example)**. I can provide you with reference letters from my store and team managers.*

Now, think about these two formulas to decide how you would answer the following questions.

1. Tell me about yourself.

Using the PAWS formula, be brief and include only information that is relevant. Answer with comments concerning your educational background and, where possible, work experience that fits the job for which you are applying. Mention your particular skills. If the interviewer asks for more personal information, talk about your background regarding schools, hobbies and why you chose this field. Commonly this question begins your interview.

2. Why do you want to work for us?

Your answer must project sincerity; you should relate the opportunity to practice your course work learning and skills, combined with knowledge of the company, to aid your chance of employment. You should be as informed as you can about the company.

3. What do you know about this company?

Read material about the company. Learning about what they do, how long they have been at this location and their plans for the future can impress. Information interviews with staff about the business can enhance your knowledge.

4. What do you expect to be doing on the job?

Be prepared for this question. Consider what the company has said about the skills required to fill the position. Usually the job posting or ad will include a brief statement about the responsibilities. Also, through your research of the company and the job you can have a better understanding of the position.

5. What are your strong points?

Discuss what you do well, especially characteristics that could be important to the job. Emphasize your special skills (financial accounting, technical knowledge, etc.). Do not underestimate your strengths and consequently leave a lesser impression.

6. What are your weak points?

Everyone has weak points and the employer will feel you are not being truthful if you say you have none. Essentially, the employer is looking to see whether your weak points will handicap your ability to do the job you're interviewing for, so don't choose an example that emphasizes weaknesses that are particularly detrimental for this job. You leave a more favourable impression when you indicate that you have worked on or are working on your weakness. Consider "sandwiching" your answers by stating a positive point, then a negative and ending with a positive note.

7. Do you have any questions about the job and the company?

Concerning the company, you could inquire about its future prospects and direction. Don't ask questions that you should already have answered reading their website. Concerning your job, inquire more about your job duties and responsibilities. Be sure you have at least one question.

Want more tips on how to answer common interview questions? Watch this video of 36 Job Interview Questions and Answers. After a question appears, use your "pause" button to stop the screen so you can read through the suggestions that follow. Make notes for yourself on the answers that resonate with you.

Note: While the video recommends asking about benefits when answering the question, 'Do you have any questions for us', for a co-op/internship interview we recommend asking questions about the position and the organization.

Sample questions asked by employers

Personal assessment

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
- How do you react to criticism?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Define success. Define failure.
- What can you offer us?
- Who are your role models? Why?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- What kind of people do you enjoy working with?
- What motivates you in a job?
- What types of people rub you the wrong way?
- What frustrates you? (Makes you angry?)
- Are you a joiner or a loner? A leader or follower? A committee member or an executive?
- How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
- Talk about a time when you had trouble getting along with an instructor/co-worker/supervisor. How did you handle it?
- Have you ever spoken in front of a group of people? How large?

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- Tell me about a leadership role you have had. What makes a good leader?
 - Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?

Education and experiences

- Can you summarize your educational background for me?
- Why did you decide to attend school at Camosun College?
- Do you think you received a good education? Why or why not?
- Why did you choose the major you did?
- What courses did you like the most? The least?
- Describe for me the most rewarding accomplishment since you've started college.
- Describe your study habits. How do you balance study with personal life?
- In which campus activities did you participate?
- What job-related skills have you developed?
- How do you spend college vacations?
- What extra curricular activities are you involved in? What have you gained through those experiences?
- Have you plans for furthering your education?
- If you could start college over, what would you do differently?
- Tell me about a class in which you were part of a study group. What role did you play?
- Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
- Tell me about the most satisfying job you ever held? The least?
- Have you had any work experience related to this position?
- What kind of boss do you prefer?
- What kind of work interests you the most?
- Have you had any supervisory experience?
- What frustrates you on the job?
- Have you ever quit a job? Why?
- Give an example of a situation where you provided a solution to an employer.
- Give an example of a time when you worked under deadline pressure.
- Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
- How would a former supervisor describe your work?
- Describe a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done.
- Describe a time when a team member came to you for help. What was the situation? How did you respond?

Career ambition and plans

- Why did you choose this career field?
- What type of position are you looking for?
- What are your long range and short range goals and objectives; when and why did you establish these goals; how are you preparing to achieve them?
- What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself in the next five years?
- What qualities does a successful manager possess? ... Does a successful team player possess?
- What do you know about opportunities in your field?
- What are the most important rewards you expect from your career?

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- What kind of challenge are you looking for?
 - What do you think determines a person's progress from your career?
 - What kind of challenge are you looking for?
 - What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
 - How do you determine or evaluate success?
 - What are your ideas on salary?
 - How much money do you hope to earn five years from now?
 - What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your field?
 - Do you prefer to work on your own or under a supervisor?

Company or organization

- Why do you want to work for this organization?
- What do you know about our organization?
- What section (service or product) are you most interested in?
- Do you prefer large or small companies? Why?
- How do you feel about working in a structured environment? A non-structured environment?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company such as ours?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- How long would you expect to work here?
- Are you willing to work overtime?
- Are you willing to work flextime?
- Are you willing to go where the company sends you?
- What type of work environment are you most comfortable with?
- Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our company is located?
- Why should I hire you?

The close

- When could you start work?
- Is there anything else I should know about you?
- Do you have any other questions?

Interview Journals

Keeping a Journal Is An Excellent Way To Prepare For An Interview



How can you keep track of everything you'd like to say? Try keeping an interview journal. Think of this as a companion piece to your resume. It's a notebook or computer file where you can write down your personal responses to anticipated interview questions. After each interview, add to the stock of questions you were asked, and refine the answers you would like to give.

Keeping a journal is also an excellent way to prepare for an interview. Before the interview starts, when you're calm and relaxed, read through your journal and recall your experiences that provide strong answers to interview questions. Not only will you be well-prepared, but you'll feel more comfortable and confident going into the interview - knowing that you have solid responses at your fingertips. Find out more about [interview journals](#), including how to get started.

Overall - Expect The Unexpected

Stay Cool, Think, and Give An Honest Answer



During the interview, don't be surprised if the employer asks you some unusual questions. Many times these questions are asked simply to see how you react. For example, surprise questions could range from, "Tell me a joke" to "What time period would you like to have lived in?" These aren't the kind of questions which you can prepare for, so don't spend time worrying about them in advance. Stay cool, think and give an honest answer. The employer will evaluate your reaction time and the response you give; but again, there is no way to anticipate questions like these. While these questions are not always used, they are intended to force you to react under some stress and pressure.

During the interview, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be construed as negative, i.e., low grade point average, no participation in outside activities, no related work experience. It is up to you to convince the recruiter that although these points are negative, positive attributes can be found in them. A low GPA could stem from having to fully support yourself through college; you might have no related work experience, but plenty of experience that shows you to be a skilled and potentially valuable employee.

For more tips on getting through tight spaces in tough interviews, read these two articles from Quintessential Careers:

[10 Sticky Job Interview Situations and How To Handle Them](#)

[Job Interview Damage Control](#)

Never wear a backward baseball cap to an interview unless applying for the job of umpire ~Dan Zevin

Competency Based/Behavioural Interview Questions

Providing Evidence of Your Skills and Abilities



With competency based or behavioural interviews, the employer's goal is to get a clear picture of what your **future** performance might be like, based on your **past** performance in similar **situations**. Employers predetermine what skills and traits are necessary for a particular job and then ask very pointed questions to determine if you have what they're looking for. For example, if leadership is necessary for a position, you may be asked to talk about an experience in which you were a leader as well as what you think makes a good leader.

Behavioural questions require that you use a **specific situation from your past to provide evidence of your skills and abilities**. Remember the skill statements you developed for your resume in Module Three? You can use those here in your preparation; and also refer to your **interview journal** to mine through your past experiences.

When responding, talk through the situation you have in mind step by step using the STAR formula. A good story-telling technique is a huge plus when interviewing because it keeps the recruiter interested; but keep your story short and on topic, making sure you answer only the question that was asked!

Using the STAR formula

Using the STAR formula, you will describe the situation; tell what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome. Your answers should contain the four STAR steps (Situation, Task, Action, Result) for optimum success.

Situation: Give an example of a situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome.

Task: Describe the tasks involved in that situation.

Action: Talk about the various actions involved in the situation's task.

Results: What results directly followed because of your actions.

Click [here](#) for an example of using STAR to answer an interview question. You can then carefully review [a STAR worksheet](#), with sample interview questions that an employer would typically ask about. You can use the sheet to develop your response to each of these questions.

It is helpful to frame your answer as a **story** you can tell. Typically, the interviewer will pick apart the story to try to get at the specific behaviour(s) that they need evidence of. When a part of your story relates to a skill or experience the interviewer wishes to explore further, s/he may then ask you very specific follow-up questions regarding your behaviour. These can include "What were you thinking at that point?" or "Tell me more about your meeting with that person?" or "Lead me through your decision-making process."

Whenever you can, **quantify** your result. Numbers and percentages illustrate your level of contribution and responsibility. For example: "I was shift supervisor" could be enhanced by saying "... as Shift Supervisor, I trained and evaluated four employees."

Be prepared to provide examples of when results did **not** turn out as you planned. What did you do then? What did you learn? Your resume will serve as a good guide when answering these questions. Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years. Use examples from your past classes, activities, team involvements, community service and work experiences.

Watch a STAR example of responding to a behavioural interview question from [Pitt Careers](#)

Examples of Behavioural Questions

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
4. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and environments.
5. Describe an experience when you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
6. Give me an example of a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.

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7. Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
 8. Give me an example of an important goal that you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
 9. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
 10. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).

The Case Interview

Case Interviews Are Used To Measure Your Problem-Solving Abilities



Certain employers—especially management consulting firms—use a “case interview” technique to determine how well-suited you are to performing their type of work. Case interviews are used to measure your problem-solving ability, your tolerance for ambiguity, and your communication skills along several dimensions.

In a typical case interview, you are introduced to a theoretical dilemma facing a particular company (often drawn from the interviewer’s professional experience). Next you and the interviewer engage in an open dialogue about various aspects of the case. The interviewer may help guide the discussion, but will often expect that you ask probing questions to uncover key information about the case facts, identify key issues, and discuss how you would move toward a possible resolution. In this way, the employer hopes to learn about your analytical skills, specifically, how you identify, structure, and think through problems under pressure. Consequently, your **approach** to a case is more important than your final solution to the problem. Employers encourage that you think out loud as you attempt to “crack” a case because it allows the interviewer to evaluate your thought process. They will also be evaluating your interpersonal skills and your ability to communicate your recommendations and solutions to the presented problem.

While there are many types of case interviews, most will involve at least one of the three following components:

- Brainteasers
- Estimation (Market Sizing) Questions
- A Specific Project or Business Case

What employers look for during a case interview

- Enthusiasm for typical consulting issues
- Ability to think out loud and brainstorm
- Listening skills and the pace of candidate's response
- Ability to restate the problem and verify the objective of the business or project
- Conciseness and focus when possible
- Use of sketches, charts, or diagrams to describe your analysis and logic
- Ability to create reasonable hypotheses and put them to the test
- Ability to summarize final recommendations in a clear and concise way, identifying which case facts lead to your solution
- Confidence in your ideas

Common mistakes to avoid during a case interview

- Ignoring the cues of the interviewer
- Use of business terms in the wrong context
- Asking open-ended questions throughout the entire interview (or asking a long series of questions without explaining why you need the information)
- Making assumptions that utilize extremely large numbers and per centages and not being able to use them comfortably in your analysis
- Appearing disorganized or having scattered notes on the specific business or project case
- Spending too much time analyzing the smaller aspects of the case and not referring back to the big picture or problem
- Not being able to respond well to criticism or questions about your assumptions or your solutions.

Overall, as your interview progresses, listen carefully and clarify anything you do not understand before proceeding. Follow the interviewer's lead. Each individual will have a unique interviewing style and take you through the case in different ways depending on his or her priorities.

Scenario/Situational Interviewing

Demonstrated Problem Solving

In a scenario interview the employer will pose a 'situation' or 'scenario' and you will be asked to suggest a solution. These kinds of questions tend to assess your analytical, logic and problem solving skills as well as your ability to handle daily tasks effectively.

For example:

"You are working on a project which has to be completed by tomorrow a.m. Your manager comes to you with another assignment that must be completed by tomorrow noon. You know you will not be able to meet both deadlines. What would you do?"

In this kind of a situation, there may be more than one "right" answer. Keep in mind; the employer is trying to assess how you arrive at a decision or solution, whether it's logical, how you deal with the individuals involved, who you consult with in coming to the final decision and what kind of results you think you might obtain.

Wherever possible answer scenario interview questions by including how you have managed similar situations in your past. Prepare for this kind of an interview in the same way you do for a behavioural interview.

Remember your **STAR** formula!

Panel Interviews

Talking To More Than One Person



Most organizations hiring for professional or career-related positions use a panel rather than a single individual for the interview. With today's emphasis on flatter organizations and more teamwork, a panel may be made up of representatives from different departments and different position levels. The members will typically have a set of questions and/or activities that they will assess you on, and will discuss their impressions afterward to arrive at a common score. They may take turns asking you questions in an orderly sequence, or they may randomly disperse the questions between them.

Having so many people in the interview room can be unnerving. A panel interview requires you to be fairly flexible, and able to build rapport with several people. In order to do well there are a few key things to keep in mind:

- Try to remember the names and positions of each person on the panel and use their names if you can during the interview. Knowing their positions may be useful in helping you tailor your answers or in determining which one to direct one of your own questions to when it is your turn. Repeating each of the names as you are introduced can be helpful.

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- Make eye contact with all the panel members, not just the person who asks the question. Remember that they are all evaluating your responses so make sure to give your answer to the entire group.
 - If one or more members of the panel appear less interested or unfriendly, do not ignore them. Continue to include them in your responses. Don't be tempted to keep talking mostly to the person who seems the friendliest or who will be your boss.
 - Occasionally refer back to previous questions to demonstrate your understanding of the interconnectedness of the various roles. For instance, you may say something like, "Yes, similarly to what I was saying in response to Kim's last question, my role at Morgan's required me to resolve many of the customer's problems with the unfamiliar new equipment which is very similar to this situation."
 - If you lose track of a question or get distracted by another panel member, do not hesitate to ask the interviewer to repeat his or her question or to ask at the end of your response if you have fully answered the question. Sometimes panel interviewers ask quite complicated questions and you may only be able to remember and to answer the first part. They won't mind if you ask them to repeat a later part of the question.

Below is a quick overview for preparing for the Panel Interview Workshop (Interview Workshop 2).

Panel Interview Workshop Preparation

Now is the time to prepare and put your best interview foot forward! In the Panel Interview Workshop you will practice interviewing in a panel setting. You will be interviewing for the same sample position that you worked on in the Resume and Cover Letter workshop. Your preparation steps should include:

- Analyze the posting – what types of questions do you think the interviewer will ask? Refer to the list of interview questions throughout Module 7.
- Refer to your Interview Journal and review the answers you have developed for commonly asked questions. Create point form answers for questions you think will be asked but are not already in your journal.
- Keep the STAR format in mind.
- Review the Panel Interview section of Module 7 to refresh yourself on tips for doing well in a panel interview.

Telephone Interviews

You can have your preparation materials in front of you

Telephone interviews have one advantage over the other types of interviews—you can have your preparation materials in front of you as the interview is taking place. Prepare for a phone interview just as you would for a regular interview. Compile a list of your strengths and weaknesses, as well as a list of answers to typical interview questions.

Prior to the Interview

- Keep your resume in clear view, on the top of your desk, or tape it to the wall near the phone, so it's at your fingertips when you need to answer questions.
- Have a "cheat sheet" of compelling story topics that highlight your accomplishments (but use it only when necessary, it's best to be able to speak naturally rather than needing to pause significantly to look up your answer).
- Have company information summarized including specific critical points describing the employer and the company's products.
- Have a short list of questions about the job and the organization.
- Have a pen and paper handy for note taking.
- Clear the room — evict the roommates and the pets. Turn off the stereo and other distractions.
- If you are caught by surprise at a busy time, you may request another time to speak.

Employers use telephone interviews as a time effective way of identifying and recruiting candidates for employment. There are three basic types of telephone calls that you get from employers at this stage. One of the keys to success is to be able to identify quickly what type you are going to be participating in.

A. "Information Gathering Interviews" An employer may call in order to assess your interest in the company. This often occurs if you are referred to him or her through a personal contact, referral, or someone you met at a career fair. This kind of call should be treated as seriously as an in-depth interview. It is a good way for you, as the potential employee, to see if you are a good fit with the company and its objectives.

B. "Screening Call" Many companies use telephone calls as a screening mechanism in order to narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. These are quick and the person calling you will most likely be someone from Human Resources.

C. "In-Depth Telephone Interview" In this case, the telephone is being used as a way to minimize the expenses involved in traveling for the interviewer and/or the interviewee. Depending on the type of organization that you are interviewing with, you may be interviewed by a hiring committee, where you will be broadcast over a speakerphone.

During the Phone Interview

- Do not smoke, chew gum, eat or drink.
- Do keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to wet your mouth.
- Smile. This may sound strange but smiling will project a positive image to the listener and will change the tone of your voice.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Use the person's title (Mr. or Ms. and their last name.) Only use a first name if they ask you to.
- Do not interrupt the interviewer.
- Take your time—it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
- Give succinct answers
- Be able to tell a brief example/story of your experiences (remember your STAR examples!).

Before you hang up

- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity.
- Get the correct spelling of your interviewer's name.
- Get contact information for follow-up questions.
- Ask about the hiring timeline, "When are you looking to have a decision made?"

Skype interviews

Similar to phone interviews, you may be asked to conduct your interview on Skype due to time constraints or travel considerations. The advantage here over phone interviews is the chance to make the face-to-face connection between employer and interviewee. Prepare as you would for the phone interview, but also keep in mind these five excellent tips on [conducting an on-line interview](#). Also worth the watch! View this video that answers [How To Ace An Interview on Skype](#).

Wrapping Up The Interview

When the recruiter asks, "Do you have any questions for me?" it is important to have a few ready. At this point you are able to ask strategic questions that will elicit positive responses from the employer. The questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization. Show the recruiter that you have done your homework.

Looking for some ideas? MonsterUK has a [3-minute video](#) filled with questions to choose from, and further tips on your inquiry time.

"When can I ask about money?" you ask. Here's are some thoughts on [how to negotiate a salary](#).

The Final Minutes of the Interview

The interview is not over until you walk out the door. The conclusion of the interview usually lasts five minutes and is very important. During this time the recruiter is assessing your overall performance.

It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous. Once you take the cue that the interview is over, stand up, shake the recruiter's hand and thank him or her for considering you.

After the Interview

- Take notes about what you were asked and how you answered.
- Follow with a thank you note which reiterates your interest in the job.

The Day After: send a thank you

Within the next two-business days after your interview, it would be both appropriate and considerate to send the employer a thank you letter, acknowledging the time they took to meet with you and discuss your qualifications. Remind them about how invested you are in joining their team, and the benefits you can offer them! Virginia Tech's Career Services offers guidelines and [samples of thank you notes](#).

So are you ready? *Really* ready? Print off this [Job Interview Checklist](#) and make sure you run through it when that all-important day comes up for you.

Suggested Activity

Choose three sample behavioural questions. Using the STAR formula write answers to the questions in your interview journal. Then with a friend or family member practice answering the questions as though you were in an interview setting.

Did writing the content in your journal help you to have a clear, concise response to your questions?

Module 8. Mock Interviews

Mock Interviews

Mock Panel Interview Process



With the progress you've made through the previous modules, you're now ready to experience a mock panel interview. These sessions are scheduled during workshop 5 (Panel Mock Interview) and workshop 6 (Employer Mock Interview). Your EF will provide you details in class and will post the schedules on the News page of D2L.

What Is A Mock Panel Interview?

A mock panel interview is a *simulated* interview that takes place on campus before a group of 3 people: usually 3 fellow students from your class. You will also have an opportunity to sit on a panel for a fellow student's mock panel interview. It helps you understand the interview process and see how an interview is performed from an employer's perspective.

Each mock interview takes approximately 30 minutes: 15 to 20 minutes is spent doing the interview and 10 to 15 minutes for the debriefing and feedback.

What Is An Employer Mock Interview?

An employer mock interview is a simulated interview that also takes place on campus with an actual employer usually from the program area that you are enrolled. These employers volunteer their time and expertise to help students practice interview skills.

An employer mock interview takes approximately 30 minutes: 15 to 20 minutes is spent doing the mock interview and 10 to 15 minutes for the debriefing and feedback.

Why Do A Mock Interview?

An important component of the Co-op WEP course is to prepare you for real co-op interviews. Through this course you have the opportunity to practice your interview skills before going on actual interviews. It's an opportunity to get real feedback in a safe environment.

How Will These Be Done?

Both the mock panel interview and the mock employer interview will take place during the scheduled class time. Just as if you were applying for an actual position, you will be required to submit a mock cover letter and resume to your EF by submitting it to the D2L drop box in advance based on a mock job posting.

How Is The Mock Interview Assessed?

This is the **mock interview form** that your mock interviewers will use in assessing your interview performance, as well as your cover letter and resume. You will receive specific feedback in the areas of preparation, appearance, manner, gestures, voice/speech and responses.

Why Do These Type Of Mock Interviews?

An important component of the Co-op WEP seminar is to prepare you for real job interviews. Through this course you have the opportunity to practice your interview skills before going on actual interviews. Past co-op students have found the mock interview to be one of the most valuable aspects of the Co-op WEP seminar. It's an opportunity to get real, unbiased feedback in a safe environment.

Our co-op and internship employers are very supportive of the learning process students go through including learning to prepare for a job interview. In addition they are able to share their industry-specific knowledge and demonstrate professional standards.

Suggested Activity

In your Interview Journal write down any feedback/ideas you received during your mock interview.

Module 9. Workplace Issues, Rights, Responsibilities

Introduction

Imagine for a moment that you've reached your ultimate goal for this course. You've taken yourself through a thought-filled self-assessment process. Your resume and cover letter can be readily tailored to jobs in your chosen field. You're equipped with a variety of job search and networking techniques to help you meet employers; and interviews are now something that you prepare for and conduct with confidence and ease.

And now you've got a job – not just *any* job, but a job that will hopefully be one of many stepping stones in a rich and fulfilling career. Well done! All that hard work has finally paid off!

But as the “new hire” in the workplace (regardless of your age), there are some additional pieces of information that you need to arm yourself with, to understand the rights and responsibilities of both yourself and your new boss. The information in this module is divided into three related areas: **employment standards**, **human rights**, and **workplace safety**. Read through each section, and make note of the applicable Contact Information in case you need assistance, once you're out there in the workforce.

Important Note: If you have concerns or questions about your employer's compliance with the Employment Standards Act, the Human Rights Act or Workplace Safety guidelines during your work term, please contact the co-op field instructor or co-op office responsible for your program to advise them of any concerns you may have.

The Employment Standards Act

Outlines basic rights for employees and obligations for employers

The Employment Standards Act sets out the **minimum standards that apply to most workplaces** in British Columbia. To accomplish this, the Act establishes certain basic rights for employees and obligations for employers. The Act promotes fair treatment of employees and employers, fosters a productive and efficient work force and helps employees meet work and family obligations. The Act also sets up fair and efficient means of resolving disputes.

The Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government administers the Employment Standards Act. The following is a list of several helpful related links that can help you better understand the Act as it applies to your situation.

The Act itself. This is the most current online version of the Employment Standards Act, made available by BC Laws.

A Guide to the Employment Standards Act. Divided into easy-to-read subsections, you can jump to information on minimum wage, minimum daily pay, overtime, and holidays. (Hint: Go to this website and familiarize yourself with all the sections of the Employment Standards Act - there are some quiz questions based on this information found on the website).

Fact Sheets. This is the place to go for more detailed information on sub-sections of the Act. You will also find the fact sheets translated into seven different languages.

Self-help section. What do you do if a dispute arises between you and your employer? This section walks you through the process of trying to solve a problem between yourselves, and what happens when you file a complaint with their offices.

Contacts. Addresses, phone lines, and fax numbers are listed for the major centres in BC, as well as a feedback form for email inquiries.

Human Rights

The BC Human Rights Code is the law designed to **protect you from discrimination and harassment** in three main areas:

1. Employment
2. Housing
3. Services and facilities customarily available to the public

What exactly are discrimination and harassment?

Discrimination occurs when an individual person or a group of people is ***denied opportunities or treated poorly*** because of their personal characteristics, such as their race, sex, religion, family status, etc.

Discrimination takes place when people are judged as members of a group rather than on the basis of their individual merits or abilities (e.g. believing that “women cannot do jobs that involve heavy lifting” or that “an older employee should be forced into retirement because of their age”).

Harassment is a particular ***type of discrimination***, and includes ***insulting or abusive treatment*** of people because of a personal characteristic. The Human Rights Code protects people from harassment because of sexual orientation, race, place of origin, or any of the other characteristics covered by the Code.

Both discrimination and harassment are against the law in BC. Even if a person contends that they didn’t mean to discriminate against someone intentionally, it is still illegal.

For a detailed explanation of discrimination and harassment please see the link to the [Ministry of Justice](#) and the [Human Rights Code](#).

Also, this link to [Protection from Discrimination](#) gives a brief description of coverage provided by the Ministry of Justice.

What do I need to know if I think I'm being discriminated against or harassed in my new workplace?

The Code itself. Here's the actual code as made available by BC Laws.

The Ministry of The Attorney General. This site contains several key information sheets in multiple languages.

BC Human Rights Tribunal. This is the independent 'court' that makes decisions on human rights complaints. You would file your actual complaint with them. They do not provide lawyers and cannot provide legal advice. Their site contains thorough information sheets on the complaint process.

BC Human Rights Coalition and Clinic. This is the group that provides legal assistance, education and service clinics to the general public. If your complaint is accepted by the Tribunal you can then send the Coalition your complaint to see if they can help you.

The following is a list of contacts to find out more information about Human Rights Act violations.

Human Rights Tribunal

Suite 1170 - 605 Robson Street
Vancouver, BC, V6B 5J3

Phone: (604) 775-2000
Toll Free (in BC): 1-888-440-8844
TTY: (604) 775-2021
FAX: (604) 775-2020
www.bchrt.bc.ca

Ministry of Justice

Dispute Resolution Office
Justice Services Branch
PO BOX 9222 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9J1
Phone: 250 387-1480
TTY: Please call Enquiry BC: 1-800-661-8773
E-mail: AGWEBFEEDBACK@gov.bc.ca

BC Human Rights Clinic

c/o University of Victoria Law Centre
Third Floor 1221 Broad St.
Victoria, BC V8W 2A4
Phone: 250 385-1221

Tollfree: 1 866 385-1221

E-mail: reception@thelawcentre.ca

Source: <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/human-rights-protection/>

Workplace Safety

Accidents at Work Can Happen Anytime



The Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government administers the Workers' Compensation Act through WorkSafeBC, whose mandate is to keep **workers and their workplaces safe from injuries, illnesses, or disease.**

Accidents at work can happen anytime and they can affect the rest of your life. One day when you're least expecting it, you could be injured at work. Workers between the ages of 15 and 24, and most often males, are at greater danger of being injured or even killed on the job than workers in any other age group. On their website (see below), WorkSafeBC reports that they receive an average of 20,000 phone calls per working day, and almost a million claims-related documents every year.

There are many reasons for accidents at work. Trying too hard can mean taking risks. It's not always easy to know what's dangerous if you are unfamiliar with new work conditions or not getting proper training. Face it, there's a lot of competition for jobs, so who wants to make waves about unsafe working conditions? But every accident is preventable. As a worker, you are responsible for working without undue risk to yourself or others.

What Do I Need To Know?

The Act itself. The full Act, made available by BC laws.

Claims Information. This is where you'll find answers on how to file a claim for compensation for work-related injuries and illnesses.

Worker Centre. This portal contains more information on your rights and responsibilities, the claims process, as well as reporting on incidents and return-to-work programs.

What you can do to be safe at work:

- Check for risks for injury at work and find out about safe work practices from your employer.
- Follow safe work rules and use safety gear provided at the work site.
- Take part in all training programs offered by your employer. Every employee has a right to safety training. Ask for training if none is offered.
- Correct or report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor as soon as you notice them.
- Know your rights. You are entitled to work in a safe and healthy workplace free of hazards and to refuse unsafe tasks and conditions.
- Remember that all workers, including young and part-time workers, are entitled to workers' compensation in the event of a work injury or illness.

Workers have the right to:

- Information, instruction, and training about safe work procedures and how to recognize hazards on the job.
- Supervision to make sure they work without undue risk.
- Equipment and safety gear required to do the job safely (workers are responsible for providing their own clothing to protect themselves against the natural elements, general purpose work gloves, safety footwear, and safety headgear).
- Refuse to do tasks and to work in conditions they think are unsafe, without being fired or disciplined for refusing.
- Participate in workplace health and safety committees and activities.

Workers have the responsibility to:

- Don't assume you can do something you've never done before. Ask your supervisor to show you how to do it safely before you begin work. Ask your employer for job safety training.
- Use all safety gear and protective clothing when and where required.
- Always follow safe work procedures and encourage your co-workers to do the same.
- Immediately correct unsafe conditions or report them right away to your supervisor.

-
- Know how to handle any hazardous materials or chemicals you use on the job.
 - If you have any doubts about your safety, talk to your supervisor.
 - Tell your supervisor of any physical or mental conditions that may make you unable to work safely.

What about my boss?

One of the most important responsibilities of the employer is to ensure that workers are adequately trained in safe work procedures and properly supervised when carrying out their duties. Under the Workers Compensation Act, the employer has the legal responsibility to ensure that every worker receives adequate training. The employer must also follow-up to see that the supervisor is carrying out all required training.

Employers should:

- Know and comply with workplace health and safety regulations that apply to their workplace.
- Create a workplace culture that encourages young and new workers to ask questions about any health and safety concerns they may have.
- Involve supervisors and experienced workers in identifying potential health and safety problems and in developing prevention programs to eliminate these hazards.
- Give supervisors and young and new workers all the training they need to do their jobs and to recognize hazards.
- Provide the required safety gear and protective clothing (workers are responsible for providing their own clothing to protect them against the natural elements, general purpose work gloves, safety footwear and safety headgear).
- Evaluate equipment that workers might be required to operate to ensure that it is safe for their use. Make sure they know how to use any equipment safely.
- Make sure that workers are appropriately supervised to prevent injuries and exposure to hazardous materials.
- Create an environment where "safe" behaviour is rewarded and recognized in the workplace.
- Provide managers and supervisors with knowledge of how to train new and young workers. Check back with them frequently to ensure they are following up with new staff to ensure that questions are being answered and to observe if the work is being done safely.

Five questions to discuss with your employer

WorkSafeBC has a handout called [Getting a job? Ask questions about safety](#). Below are five key questions you can ask your employer during the interview process to help you decide if this is the right job for you.

1. Are there any risks or hazards I should be aware of in my job?
2. Are there any health and safety procedures I should follow?
3. What safety gear will I be expected to wear?
4. When will I receive job safety training?
5. If I get hurt, who is the first aid person?

Also from WorkSafeBC is this [Q and A](#) page related to safety at work. Just click on the “plus” signs to view the related answer to each question

Self-Employment or Contracting

Self-employment and contract positions can be awkward in terms of supervision but have proved to be very successful learning opportunities for motivated and organized students. Most contractors have worked for a single client and have a pseudo-supervisor in that client organization who guides and assesses the student learning. While potentially complicated, this is still a valid work term experience for the entrepreneur. Chat with your CIC, CFI or EF if you are thinking about this option.

Insurance Issues for self-employment work terms

This information applies to students who elect to do a self-employed work term or are hired as contract employees.

Self-Employed?

If you are self-employed, you are responsible for your own accident/liability and any travel insurance. Consult with ICBC and any private insurance carriers for appropriate insurance coverage information. Any additional costs you incur can be claimed against income as business expenses.

Contracting to your employer?

Not all contract situations are the same so the first thing is to determine details of the status of yourself as a contracted employee. You will again be responsible for your own accident and liability insurance, and any travel insurance. As in the case where students are self-employed, any additional costs can be claimed against your income as business expenses.

Working Outside of BC

If you manage to find a work term position outside of this fine province, you will have a fantastic opportunity to discover and learn so much more about this country and our people. Work term positions outside of Canada provide an awesome opportunity to learn about other cultures, history, and the world.

We strongly encourage you to expand your horizons...and to do so safely. Below we have listed insurance considerations...

Out-of-Province Insurance Issues for Students

Based on consultation with the College's lawyer, the following best describes your insurance and risk management issues if you are engaged in work terms outside the Province of BC:

Paid work term within Canada?

Within Canada, you should be covered by the employer's workplace insurance. Every province has some version of WorkSafeBC.

Paid work term outside Canada?

Coverage for students employed in foreign countries is less consistent. We will work with you to find out what insurance your employer may have in place. Western companies like those in the UK, Australia, Europe and so on, are not going to be risks, but work terms in third world or emerging economies may not meet such expectations as normal working conditions are considerably different.

We will help you to find out what the employer has in place (in fact if a third world/emerging firm claims to provide coverage, we'd want to see evidence of that and not just take their word).

If there is limited or no coverage by the organization, then you will need to review your own insurance and possibly purchase additional coverage for accidents & health. In fact, you may wish to do this anyway even if there is some coverage, depending on the country of origin and/or the details of any coverage. You never know what can happen and it is best to be financially prepared.

If you are routinely traveling outside the country for work, you are advised to investigate the purchase of additional travel/accident/health insurance regardless.

Unpaid work term within Canada?

If the work term position occurs outside BC, and you will not be covered by an employer's policy if you are a volunteer or self employed (including contracting), again check your existing insurance and/or purchase additional coverage as seems prudent.

Unpaid work term outside Canada?

This situation is no different from the scenario of an unpaid work term position within Canada except that the organization is even less likely to have any coverage.

Other Insurance Resources

Below are some resources that you may wish to check into. Students are also encouraged to research private insurance plans (check with a bank or insurance office).

Camosun College Student Society Benefits Office

Located in Campus Centre 117 @ Interurban campus and Fisher 107 @ Lansdowne campus

Medical Services Plan of BC

Check on-line for how to contact them: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/>

Unpaid Work Terms and WorkSafeBC Coverage

Please keep in mind the following information if you accept an unpaid work term.

The College's WorkSafeBC **coverage is extended** to apply to Camosun students in cases where:

1. The work term is a required part of a program of study, and
2. The student is registered in the required work study course, and
3. The work term is occurring with a host employer within BC and is unpaid

Camosun students in the following work term situations **are not covered** by the College's WorkSafeBC coverage and it is highly recommended that students secure private insurance coverage:

1. The work term is an optional part of a program of study, or
2. The work term is taking place outside of BC

Other Insurance Resources

Below are some resources that you may wish to check into. Students are also encouraged to research private insurance plans (check with a bank or insurance office).

Camosun College Student Society Benefits Office

Located in Campus Centre 117 @ Interurban campus and Fisher 107 @ Lansdowne campus

Medical Services Plan of BC

Check on-line for how to contact them: <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/>

Module 10. Completing a Successful Workterm

Work Term Expectations

Workplace education is an educational model that promotes continuous learning through the integration of classroom and applied work-based learning. Through workplace education, employers and educators share the responsibility to prepare students for the rapidly changing social, economic and technological environment of the modern workplace. Workplace education is a learner-centred model where students direct their own learning and make a valuable contribution to the workplace while guided and supported by both the employer and the College.

In other words, you and your employer share responsibility to:

- make your work term experience the best it can be
- find the best project or set of duties for you
- use the skills you have learned in the classroom so far
- look for additional learning at work, and
- look ahead for ways to apply what you are going to learn next term

Your learning is the most important aspect of workplace education. Your employer and instructor are your guides, but you are in control.

Through the work term, integrated learning, or work term experience, you will have the opportunity to:

- transfer and apply the skills, knowledge and abilities learned in the classroom to a practical setting
- set and pursue specific, measurable (S.M.A.R.T.) goals for personal and professional growth within the context of your career field
- demonstrate components of effective workplace communication
- demonstrate appropriate professional behaviours in the workplace
- build and maintain a network of colleagues, supervisors and associated contacts in your career field to assist in personal and professional growth
- learn about your preferred industry and career direction
- relate the technologies learned and skills developed in the workplace to your next level of academic study
- articulate your personal growth needs
- connect academic learning between the workplace and the community
- maximize personal and professional contributions toward the development of new skills and knowledge in your career field
- gain a competitive edge when applying for jobs with this relevant, applied work term experience

The responsibilities of each party in the three-way partnership are:

1 - Employer work term expectations

- Provide meaningful employment and a quality work experience in your field of study
- Orient and familiarize you to the organization and job expectations
- Provide training and tools to enable you to perform the job up to the expected standards
- Provide supervision and be available to you when assistance is required

-
- Be available to meet with a member of the College staff during the work term to review your performance
 - Notify the Co-op department should any problems arise during the work term, prior to taking further action
 - Complete a formal evaluation with you at the end of the work term and send this information to the Co-op department

2 - Your work term expectations

- Perform the tasks and duties of the job as required
- Maintain an enthusiastic, energetic and positive attitude towards your work, showing initiative and a willingness to learn
- Advise the employer, the field instructor and/or the Co-op office of any significant problems within the work environment (THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT: if something is wrong, let us know immediately or as soon as possible. We can help!)
- Recognize your role as a representative of the College and of your program
- Ensure you're working toward fulfilling the learning plan established at the beginning of the work term

3 - College (Co-op staff and program faculty) work term expectations

- Be available to you and your employers throughout the work term
- Support you in the continuation of your learning on the work term
- Visit all students and employers in person or over the phone and following up as necessary
- Advise you and/or your employers should a problem occur during the work term
- Guide students in their articulation of knowledge gained at the workplace with their academic studies
- Evaluate the success of your work term and completion of the goals you established in your learning plan

Tips for Student Success on the Job

Listen to what some of our co-op and internship employers have said about what makes a student successful!



Tori Klassen,

BCCampus

[Click here](#)



Paul Butterfield,

District of Saanich

[Click Here](#)

Establish communication with your supervisor.

Approximately 90 per cent of problems that students encounter on a work term stem from a lack of effective communication between the student and the employer. Being proactive and establishing an effective means of communication with your supervisor or manager on the job is an essential step toward work term success. Often, it is the CEO or Human Resources Director of a company who makes the decision to hire a student. Your direct supervisor may not be aware that your employment with the company is an integral part of your education. By establishing an effective means of communication, you'll be encouraging your supervisor to take an active, interested role in your learning.

There are several methods to facilitate excellent communication with your supervisor. Make sure you ask your employer if s/he has a preference. Three examples are:

- *Briefing meetings*: once or twice per week, every week, at a regular time for 15 to 30 minutes to discuss what was planned for last week, completed last week, and is proposed for this week. (Take notes at every meeting!)
- *Writing a brief weekly report* for your supervisor each week outlining the tasks that had been planned for the previous week, what was accomplished last week, and what is planned for the current week. (Be sure to keep a copy of each week's document for yourself!)
- *Daily update meetings* every day with your supervisor for 5-10 minutes to update him/her on what was planned for yesterday, completed, and what is planned for today.

Ask for feedback. Employers are not always forthcoming in providing student feedback, so, take a proactive approach. Let your employer know that you would like to receive some feedback on your performance, and schedule a meeting with him or her to discuss how you're doing.

Don't be afraid to admit your mistakes; be prepared to accept criticism. In consultation with your employer/Co-op Field Instructor, form a plan to make the necessary changes within a prescribed time frame.

Listen carefully to instructions and take notes. Ask immediately if you do not understand the instructions; otherwise, try to collect a number of questions before approaching your employer to avoid constantly interrupting them.

Use your judgment. Some questions need to be asked immediately so you don't waste time.

Keep busy. Let your employer know when you are nearing the end of your assigned work to give them a chance to plan ahead/find additional work for you. Also consider asking your co-workers if they need assistance, but check with your employer before starting.

Demonstrate a positive attitude. When asked to do work which you think is routine or menial and below you, do it willingly. Demonstrate initiative and a willingness to take on additional responsibility.

Keep yourself organized; be aware of deadlines. Attention to detail is critical to building trust and responsibility.

Learn company policies and rules – both written and unwritten. Ask before acting if you are unsure. Remember to keep your eyes and ears open and adapt accordingly.

Be aware of both the formal and informal lines of command. Have a look at an organizational chart (if one exists), and follow the formal lines of command unless directed otherwise.

Be aware of office politics and gossip without getting involved. Keeping informed is important to building and maintaining relationships. Be sensitive if personal issues are spilling into work by giving coworkers space until they work through the emotions. Be supportive and understanding but avoid passing on gossip or speaking about others' personal issues.

Learning on Your Work Term

We all learn in different ways. Some of us prefer a logical step-by-step way of learning; others prefer to be immersed in a topic and suddenly have an “a-ha” moment where it all makes sense. As your work term is a learning experience, not just a job, it's important for you to understand how you learn. So far, we've focused

on your abilities and transferable skills so you can market yourself effectively. However, once you begin your work term, you will need to know how to make the most of this *as a learning experience*.

Your work term will be experiential. In other words, you will learn by executing a typical industry job on a day-to-day basis. However, to be effective on the job, to successfully integrate and transfer knowledge of what you've learned in the classroom to the workplace, and to be able to report on this as part of your work term learning assignment, knowledge of your learning styles can be very helpful. Knowing how you learn can help you as you craft learning objectives for your Work Term Learning Plan.

Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire

The assessment called the Index of Learning Styles (ILS), was developed by North Carolina State University, and can help you to understand the learning environment you prefer. The assessment tool will also give you tips on how to cope when the environment is NOT optimum for you and the way you learn best.

Go to this web site, <http://www.ncsu.edu/felder-public/ILSpage.html> and click on the link to the ILS (Index of Learning Styles) questionnaire.

- Key in your name and answer the questionnaire as directed (44 questions total).
- Hit "submit" at the bottom of the page and your results will appear.
- Print off your results and click on the "Learning Style Descriptions" at the bottom of this page. Look at the description for your results. Save this information, and think about strategies you may need to use to accommodate your particular learning style during your work term.
- Keep this for reference during your work term. This can also be part of selecting goals or reflecting on your work term.

Creating SMART Work Term Goals

Your work term is a vital part of your education as it represents the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills you have acquired in the classroom to the work place setting. This means your work term is more than just a job you are doing during a break from school, it's a valuable experiential learning experience that integrates your academic knowledge into a real life professional situation in which you are continuing to learn.

Work term objectives describe goals to be completed during the work term. The goals can combine the supervisor's expectations, the job description, and your learning aspirations to create specific performance targets and learning goals. Setting learning goals for your work term will help to keep you and your employer focused on what you hope to achieve as a result of your participation in experiential education.

For example, what do you hope to accomplish during your work term? What skills do you want to apply and practice on the job? What new skills or knowledge do you hope to acquire? How can these be measured? In

what ways can you integrate the knowledge you've gained in the classroom? When designed in partnership between you and your supervisor, work term goals help ensure a successful work term for everyone involved.

We have helped to guide your development of learning goals by including examples in the course outline of your work term course. The learning goals are divided into four general categories:

1. Occupational and work place awareness
2. Academic/Technical learning
3. Employability skills
4. Self-awareness and professional development

You are required to develop one or two goals in each of these categories.

The learning goals that you develop should be realistic and achievable within the time frame of your work term. They should also be specific so that they can be measured at the end of your work term experience. At least some of the goals should also be directly linked to the academic/technical knowledge and skills learned in your program of study.

Using SMART Learning Goals

Writing SMART learning goals for your work term will take a little time, but is relatively easy. SMART goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time bound

Each of your learning goals should answer the questions:

- What is the task to be accomplished or skill to be mastered?
- How does this task or skill relate to what I have learned in the classroom?
- How will learning how to do this help me in my studies when I return to classes and/or begin my career?
- How will it be accomplished?
- When will it be completed?
- How will I know I have accomplished it (i.e. how will it be "measured")?

On Your Work Term

Your Co-op Field Instructor (CFI) is faculty from your academic learning department at Camosun. As in any college course, your CFI is your primary contact while on the work term. Should you have any questions,

concerns, or admiration to share, start with your CFI. Always speak to your instructor first and if you need assistance reaching them, then contact your Co-op & Internship Coordinator or your Employment Facilitator by checking for contact information on the [Contact List](#).

All course material is available online in D2L. As soon as you are registered and your work term course has begun, you will have access to the work term D2L documents. The degree to which you use the D2L course will depend on your CFI, but the minimum will be two-fold: as a repository for course documents and as a location for submitting assignments and assessments into the appropriate drop box.

You will get an email reminder from your CFI regarding the assignments you'll be expected to complete and submit during your work term. Here's an overview to the components on which you will be evaluated. Be sure to check the course outline from your CFI as requirements and due dates can vary between programs. Be aware of deadlines! Components handed in by the due dates will count towards achieving a DST (With Distinction) grade.

Work Term Learning Plan

Shortly after you start your work term position, meet with your supervisor to establish your duties at the workplace and ensure you are all clear about your mutual expectations. This will help you to determine realistic and measurable SMART learning outcomes or goals in consultation with your supervisor. Completion of these learning outcomes corresponds to the educational aspect of your work term. The learning outcomes must demonstrate a relationship between what you have learned to date in the classroom and what you are experiencing in the work place. Successful completion ties into your longer term academic and/or career plans.

You need to list at least four objectives or goals as the core of your Work Term Learning Plan; submit them to your Co-op Field Instructor (CFI) for approval. Your instructor will tell you whether you should submit your goals using the Work Term Learning Plan form (available online at the [Co-op website](#)), or if s/he prefers a different format. These are due within 2 to 3 weeks of the start date of your job. The next page contains tips on writing SMART learning goals.

Midterm Reflection

At or around the midpoint of the work term, you'll need to submit a midterm reflection to your instructor. Your instructor will tell you whether you should submit your reflection using the Midterm Reflection form (located online at the [Co-op website](#)), if s/he prefers a different format, or if this should be completed prior to the site visit.

Virtual or On-Site Visit

Your instructor will schedule a virtual or on-site visit with you and your employer either in person or via phone, about a third of the way into your work term, or as late as around the midpoint of your work term.

In some schools, your site visit occurs early in the work term to provide the opportunity for guidance in developing relevant, effective and useful learning goals, while in others your midterm reflection is required prior to the site visit.

Make sure you know what your instructor's expectations are with regards to learning outcome submissions and site visit timing!

Regardless of the timing of the work term, the CFI will meet with your employer to see how he or she thinks you are doing and if there are areas you need to work on or any concerns to be addressed. Then the CFI will meet with you to discuss your employer's feedback and, more importantly, to discuss your work, projects you have been assigned, and progress on the learning goals you have selected. In addition, the instructor is there to help you work around any issues or concerns that may have arisen.

Performance Assessment

Prior to the completion of your work term, your employer needs to complete an evaluation of your performance during the work term. Make sure your employer completes the "Employer Performance Assessment" form and discusses it with you before returning the form to the College. You will also be required to submit your signed version to your instructor in the course drop box. There is also a student assessment of learning form which your instructor may wish you to complete. Both these forms are available online at the [Co-op website](#). Your instructor will let you know which forms are required for successful completion and final evaluation of your work term.

Portfolios or Projects

Your course outline will describe what you need to hand in at the end of your work term. Some programs may require a portfolio, others a report and/or a reflective essay. Please make sure of your due dates. Timely submission of work term course materials will qualify you for the Distinction grade. Materials may need to be submitted just prior to the completion of the work term, (i.e. before you return to the College), or you may have a due date of a week after the start of classes. Confirm these details with your instructor PRIOR to the start of your work term if you're unsure.

Return to School Meeting

On your return to the College you may be scheduled for a "Return to School Meeting" and/or an assignment that gives you an opportunity to discuss and share your work term experience.

Grading System - Work Terms

The College's competency grading system is used for co-op work terms with the opportunity to earn a DST in addition to grades of COM or NC.

To receive a 'Completed with Distinction' (DST) grade for the work term, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- Submit all required co-operative education documentation by the established deadlines. This includes the following.
 - Work term learning plan
 - Midterm reflection on learning
 - Student assessment of learning
 - Employer performance assessment of co-op student
 - Final work term assignment (assignments may vary by program)
 - Receive a "Very Good" or "Outstanding" overall evaluation on the employer performance assessment of co-op student
 - Submit a co-op work term assignment that receives an "Outstanding" evaluation from the co-op field instructor assigned to the work term
 - Participate in a "return-to-school" meeting

To receive a Complete "COM" grade for the work term, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- Submit all required co-op education documentation within one week of work term completion. This includes the following:
 - Work term learning plan
 - Midterm reflection on learning
 - Student assessment of learning
 - Employer performance assessment of co-op student
 - Final work term assignment (assignments may vary by program)
 - Receive a "Satisfactory" or better overall evaluation on the employer performance assessment of co-op student
 - Submit a co-op work term assignment that receives a "Satisfactory" or better evaluation

Students who do not meet the minimum criteria for a "Complete" grade are given a "Not Complete" (NC) grade for the work term and are not eligible for a second work term.

What Your Tuition Pays For

The Co-op Education and Student Employment office is available to assist you before, after and during your co-op work term and provide you with the skills that will help you secure employment. This includes lifelong career management skills; consultation and guidance that will help you secure co-op and post-graduate employment; access to prospective co-op employment opportunities and events; and providing the services of a resource centre during your job search, including access to the CIMS job board. We also act as a liaison between co-op students who are actively seeking employment and prospective employers who can benefit from the skills of a student in the workplace, and we help coordinate the job application and interview / selection process for students and employers.

We provide year-round facilities, full-time staffing and administrative support. A portion of your tuition from all your courses at Camosun College, including co-op courses, goes towards these services, as well as student services operations, and program and school costs (work terms, because they are courses, face the same internal approval and development processes), marketing costs, and the costs of promoting the benefits of co-operative education in general and Camosun students in particular.

Your tuition also covers the instructional time, resources and travel costs devoted by faculty to your work term. In addition to site visit(s), instructors must approve work term learning plans, review midterm reflections, and mark assignments at the end of the work term. Occasionally, faculty or the co-op staff may be asked to mediate on your behalf if an issue arises during your work term. Additionally, having faculty monitoring the work terms provides opportunities for meaningful dialogue between the faculty and employers which is valuable both in the College's ongoing effort to provide relevant programming for students and for the faculty's personal awareness of current industry practices, as well as contributing to the establishment of relationships with employers who can provide ongoing employment for our students and graduates. Virtually all of these services and benefits apply whether you develop your own work term experience or apply for a job through CIMS.

What Will My Work Term Cost?

The tuition cost of a work term course varies by program. You can view a list of tuition by course at:

For Domestic Students: <http://camosun.ca/learn/fees/current/course/course-fees.pdf>

For International Students: <http://camosun.ca/international/students/fees-costs.html>

Student Society fees and levies: <http://camosun.ca/learn/fees/current/model/ccss.html>

It's important to be aware of your work term tuition expense and to plan ahead for it. For more specific information about your work term course fee you may contact the co-op office.

Students may be eligible to receive financial aid during a work term semester/quarter. For more specific information contact the Financial Aid department located in Student Services.

Each work term course is loaded on CAMLINK just like regular courses. You will be required to pay an initial deposit followed by paying the balance of the tuition by the fee deadline established by the College. The minimum number of hours that a work term provides is defined through a combination of criteria set by the College and the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education.

Today's Workforce

Diverse and Multi-generational



The workforce that you will enter is completely different from all the workforces that have come before it. Sound a bit dramatic? The truth of the matter is that when you combine a shrinking Canadian labour force with programs designed to drive inclusiveness, the employment landscape now includes a greater mix of youth, older workers, immigrants, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, and visible minorities than it ever has in the past.

So you readily think to yourself, “Great; I’m a team player. It says so on my resume.” That may be true, but you would do well to visit the following links and heed their advice on working through conflict and misunderstandings between diverse co-workers.

What is Cultural Awareness Anyway? How Do I Build It? This article from [curiosity.com](https://www.curiosity.com) walks you through the importance of being able to step back from yourself, and realize your own cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions. In particular, scroll down to the section titled “How Do I Manage Cultural Diversity?” for their noteworthy tips.

Communicating Effectively in a Diverse Workplace. Originally prepared for workers in the Calgary Health Region, this [article](#) actually has several communication pointers that any worker can make use of when handling miscommunication difficulties.

Video time: a nice summary to the question **How do I communicate in culturally diverse environments?** from the [Steven Gaffney Company](#).

Multi-generational Conflicts

Hard economic times have led many Canadians to stay in the workplace well past the age when they normally would have retired. Combine that with greater amounts of youth also working, and we now have a labour force that has – for the first time ever – four generations in it at once. They are:

The Traditionalists: born between 1925-1945

The Boomers: born between 1946-1964

Generation X: born between 1965-1980

Generation Y/ The Millennials: born after 1980

You can easily identify which group you belong to. The hard part is figuring out how to solve a conflict at work that doesn't dissolve into muttered grumblings about how the other generation "just doesn't understand" you or your point of view. What to do?

- Read the Government of Alberta's tips sheet on [Bridging the Generation Gap at Work](#). It contains an excellent summary of the 4 generations currently sharing the workplace and the values that distinguish each generation from the other. Take particular note of the suggestions in the article's final section, titled Closing the Gap.
- Time for a laugh. Watch this funny-but-accurate synopsis on [Generational Differences in the Workplace](#) from professional speaker Garrison Wynn.

Boundaries and Professionalism

Drawing a line between your professional and personal life



As much as you want to be comfortable in your new workplace, there's a fine distinction to make between total comfort with your colleagues and a lack of professionalism. Each of the following points contain an article that you should review, which can further help you learn how to not just survive, but actually *shine* on the job.

Setting boundaries: Read this article from the University of California - [Setting Healthy Workplace Boundaries](#), walks you through the why's and how-to's of drawing a line between your personal and professional life.

Gossip: "Everybody does it," you think to yourself. Sometimes we just want to vent, and sometimes sharing gossip can help us to feel "included" when we're the new person on the job. Gossip may feel good in the immediate sense, but in the long run, the drawbacks affect everyone in the workplace. Read this article by Life with Confidence, titled [Are You Willing to Build Your Self-Confidence By Avoiding Gossip at Work?](#) Pay close attention to their questions you should ask yourself *before* you gossip, and the tips on how not to get involved in the first place.

Social networking and your online presence: Read about one of the first widely publicized cases of two employees who were *fired because of comments they posted about their bosses on their personal Facebook pages*. Although their comments were not made during work time or using work computers, a ruling from BC's Labour Relations Board said the employees were justly terminated for actions that lead to a "hostile working environment." Linked from Employment and Human Rights Law in Canada <http://www.canadaemploymenthumanrightslaw.com/2011/02/articles/social-media/handling-social-media-in-your-workplace/>

Communicating at work, but not for work: Did you know that the average person sends between *20 to 300 texts per day*? That's a staggering number, and a huge detriment to productivity at work. If you constantly phone family members throughout the day, or text friends to make after-work plans, read this article by business efficiency consultant Andrew Jensen, [Handling Personal Calls and Texting While Working](#). The bottom line: review your employer's policies, and know when too much outside communication is affecting your ability to be productive!

Coping With Stress

Work/Life Balance



Stress is a fact of everyday life. Getting through your courses at Camosun is stressful. Finding a job is stressful. Starting a new job - no matter how much you really want that job - is stressful.

Now add to that picture all the demands being placed on you between the different spheres of your life. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, that lack of balance between your many responsibilities leads to about 58% of Canadians feeling like they are “overloaded.” Take the [CMHA's Quiz](#) to see how you rate in terms of your own work/life balance (note: to take this quiz you need to click on the download button on the right side of the page).

Libraries and bookstores abound with first-rate books explaining the effects that stress has on us, and a variety of useful techniques to manage it. For your purpose here, [the University of Florida, IFAS Extension, Hillsborough County](#) has a thorough on-line [Stress Management Workshop](#) for students, which you can work through in about 20 to 40 minutes on your own at your computer. Whether you do it right now, or at some point in the future, keep a note of the website. Included are quizzes that can help you identify your triggers and personal warning signs of stress, and a thorough list of stress reduction techniques.

Don't forget that while you are a registered student at Camosun College you are able to utilize its Counselling Centre. Should you find yourself unable to cope, do ask for assistance by contacting the Counselling department at the Lansdowne campus - Phone: 250-370-3571 or the Interurban campus - Phone: 250-370-4925, or visit their website for links on helpful strategies <http://camosun.ca/services/counselling/index.html>.

How To Maximize Your Co-op Experience

Although securing a co-op work term for all students is not guaranteed, we have found that there is a direct correlation between your chances of successfully obtaining a work term position and the degree to which *you are personally and actively engaged* in doing the following:

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- Invest time in writing well-written, professional cover letters and resumes
 - Prepare for job interviews
 - Proactively involve yourself in your job search
 - Implement recommendations made to you by your EF, CFI or CIC
 - Remain in regular contact with your EF and/or CFI.

While we do our utmost to promote Camosun's co-op program and students to potential employers, and to prepare you for success through Co-op WEP, a number of external factors contribute to the quality and quantity of job postings and the likelihood of your receiving a job offer:

- Current industry demand for co-op students
- Financial ability of companies to hire
- Economic and labour market conditions
- Specific skill sets and experience of co-op students (i.e. how these match with a potential employer's needs)
- Competition from other co-op programs
- Your ability to write effective cover letters and resumes
- Your ability to communicate and perform well in an interview
- Your willingness to work outside Victoria

When it all does come together, and you have a work term, the benefits are immediate and lifelong as you:

- Apply your classroom learning to a "real world" workplace for well-rounded experiential learning
- Acquire relevant work experience with diverse employers in a variety of locations
- Become more competitive for employment
- Develop a network of contacts
- Refine existing and develop new professional skills
- Experience professional development and personal growth
- Earn money (in most cases!) and
- **Have fun!**
