

Skillmax Resource Guide THE AUSTRALIAN CAREER LANDSCAPE







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Welcome to Unit 1

Unit 1 focuses on the Australian job market, employer expectations and different ways of finding work in Australia. You will learn how to:

- maximise your job opportunities
- identify skills which you can transfer to different jobs
- how to market yourself
 You will begin to set your jobseeking goals and start to plan your career in Australia.

Your career portfolio

In this unit you will begin to develop your career portfolio where you record your research and jobseeking tasks. You will use this portfolio throughout your Skillmax course. In the portfolio you will record and file:

- industry research
- statistical information on occupations and employment in Australia
- relevant websites and careers information
- newspaper and internet articles
- job advertisements
- your draft application letters
- your sample résumés and job applications
- your Career Action Plan

Assessment

There is no formal assessment in Unit 1 but you will be asked to file your responses to unit tasks in your career portfolio.

Comparing jobseeking in Australia and overseas

You are more than likely aware of the cultural differences between the job seeking processes in your former country and those which operate in Australia. In different cultures different emphases are often placed on various jobseeking strategies. For example, in some countries qualifications and examinations are important and a job interview is only seen as a formality. In other countries people can be designated a government position after graduation without being personally consulted. An awareness of these differences is an essential start to the jobseeking process.

Activity 1

a Work in a small group with people from your own cultural background and discuss how you, or someone you know well, got a job in your former country.

b Complete section A of the table on the next page by:

- looking at the ways of finding a job listed across the columns
- circling the number on the scale of 1 to 5 to indicate which are the most common ways of finding a job in your former country and in Australia Scale:
 - 1 = the most common
 - 5 = the least common

c Complete section B of the table by:

- looking at the ways of applying for a job listed across the columns
- using the same scale of 1 to 5 to indicate which ways you think are the most common ways of applying for a job in your former country and in Australia

d Complete section C of the table by:

- looking at the ways of being assessed for a job listed across the columns
- using the same scale of 1 to 5 to indicate which ways you think are the most common ways of being assessed for a job in your former country and in Australia
- e Report back to your teacher and the rest of the class about the jobseeking processes in your former country and participate in a whole-class discussion about the comparisons with Australia.

SECTION A i Finding out about jobs in my former country				
Newspaper advertisements contacts	Friends/family business	Recruitment consultancies	Educational institutions	Internet
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
ii Finding out abo	out jobs in Australia			
Newspapar advertisements contacts	Friends/family business	Recruitment consultancies	Educational institutions	Internet
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
SECTION B i Applying for job	os in my former coun	try		
Newspaper advertisements contacts	Friends/family business	Recruitment consultancies	Educational institutions	Internet
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
ii Applying for jo	bs in Australia			
Newspaper advertisements contacts	Friends/family business	Recruitment consultancies	Educational institutions	Internet
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
SECTION C i Being assessed for jobs in my former country				
Qualifications	Interview	Political affiliations	Assigned by government	Psych Assessment
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
ii Being assessed for jobs in Australia				
Qualifications	Interview	Political affiliations	Assigned by government	Psych Assessment
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Employer expectations in Australia

Activity 2

Read the following article written by Karalyn Brown, Manager of Interview IQ, a consultancy assisting job seekers to find employment. See www.interviewig.com.au

- Underline key points
- Discuss the main topics in the article.
- How do these issues impact on you?
- How can you use this information to improve your career development?
- Report your feedback to the rest of the class.

Other side of think local

September 20, 2008 Article from: The Australian

Demanding 'local experience' doesn't guarantee the best person for the job, writes Karalyn Brown.

'BILL Gates wouldn't get a job in Australia because he has no local experience," says Ailis Logan, the founder of Tribus Lingua, a consultancy assisting skilled migrants to find jobs. Logan is only half joking. She believes that Australian employers value local experience much more than their counterparts in Europe and the US.

What does "no local experience" really mean? Are we so parochial that we'd reject Bill Gates if he sent us his resume? Do we run our businesses in a uniquely Australian way? Many of us will go overseas to work, valuing the career and life experience we bring back -- yet we appear to view the experience that others

bring here with suspicion.

Ian Little, the author of Project Australia: Land that Engineering Job in Australia, suggests our geographic isolation has contributed to our conservatism. the senior engineering manager at engineering giant Worely Parsons, he's hired many overseas professionals. He believes that a lack of Australian experience is actually the biggest barrier any newcomer will face. Employers appear worried about the communication skills of skilled immigrants.

Poorly written resumes from overseas professionals may fuel employers' doubts about immigrants' communication skills. Little and Logan say they see many bad resumes from recent arrivals. This makes it harder for employers to assess overseas experience. Logan recommends

that newcomers provide context around places they've worked, including the challenges and drivers of the businesses they've worked in. It can be difficult to read a resume in isolation of preconceived ideas about a

It would be naive to suggest that people never discriminate, but Little certainly doesn't believe many Australians are inherently racist. When it comes to hiring he thinks Australian employers are just risk-averse. "People will still encounter difficulties when they want to switch industries," he says. "Employers don't realise how tough times are, and they need to get flexible."

But even if everyone spoke misunderstandings about meanings can be common. Logan suggests our easy-going expressions can easily confuse

newcomers. "Australians appear casual, but are not casual at all," she says. "'Come in for a chat' can mean a formal interview, so you need to be prepared."

But perhaps there's more going on than verbal confusion. Body language plays its part in defining meaning and each culture uses this differently. Aparna Hebbani, an academic and researcher into intercultural communication in interviews at the University of Queensland says "non-verbals" such as a handshake and eye contact contribute to an estimated 66 per cent of meaning in social interaction.

She's seen many cross-cultural misunderstandings in an interview. "If an Indian interviewee. for example, does not make 'appropriate' levels of eye contact with an Australian interviewer, they can interpret that as a lack of confidence or not being truthful," she says. "But the interviewee might not look into the interviewer's eye out of respect."

The way different cultures see interviews may be detrimental to their chances of success. Little claims some have a "servant attitude" when it comes to marketing their skills. "An employment contract is a two-way thing. I've not seen many overseas professionals who understand that," he says. "They don't understand that they have something to offer."

Confused communication aside, what are other risks in recruiting a newcomer? Logan and Little say that new arrivals need to understand Australian law, regulations and codes plus the general rules of Australian business practice. But Little suggests in engineering that employers' perception that newcomers can't adapt is greater than real-

ity. "Engineering is an applied science -- the laws of science do not change," he says.

In some professions the local learning curve is steeper and longer. Accounting is one example. David Smith, a former partner of accounting firm PKF and ex-president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, runs Smithink, a management consultancy advising accountants. He sees the employers' concern over communication skills of immigrants and their ability to understand the highly complex Australian tax system and superannuation laws as major barriers for accountants new to Australia.

Logan says overseas professionals need to understand that the structure of the Australian economy is "old-fashioned", with up to 70 per cent of businesses classified small-medium.

accounting industry reflects this statistic. Smith suggests a typical small-business accounting firm will find it hard to embrace new arrivals who cannot hit the ground running. Small firms struggle to verify skills, have limited resources for training and perhaps less patience for the newcomer under pressure.

There are other barriers that make it difficult for newcomers to find jobs. Smith and Little suggest that employers need to assess attitude when it comes to hiring overseas professionals, as this makes a big difference in how quickly people will adapt.

Little says employers' rigid recruitment practices can prevent this. "Many employers are stuck in a 1980s way of thinking," says Little. "In that decade there were lots of people to choose from and some fairly militant unionism. Employers found that

if they didn't select the right person [the union] would be likely to challenge. They needed a bullet-proof system." Little believes employers should build teams -instead of filling holes when they hire -- matching weaknesses in skill sets with complementary strengths.

HR professionals would argue that recruitment processes have evolved. The larger firms often spend many thousands of dollars identifying what makes the company tick before writing it into recruitment practice, hoping to recruit candidates with the right attitude. Yet the "right attitude" is nuanced, notoriously difficult to codify and assess from an appraisal of a resume and the more traditional interview.

Also keeping candidates at a distance are online resume screening software. Many employers' online careers pages do not have a contact name or number. It can be difficult for applicants to talk directly to someone with close knowledge of the core business who can give them a realistic appraisal of their fit.

Little sees many benefits for organisations willing to open their doors a little wider. While he has observed overseas engineers having a slower path to productivity than their Australian equivalents, he notes the longer term rewards of hiring them as a bonus. "They are less likely to move on than an Australian hire and they have a great work ethic and less baggage from their background," he says. "They bring new skills not available in Australia, and support our international operations with their knowledge and language skills."

Understanding the Australian labour market

Understanding and recognising the values of the Australian workplace will assist you in moving towards developing the cultural fit. Recruiters and Managers often use this term to describe the culture of communication, teamwork and social interaction.

The key differences between Australian and other workplaces:

- hierarchy and leadership styles
- expectations of employees
- communication styles

Employers prefer employees who:

- are appropriately skilled
- take initiative and are assertive when appropriate
- are able to work independently or in diverse teams
- have good problem-solving, planning and organisational skills
- demonstrate good communication skills
- show enthusiasm and are self-motivated

Australian communication:

- informal speech is typical
- directness can be seen as being efficient and more effective
- managers use collaborative rather than directive communication styles with subordinates
- the use of humour can be a sign of respect
- sarcasm is a common form of humour

Sourcing effective relevant industry information requires you to:

- identify current employment trends
- find out what employers are looking for in their new employees
- develop strategies to source employment opportunities in Australia
- take responsibility for accessing these sources
- gain the necessary cultural knowledge

- a Search the internet to find job vacancies and the types of jobs which are being currently advertised.
- b Use the information to complete the table.

Source of job advertisements	Types of jobs	Suitable for you	
		□YES	□NO

Maximising employment opportunities

There are various strategies to seeking employment in Australia. Lisa LaRue, Careers Counsellor of CareerWorx Careers & Transitions at http://www.careerworx.com.au/ offers this advice:

One of the most important steps of the career development process is to undertake research on careers which interest you. Through the right kind of internet research activities you can gain a plethora of quality careers information. Search engines, online forums, company and industry websites all offer opportunities to learn all you need to know about a particular career...

16 ways to seek employment in Australia

- 1. Researching government websites for information on skills shortages, occupations in demand, types of careers available in Australia. (Refer to the Resource section for government websites)
- 2. Researching careers information websites for advice and guidance on how to access employment. (Refer to the Resource section for career and training websites)
- 3. Sourcing job advertisements listed on internet websites. (Refer to the Resource section for online job board websites and government websites)
- 4. Registering with job-board websites so that newly advertised jobs can be sent to you by email.
- 5. Sourcing job advertisements in local and national print newspapers. (Refer to the Resource section)
- 6. Registering with recruitment agencies particularly those that specialise in your industry/profession. (Refer to the Resource section for recruitment agencies)
- 7. Networking with friends, family, training providers, career counsellors, career coaches and industry contacts for information about employment opportunities/career pathways.
- 8. Cold canvassing direct contact with employers, recruitment agencies and industry associations for information on job vacancies, employment trends and industry referrals.

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- 9. Joining professional organisations and attending conferences and meetings where you will network with people from within that industry.
- 10. Subscribing to newsletters, industry journals and other media publications.
- 11. Social Networking Online is an online community of internet users. Many of these online community members have something in common. After you gain permission to access a social networking website you then commence socialising. There are many benefits to social networking online. One of these benefits includes sharing information and common interests and occupations.
- 12. Sourcing job ads displayed in community centres and retail outlets.
- 13. Researching information in state and local libraries.
- 14. Volunteering work: this provides an opportunity to try out a company and can lead to employment. Ensure that the company offering the work experience provides personal accident and liability insurance cover. (Refer to the Resource section for volunteer websites)
- 15. Undertaking work experience. Undertaking work experience will assist you in demonstrating that you possess the kinds of transferable skills that employers are seeking. Work experience tells employers that you can apply specific qualities and your academic knowledge in the workplace.
- 16. Mentoring and coaching benefits include developing close working relationships including personal growth and enhanced communication skills.

In your group discuss the 16 ways to seek employment in Australia and answer the following questions:

- 1. What strategies do you think are the most successful in finding work?
- 2. Consider which strategy / strategies would best suit you in your job search.
- 3. Share with the group any strategies you have already used. Did you experience any problems? What were the results?
- 4. Report back to the class.

REMEMBER

- Many jobs are not advertised they are referred to as the hidden job market
- Direct approach applications can be very successful self marketing, cold calling or canvassing
- Contacts can be very important in obtaining employment eg friends, relatives, previous employers, professional associations, sport or volunteer work supervisors

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To many people arriving in NSW, Australia is a very foreign place. It is therefore very important that you orientate yourself as fast as possible and meet people in your profession or industry sector as well as make contacts informally through hobbies, sports or even the activities of your children.

Finding people in your sector

There are various ways to find out the associations and groups that bring people from your skills group together.

You can use Google to find professional or industry associations. Membership might be a good investment. I realise it might not reap results as fast as job hunting but if you are interested in career options and not just work options, it is very important to get connected. Also, many associations provide skills assessments and can also direct you to recruiters and employers in your sector.

As well as researching online, why not take a trip to the beautiful State Library of NSW in Macquarie Street at the north end of the CBD. Take the family as the Botanical Gardens is just a stones throw away. Use the library to find media clippings on

your sector but more importantly ask to see the trade magazines in your sector. This will help you figure out the major employers and issues.

So, let's take engineering as an example. Engineers Australia is the association www.engineersaustralia.org.au. It provides skills assessments and has its own publications. Or in the IT sector there is the Australian Computer Society - www.acs.org.au. There are a number of associations covering accounting. There is even an association covering personal assistants and secretaries - the

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Institute of Office Professionals - www.aiop.com.au/ There are a great many more so check with the library or search online.

When job searching online, even when you don't find the perfect job, reading job ads is great research. Which recruiters are advertising jobs most often? What reoccurring skills and qualifications are you seeing in your sector?

Also look for non-professional groups to join when you arrive to help you meet Australians, other migrants and to generally blend into the new life. This could be sport - let's say soccer if you play soccer – or something like Toastmasters. Toastmasters is a very friendly organisation that helps people develop public speaking skills. They are just every day people and while public speaking usually is feared by people they make it so easy. Besides, you need to develop your communication skills.

I belong to a Toastmasters club - it's \$5 a visit - and one of the members is originally from Hong Kong, another France, another Ghana, Bangladesh and

If you have children, look for things for them to join so you meet people quickly like Scouting Australia – www.scouts. com.au/ or the Little Nippers section of Surf Life Saving NSW. – www.surflifesaving.com.au/ It is vital children know how to swim in Australia anyway so not only do you get to meet the other mums and dads but your kids will learn life-saving skills.

Also look for community groups formed by former migrants from your country as well as groups surrounding where you worship.

All information is useful when vou first arrive. However, remain open. A negative experience shared by another migrant is something you can learn from. Don't let it leave you thinking "oh, that is what is going to happen to me". Your results will depend on the quality of your

research, your approach, your persistence and how wide you cast your net.

Please don't use any one method of job hunting. Use them all - "visible" and "hidden".

In the Australian market there are visible jobs – those advertised on job boards like CareerOne. com.au and newspapers - both metropolitan newspapers like The Daily Telegraph and national newspapers such as The Australian but also your local newspaper delivered free to your house as well as trade magazines.

Then there are "hidden" jobs - those you learn about by speaking to the people you meet and by visiting the "career" section of employer websites you visit or seminar and networking events you attend.

Good luck and welcome to Australia and our beautiful state of NSW.

About Kate

Kate Southam has been a journalist for more than 20 years and a workplace and career writer for more than nine years. She is the Editor of the online career magazine News & Advice on CareerOne.com.au as well as the author of the syndicated Ask Kate column and the Blog about work called Cube Farmer on news.com.au

Activity 5

Read the following careers article written by Jim Bright a Professor of Career Education and Development at ACU National and a partner at Bright and Associates, a career management consultancy. Websites: www.brightandassociates.com.au and www.beyondpersonalmastery.com

- 1. Discuss the main themes contained in the article on the next page.
- 2. How does the article impact on you?
- 3. Explain this statement in your own words:

The question arises, is the sharp decline in market confidence reflected in lower employee confidence, and in particular, has it dented the remarkable confidence of Gen Y?

4. Discuss the trend in using Outplacement Services. Kevin Chandler of the recruitment company Chandler Macleod **Group explains:**

So demand is cooling for job candidates, and at the same time, Chandler points to a fourfold increase in demand for Outplacement services - the services designed to help employees who are leaving the organisation.

5. Read the following paragraph and discuss with the class how your expectations, culture fit and self-view can be valuable, significant and advantageous in the current job market.

Ironically, a downturn provides a great opportunity to decide what really matters to you in terms of work. When things are going well, there is no reason to question our reason for working, but when things are not so smooth, opportunities or even excuses for reinvention present themselves. Small personal experiments in different types of work become more viable as the number of temporary and shortterm assignments increases. In a word, flexibility in expectations, culture fit and self-view is a valuable commodity for any job hunter at this time.

6. Consider the strategies suggested for jobseekers – how could you incorporate them into your own job search?

Gen Y and the workplace bargaining power

By Jim Bright

"You cannot speak of ice to a summer insect, the creature of a season" wrote the ancient Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu. A revised message for current times might add and you can't speak of economic downturns to Generation Y. For the last eight years we have heard a torrent of rhetoric about the power of young people to dictate employment conditions to employers. "12 months ago there was massive demand for Generation Y employees" says Graham Doyle, a director with recruiters Hays, "there was tremendous employee confidence and Generation Y leveraged that confidence better than any other group". The question arises, is the sharp decline in market confidence reflected in lower employee confidence, and in particular, has it dented the remarkable confidence of Gen Y?"

confidence Market does appear to be down. Kevin Chandler, an Executive Director of the outsourcing and recruitment company Chandler Macleod Group, says that recruiting activity is down in New South Wales and Victoria. "We are no longer having to pay candidates sign-on fees for positions in Finance and Banking or Information Technology". So demand is cooling for job candidates, and at the same time, Chandler points to a fourfold increase in demand for Outplacement services - the services designed to help employees who are leaving

the organisation.

This downturn in demand has been detected on some University campuses. Sheila Mylvaganam Head, Career Development Macquarie University observes "some graduate employers, mainly in the financial sector have withdrawn offers made to students for 2009 or have reduced the number of offers". Malcolm McKenzie, Head of Careers at the University of Technology, Sydney predicts that the demand for graduates which has been growing steadily will flatten rather than reverse, "the impact of the financial crisis is uneven, employers are telling me that while there will be fewer vacancies in some areas, others such as financial regulation, and legal work related to mergers and acquisitions may increase".

The double-whammy reduced hiring and increased outplacement (sometimes outplacement is cynically called firing employees with enthusiasm) suggests that the war for talent amongst employers has been transformed into a war amongst the talented for employment. However this does not appear to be happening yet. Debra Loveridge, Chief Executive Officer of recruiters Vedior Asia Pacific contends that the "there has been a freeing up of the recruitment market recently, the pendulum has only swung back to the middle" and that "there are still pronounced skills shortages in some areas".

The general consensus ap-

pears to be that the economic downturn has had a very dramatic impact on the banking and finance world, and it is here where the balance of power has shifted in favour of the employers. The situation in other areas is best described as uncertain. "We are talking about feelings and attitudes rather than real numbers" says Kevin Chandler, "unemployment rates not really changed much yet". Debra Loveridge feels we are in "early days, the downward trend won't emerge until the 2nd and 3rd quarters next year", Graham Doyle agrees, "the downturn has not floated through completely but by next year the pendulum will have moved further".

Generation Y may have avoided the worst ravages of the downturn to date. Being typically more junior in organisations, they are cheaper to employ and therefore they are smaller targets for redundancy programs. Lessons appear to have been learned from the last major recession in the early nineties and employers are cautious about creating a talent vacuum by failing to recruit, or dispensing with upcoming talent which provides some reassurance for this group.

The degree to which Generation Y are prepared for harder economic times is also an open question. We are all far better informed about what is happening economically around the world than we were during the last recession courtesy of the in-

ternet and on-line news services. We are also far more aware of the personal costs of downturns: social networking sites are full of tales of retrenchments, sudden job losses and personal accounts of the economic downturn. However if you have never personally experienced having to compete hard or compromise to get a job, then you may simply feel that it will never happen to you.

Strong candidates will probably have few problems and will continue to be in demand. Some in the human resources world make a distinction between employers in the "real" economy and those in the world of finance. It may be that those in the finance area will have to seriously re-appraise what they

really are looking for in a job. Employees used to the culture, salaries and level of support that were characteristic of many finance roles, may have a problem of culture fit in other organisations. This may mean expecting to get their hands dirtier - literally. I recently bumped into two senior ex-bank employees of my acquaintance. One was off to inspect a sewage works and the other was donning wellies in a meat factory. For both, this represented not only genuine career advancement, but also a deep level of job satisfaction.

Ironically, a downturn provides a great opportunity to decide what really matters to you in terms of work. When things are going well, there is no reason to

question our reason for working, but when things are not so smooth, opportunities or even excuses for reinvention present themselves. Small personal experiments in different types of work become more viable as the number of temporary and shortterm assignments increases. In a word, flexibility in expectations, culture fit and self-view is a valuable commodity for any job hunter at this time.

For years part of the stereotype of Generation Y was that they are creative and focussed on the short-term. Perhaps now is a great time for Gen Y to demonstrate those alleged qualities.

Strategies to navigate the downturn - jobseekers

Work longer and harder in your role

Now is probably not the time to make extravagant demands

Realise it could happen to you

Appreciate career strategies that worked over the last 5 years may not work now

Reappraise what is really important to you and what you expect from work

Keep in the game by taking short-term or temporary roles

Temporary work often becomes permanent when the market recovers

Think creatively and differently about yourself and job opportunities

Strategies for organisations

Resist the temptation to downsize; now is the time to secure employee belief in your organisations -Graham Doyle, Hays Group

It wasn't the talent that caused the problem, but they will be a key part of the solution Chuang Tzu "Autumn Floods" (4th – 3rd c B.C.)

Jim Bright is Professor of Career Education and Development at ACU National and a Partner at Bright and Associates, a Career Management Consultancy. ladder@brightandassociates.com.au

To maximise your career planning, file your research, worksheets and other resource materials into your Career Portfolio.

Research the Australian labour market and find two sources of news articles that cover topics on:

- an industry specific sector related to your field of expertise
- Australian workplace culture
- common workplace terminology relating to employment contracts, work patterns, legislation, equal employment opportunity, occupational health and safety
- employment trends skills shortage industries, contract and temporary work, retrenchment and redundancy
- the impact of a competitive employment market
- other relevant employment topics that interest you
- 1. Research selected websites listed in the Resource section of this Guide.
- 2. Print out two articles and critically analyse and summarise the key points.
- 3. What impact does the information have for your career planning?
- 4. Produce a report on the articles and submit to your teacher.
- 5. Insert the articles and report into your Career Portfolio.

Career self management

WHAT IS A CAREER?

The term career was traditionally associated with paid employment and referred to a single occupation. In today's world of work the term career is seen as a continuous process of learning and development.

A career is the process of planning and developing, with the main responsibility attributed to the individual. It comprises the total of paid and unpaid work, learning and life roles. All life experiences, including paid work, sporting interests, community involvement and managing a household can be drawn upon to show a potential employer that you are the person for the job.

Contributions to a career can include:

- work experience
- community involvement
- employment
- life roles
- enterprise activities
- cultural activities
- training
- education
- interests
- sport
- volunteer work

CAREER PLANNING

Career planning is an ongoing process during an individual's life. The different stages include:

- 1. self analysis
- 2. identifying career options
- 3. goal setting

The first step to developing a career in Australia is to identify your work skills, personal attributes and goals.

A skill can be defined as the capacity to combine knowledge and experience in order to do a task. You can learn a skill through formal training, on the job experience or from unpaid work.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The Employability Skills Framework is a report which identified eight employability skills that business and industry require when recruiting new employees. The skills list has significance for individuals when they seek a job and as they progress within an organisation. (For more information go to www.deewr.gov.au)

The report indicated that employers consider employability skills on the same level of importance as job-specific or technical skills.

Employability skills are also known as key competencies, capabilities or generic skills. The key generic skills identified are:

- communication
- teamwork
- problem solving
- initiative and enterprise
- planning and organising
- self-management
- learning
- technology

Identifying skills

Activity 7

To identify skills you need to analyse your previous work history, including both paid and non-paid work experiences.

- 1. Read the table below. The left-hand column lists some of the skills an employer might require an employee to have. The right-hand column gives examples of these skills used in a workplace.
- 2. Tick the skills you developed in your previous jobs or unpaid work.

Ма	nagement and supervisory skills	
	Supervising other people	I supervised three draftspersons, six design engineers and three clerical staff.
	Encouraging teamwork and motivating others	As a senior clerk I was responsible for encouraging people to work together to solve problems and to maintain high standards of work.
	Being aware and responsive to workers	I was responsible for improving safety by checking that occupational health and safety regulations were being carried out. I held weekly meetings to discuss staff problems.
Ad	ministration skills	
	Planning, coordinating and arranging of corporate functions or appointments	I was responsible for the formulation and implementation plans. I planned, organised and implemented employment programs for women.
	Scheduling	I scheduled 24-hour work rosters for maintenance engineers and technicians.
	Accounting and budgeting Storing or filing information	I estimated annual budgets and controlled finance. I maintained files and other records. I created new filing and archiving systems.

	fice skills General	I was responsible for sending faxes, photocopying,	
	Keyboarding Computing Bookkeeping	answering the telephone and typing letters. My typing speed is 35 wpm. I have word processing skills using Microsoft Word 7. I was responsible for bookkeeping to trial balance stage.	
An □	alytical and evaluation skills Collecting and analysing data	I collected and analysed the results of a road traffic survey for the central district of Lima and designed	
	Recognising problems and acting to solve them Evaluating work practices	methods of improving traffic flow. I developed a new filing system which improved accessibility to files. I improved the efficiency of the business by designing a new way of recording deliveries.	
Pro	oduction and warehouse skills		
	Designing, installing and maintaining production lines	I designed and developed milling machines.	
	Controlling quality	I introduced Total Quality Management techniques to management and factory floor. I was responsible for checking dairy products to maintain quality control standards.	
Sal	es and marketing skills		
	Meeting client needs	I visited clients weekly to determine orders and discuss	
	Establishing public relations	problems. I liaised with clients, developed advertising brochures and organised the set up of exhibitions.	
	Seeing selling opportunities and making sales	I obtained new clients and increased my area sales by fifteen percent in twelve months.	
Tea	aching skills		
	Organising teaching material	I prepared and delivered classes to HSC Mathematics students.	
	Giving classes, seminars or lectures Assessing and evaluating students	I conducted tutorials and laboratory sessions. I prepared, administered and marked tests, projects and assignments to evaluate student progress and recorded the results.	
Skills in using appropriate machinery or equipment			
	Maintenance, installation and coupling of machinery	I attached piping to refrigeration systems using sleeve, unions and soldered joints to form complete systems.	
	lls in handling stress and conflict		
	Managing time effectively	I managed my time effectively by prioritising tasks and delegating where possible so that I could complete work	
	Able to handle conflict	before deadlines. I formulated and implemented grievance procedures to deal with complaints and conflict situations.	
	Able to deal with stress	I was able to meet strict construction deadlines by organising work, dealing with problems efficiently and quickly without feeling pressured.	

UNIT 1: THE AUSTRALIAN CAREER LANDSCAPE

Flexibility		
☐ Able to adapt to different working conditions	In my previous job I was often asked to work in different sections. My experience includes working in different organisations, different countries and with multicultur workforces and using a variety of technologies. There I believe I am flexible and can adapt to local condition	
☐ Able to learn new technology and methods	In my last job a computerised checking system was installed and I was able to learn the new system very quickly.	
Self knowledge and self confidence ☐ Knowing your strengths and weaknesses	My strengths are my enthusiasm, ability to work hard and problem-solving skills. My weakness is that I sometimes work too hard and get stressed, so I try to prioritise and	
☐ Being confident in your job	delegate my work. I am confident in dealing with clients and getting results for them.	
Creativity ☐ Able to create original designs or new ideas	I designed four multi-storey apartment blocks and two international hotels.	
Communication skills		
☐ Able to communicate orally ☐ Able to communicate in writing	I successfully answered all counter and telephone inquiries from a range of clients. My work involved liaising with management, colleagues, workers, clients, government departments and consultants. I also took part in meetings, committees and conferences. My responsibilities included writing business correspondence, reports, submissions, recommendations, assessments, memos and accounts. I wrote reports for the supervisor on the mechanical repairs completed.	
☐ Able to relate well to people at different levels	I was able to work well with my supervisor as well as with other workers. We were usually able to	
☐ Multilingual skills	discuss problems and negotiate solutions. I am fluent in both Mandarin and English, and used both in my last position. This was particularly useful when working with customers from different linguistic backgrounds.	
Interpersonal skills		
☐ Able to use negotiating skills	In my position as supervisor I had to mediate between workers as well as take workers' problems to	
☐ Relate well to team members	management and negotiate solutions. I am willing to share knowledge and expertise with members of a team and listen to the ideas of others.	

Ac	cepting responsibility	
	Taking responsibility to ensure work is completed	I often had to work overtime to complete projects in an appropriate manner before deadlines.
	Able to work without supervision	I often had to work independently to assess urgent breakdown or maintenance problems and decide on immediate solutions so that production would not be interrupted.
	Able to achieve appropriate/ successful results	I was able to assess the mechanical problems in the trucks and finish the repairs quickly.
Pro	blem solving skills	
	Able to see and solve problems effectively	I was responsible for trouble-shooting railway breakdowns and ensuring the problems were repaired quickly.
En	ergy level	
	Able to work effectively over a long period	I was able to work long hours to meet production schedules, without losing focus.
	Showing enthusiasm about work	I enjoyed looking after my own children when they were young and I often looked after other children in the neighbourhood, organising outings and other activities for them. I was also a cub leader.
Fit	ness and health	
	Able to cope physically and mentally	I maintain a healthy lifestyle which includes regular exercise, a well-balanced diet and relaxation.

Summarise your skills below and give concrete examples to prove you have these skills. Remember to use action words when providing examples because this is important when writing an application letter, creating your résumé and undertaking a job interview.

Skills	Examples from my work

Transferable skills

Transferable skills are skills that can be used in more than one setting. They can be moved or transferred from one setting to another. Transferable skills are not only gained in the workplace; they are also acquired by volunteering, by life experiences, by study or training or perhaps by being involved in an interest or hobby. Knowledge of your transferable skills is important when changing jobs or when entering the job market for the first time.

Once you have identified your particular skills include them in your résumé. List the ones relevant to the particular job you are applying for. This means that you will need to research the requirements of every job you apply for.

Activity 9

- 1. Read the article called Transferable Skills written by Jim Bright a Professor of Career Education and Development at ACU National and a partner at Bright and Associates, a career management consultancy. Websites: www.brightandassociates.com.au and www.beyondpersonalmastery.com.
- 2. What are the main themes contained in the article?
- 3. How does knowledge of transferable skills impact on your career planning? Provide some examples of how you can use this information to benefit your career planning.

Transferrable Skills

At some time it is likely you have dreamed of changing jobs. For some it is a dream about excitement, challenges and freedom, whereas for others it is about finding their niche, their true working home. The trouble is there are many barriers to changing jobs including self-confidence, financial and other responsibilities, awareness of opportunities and the state of the economy. There is another problem too and that is that many of us don't know what else we are capable of doing.

In most jobs quite properly the emphasis is on getting the

job done and this leaves little or no time to reflect on how the skills we use could be transferred to other roles. The good news is that many of us have many skills that are eminently transferable and there is good advice available too. Dr Robert Pryor is a Director of the Vocational Capacity Centre in Sydney, a firm that specialises in identifying the transferable skills of people who have been injured at work or on the roads. "Think of your skills in terms of content and process" he advises, "you can transfer both what you know and what you do to other jobs". Here are some examples of popular jobs

with some suggestions about the other work you could do.

Teaching

Teaching is a popular occupation with 131 040 Secondary School Teachers employed in Australia (all Labour Market statistics quoted here come from Labour Market Analyst Rodney Stinson). Add to that 142 630 Primary School Teachers and over 36 000 Vocational Education Teachers and you begin to get a feel for the size of the Teaching Industry. It represents a very significant proportion of the workforce. The biggest issue for teachers wanting to

change in my experience is their modesty or an acceptance of the false and pejorative view that they do not work "in the real world" more than any limitations with their qualifications. Teachers have outstanding transferable skills. A brief audit of their skillset would typically come up with skills such as: planning and organising, written, oral and IT-based communication skills, critical thinking, good interpersonal skills, conflict resolution skills, attention to detail, as well as any subject specialist knowledge. Dr Pryor suggests some occupations that they could consider include: Corporate Trainer; Technical writer; Human Resources Manager; Childcare Centre Manager; Office Manager, Education Officer, Public Relations/Communications Manager and Events Manager. With further training (Bachelors, Masters or PhD), University Lecturer, and Educational Psychologist.

Nursing

Nursing is another occupation that employs over 100 000 people in diverse areas. Like teachers, nurses have a tremendous set of skills that can be easily transferred to other roles. Pryor lists medical knowledge, dealing with people, responsibility, empathy, crisis management, ability to cope with shiftwork, team skills and people skills as some typical nursing competencies. As with all transferable skills, your specialist skill may be a good starting point for exploration. Some occupations that are worth considering include: Medical Sales; Personal Trainer; Physiotherapist (with Training); Doctor or other medical specialist (with training); Dietician and Counsellor; Nurse Educator; Nursing Agency Manager;

Teacher; Social Worker; Medical Administrator; Hospital Designer. Pryor adds Medical Instrument Maker, Nurse Researcher, Sonographer, Occupational Health and Safety and Environmental Health Officer to the list.

Sales and Marketing

Sales and Marketing Managers number over 100 000 in Australia. They are responsible for coordinating sales teams, developing or implementing marketing plans and monitoring sales. Dr Pryor suggests that other management roles would be an obvious consideration, for instance Human Resource Management, Financial Management, and Policy Planning. He also suggests journalism related to the specialist industry you have worked in, or copy writing. Other roles to consider include Corporate Trainer; Public Speaker; Public Relations Management; Management Consultant; Television Presenter; Real Estate Agency Manager; Travel Agent; Logistics Management; Shop Manager; and Teaching (with training).

Accountant

There are 150 000 of these blighters employed in Australia and not all of them are working on tax avoidance schemes in Lichtenstein. However it is not just pushy clients trying to corrupt them that provokes them to look elsewhere, it is the fact that they have a very desirable skill and mindset that can be put to use in a range of different occupations. Accountants are good with numbers and analytic thinking. They are skilled in understanding and applying laws, policies and procedures. They have a good understanding of the fundamentals in running a business. Pryor suggests

Financial Advisor, Stockbroker, Funds Manager, general management and small business manager as possibilities. Others include Management Consultant; Company Secretary; Policy Analyst, and CEO of a Non-Profit Organisation.

IT Worker

IT workers are a diverse mob but it is not the stereotypical geek that will be eager to change. For the rest, there are loads of opportunities, especially for those presenting with a combination of good technical skills and excellent communication skills. For a start there is the role of Project Manager - the person who can understand both the geek speak and the clients needs to manage the expectations of both. Other possibilities include Sales and Marketing, Management and Consulting at one end of the spectrum, through to more scientific roles such as Laboratory Manager at the other. Other possibilities include Security Consultant, Teaching, Sales Analyst and entertainment roles such as Sound Engineer.

Retail Worker

Good sales staff are always in demand. Always. Retail workers are well organised, good with customers, helpful, calm under fire and show initiative. They are also good with cash handling, understand marketing principles and may also be good with inventories and ordering. Dr Pryor suggests Stock Clerk, Warehouse Representative, work, Sales Buyer, Fraud Analyst, Insurance Investigator, Retail or General Tour Guides, Beauty therapist, clerical work, carer roles, bar manager, reception work or service manager.

Administrative and Clerical Workers

Pryor points our that typical skills for this group include clerical skills, being organised, teamwork, literacy, numeracy, communication skills, some IT skills, and the ability to follow procedures. He says that the area is "massively diverse but the entry qualifications are less demanding than a profession so movement within the area is easier and relies more on experience that qualifications. One possibility is to specialise in an area such as medical secretary, insurance claims or personal

assistant." Other possibilities include assessment or inspector roles such as transport inspector or licensing clerk. The service industry offers other roles such as nurses aide, security guard or beauty therapist.

Training, Trades and **Professions**

If your skills do not transfer easily, or your passion lies elsewhere, then consider retraining via an apprenticeship, diploma or degree. As the recent ACER report highlighted, those with more training tend to be paid up to 30% more than their counterparts.

For the vast majority of people there are other options, you do have skills that other employers value. It is simply a case of taking the time to make a list of what you know and do in your job, taking the time to research some alternatives and then seeing the links and pathways. If you are good at doing that for other people, can I suggest career counsellor (with training) as an occupation? If not go and see

Activity 10

Work with a class partner and refer to the skills list from Activity 7.

- Identify and underline the skills that you could transfer to another work setting.
- Highlight the skills you consider to be your strongest.
- Identify and record any skill gaps in your analysis.

Activity 11

Job advertisement alignment

Research the industry or profession that equates to your qualifications, skills and employment experience. Insert the relevant information into the table below.

- Research and download three job advertisements from your industry or profession.
 - Refer to the job-board websites in the Resource section of this Guide.
- List the qualifications and skills that are required for these jobs.
- List your own skills and qualifications in relation to the advertised position.
- Identify any gaps in your skills.
- File the job advertisements into your Career Portfolio.

UNIT 1: THE AUSTRALIAN CAREER LANDSCAPE

Job advertisement criteria	Existing skills	Skill or qualification gaps
Essential:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Desirable:		
1.		
2.		
3.		

Job advertisement criteria	Existing skills	Skill or qualification gaps
Essential:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Desirable:		
1.		
2.		
3.		

Job advertisement criteria	Existing skills	Skill or qualification gaps
Essential:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Desirable:		
1.		
2.		
3.		

From the research completed in Activity 10 you may decide to expand your career choices. In a competitive job market some applicants may need to consider jobs at a different level or in an associated industry or profession.

Refer to Activity 11

Complete the table below.

- Identify the impact some of the information may have on your future career choices within Australia. Are there any gaps in your career profile that need to be addressed?
- Do you need to consider alternative jobs or industries to make yourself more marketable?
- Do you need to consider further training or other specific courses to meet the entry levels in Australia?

SKILL AND GAP ANALYSIS

Example:

1. Previous position overseas: Accountant 2. Position applied for in Australia: Accountant

3. Identified gap: Qualifications are not the equivalent to a Bachelor of

Commerce; software experience primarily Oracle

and Excel

4. Strategies to address gaps: Enrol in a university bridging course to have degree

assessed and recognised; undertake additional study on

taxation and company law subjects

Complete further training on SAP and Sunsystem

Gaps in skill levels and qualifications	Strategies to address gaps
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

Marketing yourself

Activity 13

How to market yourself to a prospective employer. Identify your personal skills or attributes. These are non-skill-based behaviours and attitudes which are highly valued by employers.

- 1. Read the list below and identify your personal skills/attributes. Tick the skills/attributes that you think describe you.
- 2. Add any others that you can think of.

PERSONAL SKILLS

□ adaptable	☐ determined	☐ motivated
affable	☐ diplomatic	open to new ideas
analytical	☐ discreet	original thinker
☐ ambitious		☐ personable
articulate	☐ efficient	persuasive
☐ attitude	<pre>emphatic</pre>	☐ proactive
calm	<pre>energetic</pre>	☐ problem solver
capable	☐ enjoy challenges	☐ quick learner
cautious	enjoy pressure	☐ rational
commonsense	enthusiastic	☐ reliable
compassionate	ueye for detail	☐ resourceful
☐ confident	☐ flexible	☐ self motivated
conscientious	☐ friendly	sense of humour
consistent	get along well with people	successful
constructive	☐ hard worker	systematic
☐ committed	☐ honest	
☐ communicator	☐ independent	☐ tenacious
cope well under pressure	☐ integrity	☐ thorough
☐ corporate	☐ innovative	☐ trustworthy
creative	☐ intuitive	understanding
ustomer service oriented	☐ leader	well groomed
☐ decisive		☐ well mannered

Throughout your search for employment you will need to identify your personal skills/attributes and provide evidence of these skills/attributes to an employer. You have to demonstrate a capacity to perform the job.

Activity 14

Select six of your most prominent personal skills from Activity 13. Write them down. Identify a corresponding example to demonstrate their authenticity and application to the workplace.

The list can be used in future job applications and interviews.

EXAMPLE 1:

- Adaptable
- In my last job as senior manager I was asked to design and introduce a new quality assurance program based on the company's previous model. I was able to adapt the program to the new specifications within a period of three weeks and then delivered the program to six regional managers.

EXAMPLE 2:

- Thorough
- In my previous organisation I wrote submissions for funding that required both accuracy and a thorough knowledge of procedures. I was responsible for writing four grant submissions that were all successfully funded.

Personal skills	Specific example
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

Work environment

As part of career planning you need to reflect on the type of work environment that best suits you. Consider your previous work environment and identify the elements that match your current requirements.

Activity 15

Compile your own list of job requirements. Share the list with your group for feedback.

Remember to remain flexible in your approach and realistic in your expectations.

- 1. Job status: full-time, part-time, casual, temporary role?
- 2. Type of organisation: large, medium, small?
- 3. Company type: private, public or community sector?
- 4. Location: is the workplace accessible?
- 5. Travel time: how much travel time to and from work?
- 6. Salary conditions: range of salary expectations does it meet current Australian salary levels for your industry?
- 7. Opportunity for training and promotion
- 8. Other working conditions

My list of job requirements:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Personal job interests

The next step in the planning process is to identify the elements of a previous job that gave personal satisfaction. For example, an accountant may seek a role in a company that specialises in company tax with the option of working offsite advising external clients. The element of client liaison is an important motivator for the job seeker.

To assist you:

- refer to the websites in the Resource section of the Guide that showcase videos of employees doing their jobs and offering their stories
- talk to other friends or contacts within your industry to gain a clear insight as to what makes up the job

Activity 16

Identify the key components of a previous position that gave you job satisfaction. What motivated you? Compile a list and discuss with a class partner.

This list will assist you in selling yourself in future interviews.
1.
2.
3.
4.

Goal setting

What are goals? The term goal is interchangeable with the words targets or aims. There are different types of goals that take different lengths of time to achieve. It is important when setting a goal, to make sure you give yourself a realistic timeframe in which to achieve it. Goals can be categorised as being short-term or long-term goals.

Specific: are clearly stated and defined Measurable: how much, can be quantified Attainable: the goal can be reached Realistic: the goal can be achieved

Time: the goal is given a timeframe to be achieved

- Discuss as a group the concept of goals both short-term and long-term.
- Provide examples of goals you have previously achieved.
- Provide a definition of the word *barrier* and some examples from your previous experiences.

Reflect on three goals that you would like to achieve in the short-term. Identify any barriers or obstacles.

- 1. Insert the goals into the table.
- 2. Complete each section within the table.
- 3. Identify any barriers to reaching your goals.
- 4. Provide solutions to some of the problems or barriers.
- 5. Discuss your goal analysis in a group.

	Specific
	Measurable
	Accountable
	Realistic
	Timeframe
	Barrier
	Solution

Reflect on your long-term goals.

- 1. List three long-term goals that you would like to achieve.
- 2. Complete each section in the table below.
- 3. Identify any barriers to reaching your goals.
- 4. Provide possible solutions and strategies.

	Specific
	Measurable
	Accountable
	Realistic
	Timeframe
	Barrier
	Solution

Based on the previous analysis of your work skills, personal attributes and goal setting complete the activity listed below:

- 1. Complete a Career Action Plan.
- 2. Submit the plan to your teacher for review.
- 3. Insert the document into your Career Portfolio.

Career planning in review

Lisa LaRue, Careers Counsellor of CareerWorx Careers & Transitions says it is important that our career planning includes an awareness and understanding of our own skills, abilities, attributes, preferred work environments and personal goals. Also important is gaining knowledge about the world of work including occupational information and the current labour market.

Activity 20

Complete the Career Readiness Assessment and file in your Career Portfolio

CAREER READINESS ASSESSMENT

Have you conducted an audit of your:		
Qualifications and training?	□YES	□NO
Employment history?	□YES	□NO
Work skills?	□YES	□NO
Have you identified your personal:		
Strengths and weaknesses?	□YES	□NO
Attributes?	□YES	□NO
Goals?	□YES	□NO
Have you considered your:		
Preferred work environment? (indoors/ outdoors, team / independent)	□YES	□NO
Preferred working conditions? (hours, pay, employee / self employed)	□YES	□NO
Career exploration and research		
Have you considered a wide range of industries Or fields?	□YES	□NO
Have you conducted thorough career research?	□YES	□NO
Have you been able to narrow your career options?	□YES	□NO
Have you developed a Career Action Plan?	□YES	□NO

Module 1 Action Plan

Tasks	Completed by	ssues

Thinking about the interview

- 1. Research three career or job websites as listed in the Resource section of this Guide.
- 2. Identify four common interview questions.
- 3. Make a list and prepare your written responses to the questions.
- 4. Rehearse the questions and responses as part of your independent career planning.
- 5. File the list in your Career Portfolio.