

LAUNCHING YOUR CAREER

A POST-SECONDARY STUDENT'S GUIDE TO
SUCCESS

EDITED BY JAMIE NOAKES



Launching Your Career

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This book was produced with Pressbooks (<https://pressbooks.com>) and rendered with Prince.

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We are excited to introduce the second edition of our textbook, expanding on the success of *From University to Career: Creating a Successful Transition* (available here (<https://trucareertext.pressbooks.tru.ca/>)). When we first launched this resource, we had no idea how far it would reach. With over 7,000 visits across 96 countries, the response has been incredible. Students, faculty, work-integrated learning practitioners and career practitioners have used this textbook to support career transitions and prepare students for the evolving world of work.

Why a Second Edition?

Work-integrated learning and Career Education are constantly evolving, and we wanted to ensure this resource remains current, inclusive, and reflective of today's student needs. This edition responds to student and faculty feedback, integrates key emerging trends, and expands on critical topics to better prepare learners for meaningful careers.

What's New?

We've added new perspectives and expanded content to reflect the changing nature of work and career education.

New Chapters

This edition includes several new chapters to address key issues in today's career landscape:

- Career Planning Theory
- Cultural Diversity and Workplace Barriers
- Intercultural Communication in the Workplace
- Indigenous Inclusion in Employment
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) & Employment
- Professional Ethics in the Workplace

New Authors

A huge thank-you and warm welcome to our new contributing authors, whose expertise and insights have enriched this edition:

- Shawn Read
- Harshita Dhiman
- Kyra Garson
- Amie McLean

Other Updates

A new, more inclusive title that reflects all forms of education and career pathways.

- A refreshed design, including an updated color scheme for better readability and accessibility.
- Integration of emerging trends, including the role of AI and digital disruption in work-integrated learning.

The Process Behind This Edition

Creating this edition was a truly collaborative effort. Here's what shaped the process:

- **Author Retreat:** We brought together most of our contributing authors for a focused retreat, aligning our learning objectives and ensuring a consistent tone and vision for the textbook.
- **Student & Institutional Feedback:** We carefully reviewed input from students, faculty, and post-secondary institutions to refine existing chapters and identify new content areas.
- **Global Career Trends:** Recognizing major shifts in the career landscape, including automation, AI, and the evolving nature of work, we ensured this edition reflects these realities.

A Personal Note

As career educators, we are passionate about equipping students with the tools they need to navigate career transitions successfully. This textbook is more than just a resource—it's a reflection of our commitment to helping learners from all backgrounds find meaningful career paths in an ever-changing world. A special thank you to all who contributed to this edition, from our dedicated authors to the students and faculty who shared their experiences. We extend a very special thank you to TRU's Open Press for funding and facilitating our authors retreat plus editing and formatting the final deliverable. Without the help and support of Brenda Smith, Marie Bartlett, Dani Collins, Kaitlyn Meyers, Jessica Obando Almache, Domenica Obregon, and Sanjeeda Saji this project would not have been possible.

Looking Ahead: Your Role in This Conversation

We hope this second edition continues to support students, educators, and career professionals in their journey. We welcome your feedback—whether you are using this textbook in a classroom, a workplace, or your own career development. Your insights help us improve and ensure this resource remains valuable for future learners.

Your support and engagement make this work possible.

Sincerely,

Jamie Noakes, MES, CPHR

Chairperson, Career and Experiential Learning Department

Thompson Rivers University

Acknowledgments

The Open Press



The Open Press combines TRU's open platforms and expertise in learning design and open resource development. TRU Open Press supports the creation and reuse of open educational resources, while encouraging open scholarship and research.

Land Acknowledgement

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) campuses are situated on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (Kamloops) and the T'exelc (Williams Lake) within Secwepemcúl'ecw, the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc. The rich tapestry of this land also encompasses the territories of the St'át'imc, Nlaka'pamux, Tšilhqot'in, Nuxalk, and Dakelh.

Recognizing the deep histories and ongoing presence of these Indigenous peoples, we express gratitude for the wisdom held by this land. TRU is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment, valuing education as a shared journey. The TRU Open Press, inspired by collaborative learning on this land, upholds open access principles, and freely accessible education for all.

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Accessibility

The web version of *Launching Your Career* (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) has been designed to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>), level AA. In addition, it follows all guidelines in Appendix A: Checklist for Accessibility (<https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/back-matter/appendix-checklist-for-accessibility-toolkit/>) of the Accessibility Toolkit – 2nd Edition (<https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/>).

Includes:

- **Easy navigation.** This resource has a linked table of contents and uses headings in each chapter to make navigation easy.
- **Accessible videos.** All videos in this resource have captions.
- **Accessible images.** All images in this resource that convey information have alternative text. Images that are decorative have empty alternative text.
- **Accessible links.** All links use descriptive link text.

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Tables	Tables include row and/or column headers with the correct scope assigned.	Yes
Tables	Tables include a title or caption.	Yes
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Links	Links do not open new windows or tabs. If they do, a textual reference is included in the link text.	Yes
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H5P	All H5P activities have been tested for accessibility by the H5P team and have passed their testing.	Yes
H5P	All H5P activities that include images, videos, and/or audio content meet the accessibility requirements for those media types.	Yes
Font	Font size is 12 point or higher for body text.	Yes

Font	Font size is 9 point for footnotes or endnotes.	Yes
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Known Accessibility Issues and Areas for Improvement

- The OER Adoption and Error Reporting forms aren't included in all export files.

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Other Formats Available

- In addition to the web version, this book is available in a number of file formats, including PDF, EPUB (for eReaders), and various editable files. The Digital PDF has passed the Adobe Accessibility Check.

SECTION I
DISCOVERY &
EXPLORATION

I. Foundations of Career Theory

SHAWN READ

Introduction

Throughout my career as a career educator, I have been somewhat ambivalent about the rigid application of career theories without considering the unique circumstances and lived experiences of individuals. While I certainly recognize the value of these theories in providing structure and guidance, I have also observed their effectiveness can be limited when applied in a one-size-fits-all manner. Career development is deeply personal and influenced by a myriad of factors, including cultural background, socioeconomic status, family dynamics, and chance events, which are not always fully accounted for in traditional theoretical frameworks.

With this in mind, I like to think of career theories as tools in a toolbox, each offering a unique way to approach career planning and decision-making. Just as a carpenter selects the right tool for a specific job, job seekers can use these theories to better understand their strengths, interests, and the opportunities available to them. For example, Holland's theory of vocational choice might help identify careers that align with one's personality type, while Super's life-span, life-space theory provides insight into how career goals evolve as individuals grow and take on different life roles. Similarly, Krumboltz's happenstance learning theory encourages individuals to stay open to unexpected opportunities and adapt to changes in the job market. When used thoughtfully, these theories can serve

as valuable guides in navigating the complexities of career development.

As Sharma (2016) aptly states, career “theories and research describing career behaviour provide the conceptual glue,” offering the foundational underpinnings needed to understand how and why these theories should be applied in the job planning process. In today’s rapidly evolving global landscape, career decision-making has become an increasingly intricate and multifaceted endeavor. The modern workforce is shaped by technological advancements, economic shifts, and cultural transformations, which have disrupted traditional career pathways. Individuals are no longer confined to linear or predictable trajectories but must instead navigate a complex web of opportunities, challenges, and uncertainties. In this dynamic environment, career theories provide essential frameworks for interpreting these changes, equipping individuals with the tools to make informed decisions that align with their skills, interests, values, and aspirations. By grounding career planning in established theoretical perspectives, individuals can better address the complexities of contemporary career development, ensuring their decisions are both strategic and adaptable to the demands of an ever-changing world. Together, these theories act as both a compass and a map, helping job seekers chart a course through the uncertainties of the modern career landscape.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Investigate and describe a variety of career theories and how they differ in scope and application.
- Evaluate different career development theories and models in terms of assumptions, accessibility, strengths, limitations, and applications to multicultural contexts.
- Apply theories as an approach to navigating and supporting your individual life-long learning career goals

What is Career Theory?

Career development theories are frameworks that offer a variety of perspectives and principles that may be used to guide an individual's journey through the complexity of the career planning process. Lent, Brown and Hackett (2002) suggest that career theory attempts to explain how individuals make decisions regarding their career choices, navigate career transitions, and develop a sense of identity and fulfillment through work. While career theories are varied in their approach, it is important for job seekers to have a foundational understanding of these theories to gain insight into career

happenstance (Krumboltz & Levin, 2004) and the chaos theory of careers (Bright & Pryor, 2005), which have gained prominence in recent years due to the dynamic changes within the labour market. As we explore career theory in this chapter, we want to stress that no one theory is superior to another and each theory we will review offers different perspectives and approaches, even though you will undoubtedly identify many similarities within these concepts.

Understanding Traditional Career Theories: An Overview

Career development has long been a subject of interest and study, with various theories emerging to explain the process of career choice, development, and success. As Jena and Nayak (2020) highlight, “understanding these theories is an essential step in determining the strengths, weaknesses, fundamental values, and desirable path that are operative while choosing career.” Over the past century, society has witnessed a swift evolution of society—transitioning through industrial, technological, and digital ages—while intertwining global economies.

The study of career development has been significantly enriched by the insights offered by scholars such as Parsons, Holland, Super, and Hackett, to name a few. Many traditional theories suggest that individuals are most satisfied and successful in careers that align with their personality type, skills, interests, and values. These structured frameworks have been incredibly helpful for individuals to make sense of factors influencing career decisions and to offer guidance for the career planning process.

While these theories have undoubtedly shed light on critical aspects of career development, it is essential to acknowledge that they reflect the socioeconomic contexts in which they were formulated.

As McMahon and Patton (2002) suggest, the traditional approach to systems theories need to be understood in the context of time and place. In the early part of the last century, the world of work essentially provided individuals with a job for life, but this is no longer the case. Instead, we now understand that as the economy and job market continually evolve, contemporary career theories must adapt to encompass the dynamic nature of work and ensure their relevance.

In the TEDx video below, Sharon Belden Castonguay discusses how career choices are influenced by various factors that impact our career decisions.

The Psychology of Career Decisions | Sharon Belden Castonguay | TEDxWesleyanU (https://youtu.be/4e6KSaCxcHs?si=h5QCbcwyDROJ9L0d) [12:26 min] by TEDx Talks (2018)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=26#oembed-1> (#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

The Psychology of Career Decisions | Sharon Belden Castonguay | TEDxWesleyanU (<https://youtu.be/4e6KSaCxcHs?si=h5QCbcwyDROJ9L0d>)



Parsons' Trait & Factory Theory



Figure 1.2 Parson's trait theory of career development (by the author using Canva) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Frank Parsons' (1909) seminal work on trait and factor theory stands as one of the earliest career development theories from the early 20th century. His pioneering work not only established a solid groundwork for countless scholars, career professionals, and job seekers but also continues to influence contemporary career practices today. Notable scholars influenced by Parsons include Donald Super and John Holland; we will explore their work later

in this chapter.

Trait and factor theory posits that individuals' career choices should be based on a thorough assessment of their traits, such as their abilities, interests, and values. In turn, these traits may be identified to match or align with suitable occupations within a person's scope of interest. Parsons believed there was a strong connection between an individuals' traits and success in one's career, and he developed a three-step process for career decision making (Parsons, 1909).

Step 1. Self-Analysis: This step stresses the importance of self-assessment and reflection to understand your individual interests, abilities, and values. According to Parsons (1909), the first step when choosing a vocation is to determine the kind of work for which nature has best fitted you. In other words, individuals possess innate traits that significantly influence their career choices and serve as guiding factors in the vocational planning process. These inherent characteristics—which may include natural aptitudes,

personality traits, and personal values—contribute to shaping an individual's professional identity and determining the types of work environments and roles in which they are likely to succeed.

Step 2. Occupational Information: This step plays a critical role in the career decision-making process. Parsons (1909) emphasized that a key step in selecting a vocation involves understanding the nature of different occupations and the opportunities they present. He highlighted the importance of making informed career choices, a principle that remains relevant today. For both job seekers and career practitioners, researching various career options is often one of the initial steps in the career planning process. Parsons recognized that informed decision making and thorough evaluation are essential for enhancing job satisfaction and ensuring that individuals find meaningful and fulfilling opportunities in the workforce.

Step 3. Decision Making: Upon completion of the self-analysis and occupational review, “The third step is to choose from among the occupations for which you are fitted, those that seem most attractive” (Parsons, 1909, p. 91). In essence, Parsons suggests that the decision-making process allows an individual to make informed choices from gathered information and then evaluate the best career alignment. This process-oriented approach to career decision making certainly provides structure and guidance for job seekers which continues to this day. You will undoubtedly recognize similarities in their approach and may have discussed the value of assessment, evaluation, research, and importance of finding a strong “fit” in one's career.

Limitations

When reflecting on my work over the past 30 years, there are tangible benefits for job seekers to engage in self-assessment and

research to formulate the best decision possible in aligning an individual's interests, abilities, and goals toward a career. Without a doubt, this theory is practical and an important framework from which many career theoretical research is based upon, but at the same time, we must acknowledge there are limitations to this linear process-oriented approach. One consideration for job seekers is the oversimplification of this theory in our modern societal landscape. The world has changed dramatically since the early 1900s, and this theory is somewhat limited in considering cultural, global, and socioeconomic aspects of our society.

A strong argument can be made that Parsons did not account for barriers to employment arising from class, status, systemic racism, financial insecurity, and gender. Other limitations of this theory include how it does not take into account factors such as social influences, personal growth and development, life-long learning, and work-life balance. In modern society, job seekers are not looking for jobs that only align with their traits and abilities. Instead, there are a host of factors that enter into the decision making of an individual.

Holland's Career Typology

One of the most influential traditional career theories that has been widely used for decades is Holland's career typology, proposed by John Holland in the 1950s and refined over subsequent decades. Holland (1997) believed that, "Individuals seek out environments that complement their own personalities. People of the same personality type are likely to congregate in similar work environments." From this, he surmised that individuals can be classified into six personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (RIASEC).



Figure 1.3 Realistic personality type (pepifoto, n.d.) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Realistic individuals are described by their practical, hands-on approach to work and their preference for tangible, concrete tasks. These individuals are often referred to as “doers” because they thrive in environments where they can actively engage with tools, machines, equipment, and physical materials.

People with this personality type are often associated with hands-on occupations such as field work, construction, mechanical trades, industrial and natural resources, and labour intensive positions, but they also include occupations such as drafters, engineers, and pilots.



Figure 1.4 Investigative personality type (by the author using Canva) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Investigative individuals tend to be analytical in nature and are described as curious individuals who enjoy solving complex problems. These individuals thrive in environments that challenge their thinking and allow them to explore, experiment, and uncover new knowledge. They are naturally drawn to roles that involve critical thinking,

data analysis, and systematic inquiry, as they enjoy delving into the intricacies of how things work and finding innovative solutions to challenging questions. They are motivated by the opportunity to explore unanswered questions, develop new theories, or create practical solutions to real-world problems.

Under this typography, an individual may be suited for occupations in research, science, engineering, financial analysis, physics, and computer science.



Figure 1.5 Artistic personality type (by the author using Canva) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Artistic individuals are often characterized by their creative nature and passion for self-expression. They are often drawn to roles that allow them to explore their artistic talents, think outside the box, and bring unique ideas to life. These individuals thrive in environments that encourage innovation, originality, and the freedom to express themselves,

whether through visual, auditory, or written mediums. Artistic types are often found in professions that involve creating, designing, or performing. They are motivated by the opportunity to produce work that resonates with others, evokes emotion, or challenges conventional thinking.

This group's occupations may be found in anything creative like music, acting, design, writing, photography, marketing, advertising, web design, and cinematography.



Figure 1.6 Social personality type (by the author using Canva) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Social individuals are very engaging and tend to move toward positions that allow for social interaction, working with people, and supporting one another. Social types thrive in environments where they can engage with people, foster connections, and address the needs of individuals or groups. They are often found in professions that allow them to educate, heal, counsel, or advocate for others. For

example, in teaching, they may excel at inspiring and nurturing students, while in social work, they might focus on empowering vulnerable populations and addressing systemic challenges. In counseling and therapy, their empathetic listening and problem-solving skills enable them to support individuals through personal struggles and mental health challenges.

Also known as helpers, this group often works in professions like teaching, social work, counselling, therapy, and community service.



Figure 1.7 Enterprising personality type (vaeenma, n.d.) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Enterprising individuals are often characterized by their ambition, confidence, and natural inclination toward leadership. These individuals are driven by a desire to achieve, influence, and advance, often seeking out opportunities that allow them to take charge and make impactful decisions. They thrive in dynamic and competitive environments where they can exercise their persuasive communication skills, strategic thinking, and

willingness to take calculated risks. Their ability to inspire and motivate others, combined with their goal-oriented mindset, makes them well-suited for roles that require vision, initiative, and the ability to navigate complex challenges.

This typography often gravitates towards positions in sales, business, entrepreneurship, management, and politics.



Figure 1.8 Conventional personality types (Warchi, n.d.) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Conventional individuals, as described in Holland's theory of vocational choice, are characterized by their detail-oriented, organized, and systematic approach to work. These individuals thrive in environments where precision, structure, and data-driven decision making are valued. They often exhibit a strong preference for tasks that

involve working with numbers, statistics, and factual information, as they derive satisfaction from solving problems through logical and methodical processes. Their natural inclination toward order and efficiency makes them well-suited for roles that require accuracy, consistency, and adherence to established procedures.

Career alignment is often found in occupations in statistics, research, banking, accounting, data analysis, library sciences, and administration.

Limitations

Holland's career typology has been a cornerstone for career counselling for many decades and has been used extensively to support job seekers with personalized guidance and recommendations for identifying suitable career paths. Individuals often display a blend of several personality types, with certain types exerting a stronger influence than others. This combination of traits reflects the complexity and diversity of human personalities, as people rarely fit neatly into a single category. So, while Holland's typology certainly serves as a valuable framework for understanding career preferences and decision making, it is not without limitations due to the sheer complexity of human beings. Notably, it overlooks critical contextual elements such as human diversity, cultural background, personal values, and skill sets, all of which contribute to the multifaceted nature of career development. This very complexity is what makes career decision making both fascinating and, at times, challenging, as there is rarely a clear or straightforward pathway to follow. The interplay of personal, cultural, and contextual factors adds layers of nuance that theoretical models alone cannot fully capture.

Super's Life-Span Theory

Another prominent career theory is Donald Super's (1957, 1980) life-span, life-space theory, developed in the 1950s and 1960s. Super's theory emphasizes the importance of individual development and the role of various life roles (e.g., student, worker, family member) in shaping one's career trajectory. Donald Super's (1990) theory highlights that individuals undergo a continuous process of personal and professional development across their lifespan. This process is characterized by a series of interconnected challenges, opportunities, and milestones that arise as individuals grow and evolve. These developmental tasks are not isolated incidents but are deeply intertwined, collectively shaping a person's identity, aspirations, and sense of purpose over time. Super's framework underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of career development, emphasizing how each stage of life contributes to the ongoing construction of an individual's personal and professional narrative.

Super (1980) conceptualized career development as a series of overlapping and interconnected stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement to illustrate the dynamic and evolving nature of career trajectories over the lifespan. These stages reflect the continuous process through which individuals navigate their personal and professional lives, and for the purposes of the revised graphic, the establishment stage has been expanded to provide a more nuanced understanding of this critical phase, which involves not only stabilizing one's career but also achieving professional growth and recognition. Additionally, a new stage, advancement, has been introduced to better capture the period during which individuals seek to refine their expertise, assume leadership roles, and make significant contributions to their fields. This expansion acknowledges the complexity of modern career paths and the increasing importance of ongoing development and reinvention in response to evolving workplace

demands and personal goals. By incorporating these refinements, the revised framework offers a more comprehensive representation of the multifaceted and non-linear nature of career development, aligning with contemporary understandings of lifelong learning and professional growth.



Figure 1.9 Super's life span career development (by the author using Canva)
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Super (1957, 1980) initially split a person's life into five stages, but this has been adapted slightly to include another stage:

Development and Growth Stage (0–14 years of age): During this

formative stage individuals are forming their identity and a sense of who they are. This self-discovery often lead to development of interests and the formation of relationships and bonds. Super (1957, 1980) posited that even in this early stage, individuals lay the foundation for future career development by fostering curiosity, creativity, and the initial formation of self-concept. Children start to imagine potential roles and careers, often influenced by family, school, and societal expectations.

Exploratory Stage (14–25 years of age): As individuals progress through adolescence and into early adulthood, they continue to experience growth and exploration. This stage is marked by the pursuit of various interests, development of skills and knowledge, and active engagement in the career exploration and decision-making processes. Super (1980) emphasized that this period involves significant trial and error, as individuals seek to align their interests, abilities, and values with potential career paths. Key tasks include career planning, skill development, and decision making, often culminating in the transition from education to the workforce. During this stage, we often witness individuals trying different occupations figuring out what they like and do not like to do.

Establishment Stage (25–45 years of age): This stage is exemplified by individuals concentrating on reaching career objectives, refining skills, and progressing in selected professions. This phase is marked by the quest for professional acknowledgement and career development. Individuals are focused on building, stabilizing, and establishing themselves in their chosen fields so they may advance professionally. Super (1980) noted that this stage often involves overcoming challenges, such as adapting to workplace dynamics, achieving work-life balance, and refining career goals. Success during this stage is marked by career growth, increased responsibility, and a sense of contribution to one's field.

Advancement Stage (45–55 years of age): While absent in Super's initial life-span theory, this stage is represents a critical phase in the

career development that builds upon the establishment stage and reflects the evolving demands of modern professional roles. This stage typically occurs during mid-career, when individuals have already gained a foothold in their chosen field and are now focused on achieving higher levels of expertise, influence, and leadership. Unlike the establishment stage, which emphasizes stability and consolidation, the advancement stage is characterized by proactive efforts to refine skills, expand responsibilities, and make meaningful contributions to one's profession or organization. Advancement can certainly occur at an stage, but it is particularly significant during one's mid to late career, when individuals have accumulated substantial experience and are positioned to take on greater responsibilities, leadership roles, and innovative challenges.

Maintenance Stage (45–64 years of age): Characteristics of this stage include stability and achievement in your career, with a focus of transitioning into retirement in the latter part of this stage. During the maintenance stage, individuals strive to preserve their career achievements and adapt to changing circumstances. This stage involves updating skills, mentoring others, and navigating transitions, such as organizational changes or shifts in personal priorities. Super (1980) highlighted that individuals in this stage may also reassess their career satisfaction and explore new opportunities for growth or reinvention, reflecting the ongoing nature of career development.

Disengagement Stage (65+ years of age): The final stage involves a gradual withdrawal from the workforce and a transition into retirement or reduced work involvement. Super (1980) described this stage as a time for reflection, legacy-building, and redefining one's identity beyond professional roles. Individuals may focus on leisure activities, volunteer work, or mentoring, while also adjusting to the psychological and social changes associated with retirement. For many individuals, this stage provides opportunities for legacy building, increased flexibility, and reducing day-to-day stress of the

position. For others, this stage represents the significant challenges of social isolation and loss of identity and purpose.

Limitations

Upon first glance, Super's lifecycle provides a neat and tidy linear approach to understanding the career development process, but it is clear these transitory stages are a guide to explain the human experience. Individuals are highly complex, and Super acknowledges that career choice is a lifelong journey influenced by many factors. It is expected that we would move through these stages at different intervals, and how we navigate these cycles is highly dependent on factors such as family support, environmental factors, culture, technology, and geography. Super (1980) stated, "Career development is the total constellation of economic, sociological, psychological, educational, physical and chance factors that combine to shape one's career. It occurs throughout one's life and includes home, school, community, and workplace."

To Super's credit, he recognized the complexity of the human condition and how personal career development is from one individual to another. He understood that life-span theory could not account for every impact and change we face in our daily lives, but by acknowledging these limitations, we can still gain insight on how to navigate our career journey.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

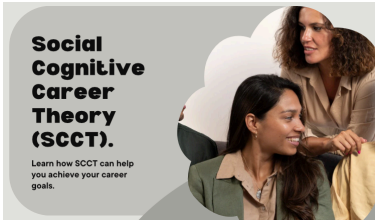


Figure 1.10 Social cognitive career theory (by the author using Canva) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT), spearheaded by scholars Robert Lent, Steven Brown, and Gail Hackett (1994, 1996), emerged in the 1990s as a significant advancement in the field of career development. Influenced by Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, SCCT examines psychological principles and constructs to decode the process that

individuals use when initiating career decision making. At its core, SCCT seeks to unveil the underlying factors that influence an individual's engagement and deliberations in career exploration and decision making. The central tenets of SCCT are a confluence of factors to explain how individuals develop interests in a certain career and how they navigate this process. SCCT defines these factors that shape an individual's career choices and behaviours as phases that include self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, social influences, and personal goals.

Self-Efficacy

According to SCCT, individuals develop self-efficacy beliefs regarding their abilities to perform specific tasks or succeed in particular careers. These beliefs, in turn, may influence career interests, goals, and actions. Lent et al. (1994) proposed that an individual's self-efficacy beliefs influence their motivation, persistence, and performance in career-related activities.

For example, if an individual believes they have the aptitude or capabilities to perform certain tasks, then they may gravitate towards certain occupations that provide these opportunities. To drill down further, if an individual has an affinity for numbers and solving problems, SCCT posits that the individual may have a belief they may be suited for occupations within accounting, statistics, and finance. Similarly, if an individual has strong spatial skills, they may develop high self-efficacy for careers that require visualization, design, and spatial reasoning, such as architecture, engineering, or graphic design. Their confidence in these abilities, reinforced by successful experiences or encouragement from others, can lead them to pursue educational and career paths that align with these strengths. Over time, this self-efficacy can influence their career interests, goals, and performance, ultimately shaping their professional trajectory.

What is interesting about self-efficacy is that one's goals are not fixed or set in stone. They can be influenced by role models, experiences in work-integrated learning environments (e.g., co-op, mentors), and other positive factors in one's life.

Performance Outcomes

The performance outcomes phase involves an individual's positive outcome expectations and belief that they can be successful in their career actions. Lent et al. (1996) proposed that an individual's career choices and performance behaviours are influenced by their interests, goals, self-efficacy beliefs, and outcome expectations; so if an individual believes they will have a positive outcome, then they will be motivated to pursue their stated goals, no matter how ambitious they may be. Positive outcome expectations refer to an individual's belief that their efforts will lead to desirable results, while self-efficacy beliefs reflect an individual's confidence in their ability to perform the tasks necessary to achieve those outcomes.

From a student's work-integrated learning perspective, we often see a student's belief that their efforts during the co-op will lead to desirable results, such as skill development, networking opportunities, or future job offers. If a student believes that their co-op experience will contribute to their long-term career success, they are more likely to approach the experience with enthusiasm and commitment.

Interests & Goals

The interests and goals phase involves the formation of an individual's career-related interests and goals. SCCT suggests that individuals develop interests and goals based on their personal characteristics, experiences, and social influences. Lent et al. (1994) emphasized how this phase connects with the role of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations to shape an individual's interests and goals. From a student perspective, a co-op experience allows students to explore their career interests in a practical setting. SCCT suggests that interests play a key role in guiding career-related behaviours. If a student's co-op aligns with their interests, they are more likely to engage deeply with their work, seek out additional responsibilities, and consider pursuing similar roles in the future.

For example, a student passionate about environmental sustainability may thrive in a co-op role at a renewable energy company, while a student with little interest in the field may struggle to stay motivated. Co-op experiences can help students clarify their interests by exposing them to different industries, roles, and work environments, enabling them to make more informed career decisions.

Environmental & Social Factors

Another interesting aspect of SCCT is the importance of social and environmental in shaping an individual's career aspirations and outcomes. These positive influences greatly enhance an individual's belief that they can accomplish their stated goals and objectives. Lent et al. (1994) emphasized the importance of contextual supports in facilitating or hindering an individual's career choices and behaviours. Contextual supports include social support, mentoring, access to resources, and opportunities for skill development.

In work-integrated learning environments, such as co-op placements, internships, or practicums, the impact of these contextual supports is particularly evident. We as faculty and career educators have witnessed time and time again how students thrive when they are provided with strong mentorship, access to resources, and a supportive network. For example, a student participating in a co-op program may benefit from a supervisor who provides guidance, constructive feedback, and encouragement, thereby boosting their confidence and self-efficacy. Similarly, access to resources such as professional development workshops or networking events can help students build essential skills and expand their career opportunities.

Social support from peers and family also plays a vital role in shaping students' career aspirations and persistence. Encouragement from loved ones can motivate students to pursue ambitious goals, while peer support can create a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose. In contrast, a lack of contextual supports—such as limited access to mentors, resources, or encouragement—can hinder a student's ability to fully engage in their work-integrated learning experience and achieve their potential.

Limitations

SCCT certainly adds to career theory research by providing a comprehensive framework that integrates psychological principles to further refine the career development process; however, there are also challenges that should be acknowledged. The theory itself is quite complex and requires a deep understanding of factors that may contribute to decision making. As well, the focus on self-efficacy and personal goals may overshadow the significance of social and economic conditions. With the increasing globalization of the workforce, there is also the potential to overlook the importance of cultural considerations that address diverse cultural norms and expectations. In summary, there is certainly value to this theory, but as our society continues to evolve, individuals may need to complement this framework with additional perspectives to provide a holistic approach to career decision making.

Timeline of Career Theory

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Evolving Career Theory Perspectives

In response to the swift transformations in society, conventional career theories found themselves struggling to fully grasp the

intricate dynamics of contemporary work settings. The impact of globalization, rapid technological progress, and evolving socioeconomic conditions emphasized the need for more fluid and responsive models in career development. Consequently, there was a proliferation of fresh paradigms, the most prominent being planned happenstance and chaos theory.

The concepts behind planned happenstance and chaos theory provide fresh perspectives and strategic guidance for individuals in the present era who are confronted with navigating an ever-changing and unpredictable job market. Planned happenstance advocates for being open to unplanned opportunities and unanticipated events, viewing them not as obstacles but as potential avenues for growth and career advancement. On the other hand, chaos theory underscores the idea that even seemingly random or chaotic events in one's career trajectory may reveal underlying patterns and opportunities for adaptation and progress. By embracing the principles of these theories, individuals can better equip themselves to thrive in today's dynamic professional landscape by fostering a mindset of resilience, flexibility, and strategic adaptation.

Planned Happenstance Theory



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Developed by Kathleen Mitchell, S. Al Levin, and John Krumboltz (1999), planned happenstance is a theory that challenges the traditional notions of carefully planned career paths. It suggests that unplanned events and chance encounters play a significant role in shaping one's career trajectory. Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory of career decision making forms the basis for planned happenstance, emphasizing the importance of learning experiences, social influences, and happenstance events.

Planned happenstance theory introduces several key principles that contribute to a more nuanced understanding of career development (Mitchell et al., 1999), including:

1. **Planned Happenstance:** Krumboltz and Levin (2004) argue that individuals can proactively create opportunities by developing skills in curiosity, persistence, flexibility, and optimism. By embracing uncertainty and being open to unexpected events, individuals can turn chance occurrences into positive career developments.
2. **Learning from Unplanned Events:** This theory posits that individuals can learn valuable lessons from unplanned events

and use these experiences to refine their career goals. This adaptive learning process involves making sense of unexpected situations and integrating them into one's career narrative.

3. **Social Networks and Support:** Planned happenstance emphasizes the role of social networks in creating and capitalizing on unplanned opportunities. Strong social connections provide access to diverse information, resources, and support, enhancing an individual's ability to navigate the unpredictable nature of the job market.

Practical Applications

Planned happenstance has many practical implications for individuals who are navigating their careers. It is important to note that while planning and goal setting are still an important part of the career planning process, one should never underestimate the importance of being flexible, being open to unplanned opportunities and events, being curious, and recognizing unplanned social factors that are out of your control but may greatly impact your career planning.

A fairly recent example of unplanned social factors would be the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the entire planet in 2020 and 2021. There was no way that one could plan for such a catastrophic global event, and we are still feeling the effects of supply-chain challenges and rampant inflation in the economy. As we move further into this decade, we anticipate these factors to be less acute, but there is no denying that we are in a new reality of how and where we work.



Figure 1.12 Planned change (Panuwat Dangsungnoen, n.d.) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

For instance, the job market has changed dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic. By embracing planned happenstance, individuals were quick to recognize opportunities in an environment of monumental change. Adopting a flexible mindset, individual and industries quickly pivoted from Plan A to Plan B methods that were resilient to the pandemic. The emergence of the digital nomad and remote or virtual worker were historically more niche in scope, but during the pandemic, these “ideals” were embraced and, quite frankly, necessary to keep the economies of the world functioning. The awareness of individuals pivoting in such a manner is remarkable in the history of modern labour and a testament to how quickly economies may change.

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic is just one example we can draw from. The digital transformation that the pandemic spawned is now leading humanity to embrace digital tools, such as artificial intelligence (AI). AI will bring enduring innovation and fundamentally change our economies as we have traditionally known them, but these technologies will also bring massive opportunities that we may or may not be currently aware of.

Key Concepts

If job seekers embrace the notion that chance events and unexpected opportunities can play a role in one's career trajectory, then planned happenstance as a theory may resonate with individuals who are navigating these turbulent economic waters. In the list below, we have identified key elements to further understand the value of planned happenstance:

1. **Embrace Uncertainty:** We are in a rapid state of economic change, and one could argue this is the greatest period of uncertainty and disruptive forces we have faced in decades. Developing a mindset that embraces uncertainty and encourages proactive engagement with unexpected events will foster adaptability and resilience, thus helping individuals to better navigate the complexities of the modern job market.
2. **Skill Development:** Planned happenstance highlights the importance of developing skills such as adaptability, networking, and problem solving. These skills not only enhance an individual's employability but also empower them to capitalize on unforeseen opportunities and emerging career paths. Technological advancements and economic fluctuations will require skills that we have not even anticipated.
3. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Krumboltz (2009) emphasizes the importance of adaptability and flexibility in career decision making and suggests that individuals should be open to exploring various career options and adapting their goals based on changing circumstances and personal experiences.
4. **Social Connections and Networking:** Networking plays a crucial role in planned happenstance theory by actively engaging in professional networks, attending events, and building connections. Job seekers increase their chances of creating unforeseen opportunities through these actions, and these chance encounters can lead to mentorships, job offers,

referrals, or valuable insights into potential career paths.

5. **Lifelong learning and Personal Growth:** In such a dynamic job market, planned happenstance theory can lead an individual on a journey that encourages continuous growth, learning, and development. Through these actions, individuals are typically exposed to new challenges and opportunities that may lead to unexpected opportunities.
6. **Chance and Awareness:** Being aware of how important “chance” encounters are leads to new prospects and career pathways that may lead individuals in career directions they had not thought possible.

In summary, flexibility, chance, and embracing uncertainty are the cornerstones of planned happenstance theory, which empowers job seekers to manage their careers by recognizing that career paths are rarely linear. Instead of following a rigid job search

plan, individuals should remain open to unexpected opportunities and chance encounters that may lead to new career paths or advancements. Ultimately, this theory posits that a linear approach is too rigid in our complex world, and individuals who embrace the notion of adaptability, resilience, flexibility, and openness will actively create conditions that increase the likelihood of career opportunities and success.



Figure 1.13 *Chance to change* (Philip Steury, n.d.) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

Chaos Theory of Careers

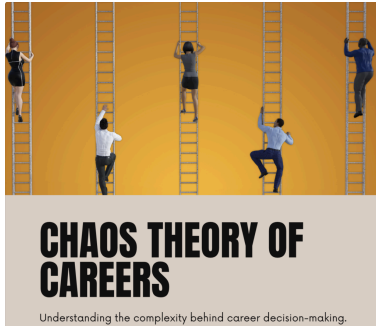


Figure 1.14 Chaos theory of careers (by the author using Canva) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

The inspiration for the chaos theory of careers (CTC) finds its origins in mathematics and physics. Edward Lorenz's (1963) work on "deterministic nonperiodic flow" is often considered the starting point of chaos theory. Over time, the work of Robert May (1976), Benoit Mandelbrot (1977), and Edward Lorenz (1963) continued to build on this work by exploring the unpredictable and non-linear dynamics of complex systems. These

principles have been adopted and applied to various fields, including CTC.

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the job market and influences that affect labour and global economies continue to evolve at a rapid pace. Traditional linear career theories often fall short in capturing these complexities that we all face in our professional lives, but similar to planned happenstance theory, CTC has emerged as a dynamic theory framework that embraces the unpredictable and non-linear nature of career development. Developed by Dr. Jim Bright and Dr. Rober Pryor (2005), CTC challenges traditional linear thinking theories of career planning and offers a more nuanced modern approach that recognizes the chaos and turbulence in the job environment.

When applied to career development, CTC challenges some assumptions of traditional career theories and suggests that individuals' career paths are inherently unpredictable, influenced

by chance events, personal agency, and interactions between one's career environment and internal characteristics.

Watch the following video by Jim Bright to learn about the foundations of chaos theory.

The Chaos Theory of Careers - its about complexity!
(<https://youtu.be/AVGA1cQX4D4?si=xuVya5K7WpIBvS4q>) [7:49 min] by Jim Bright (2015)



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The Chaos Theory of Careers - its about complexity!

(<https://youtu.be/AVGA1cQX4D4?si=xuVya5K7WpIBvS4q>)



Avalanche-Snowflake Metaphor



Figure 1.15 Key concepts of the chaos theory of careers (by the author using Canva) Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>)

The relationship between avalanches and snowflakes (Bright & Pryor, 2005) is another metaphor that is often used to illustrate how large and transformative changes (avalanches) can stem from small, seemingly insignificant actions (snowflakes). It underscores the idea that significant career developments can emerge from minor decisions, interactions, or events.

In this metaphor, snowflakes represent the small, everyday decisions, interactions, or events that may appear inconsequential at the time. For example, attending a networking event, taking an elective course, or having a casual conversation with a colleague can all be considered “snowflakes.” Individually, these actions may seem minor, but they have the potential to set off a chain reaction that leads to significant outcomes.

Avalanches symbolize the large, transformative changes that can result from the accumulation of snowflakes. In a career context, an avalanche might represent a major career shift, such as landing a dream job, starting a business, or transitioning to a new industry. These changes often feel sudden or unexpected, but they are the result of a series of small, interconnected actions and events.

From a student perspective this metaphor is particularly powerful, because small, intentional actions can lead to significant outcomes

over time. Consistently building professional relationships, pursuing learning opportunities, or exploring new interests can create a foundation for future opportunities. While the immediate impact of these actions may not be apparent at first, they contribute to the conditions that make transformative change possible.

The avalanche-snowflake metaphor also illustrates how career development is shaped by a complex web of interconnected factors. A single decision or event can have ripple effects that influence multiple aspects of an individual's career. For instance, accepting a temporary job in a new field, joining a student club, or becoming a co-op student or ambassador might lead to unexpected skills, connections, and opportunities that open doors to a completely different career path.

Finally, this metaphor encourages individuals to embrace uncertainty and remain adaptable in their career journeys. Just as an avalanche cannot be precisely predicted or controlled, career paths are often shaped by unforeseen events and opportunities. By staying open to change and proactively engaging with small actions, individuals can position themselves to capitalize on transformative moments when they arise.

Key Concepts & Implications

Below, we have identified key elements of chaos theory to further understand its value:

1. **Navigating Uncertainty:** Chaos theory suggests that complex systems, such as the job market, are highly sensitive to initial conditions and inherently unpredictable. Job seekers can apply chaos theory principles by acknowledging the unpredictability of the job market and adopting flexible strategies to navigate uncertainty. Rather than striving for rigid control or linear

progression, individuals are encouraged to embrace ambiguity and navigate their careers with a sense of curiosity, adaptability, and resilience. CTC encourages individuals to embrace the inherent uncertainty in their careers.

Navigating Uncertainty Example

Consider a professional exploring new career options during a period of industry disruption. By applying principles from both theories, the individual can proactively seek out diverse opportunities, network with professionals from different fields, and adapt to changing market demands to effectively navigate uncertainty.

2. **Flexibility and Resilience:** The non-linear and unpredictable nature of career development underscores the importance of flexibility and resilience. Individuals who can adapt to changing circumstances and bounce back from setbacks are better equipped to navigate the complex and dynamic job market.

Flexibility & Resilience Example

An individual who starts their career in marketing but discovers a passion for technology through a chance project collaboration exemplifies the non-linear nature of careers. By embracing this unplanned opportunity and leveraging it to transition into a tech-focused role, the individual demonstrates how serendipitous events can lead to fulfilling career shifts.

3. **Recognizing Chance Events:** The concept of “avalanches” emphasizes the role of chance events or critical moments in shaping career outcomes. Understanding that career paths can be influenced by unexpected opportunities or challenges encourages individuals to remain open to serendipitous encounters and capitalize on them when they arise.

Recognizing Chance Events Example

A professional attending a networking event with no specific agenda may unexpectedly meet a potential mentor who introduces them to a career opportunity in a different industry. By seizing this serendipitous moment and exploring the new opportunity, the individual demonstrates how embracing unplanned encounters can lead to valuable connections and career growth.

4. **Valuing Incremental Progress:** Conversely, “snowflakes” represent the cumulative impact of small, incremental changes or experiences over time. This highlights the importance of patience and persistence in career development, recognizing that even seemingly minor actions or decisions can contribute to long-term success.

Valuing Incremental Progress Example

Upon completing a degree, Nicholas secures an entry-level position with a small firm. While the role is not his ultimate goal, he recognizes the “opportunity” it provides for experience, skills development, and networking. Over the next several years, he consistently engages in professional development to acquire new certifications and knowledge, which leads to increasing leadership roles within the organization. Ultimately, these incremental successes lead to his ultimate goal of managing the firm.

5. **Exploring Diverse Opportunities:** Chaos theory encourages job seekers to explore diverse opportunities and consider alternative paths. Instead of focusing solely on traditional job listings, they can explore freelance work, project-based opportunities, remote positions, or entrepreneurial ventures. By embracing a diverse range of opportunities, job seekers can leverage the non-linear nature of the job market and uncover unexpected avenues for career growth.

CTC Summary

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Integration & Adoption of Planned Happenstance & Chaos Theory

As reviewed in this chapter, planned happenstance theory emphasizes the role of chance and unplanned events in shaping an

individual's career, while the chaos theory of careers explores the chaotic and unpredictable nature of career paths. While planned happenstance and chaos theory have distinct foundations, they share a common ground in challenging deterministic and linear views of career development. Both perspectives acknowledge the importance of unplanned events, adaptability, and the dynamic interplay of unforeseen opportunities in shaping careers. Rather than viewing uncertainty as a barrier, planned happenstance and chaos theory embrace it as a natural part of the career development process. The combined insights from these theories provide individuals with a more robust toolkit for navigating uncertainty.

By applying principles from both theories, individuals can proactively seek out diverse opportunities, network with professionals from different fields, and adapt to changing market demands to effectively navigate uncertainty.

Case Studies

To illustrate the practical applications of planned happenstance and chaos theory, this chapter includes case studies of individuals who have successfully navigated their careers by embracing career theory.

Case Study 1.1

Fiona's Career Journey: Embracing Planned Happenstance

Fiona, a recent graduate with a degree in marketing, initially had a clear career path in mind. She aimed to secure a position at a top advertising agency in her city. However, despite her diligent job search efforts, she struggled to land a job in her desired field.

Instead of becoming discouraged, Fiona decided to attend networking events, volunteered for projects outside her comfort zone, and actively sought informational interviews with professionals in various industries. During one such interview, she met a marketing executive who mentioned an upcoming internship opportunity at a tech start-up.

Although Fiona had never considered working in the tech industry, she decided to seize the opportunity. The internship exposed her to new skills, challenges, and perspectives. She discovered a passion for digital marketing and data analytics, areas she had not explored during her academic studies.

As Fiona immersed herself in the tech startup environment, she encountered unexpected opportunities for growth and advancement. She leveraged her newfound skills to contribute meaningfully to the company's marketing

initiatives, eventually securing a full-time position as a digital marketing specialist.

Case Study 1.1

Discussion Questions

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Case Study 1.2

Jose's Career Evolution: Embracing Chaos Theory

Jose is a university student approaching graduation with a degree in business administration. He is feeling uncertain and overwhelmed about his future career path. Jose is interested in various fields—including marketing, finance, and entrepreneurship—but struggles to narrow down his options. He is finding it challenging and overwhelming to pinpoint a specific career path, and he is worried he will not be able to find the perfect career.

As Jose delves deeper into his career exploration, he reaches a point where he must make decisions that will shape his future path. He recognizes the need to narrow down his options and focus on areas that align with his skills, interests, and values. At this critical juncture, Jose starts to feel the pressure of making a definitive choice amidst the uncertainty and complexity of his decision-making process.

Case Study 1.2

Discussion Questions

Utilizing the chaos theory of careers, what steps could Jose take to navigate his career decision-making process?

Questions to Consider:

1. How did Jose leverage the chaos theory for careers to navigate his decision-making process?
2. What challenges did Jose face at each phase of his career exploration, and how did he overcome them?
3. How did Jose's interdisciplinary interests in marketing, finance, and entrepreneurship shape his career trajectory?
4. What lessons can students draw from Jose's experience in embracing chaos and complexity in career decision-making?
5. How can students apply the principles of the chaos theory for careers to their own career planning and exploration processes?

Discussion Questions

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Conclusion

Delving into career theory offers insights into the intricate and ever-evolving landscape of career growth. Throughout this chapter, we explored a range of career theories that provide frameworks for understanding individual career trajectories, decision-making processes, and the broader socioeconomic contexts that influence career development. Ranging from conventional theories—such as trait and factor theory and developmental theory—to modern perspectives—like social cognitive career theory, planned happenstance theory, and the chaos theory of careers—each theory bestows distinctive viewpoints that enrich our comprehension of career advancement.

A pivotal takeaway from our exploration is the recognition that a universal one-size-fits-all approach to career development is impractical. Scholars like Super (1980, 1990) underscore that a singular theory lacks the breadth to entirely explain the multifaceted career decision making processes given individuals' unique traits, diverse interests, values, strengths, and environmental circumstances that shape their career journeys in distinct ways. Instead, we recognize the need for a convergence of theories to make meaning of the themes, principles, and concepts shared across different frameworks (Savickas & Lent, 1994).

Career theories serve as indispensable resources and frameworks for individuals to navigate the complexities of career development and support a more informed pathway. As societal dynamics evolve, career theories will continuously adapt to a myriad of factors that influence all of us in the choices we make. Individual characteristics, social influences, environmental factors, and the interplay between personal agency and external constraints will continue to evolve, and the evolution of career theory will reflect broader societal changes and shifts in our world. Traditional linear models of career development have given way to more dynamic and non-linear

approaches, and as we move forward, it is essential to continue refining and expanding our understanding of career development through interdisciplinary research, empirical studies, and practical applications. By integrating insights from psychology, sociology, economics, and other relevant fields, we can develop more holistic approaches to career theory that address the diverse needs and aspirations of individuals across different stages of their careers and lives.

In conclusion, career theory serves as a valuable foundation for understanding, guiding, and supporting individuals in their career journeys. By applying insights from the highlighted theories in this chapter, you will be empowered to make informed decisions to pursue meaningful and fulfilling careers in an ever-changing world.

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- **Figure 1.12** “Businessman hand flipping wooden cube blocks with PLAN A change to PLAN B text on table background. strategy, analysis, marketing, project and Crisis concepts (<https://www.canva.com/photos/MAD8f0g0fls/>)” by Panuwat Dangsungnoen (n.d.), via Canva, is used under the Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>).
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- **Figure 1.15** “Key concepts of the chaos theory of careers” [created using Canva] by the author is used under the Canva Content License (<https://www.canva.com/policies/content-license-agreement/>).

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Long Descriptions

Figure 1.1 Long Description: Words related to career theory include: accept, adjust, alternative, assessment, attending, butterfly, career, chance, change, changes, chaos, complexity, confidence, constructivism, decision, developmental, diverse, economic, effect, embracing, encounters, entrepreneurial, events, evolving, flexibility, freelance, Ginzberg, happenstance, Holland, influences, integrated, interconnectedness, know, learning, life, lifelong, making, market, minded, navigating, networking, networks, open, opportunities, Parsons, paths, personality, perspectives, planned, planning, positions, professional, project-based, remote, resilience, risks, search, seeker, self, social, span, strategies, strengths, success, Super, theory, trait, uncertainty, unexpected, unpredictable, ventures, weaknesses, work, and cognitive. [Return to Figure 1.1 (#fig1-1)]

Figure 1.9 Long Description:

- Title: Super's Life Span Career Development
- Inner circle: Lifespan Theory (at the top) — child, student, leisure, citizen (above a star) — worker, parent, spouse, homemaker (below the star)
- Outer circle: Development 5 years and under, Growth 14 years and under, Exploration 14–25 years, Establishment 26–45, Advancement 45–55, Maintenance 55–65, Disengagement 65+

[Return to Figure 1.9 (#fig1-9)]

2. Self-Assessment

HARSHITA DHIMAN AND NOAH ARNEY

[This chapter is adapted from a previous version by Mitch Clingo]

Introduction

Assessment has been a core element of career development since the beginning of the 20th century. Career theory began early on with the belief that if you had an accurate understanding of an individual's traits, the person could then be matched to their ideal profession. While we understand that career-pathing is more intricate than this matching process, a strong self-understanding still creates a solid foundation for vocational exploration, self-promotion, and informed career decision-making (Metz & Jones, 2013). Today, the focus of most career assessments is on the meaning-making that an individual does with the results of the assessment. In many cases, externally administered assessments have been replaced with self-assessments. Engaging with career assessments can help immensely in moving from a state of unawareness to opportunity.

This chapter explores the most common dimensions of self-awareness—personality, interests, and abilities—that have traditionally been measured through quantitative assessments (those that provide a categorical output). It will also look at modern qualitative assessments that seek to create self-awareness through a dialogue of self-reflection and meaning-making.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize three dimensions of personal awareness: skills, values, and personality.
- Critically consider the differences and strengths of qualitative and quantitative assessments.
- Apply a qualitative self-assessment to explore your skills.

Personal Awareness

Personality

When deciding on a career path, it is important to consider whether your personality aligns well with the job requirements. Personality is a staple of self-awareness. It is the individual set of behaviours, cognitions, and emotional patterns that arise from biological and environmental factors (Burch & Anderson, 2009). Aligning a job role with an individual's personality traits tends to exhibit higher levels of productivity (Riggio, 2018).

Not every personality is suitable for every job, so it is important to

understand your own personality traits to make more appropriate and realistic occupation choices. For example, extroverted people are more productive in a work environment where they interact with others; whereas, introverted people often work well in a work environment with no or less social interaction.

Interests

Considering interests during career planning can provide valuable insight into potential career paths. Interest can be described as a condition in which an individual is actively involved or has a natural inclination or desire to engage in an activity (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Interest awareness can help an individual identify what motivates them in life. In the process of self-assessment, finding career indicators within one's interest creates a promising path to achieve career success. Tools like career interest inventories, such as RAISEC, can help individual explore their interests and relate them to different career options.

Interestingly, while it is important to consider these factors when choosing a career, these factors are not set in stone. Research has shown that personality traits and RAISEC interests are impacted by the careers we choose. Regardless of what you choose, your personality and interests will moderately change to match your chosen field (Wille & De Fruyt, 2014). The things we enjoy doing outside of work and the things we are happy to do as part of our work context are often very different.

Values

Values are the beliefs and principles that influence an individual's behaviour and decisions. Values act as benchmarks or guidelines

that offer social validation for decisions and actions (Rokeach, 1973). Understanding and focusing on our individual values can assist you in identifying job prospects that closely match your core beliefs, thereby fostering greater confidence during interviews. For instance, if you prioritize stability, you may seek roles characterized by consistent tasks, fixed daily schedules, and a steady work environment. Value recognition can not only help you select a career but also help you make more informed decisions in the workplace.

Holistic Self

One way of understanding values is to consider yourself within a complex set of contexts and relationships. These contexts and relationships all impact how we interpret our values and how we perceive our self. There are a number of ways to visualize these interconnected contexts, but two for you to consider today are the systems theory framework for career development (STF) (Figure 2.1 (#fig2-1)), created by Wendy Patton and Mary McMahon (1999), and the Indigenous wholistic framework (IWF) (Figure 2.2 (#fig2-2)), created by Michelle Pidgeon (2014).

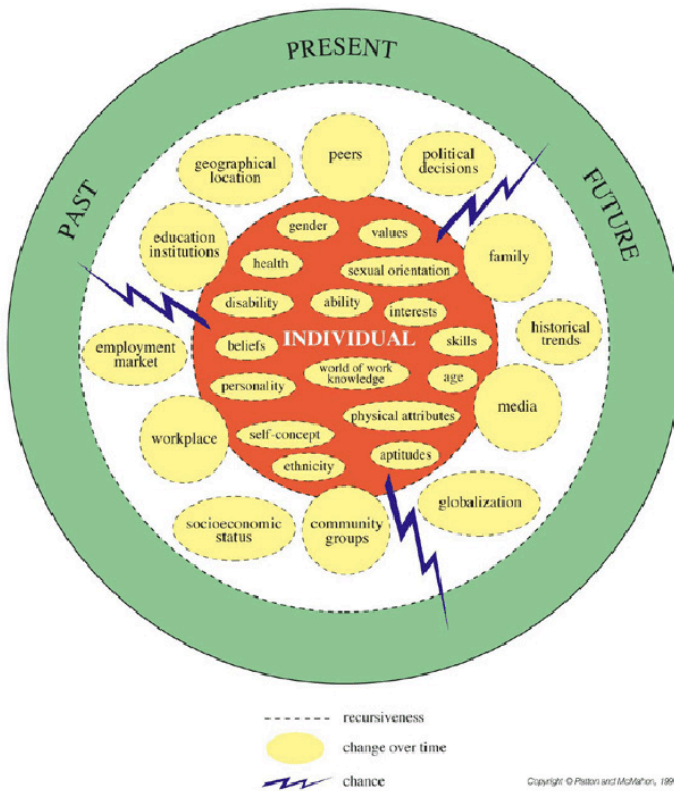


Figure 2.1 Systems theory framework for career development (Patton & McMahon, 1999) Used with permission

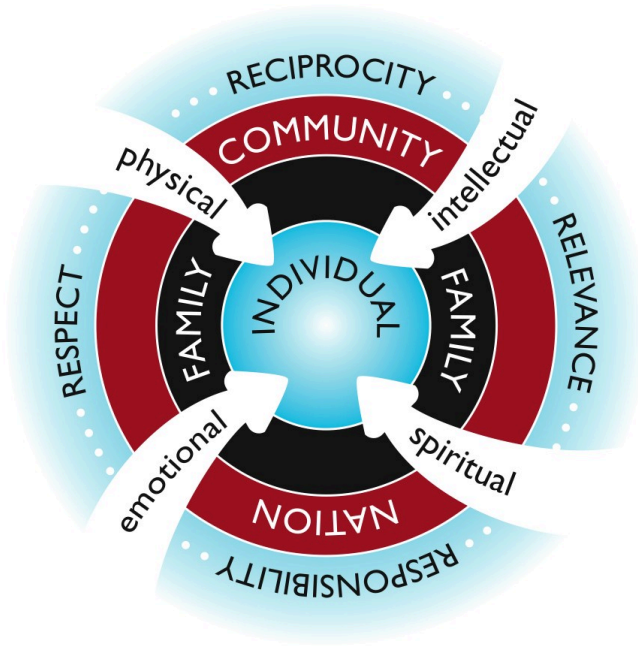


Figure 2.2 Indigenous wholistic framework (Pidgion, 2016) [For more information about the framework see this chapter on Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/chapter/indigenous-ways-of-knowing-and-being/>)] CC BY 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) [Long Description (#fig2-2longdesc)]

When using these frameworks to understand your holistic self, consider how you interact with each part of your self and in what context you connect with others or aspects of yourself and aspects of others. How do you connect with family or community regarding your goals, hopes, or values? How does what another person does (i.e., the choices they make) impact your values or perception of yourself?

Skills & Abilities

Over the past two decades, the discussion of career preparedness in Canada has shifted its focus to skills (Viczek et al., 2019) and abilities. This shift means that instead of looking at markers expected to mean that a person has certain skills and abilities (like a university degree in certain disciplines), employers are more likely to want to know what specific skills a candidate has. For a very long-time, skills discussion focused mostly on skills that are specifically applicable to individual jobs (i.e., technical skills), with broader skills that are interpersonal, social, and emotional in nature being described as “soft skills.” Today, these skills are considered more important than ever and, in some industries, are considered more important than technical skills. To show this equality, the terms “technical skills” and “transferable skills” (Arney & Krygsman, 2022) will be used here.

Skill and ability assessments have traditionally been used to determine an individual’s potential for specific types of work (Metz & Jones, 2013). However, because in the 21st century, we emphasize choosing a career rather than being matched to it, skills assessments are now seen as part of career exploration and planning. You identify skills you enjoy doing well and then consider roles in which you will get to do those skills frequently.

Skills or ability assessments evaluate strengths and weaknesses in relation to work. Once a career path has been chosen, this awareness is used to set goals for coursework and experiential opportunities to amend skill deficits or enhance strengths (Metz & Jones, 2013). Skills assessments can be further used to better articulate self-promotion and career pathing.

Technical Skills

Technical skills are the skills you use in a job, profession, career, or role that are specific to that area and less impactful in other fields, such as the types of tools or techniques used. What it does not include are broadly applicable skills, such as communication or teamwork skills.

Many of these skills are taught in discipline-specific classes within a post-secondary program. Take a moment to consider the tools, techniques, and methods taught in your program or discipline-specific classes. If you are struggling to identify them, find a few jobs, preferably entry level, that are specific to your discipline and identify common things they ask for that do not show up on job postings outside of your industry or field.

Technical Skill Examples

- **Electrician:** A specific way to wiring an outlet according to code.
- **Accountant:** The ability to use the software Sage 50.
- **Health Care Assistant:** A specific way of moving a patient.
- **Scholar of English:** The methodology of literary criticism.

Transferable Skills

Although there are a lot of frameworks for transferable skills (<https://careerwise.ceric.ca/2021/05/27/comparing-essential-skills-frameworks-as-a-tool-for-career-development/>) (Arney, 2021), the most common skills listed in them are critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. Sometimes life-long learning and self-management are included as well. The use of a transferable skills framework is helpful for being able to specify what you mean when you talk about your skills. For example, many students find it difficult to explain why they have good communication skills or how they can display or describe collaboration. In Canada, the new Skills for Success framework (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/understanding-individuals.html>) (expanded and reworked from the Essential Skills framework) is a strong choice for understanding your skills and how you can explain them to an employer in a way they will understand (Employment and Social Development Canada [ESDC], 2024a).

Skills for Success

Reading, writing, numeracy, and digital skills remain the foundation of the Skills for Success framework, but the transferable skills of problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, collaboration, and adaptability are given new prominence (Figure 2.3 (#fig2-3)) (ESDC, 2024a). Each of the nine skills has six components, which give aspects of the skill that you can consider. For example, one of the components of creativity and innovation is “facilitate a creative and innovative environment.” (ESDC, 2024b). These components allow you to think critically about your skill level in a way that is more applicable than simply considering the broad skill.

The skills for success framework forms the basis of the assessment you will be trying out at the end of this chapter.



Figure 2.3 Skills for Success skills wheel (ESDC, 2024a)
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(<https://www.canada.ca/en/transparency/terms.html>)

Quantitative Assessment

Quantitative assessments utilize standardized tests that are designed to measure individual's specific skills. Examples of such assessments include psychometric tests, personality evaluations, and aptitude tests. These assessments primarily aim to determine one's capability to perform certain tasks rather than their

inclination towards them. Qualitative assessment results include a list of professions that will be most suitable to you in terms of job satisfaction and your chances of succeeding at it. For instance, an aptitude test for an entry-level computer programming position would assess whether the individual possesses the capacity to acquire the requisite skills for the field.

Holland

The best known model of vocational interests is the hexagonal model proposed by John Holland (Holland, 1997). Holland defines six categories (or types) based on sets of interests. These are known as either Holland codes or RIASEC types. In this model, as shown in Figure 2.4 (#fig2-4), interest types are organized onto the hexagram to imply stronger relations to closer types. For example, realistic is seated next to investigative because a person who scores higher on the realistic category is likely to score higher in investigative as well.

Holland (1997) believed workers would be happier in the environment they were most interested in. There are several self-assessments available online that measure your interest in the six categories and provide your top three dominant types as a measure of occupational suitability. However, there are criticisms for using interests to steer career explorers to specific

career areas (Spokane et al., 2002). Evidence does not support high job satisfaction simply based on interest alone. Furthermore, interest-based inventories do not account for the wide degree of



Figure 2.4 Holland's hexagram
(Turner, 2018) Used with permission

“jobs” in any career area. For example, in the forestry industry, jobs range from machine operator to project manager. The responsibilities and skills required for those two roles are vastly different, even though they fall within the same career area of forestry.

Interest inventories are a great place to start with career exploration. They can provide insight into available jobs or careers based on self-reported personal information. Once careers are identified, career explorers can delve further into their area of interest through reality-based investigation, such as job shadowing, volunteering, course work, etc. This information should be used in conjunction with other strategies to make realistic and informed career decisions.

Exercise 2.1

RAISEC Assessment

Complete the Holland code (RIASEC) test from the Open-Source Psychometrics Project (2019): Holland Code (RIASEC) Test (<https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/RIASEC/>)

After you complete the assessment, consider the following:

1. Would your family and friends agree with your results?
2. Were you surprised by any of the results?
3. How have your interests guided your decision-making until now?
4. Which suggestions from the assessment resonate with you most?

Five-Factor Model

Currently, the most dominant paradigm of personality is the five-factor model (as shown in Figure 2.5 (#fig2-5)), also known as the “Big Five.” Each factor is a spectrum, with individuals able to score anywhere on the line. Each factor is also made up of multiple sub-factors.

The five factors of the model are:

1. Openness to experience
2. Conscientiousness
3. Extroversion
4. Agreeableness
5. Neuroticism

Each personality trait has its own meaning. Understanding these traits help provide insight into your own personality. A different way of looking at the big five can be that “Extraversion is sociability, agreeableness is kindness, openness is creativity and intrigue, conscientiousness is thoughtfulness, and neuroticism often involves sadness or emotional instability” (Cherry, 2022). An easy way to remember the Big Five is through the acronym OCEAN or CANOE. There have been many theories and attempts to figure out how many personality traits exist, ranging from as little as three to 4,000 or more. With the Big Five, we are able to describe these broad traits in a building block style that creates our personality.

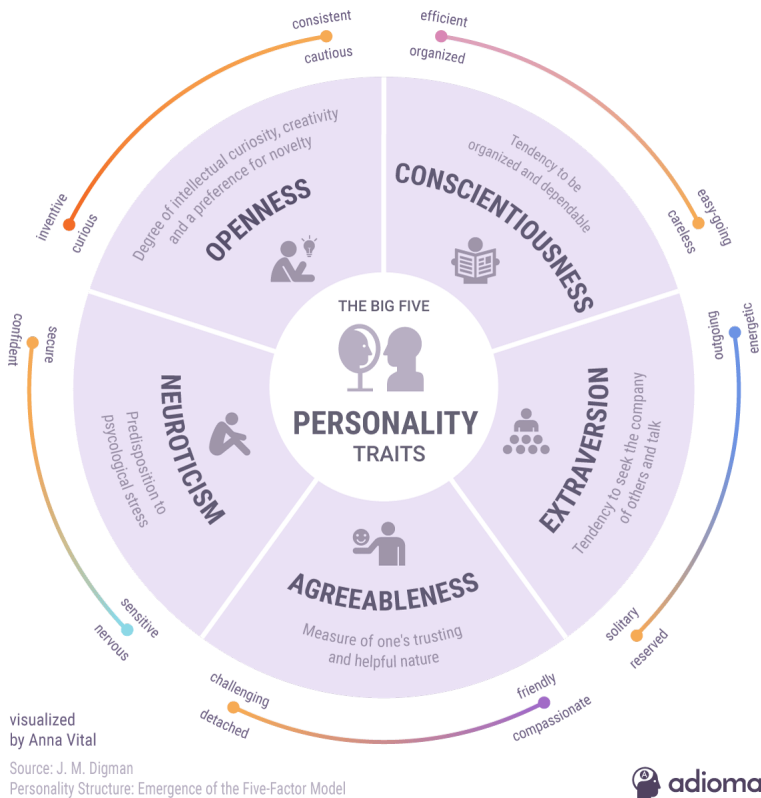


Figure 2.5 Five-Factor Personality Model (Visualized in Adiomia by Anna Vital [original source by J. M. Digman]) Used with permission [Long Description (#fig2-5longdesc)]

Personality has often been strongly considered in vocational choice because it represents characteristics that are largely stable over time (Spokane et al., 2002). Therefore, many researchers believe a successful career decision can be made by matching personality with corresponding occupations. For example, an individual who scores high in extroversion, characterized by sociability and talkativeness, is often recommended entrepreneurial careers such as sales and marketing.

However, research has struggled again to find clear correlations in

this area (Guruge, 2021). It is difficult to find a consensus on what personality characteristics are most suited for a specific job. If a panel of experts were asked to determine the most valuable traits for a given occupation, different experts would suggest different traits. Using extroversion again as an example, you could assume it would be a valuable trait for counsellors or case managers. However, you could make another argument that introverts, who have a strong ability to connect with others in one-to-one scenarios, would be a better fit for these positions. Most occupations are made up of individuals with a wide range of personalities. Personality assessments are well-suited to initiate the process of self-reflection.

Being intentional about the skills you are developing and reflecting upon your experience once you are done leads to more effective career planning. See Figure 5.1 in Volunteering (#fig5-1), which is based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle and Lewin's experiential learning model.

Exercise 2.2

Big 5 Personality Assessment

Complete the Big Five personality test from Truity (n.d.): Big Five Personality Test (<https://www.truity.com/test/big-five-personality-test>)

After completing the assessment, consider the following:

1. Would your family and friends agree with your results?
2. Which result of the assessment do you most agree with?
3. Which result of the assessment do you most disagree with?
4. Which aspects of your personality do you feel impact your decision-making?
5. How has your personality guided your decision-making until now?

Qualitative Assessment

Qualitative assessment is described as “informal forms of assessment” (Okocha, 1998, p. 151). “Qualitative career assessment stimulates storytelling, and in doing so, facilitates learning about oneself through self-reflection and enhanced self-awareness”

(McMahon & Watson, 2019, para. 4). “Abilities predict occupational performance and success; interests and values predict occupational satisfaction” (Metz & Jones, 2013, p. 471).

Qualitative assessments are then used to understand the larger picture. These assessments emphasize your individual experiences, which affect the choices you make. They are more informal, flexible, open-ended, and holistic than quantitative assessments. They recognize the importance of stories and the intangible aspects that lead to career adaptability and satisfaction. Qualitative assessments also do a better job of taking into account the challenges and barriers that traditional assessments overlook (McMahon et al., 2019). Collaboration and cooperation with a career practitioner is encouraged to facilitate reflection, debriefing, and meaning-making.

Examples of qualitative assessments include *My System of Career Influences* (McMahon et al., 2017a; McMahon et al., 2017b; McMahon et al., 2013), which guides users through a structured process in a booklet format, and the *Motivated Skills Card Sort* (Knowdell, 2005), which provides a set of step-by-step instructions for users.



Figure 2.6 How career practitioners help make sense (Mohamed_hassan, 2021) Pixabay content license (<https://pixabay.com/service/license-summary/>)

Career Construction

About one-third of qualitative career assessments fall under the broad career construction grouping (McMahon et al., 2019). This specific theory comes from Mark Savickas and explains how we apply meaning to our career paths, which are

often much more complex today than when career theory first arose. What is important is not so much what the career paths have

been but how we perceive and understand them. People do not make decisions randomly; they do what they feel is the best option or aligns with the themes or focuses of the person's path so far. Career construction assessments, such as the career construction interview, focus on this.

Narrative Assessment

Many of the more recent career assessments are based off of a narrative understanding of career development (McIlveen & Patton, 2007; McMahon et al., 2019), making them the second most common qualitative tool currently used. What is meant by narrative is that what matters about career assessment is not what some outside test says but how it connects to the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and what we do. If an assessment says that you are a practical person, how does that fit into how you see yourself?

One of the common methods for this is based on Reinekke Lengelle and Frans Meijers's (2015) work on "career writing," where individuals and groups write reflectively on their current or potential career, their identity, and how they see themselves connecting with it. This helps people identify things they believe about themselves that are no longer true or relate to something that has changed too much for it to be useful anymore. It also helps build a narrative about what an imagined future could be like and how to achieve it.

My Career Story (Savickas & Hartung, 2012) is a way of blending the career writing and career construction methods. In this method, you write several very short stories about yourself based on prompts that touch on the things you admire or enjoy in media as well as career topics. The work is then blended together with questions and discussions before being rewritten into a story that

talks about where you want to go next and advice to yourself about it.

The most important part here is how you create your own narrative and how you think about yourself and your options, limitations, and opportunities. By being explicit about these, you can often find places to improve or find limitations you have put on yourself that may no longer make sense. The process by which we make meaning in our own narrative is both how we limit ourselves and how we identify self-imposed limitations that can be overcome.

Subjective Reports Transferable Skills Assessment

One of the connection points between qualitative and quantitative assessments is that it needs to be something that provides a place for the person taking it to examine something about themselves. For qualitative assessments, this is meant as a starting point for reflection. To bring together your self-assessment in this chapter, you will use an assessment of your transferable skills to help you better understand what is meant by them and how you may already be using these skills in your professional and educational life.

The Subjective Reports Transferable Skills Assessment (<https://careertheory.trubox.ca/srtsa/>) (Arney, 2024) is a tool to help walk you through the sub-skills or components of five of the Skills for Success skills. It provides additional information about what is meant by the component and how you may be able to demonstrate it. The subjective part is that this is done not based on practicing the skill and being reviewed quantitatively but is based on a qualitative and holistic perception of the skills in practice by the one using it.

Exercise 2.3

Subjective Reports Transferable Skills Assessment

Completing the Assessment

Each of the five skills has six components and each of those components has three different levels: building, enhancing, and proficient. A statement about an action you can do is given for each level of the component. Each level builds on the ones before.

In scoring the assessment, reflect on times when you have done the actions within each component and level. Write down, circle, or mark the highest-level actions you are frequently able to do for each component of each skill.

Reflection: How many times did you circle building, enhancing, or proficient for each of the skills? What skills did you score yourself higher on than you expected? How often do you think you can demonstrate that component to others.

Problem-Solving

Table 2.1: Problem-Solving Skills Assessment

Components	Building	Enhancing	Proficient
Identify the Issue to Be Addressed	Recognize familiar problems and the common issues or variables within them.	Identify common variables in new issues and problems, connecting past experience to the problem.	Identify complex and contradictory variables within new and unfamiliar problems and the specific issues at play within them.
Gather Information	Connect past experience, knowledge, and skills to familiar problems and common issues.	Identify information sources beyond your past experience that are useful for an unfamiliar issue or problem.	Use new-to-you or complex methods of research to identify information on new-to-you or complex problems.
Analyze the Issue	Determine potential common reasons for familiar problems or issues.	Determine multiple causes of and variables of problems and issues that are new-to-you based on gathered information.	Using assessments, tests, research, and external standard procedures analyze a complex issue and synthesize the information about it.

Create Multiple Options	Troubleshoot familiar problems or issues by determining options for solutions based on past experience with similar problems and issues.	Troubleshoot and develop multiple choices for solving problems and issues where the causes and variables are knowable but require more than one step to analyze.	Determine multiple options for solutions or decisions about complex problems which have unfamiliar variables or unknown causes based on substantial research or diverse unfamiliar sources.
Address the Issue	Determine and implement a decision or solution to common or familiar problems and issues based on past or best practice.	Select and implement the best solution to a complicated problem or issue with multiple variables and causes that were previously unknown to you.	Implement and iterate on solutions and decisions to complex problems where there is no identifiable best choice.
Evaluate Effectiveness of Solution	Assess whether past or best practice solutions were effective in resolving a problem or issue.	Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution or decision made to solve a problem according to an external standard.	Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of a complex solution or decision to a complex problem or issue where there is no identifiable best choice.

Creativity & Innovation

Table 2.2: Creativity & Innovation Skills Assessment

Components	Building	Enhancing	Proficient
Use Imagination and Curiosity	Imagine a world in which things are different.	Imagine a world in which things are different and explore what might need to happen for that world to be real.	Imagine a world in which things are different and identify specific changes that could happen to make it a reality.
Identify Opportunities to Innovate	Explore new-to-you ideas and understand when others show me how they can be expanded.	Explore new and innovative ideas and identify ways they can be improved or expanded.	Expand and innovate on ideas new-to-you and others in a way that substantially improves them.
Generate Ideas That Are New	Generate new-to-you ideas yourself with support and guidance from someone else.	Generate new-to-you ideas without support from others.	Generate new and original ideas others have not considered before.
Develop Ideas	Develop ideas within the norms and habits of your environment with support.	Develop ideas while embracing uncertainty or failure without support.	Develop ideas in new, innovative, or original ways that iterate on failures.

Apply Ideas	Implement ideas others bring forward into systems you are familiar with.	Implement ideas you and others generate in situations without a correct or knowable answer.	Implement a wide variety of innovations and ideas generated by you and others in new and unique ways that embrace failure as part of the process.
Facilitate a Creative and Innovative Environment	Accept changes others make to your environment that are designed to make it more creative or innovative.	Organize your environment in a way that supports your creativity.	Facilitate an environment for others to be creative and innovative.

Communication

Table 2.3: Communication Skills Assessment

Components	Building	Enhancing	Proficient
Listen With Intention	Actively listen to topics of interest in an attempt to understand the listener rather than simply to develop a response.	Actively listen to many topics outside of interests in an attempt to understand the listener with no intention of developing a response.	Actively listen to topics which are counter to your own interests or biases or know little about in an attempt to understand the listener with no intention of developing a response.
Listen to Understand	Understand content on topics of interest presented with factual and concrete language and understand common non-verbal cues.	Understand content on topics outside of interests presented with factual and abstract language or which includes non-verbal or culturally influenced information.	Understand abstract concepts and content with which you disagree or about things which you know little about and able to understand non-verbal or culturally influenced information from cultures other than your own.

Speak With Clarity	Speak about topics of interest in a way that others understand your concepts when presented using factual and concrete language.	Speak about topics outside of interests in a way that others understand your concepts when presented using factual and abstract language.	Speak on a wide range of topics in a way others understand even if they do not have the same cultural worldview.
Speak With Purpose	Speak about topics of interest in a way that is structured to explain your points to those who know the topic well.	Speak about topics outside of interests in a way that is structured to explain your points to those who know little about the topic.	Structure speaking on a wide range of topics in a way that guides others through learning about the topic so that they come to the same level of understanding as you, even if they knew little to start with.
Adapt to My Audiences and Contexts	Present on topics of interest to a single person.	Present on topics of interest to individuals or small groups of people you do not know or in places you are not familiar with.	Present on a wide range of topics to large and small groups as well as individuals in a variety of spaces and formats.

Adapt to Others Communication Modes and Tools	Adapt presentations enough to be understood based on common non-verbal cues from those listening.	Adapt presentations to be better understood based on complex non-verbal and cultural cues from those speaking.	Adapt presentations to be best understood and increase persuasiveness based on shifting contexts, spaces, formats, and group sizes.
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Collaboration

Table 2.4: Collaboration Skills Assessment

Components	Building	Enhancing	Proficient
Work Well With Others	Interact with and accomplish goals with familiar people.	Interact with and accomplish goals with unfamiliar people.	Interact with and accomplish goals with large teams of diverse unfamiliar people.
Value Diversity and Inclusion	Maintain respectful behaviour towards those who are different from you.	Value diversity and inclusion within your groups and encourage the respectful behaviour of others in the groups.	Value diversity and inclusion of all groups and work toward improving your and others respectful behaviour of groups.
Manage Difficult Interactions With Others	Interact with familiar people in a way that minimizes conflict.	Manage difficult interactions with individuals and groups and manage conflicts between others and yourself.	Manage difficult interactions within and between groups and work toward resolving conflicts.
Facilitate an Environment of Collaboration	Collaborate with familiar people or small groups of unfamiliar people to complete routine tasks.	Collaborate with familiar people and groups of unfamiliar people to coordinate tasks.	Collaborate with large groups, taking responsibility for coaching, motivating, and evaluating others.

Achieve a Common Goal With Others	Work toward a routine goal with familiar people or small groups of unfamiliar people.	Work toward a simple goal with groups of unfamiliar people.	Achieve complex goals with large groups in unpredictable situations.
Reflect and Improve on Teamwork	Reflect and improve on how you work with familiar people.	Reflect and improve on how you work with unfamiliar people.	Reflect and improve on how groups of people work together.

Adaptability

Table 2.5: Adaptability Skills Assessment

Components	Building	Enhancing	Proficient
Demonstrate Responsibility	Follow provided directions responsibly with some supervision.	Follow provided and implied directions with minor supervision.	Independently determine what is expected of you and demonstrate responsibility without supervision.
Persist and Persevere	Stay positive and persist in the face of minor changes.	Stay positive, persist, and persevere in the face of moderate changes.	Stay positive, persist, and persevere in the face of complex or substantial changes.
Regulate Emotions	Regulate emotions in response to minor stress.	Regulate emotions in response to moderate stress.	Regulate emotions in response to high stress.
Set or Adjust Goals and Expectations	Set goals and expectations with direction and adjust in response to minor changes.	Set goals and expectations with supervision and adjust in response to moderate changes.	Set goals and expectations independently and adjust in response to complex changes.
Plan and Prioritize	Plan and prioritize tasks and goals when given direction.	Plan and prioritize tasks and goals with some supervision.	Plan and prioritize tasks and goals without any supervision.

Seek Self-Improvement	Learn what is required of you with direction.	Determine what type of learning or self-improvement is needed with some supervision and begin working on it.	Identify opportunities for self-improvement and life-long learning independently and progress towards them.
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Conclusion

A strong sense of self-awareness is the first step in making informed career decisions. Once you feel you have a strong sense of yourself and your skills, your next step is to expand external awareness. That is to say, learn more about what careers are out there and how viable they may be. The next chapter on Labour Market Information (#chapter-labour-market-information) will explore these concepts. In the Career Planning and Goal Setting (#chapter-career-planning-and-goal-setting) chapter, you will read about how an awareness of self and available career options can be integrated to make career decisions.

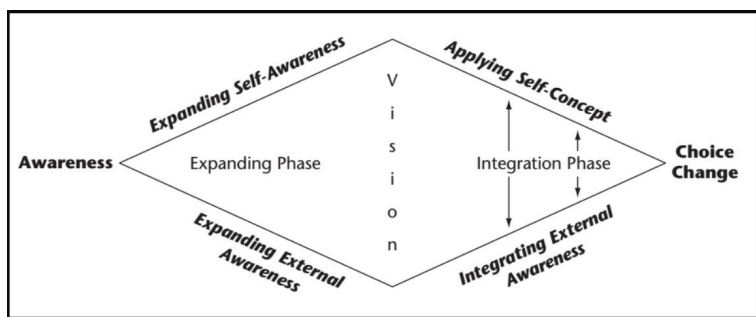


Figure 2.7 Career diamond (Guruge, 2021) Used with permission [Long Description (#fig2-7longdesc)]

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Long Descriptions

Figure 2.1 Long Description: Starting from the outside, the concentric circles include:

- Past, Present, and Future
- Peers, political decisions, family, historical trends, media, globalization, community groups, socioeconomic status, workplace, employment market, education institution, and geographical institution.
- Individual: Gender, values, sexual orientation, interests, skills, age, physical attributes, aptitudes, world of work knowledge, ethnicity, self-concept, personality, disability, health, gender, and ability.

Three lightening bolts start in the innermost circle and end at the outermost circle.

[Return to Figure 2.1 (#fig2-1)]

Figure 2.2 Long Description: Starting from the outside, the concentric circles include:

- Reciprocity, Relevance, Responsibility, and Respect
- Community and Nation
- Family
- Individual

There are also arrows pointing to the centre labelled Physical, Intellectual, Spiritual, and Emotional.

[Return to Figure 2.2 (#fig2-2)]

Figure 2.4 Long Description: Psychologist Holland divided personality types into a 6-factor typology. With a few keywords for each, they are:

1. **Investigative:** structured, organized, and careful
2. **Artistic:** expressive, creative and visual
3. **Social:** helping, empathetic, communicative and friendly
4. **Enterprising:** influential, energetic, sociable, and leader
5. **Confidential:** structured, organized and careful
6. **Realistic:** practical, hands-on, and tangible work

[Return to Figure 2.4 (#fig2-4)]

Figure 2.5 Long Description: J. M. Digman's Personality Structure: Emergence of the Five-Factor model is described as follows:

- **Conscientiousness:** A tendency to be organized and dependable; ranging from efficient and organized to easy-going and careless
- **Extraversion:** A tendency to seek the company of others and talk; ranging from solitary and reserved to outgoing and energetic
- **Agreeableness:** A measure of one's trusting and helpful nature; ranging from challenging and detached to friendly and compassionate
- **Neuroticism:** Predisposition to psychological stress; ranging from secure and confident to sensitive and nervous
- **Openness:** Degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty; ranging from inventive and curious to consistent and cautious

[Return to Figure 2.5 (#fig2-5)]

Figure 2.7 Long Description: This framework illustrates that a person begins their career confused and unaware about who they are, the job market, or both. The process of career counseling helps them expand their knowledge and then find some resolution about both to make a career choice or change.

The person begins when they are aware they need to explore

careers and make a choice in the world of work. The top of the diamond represents the person's self-awareness; it expands and then narrows down to an eventual choice or change. The bottom of the diamond is the person's awareness of the world of work, which expands and then narrows to a choice.

On one side of the diamond is the Exploring Phase, where a person explores their own internal self-concept and expands their external awareness of the work world. The other side is the Integration Phase, when the person applies their self-concept and integrates it with their new knowledge (external awareness) of the work world.

[Return to Figure 2.7 (#fig2-7)]

3. Labour Market Information

LARRY ILES

Introduction

Why Won't the Baby Boomers Leave the Canadian Labour Market?

At the time of writing this chapter, Canada is two years into its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and is entering into the world of AI platforms like ChatGPT. How the world of work will adjust to the post-pandemic landscape and the increase of AI remains to be seen. By now, readers may have encountered web-based articles discussing the “Great Resignation.” Broadly, this term refers to the significant number of workers who have not returned to their pre-pandemic jobs. The internet is filled with articles on this topic, with titles such as “Who is Driving the Great Resignation?” (<https://hbr.org/2021/09/who-is-driving-the-great-resignation>) (Cook, 2021) and “The Great Resignation Rages On” (<https://fortune.com/2022/01/04/great-resignation-record-quit-rate-4-5-million/>) (Leonhardt, 2022).

However, it is too early to tell where these displaced workers have gone and what types of new jobs they may have found. In this age of media, determining reliable sources of information can be challenging. One reliable source is labour market information (LMI), which helps students and new graduates navigate the world of work and potential career pathways. LMI provides a vast amount of data and information that can assist students in both career planning and job searches. It can be used to check on job growth, economic climates, skills needed, wages, labour supply and demand, and future projections. According to the Business Council of Canada, students can also use LMI to understand how their educational

credentials will be “measured, accredited, and transferred” (Drummond & Halliwell, 2016). With the advent of easy access to LMI, there is no lack of labour market information. Yet the information can be scattered and is offered by a variety of sources. This chapter will highlight a small subset of the information available and show how it can be utilized for career development and job searching.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Incorporate the current labour market conditions in Canada using population statistics into your career plan.
- Identify and reflect on career choices through labour market research.
- Create a career analysis using labour market research.
- Practice using AI platforms for labour market information.

Who Am I?

Current Labour Market Conditions in Canada Using Population Statistics

Let's start with a brief overview on the population cohorts impacting the labor market in Canada.

Baby Boomers

Baby boomers remains active in the labor force, with many choosing to work longer due to improved health and the elimination of mandatory retirement. This defies earlier predictions of their swift exit from employment. For current students, this holds significance as baby boomers continue to occupy positions, sometimes competing with students for jobs in various career fields. In Canada, baby boomers maintain a strong presence in the labor market. According to David Foot (2007), individuals aged over 45 constitute 42% of the labor force. This implies that approximately 7.5 million Canadians aged 50–64 (Statistics Canada, 2021) could still be participating in the workforce.

The precise definition of the baby boomer demographic is subject to debate, but the general consensus places their birth years between 1947 and 1966 (Foot, 2007). The oldest members of this cohort are in their early 70s, while the youngest are in their early 60s. Roughly 10 million births occurred within this period. This generation is typically characterized as having experienced economic prosperity and being part of the post-World War II boom in North America that extended into the 1980s. The key takeaway is that baby boomers are likely to remain active in the labor market well into the late 2020s. This could impact recent graduates entering sectors or professions that traditionally experience slower job growth.

Generation X

The term “Generation X” was coined by Douglas Coupland in his 1991 book, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*. This generation comprises around 5.4 million Canadians born between 1965 and 1980. Compared to the baby boomers, Generation X individuals typically boast higher educational attainment levels, face heightened competition for jobs, and exhibit greater geographic career mobility.

Millennials

Millennials are a group that has been extensively scrutinized by the media (Strauss & Howe, 1992). Generally, millennials are described as highly educated individuals who tend to reside in the family home for longer periods compared to previous generations. This cohort can encounter challenges entering the labor market due to the large baby boomer generation preceding them. Millennials are also known for embracing new lifestyle trends and exhibiting consumerist behaviors.

This cohort represents over 7 million live births in Canada between 1980 and 1995 and constitutes a significant portion of the Canadian labor economy. Projections suggest that millennials will make up three-quarters of the global workforce by 2025 (Lyons, 2016).

Note. Canada is not alone in labeling this demographic. In other countries, millennials are referred to as the Curling Generation (Norway), ken lao zu—the generation that eats the old (China), Generacion ni ni—no work/no study (Spain), Generation Y (Australia), and Generation Rent (UK) (Lyons, 2016).

Generation Z

Finally, there is “Generation Z.” Figure 3.1 (#fig3-1) illustrates the primary characteristics of this cohort, which includes over 6 million individuals born since 1996. The eldest members of this generation are now beginning to enter the labor market. According to Dimock (2019), Generation Z is the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age, shaping their values, communication styles, and expectations in the workplace.

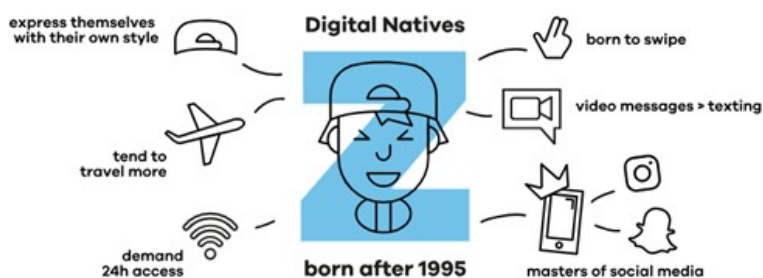


Figure 3.1 Generation Z: A New Generation has Arrived. (von Jörg, 2017) CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>) [Long Description (#fig3.1longdesc)]

Why Is It Important?

As graduation approaches, it is crucial for students to factor in these demographic trends when exploring career options and assessing future labor market dynamics. For instance, let's consider a scenario at a small university in British Columbia where there are two full-time career counselors, both likely to remain in their roles for another 10 to 20 years. For students aspiring to enter this sector in this location, they evidently may face a prolonged wait for opportunities to open up due to the continued presence of baby boomers and millennials in the workforce.

Another important aspect to consider is the phenomenon of having four generations coexisting in the workplace, each with its distinct perspective and work culture. How new graduates navigate interactions with these different generations will significantly impact team dynamics and organizational communication structures. This aspect will be further explored in subsequent chapters.



Figure 3.2 Four generations in a workplace (Windows, 2019) Unsplash license (<https://unsplash.com/license>)

Labour Market Information

Employers often inform post-secondary career counsellors that they are concerned about candidates' lack of knowledge about the industry to which they are applying. Students not only need to research the job and company but also understand the issues the sector is experiencing, the drivers of the sector, and the future of the sector. This information is invaluable when writing a cover letter and preparing for interviews—especially for the question, “What is your future career plan?” It is crucial to find relevant and reliable LMI when researching careers and applying for jobs. Students can use any of the following key sites to build their LMI knowledge. Ideally, students will begin this type of research long before graduation to assist with both academic and career decisions.

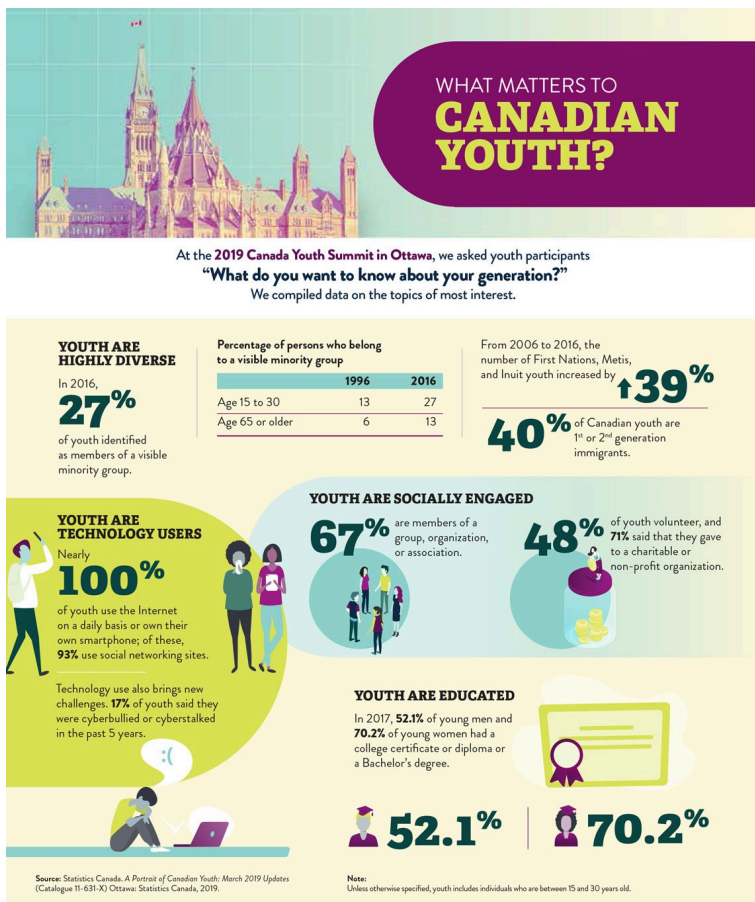


Figure 3.3 A portrait of Canadian youth (Statistics Canada, 2019) Statistics Canada Open Licence (<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/reference/licence>) [Long Description (#fig3-3longdesc)]

Using LMI for Career Planning

There are many career development labour market sites available

to students. This section will focus on two key sources of LMI for career planning:

1. **British Columbia Labour Market Online**
(<https://www.labourmarketonline.com/>): Published by Christian Saint Cyr (n.d.), this highly informative site provides easy-to-review labour market information.
2. **The Future of Work in Canada: Bridging the Gap**
(<https://lmic-cimt.ca/publications-all/lmi-insights-report-no-2-the-future-of-work-in-canada-bridging-the-gap/>): Produced by the Labour Market Information Council (LMIC) (2018), this resource reflects the scope of the Canadian labour market. For students and new graduates, it provides access to career decision-making data.

Students can use these sites to determine where the jobs are, skills and credentials needed, projected growth of an industry, and even geographical locations of career choices. For example, students can access a report produced in British Columbia by Labour Market Solutions (<http://labourmarketsolutions.ca/>) (n.d.). Their monthly newsletter focuses on different career choices and provides LMI for that area. For example, one issue on midwives provided information on education, the number of midwives in BC, a review of the typical workload, possible job descriptions, and future growth. These and additional resources are listed near the end of this chapter. Students can use this information to prepare a career plan academically and post-graduation.

LinkedIn

This section will focus on the use of LinkedIn (<https://ca.linkedin.com/>) as a source of labour market data. LinkedIn provides students with a vast amount of information—if

they are willing to work a little harder to gather it. According to Statista (2025), LinkedIn had approximately 27.4 million users in Canada as of January 2025, and over 75 million organizations are listed on the platform globally. The Labour Market Information Council (LMIC) partnered with LinkedIn to analyze over 400,000 paid job vacancies across Canada. Their summarized findings identified the top required skills and top job titles across 10 major cities. Notably, common skill groups—such as business management, leadership, and oral communication—emerged as essential for students and new graduates entering the labour market (LMIC, 2020). This is not surprising because these skills often surface in “Top 10 Career Skills” lists. However, it shows students which skills to highlight in application packages and interviews.

Another way to use LinkedIn for LMI and career planning is by reverse engineering profile information. The main challenge students have is how to determine what type of entry-level position is suitable for their career immediately after graduation. Using informational interviews is one method to gain insight into a person’s career progression. However, they are time-consuming and limited to a small cross-section of professionals. LinkedIn profiles can provide similar information (depending on the details included) to that gained in an informational interview but on a much larger scale.

Students investigating possible career paths can search LinkedIn by degree type. For example, a student wondering about the career progression offered by a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in psychology can search for this degree type. Results will show all LinkedIn members that have indicated this degree in their profile. Depending on how complete the profile is, students will be able to determine the first position the degree holder obtained and observe their career progression following graduation. If a student were to review 50 BA in psychology profiles, a pattern would emerge for education, additional training, job titles, and potential employer organizations.

Students could reflect on this information in terms of interests, academic planning, and future career roles for this degree type.

Watch the following video by Career TV (2022) for an example of how to use LinkedIn for LMI.

Reverse Engineer LinkedIn for Labour Market Information
(<https://youtu.be/IW08f6D33aE?si=FEcB5UA21HXFIgeq>) [1:56 min] by Career TV (2022)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=125#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Reverse Engineer LinkedIn for Labour Market Information (<https://youtu.be/IW08f6D33aE?si=FEcB5UA21HXFIgeq>)



Using LMI for Skill Gap Reflection

The following figure displays a snapshot of financial auditors and accountant job postings in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, highlighting key employer demand and required skills. The data was sourced from Worxica (2025) This visual provides valuable insight into regional labour market trends and the specific qualifications sought by employers in the accounting field.

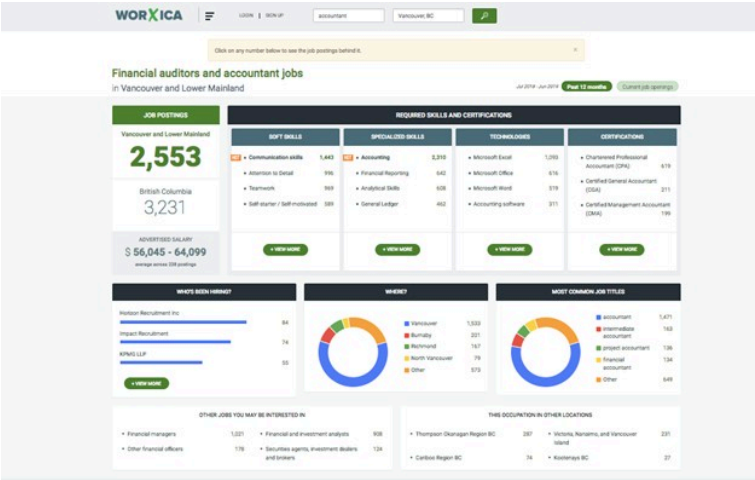


Figure 3.4 Financial auditors and accountant jobs in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland (Worxica, 2015) Used with permission

Using Artificial Intelligence for LMI

Artificial intelligence (AI) can significantly enhance career planning for university students by leveraging labor market information (LMI). AI-powered tools can analyze vast datasets to identify emerging job trends, in-demand skills, and industry needs. For instance, AI algorithms can process LMI to forecast job market shifts, helping students choose courses and majors aligned with

future opportunities. Platforms like LinkedIn utilize AI to suggest relevant job openings and professional connections based on a student's academic background and career interests.

AI programs, such as ChatGPT 4 Omni, can also personalize career advice by analyzing individual student profiles, including academic performance, interests, and extracurricular activities. This tailored guidance can highlight potential career paths and suggest specific skills to develop to increase employability. Additionally, AI-driven resume builders can optimize resumes by matching them with job descriptions, ensuring students emphasize the most pertinent skills and experiences.

Moreover, AI can facilitate virtual career counseling through chatbots and virtual advisors, providing real-time feedback and resources. These tools can simulate interview scenarios, offer tips, and even predict interview questions based on the job role. By integrating AI with LMI, university students can make informed decisions, proactively addressing skill gaps and aligning their education with labor market demands. Practice using AI for a personal labour market analysis with the prompts in Exercise 3.3 (#exercise 3-3).

Industry 4.0 & the Labour Market

Industry 4.0 refers to a significant transition in the digitization of manufacturing. However, the transition goes far beyond the world of manufacturing. The expansion of Industry 4.0 will be the digitization of work in many roles and sectors.

Technological changes in labour markets are nothing new, but questions remain:

1. Does increasing digitization technology (tech) and automation

always lead to job loss?

2. Will artificial intelligence (AI) cause the removal of the human element in the labour market?

The 19th century economist Frédéric Bastiat (1850) wrote on the concept of what is seen and what is not seen. To paraphrase, he was concerned that society would lose if things of value were “uselessly destroyed” (i.e., jobs for the purpose of this chapter). Bastiat discussed how the loss of labour in an economy can be a destructive force without a thoughtful approach to the consequences. Bastiat suggested that machines do not take away jobs; they free people up for different jobs.

How Will Technology & AI Affect the Labour Market?

Will AI take over the majority of jobs in the world? Some predict it will, while others predict it will not. The latter includes the Fraser Institute (Globerman, 2019), Carden (2017), and the World Economic Forum (2022). However, Facebook (now Meta) CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, and Tesla founder, Elon Musk (Clifford, 2017), have been vocal in their belief that AI—systems that perform a single task—or artificial general intelligence (AGI)—systems that perform a range of tasks and solve a range of problems—will result in unemployment. After all, AI and AGI can be programmed to complete any task a human can.

Yet there is evidence that technology does not reduce labour market opportunities. According to the World Economic Forum (2022), despite 80% of labour having been on farms in the 1800s, as labour markets have expanded over the past 200 years, only 2% of jobs are now related to farming in Canada. However, the economy added over 700,000 jobs in Fall 2021 and Winter 2022

(Statistics Canada, 2022). Of course, the reality is that technology has already had a significant impact on labour markets, leading to growth in many occupations—particularly in computer science and digital fields. The Labour Market Information Council (2023) reports that demand for digital skills is rising across a broad range of industries, as reflected in online job postings.

But what are the ramifications for the broader labour market over the next 50 years? As technology continues to evolve, understanding these long-term effects remains a critical question for educators, policymakers, and job seekers alike.

Planning Around Technology & AI

Students are advised to be cautious about making all their career decisions based on possible future work increases. Elements such as the COVID-19 pandemic and 2008 global recession can disrupt even the best LMI predictions. The chaos theory of careers teaches that the farther a prediction extends, the more probability that the prediction may collapse. However, the world is experiencing a massive technical shift as it moves into the third decade of the millennium.

We will briefly explore the possible effects on labour markets, job losses, and job gains.

Potential Job Losses & Gains

Mokyr (2018) argues that tech advancement does not mean job loss. Certainly, the industrial revolution replaced some roles. The tech change, however, created new sectors and increased employment: mechanics to fix machines, supervisors to coordinate mass-

production factories, financial workers to manage the increased globalization of goods, and so on. What seems consistent is that it is easy to replace lower skill jobs with technological change, and harder to replace jobs that complement technology. Roles that require empathy, creativity, and initiative will still be required (Carden et al., 2019).

What jobs could be replaced? Tech leaders like Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Bill Gates have warned that artificial intelligence (AI) could replace up to half of all current jobs, leading to widespread labour market disruption. Musk recently predicted that AI will eventually eliminate the need for human employment altogether, advocating for a future with a “universal high income” (Dumas, 2024). In a Wall Street Journal article, Carl Benedikt Frey (2019) argues that AI will likely destroy more jobs than it creates, particularly in sectors that rely on routine tasks and do not require advanced skills or training. Dr. Brian Goldman (2019)—host of CBC’s White Coat, Black Art—echoed this sentiment in a talk at Thompson Rivers University, suggesting that the future of work will increasingly favour roles centered on thinking rather than doing.

Looking Forward With LMI

So, what can LMI tell us about the future of jobs? A review of employment records over the past 10 years suggests that, arguably, this is the period when tech and AI have been increasing at a rapid pace. However, the Labour Market Information Council (2018) reports a steady increase in the labour market, not a decline. The US is entering its 12th year of steady job increases—regardless of the advent of AI and AGI.

The 2022 World Economic Forum report predicts 50% of current rote-type labour can be replaced by machines and AI. In some fields, this is already happening. The food delivery and restaurant

industry have been forever altered due to apps like DoorDash and SkipTheDishes. There are reports that law firms may need fewer junior lawyers as there are AI programs that can search case law and prepare case arguments. Typically, it was the law articling students and new lawyers that conducted this work.

The key consideration for students when using LMI for decision-making and determining the future of technology is to reflect on this question: Can a mechanical or AI application be developed that would replace my core skill set?

Conclusion

At the time of this writing, every person is feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift and movement of labour is occurring on a vast scale. There has been job losses in some sectors like the tourism sector, typically made up of youth and lower-wage employees, but also job gains in the finance, supply chain management, and IT sectors. The pandemic highlighted sectors that were more vulnerable to labour market shifts and the use of technology. Students using LMI information as part of their career plans will be better prepared if they stay current with the shifts in the job market economy. LMI research alerts students and new graduates to potential shifts and disruptions in the job market. Students who pay attention to LMI will be better able to cope with the ultimate shifts in their chosen occupation. Prepared students will not say, “I didn’t see that coming” following layoffs due to tech or other factors.

Exercises

Exercise 3.1 Could You Be Replaced by an App?

Based on your LMI research from this chapter into your future career (going back to the Worxica.com platform discussed in Using LMI for Skill Gap Reflection (#skillgapreflect)), reflect on which skills from jobs posted in your future career choice over the past months could be replaced by realistic AI or AGI applications.

Consider the following questions:

1. What elements of your role could be performed by an app?
2. How easily could this app be developed?
3. What might this app be called?

Exercise 3.2

Career SWOT: Identify External Opportunities & Career Gaps

SWOT is a key tool in the strategic planning process that can also be applied to career planning.

This tool is an LMI marketing analysis using the SWOT technique. A SWOT analysis focuses on internal and external environments, examining strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment and opportunities and threats in the external environment.

Imagine your SWOT analysis to be structured like Table 3.1 (#tab3-1) and 3.2 (#tab3-2). To construct your SWOT analysis to set a course for your career planning, examine your current situation. Using LMI:

1. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
2. How can you capitalize on your strengths and overcome your weaknesses?
3. Are there career gaps that could be addressed before graduation?
4. What are the external opportunities and threats in your chosen career field?

Table 3.1: SWOT Analysis — Internal Strengths & Weaknesses

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses
<p>Internal positive aspects that are under your control on which you plan to capitalize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience • Education, including value added features • Strong technical knowledge within your field (e.g., hardware, software, and programming languages) • Specific transferable skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, and leadership) • Personal characteristics (e.g., strong work ethic, self-discipline, ability to work under pressure, creativity, optimism, and high energy level) • Good contacts, successful networking, and interaction with professional organizations 	<p>Internal negative aspects that are under your control on which you plan to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of work experience or experiential learning (e.g., co-op or volunteer projects) • Low grade point average (GPA) or wrong major • Lack of goals, self knowledge, and specific job knowledge • Weak technical knowledge • Weak transferable skills (e.g., leadership, interpersonal communication, and teamwork) • Weak job-hunting skills • Negative personal characteristics (e.g., poor work ethic, lack of discipline, lack of motivation, indecisiveness, shyness, and being too emotional)

Table 3.2: SWOT Analysis — External Opportunities & Threats

External Opportunities	External Threats
<p>Positive external conditions that you do not control that you can plan to take advantage of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive trends in your field that will create more jobs (e.g., post-pandemic growth, globalization, and technological advances) • Opportunities you could have in the field by enhancing your education • The field is particularly in need of your set of skills • Opportunities you could have through greater self-knowledge and more specific job goals • Opportunities for advancement in your field • Opportunities for professional development in your field 	<p>Negative external conditions that you do not control, but the effects of which you may be able to lessen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative trends in your field that diminish jobs (e.g., downsizing and obsolescence) • Competition from your cohort of college graduates • Competitors with superior skills, experience, and knowledge • Competitors with better job hunting skills than you • Competitors who went to schools with better reputations • Obstacles in your way, (e.g., lack of the advanced education/ training you need to take advantage of opportunities)

Exercise 3.3

Job Market Trends Analysis

Objective: Use AI to analyze current job market trends and forecast future opportunities.

Instructions:

1. Initial Research:

- **Ask ChatGPT:** “What are the current job market trends in [your field/major]?”
- Gather insights on high-demand roles, industries experiencing growth, and emerging skills.

2. Trend Comparison:

- **Inquire Further:** “How have these trends changed over the past five years?”
- Compare the past and present data to understand the evolution of the job market.

3. Future Projections:

- **Ask ChatGPT:** “What are the predicted job market trends in [your field/major] for the next five years?”
- Summarize the findings and reflect on how these projections can influence your career

planning.

Outcome: Understand the trajectory of your chosen field and anticipate future opportunities.

Exercise 3.4

Skill Demand Identification

Objective: Identify the most sought-after skills in your desired career field using AI insights.

Instructions:

1. Current Skills Demand:

- **Ask ChatGPT:** “What are the top skills employers are looking for in [your field/major]?”
- Note the skills frequently mentioned and compare them with your current skill set.

2. Gap Analysis:

- **Inquire Further:** “What skills are emerging as crucial for future professionals in [your field/major]?”
- Identify any skill gaps you have and plan to acquire these skills.

3. Action Plan:

- **Ask ChatGPT:** “What resources or courses can help me develop these high-demand skills?”
- Create a list of recommended resources and outline a plan to enhance your skills.

Outcome: Develop a targeted plan to acquire in-demand skills and improve employability.

Further Reading

- Association of Industry Sector Councils (<https://www.aisc.ca/>)
- British Columbia Labour Market Online (<https://www.labourmarketonline.com/>)
- Business Council of Canada (<https://www.thebusinesscouncil.ca/>)
- Fraser Institute (<https://web.archive.org/web/20241114164930/https://www.fraserinstitute.org/tags/canadian-labour-market>) – Articles on the Canadian labour market.
- Glassdoor (<https://www.glassdoor.ca/index.htm>)
- Labour Market Information Labour Market Information Council (LMIC) (<https://lmic-cimt.ca/>)
- Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey (LFS) (<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3701>)
- World Economic Forum 2022 (<https://www.weforum.org/meetings/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2022/>)
- WorkBC (<https://www.workbc.ca/>) – Research the Labour Market: This platform offers insights into BC's economy, industry profiles, regional analyses, and the 10-year employment outlook. It is a valuable resource for understanding current trends and future projections in the province's

labour market.

- Worxica (<http://worxica.com/>)

Media Attributions

- **Figure 3.1** “Introducing: Generation Z” (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200808003220/https://www.engage.net/introducing-generation-z/#.Xy3yl3bPID8>)” by Mariana von Jörg (2017), via En Garde, is used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>) license.
- **Figure 3.2** “Men and women sitting and standing while staring at laptop (<https://unsplash.com/photos/men-and-women-sitting-and-standing-while-staring-at-laptop-p74ndnYWR4>)” by Windows (2019), via Unsplash, is used under the Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com/license>) license.
- **Figure 3.3** “What matters to Canadian youth?” (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019046-eng.htm>)” by Statistics Canada (2019) is used under the Statistics Canada Open Licence (<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/reference/licence>).
- **Figure 3.4** “Financial Auditors and Accountant Jobs in Vancouver and Lower Mainland (<https://worxica.com/financial-auditors-and-accountants-jobs-vancouver-bc>)” by Worxica (2019) is used with permission.

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Worxica. (n.d.). Home. <http://worxica.com/> (<http://worxica.com/>)

Long Descriptions

Figure 3.1 Long Description: According to Mariana von Jörg (2017) at Engarde, “Digital Natives” born after 1995:

- express themselves with their own style,
- tend to travel more,
- demand 24-hour access,
- [were] born to swipe,
- [use] video messages more than texting, and
- [are] masters of social media.

[Return to Figure 3.1 (#fig3-1)]

Figure 3.3 Long Description:

What matters to Canadian Youth? At the 2019 Canada Youth Summit in Ottawa, we asked youth participants “What do you want to know about your generation?” We compiled data on the topics of most interest:

Youth are highly diverse: In 2016, 27% of youth identified as members of a visible minority group.

Percentage of persons who belong to a visible minority group:

- **Age 15 to 30:** 1996, 13%; 2016, 27%
- **Age 65 or older:** 1996, 6%; 2016, 13%

From 2006 to 2016, the number of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit youth increased by 39%. 40% of Canadian youth are first or second generation immigrants.

Youth are technology users: Nearly 100% of youth use the Internet on a daily basis or own their own smartphone; of these, 93% use social networking sites. Technology also brings new challenges. 17% of youth said they were cyberbullied or cyberstalked in the past 5 years.

Youth are socially engaged: 67% are members of a group, organization, or association. 48% of youth volunteer, and 71% said that they gave to a charitable or non-profit organization.

Youth are educated: In 2017, 52.1% of young men and 70.2 % of young women had a college certificate or diploma or Bachelor's degree.

[Return to Figure 3 (#fig3-3)]

SECTION II

REFLECTION & PLANNING

4. Career Planning & Goal Setting

SARAH GIBSON

Introduction

A successful career plan emerges through authentic self-reflection, personal and professional skill assessments, and a diligently researched labour market. Planning your career path with evidenced-based information and personal excavation can be overwhelming; however, when tackled with a positive mindset and a spirit of curiosity, ideas, and inspiration, it will unearth a plan geared towards true success. Additionally, developing relationships and professional contacts within a specific profession or sector will allow you to leap into action when opportunities arise. Your preparation, focused efforts, and initiative will form the foundation of your career achievements.

People will often describe a successful person as “lucky.” However, we believe luck can best be summed up by the following quote.

“Luck is preparation meeting opportunity. If you hadn’t been prepared when the opportunity came along, you wouldn’t have been ‘lucky.’” – Oprah Winfrey (2010, March 19)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Reflect on your skills, strengths, interests, and values to explore potential career pathways.
- Consider current labour market information to inform your job search and career progression.
- Create specific, measurable, and achievable action items to prepare short-term and long-term goals.
- Identify experiential opportunities to develop strengths and address knowledge, skill, or experience gaps.

What Is a Career Path & What Does It Look Like?

There have been significant shifts in navigating career decision making over the past century. Career paths typically evolve based on the cultural and social norms and the labour market needs of specific times in history. Generational and labour market changes have had a major impact on the types of opportunities available to job seekers. An aging population alters the demographics of the workforce, which includes the availability of positions. Labour market changes include increased access to higher education,

advancing technologies, and emerging industries and skill requirements within various sectors.

As the popular phrase “climbing the corporate ladder” clearly illustrates, a traditional career path would have appeared as a straight line with an upward trajectory involving clearly defined steps to advancement (Figure 4.1 (#fig4-1)). However, a modern successful career plan can appear as a complex, organic web of interconnected decisions and outcomes related to job roles and responsibilities. It may look like a spiral staircase or a corkscrew with lateral moves involving a cross-section of different employers, employment types, or even industry sectors (Figure 4.2 (#fig4-2)).

In this evolving labour market, focusing on your strengths, skills, and passions will lead you on a career trajectory that may appear different from how your parents or grandparents managed their lives and careers.



Figure 4.1 Traditional career path (Peggy_Marco, 2015) Pixabay Content License (<https://pixabay.com/service/license-summary/>)



Figure 4.2 Modern career path (Peggy_Marco, 2015) Pixabay Content License (<https://pixabay.com/service/license-summary/>)

Decision-Making Strategies

Now that you have completed a series of personal and professional skill-assessment exercises in the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter, you can reflect on your unique qualities, abilities, passions, and interests to begin the process of strategic career planning. As you identify your strengths and interests, the beginnings of a career path process begin to emerge. Combining this reflective practice with accurate, source-based labour market information will inform your road map to career success, allowing you to identify and articulate potential career pathways.

Other strategies to begin your reflective process may include answering the following questions:

1. What are my favorite academic courses?
2. What courses or subjects have I excelled at academically?
3. What job or volunteer roles have I enjoyed the most? Why?

Choosing a Direction

With your personal and professional strengths and interests identified, it is time to explore occupations and job opportunities across different sectors. Some credible labour market information sources in Canada are:

- Worxica (<https://worxica.com/>)
- Employment and Social Development Canada (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/opportunities.html>)
- WorkBC (<https://www.workbc.ca/search-and-prepare-job/find-jobs#/job-search>)
- Statistics Canada's National Occupational Classification (<https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>)
- Glassdoor (<https://www.glassdoor.ca/index.htm>)

Gathering credible and timely labour market information will help you see where compelling job opportunities are and what skills employers are looking for to build their workforce. This information changes rapidly and depends on a variety of factors, such as the global and local economy, political and current events, and evolving technologies. Therefore, in-demand job opportunities will evolve, just as your interests and skill levels will change.

Student Insights: Tips for Success

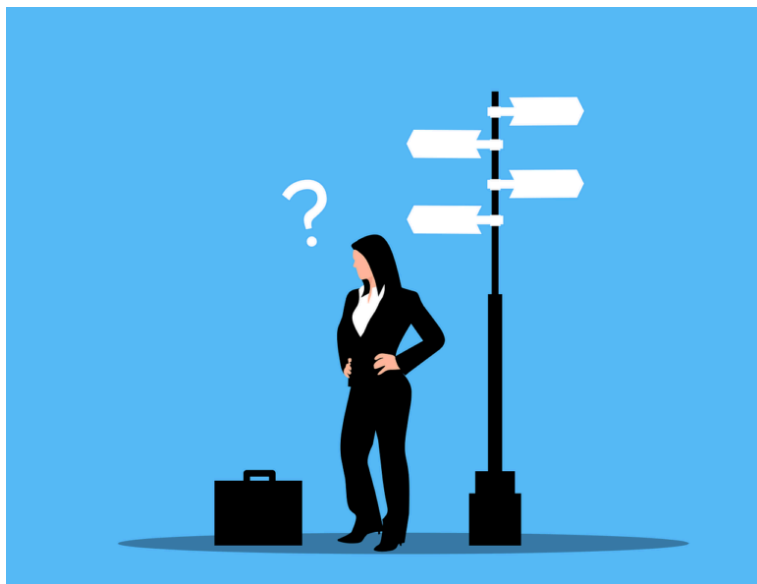


Figure 4.3 Career path choices (Mohamed_hassan, 2021) Pixabay Content License (<https://pixabay.com/service/license-summary/>)

Past TRU co-op students have explained their career journeys and described how their experiences in the co-op program have influenced their career paths and led them to be successful. Their unique experiences have allowed them to reflect and provide advice to other co-op students in the midst of their career exploration.

Katelyn Zubak
TRU Bachelor of Business Administration

“The primary factors that have influenced my career path choices are my family, my work experience, and travelling. My dad is in business, so that’s how I initially became interested. I knew I didn’t want to be an entrepreneur like him, so I was first interested in marketing or human resources.

At university, I joined a marketing club in my first year and found it was not my interest. Around that time, I also started working at a bank, which sparked my interest in finance and accounting. I decided to join the co-op program, and I did a finance co-op at the bank. Again, I found this wasn’t the exact fit for me. I had classes for a semester and then went to study abroad in the UK. That’s when I thought about the supply chain. I realized how interconnected we are globally and was fascinated by how one item manufactured in Europe somehow made it to my local grocery store. I declared my major and took some courses before starting a supply chain co-op at Hydro One.

It’s been an amazing experience, and I’m really happy. I’m so glad that I continued to try new things till I found the right fit for me. All three factors have had a major impact on my career

path, and it's been a great thing for me.” – Katelyn Zubak

Katelyn's three tips for students looking to secure a co-op position:

1. **Be Flexible and Adaptable:** “Don't get set on a specific career path or idea of what your career plan should look like. What you think at the beginning may not be the right choice for you, so don't let yourself get stuck in a box.”
2. **Be Open to New Opportunities:** “You never know what doors will open for you, so don't be afraid to take a chance and walk through them. You might just find something you love!”
3. **Try Different Career Paths:** “Trying a few different industries before settling in one can be helpful to figure out what you want and don't want. You also become more well-rounded and develop diverse skill sets.”

Kesha Temirgaliyev
TRU Bachelor of Tourism Management

“For me, as a professional trampoline gymnast, Cirque du Soleil was always on the horizon, but I never knew when it would happen. I first heard about this company when I was about 11 or 12 years old, and since then I have dreamed of getting into it. I watched a lot of videos, and when it happened, it was even better than I could have imagined. As many employees and circus performers say, once you get into this industry, you don’t want to leave it. And it’s true; now I want to connect my life with the circus.” – Kesha Temirgaliyev

Kesha recommends that students:

1. “Dream big.”
2. “Determine what you really love to do and what you are good at.”
3. “Be passionate about it and work hard to get your dream job. If you are following your passions, you can live more authentically, and not just be “working” for

a living.”

Emily Breiteneder
TRU Bachelor of Arts

Emily’s three pieces of advice to students in the co-op program:

1. “Be open and willing to take every opportunity that arises.”
2. “Reach out to people, build relationships, and ask for help or clarification as needed.”
3. “Be flexible to having plans or [when] circumstances change. That’s where the best lessons and experiences come from!”

Introduction to a Career Plan

Creating a career plan can be a very important “first step” to navigating your longer term career path. A well-thought-out career plan typically includes short-term and long-term goals, along with a list of resources and tools you will need to succeed. The remainder

of this chapter will focus on the steps to take while developing a career plan.

Step 1: Identifying Needs

By now, you have reviewed the chapters on self-assessments and labour market research, and you probably have a good idea of which careers are “growth” careers and which may be declining. When identifying career needs, think of the end state. What do you hope to become in your career? Do you want to be a doctor? A nurse? A scientist? An accountant? Start by finding a job description that aligns with your future career goals and aim for a career that might be 10–15 years from the start of your career.

Now, search for an entry-level job description that could lead to a senior-level job description. For example, if I wanted to be a teacher in the secondary school system, the entry-level job description might be for working as a teaching assistant or at a summer camp for youth. Or, if I wanted to be a construction superintendent at a senior level, an entry-level job might be a site labourer.

Once you have job descriptions selected, identify the following details:

- Qualifications required
- Soft skills
- Hard skills
- Educational requirements
- Key competencies

With this information, you’ll be able to complete the chart in Exercise 4.1 (#exercise4-1). This exercise will enable you to break down a job description to assess the skills and requirements needed for a career.

Exercise 4.1

Identify Career Skills and Requirements in a Job Description

1. Find three job descriptions: one entry-level, one mid-level, and one senior-level.
2. For each job description, pull out the details listed in column one and fill in the chart (Table 4.1 (#tab4-1)). A fillable PDF version is provided after this exercise.

Table 4.1: Identifying Career Skills and Requirements – Listing the Job Specifications for Different Position Levels

Job Requirements	Entry-Level	Mid-Level	Senior-Level
Job Title	–	–	–
Experience	–	–	–
Key Competencies	–	–	–
Soft Skills	–	–	–
Hard Skills	–	–	–
Certifications	–	–	–
Key Qualifications	–	–	–

3. Take a moment to reflect on the difference between each job level. Now that you have a better understanding of what is required for the career you

want, it will be easier to create goals associated with your career plan.

Chapter-4-Fillable-Tables (includes Table 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)
(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Chapter-4-Fillable-Tables.pdf>) — Students can fill out this form and hand it in to the instructor.

Step 2: Goal Pre-assessment

With increased knowledge of requirements for entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level positions, you can now assess the strength of your skills in relation to the entry-level job description.

Exercise 4.2 (#exercise4-2) assists you with the next step in the career-planning process; it is a goal pre-assessment where you review key skills for an entry-level job and evaluate your current skill levels in these areas.

Exercise 4.2

Goal Pre-Assessment

1. Using the entry-level job description, fill in the soft skills, hard skills, education, certifications, and work experience needed for that job description.
2. Assess your skills concerning the job description and identify ways to improve these skills in Table 4.2 (#tab4-2).
3. Take a moment to reflect on your skills assessment and identify two or three of your lowest skills.
4. If you could develop those skills further, what steps could you take? How could you advance those skills?
5. Now, reflect on your top three strengths. How could you advance those skills even further?

Table 4.2: Goal Preassessment — Skill Assessment for Career of Interest

Career Goal (e.g., I want to be an accountant)	Current Assessment of Skills	Ways to Improve	Action Items or Resources
Soft Skills (e.g., verbal communication)	4/10	Practice speaking professionally	Join Toastmasters
Hard Skills	–	–	–
Education	–	–	–
Certifications/ Training	–	–	–
Work Experience	–	–	–

Step 3: Creating a Career Plan

Ideally, a career plan is a structured set of short-term and long-term goals that create a “game plan” of how to advance your skills so that you can enter the career of your dreams. A strong career plan also outlines the resources needed to achieve your goals. Career planning is an activity you may want to complete yearly because your short-term goals will continually change. With this in mind, let’s complete Exercise 4.3 (#exercise4-3) and create a career plan.

Exercise 4.3

Creating a Career Plan

Review Exercises 4.1 (#exercise4-1) and 4.2 (#exercise4-2) and create the following short-term goals in Table 4.3 (#tab4-3).

Table 4.3: Creating a Career Plan — Listing Short-Term Goals and Resources Required

Short-Term Goal (within 3-6 months)	Resources Needed
Goal 1	Example from accounting (see Table 4.2 (#tab4.2)): To develop my knowledge of taxation, I will take ACCT 3221: Income Taxation 1, and two more taxation courses at University.
Goal 2	–
Goal 2	–

Congratulations! You have now created a road map for your career. Starting now, you will want to keep a copy of your career plan easily accessible to remind you of the goals you have committed to working on.

Conclusion

Career planning and goal setting is a lifelong endeavor. It is certainly not a “one-and-done” experience. Your goals and plans can shift as you gain more skills and abilities and evolve personally and professionally. To build and maintain lifelong career success, the personal reflective processes, ongoing skill development, and timely labour market information identified in this chapter (and previous chapters) will continue to be important influences on your career journey. The ability to navigate the dynamic interplay of labour market fluctuations with your evolving career will be essential for you to possess innate flexibility and to pivot and change with the times (i.e., the evolving job market) for lifelong career success.

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5. Volunteering

BRAD HARASYMCHUK

Introduction

Volunteering has many benefits to you and your community. Most likely, you have already volunteered your time and helped others on many occasions and in many different ways. What you may not be aware of are the many skills that you may develop while volunteering.

This chapter will give you an overview of the what, why, and how to volunteer. It will also provide a list of skills you can develop—but it will be your responsibility to prioritize the skills you would like to develop. This chapter concludes with an activity that allows you to create a volunteer action plan (#actionplan) for engaging in your next volunteer experience. Let's get started!

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize that volunteering can enhance your career development.
- Identify skills associated with volunteering.
- Develop a volunteer action plan to engage with your next volunteer experience.

What Is Volunteering?

Volunteering can be broken down into two categories: managed and unmanaged. As Dingle et al. (2001) explain, managed volunteering takes place in public, private, and non-profit organizations, while unmanaged volunteering is spontaneous and sporadic help between members of the public, family, or friends. This chapter will focus more on managed volunteer experiences, specifically within non-profit organizations. However, this should not take away from your efforts in seeking out unmanaged volunteering experiences in your community.

Volunteering has been defined as “unpaid help, in the form of time, service or skills, through an organization or group, and carried out willingly without coercion” (Oppenheimer, 2008, p. 6). It is really

about you going out and helping at a non-profit organization. See Appendix A: Places to Volunteer in Your Community ([#back-matter-appendix-a-places-to-volunteer-in-your-community](#)) for a list of community organizations in which you may be able to volunteer.

Communities rely on volunteers to serve and help. Canadians volunteer over 1.9 billion hours a year, which is significant (Statistics Canada, 2016). The Conference Board of Canada (2018) estimates that volunteering would add nearly 56 billion dollars to Canada's Gross Domestic Product in 2017 alone, which would account for 2.6% of Canada's economic activity. This truly shows the impact of volunteering, but why do people give their time to help out in their communities? Let's explore some reasons why so many Canadians volunteer.

Why Volunteer?

There are multiple reasons why people volunteer. Some people volunteer solely to benefit other people or a cause, which is known as altruism. Others volunteer to meet people, socialize, and feel good about doing something good for their community, which may be done for personal well-being. A practical reason to volunteer is to gain valuable skills to use both personally and professionally towards your career development. Table 5.1 ([#tab5-1](#)), created by Smith et al. (2010), outlines the top motivations for students who volunteer. The following sections will elaborate on these and other reasons to get out there and volunteer.

Table 5.1: Motivations to Volunteer

Motivational Item	Motivation for Volunteering	Regular Volunteers (%)	Occasional Volunteers (%)	Non-Volunteers (%)
To post of CV (resume) when applying for a job (**)	Instrumental/ Career-Related	61.5	65.1	70.6
To put on CV (resume) for admission to higher education (**)	Instrumental/ Career-Related	58.0	61.5	67.0
To make new contacts that might help a business career (**)	Instrumental/ Career-Related	57.7	56.5	62.0
To help one get a foot in the door for paid employment (N.S.)	Instrumental/ Career-Related	58.2	57.6	60.7
It is important to help others (**)	Altruistic/ Value-Driven	90.2	85.7	79.2
To work for a cause that is important (**)	Altruistic/ Value-Driven	87.8	84.0	78.3
Makes one feel better (*)	Altruistic/ Value-Driven	75.4	71.6	68.0
Volunteering gives one a new perspective (**)	Altruistic/ Value-Driven	79.0	72.9	64.3

To learn about the cause (**)	Altruistic/ Value-Driven	63.7	57.1	55.9
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** Significant at the 0.01 level; * Significant at the 0.05 level; N.S. Not significant.

Note. Volunteers: Why do you volunteer? Non-Volunteers: Why do you think people volunteer? Percentage of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing. (Smith et al., 2010). Adapted and used under a CC BY 3.0 (<https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-09-2013-0111>) license [Adapted: Recreated for this format and part of original table removed.]

Altruism & Empathy

Altruism is a commendable reason to volunteer with organizations. “Altruism refers to helping others when there is little or no perceived potential for a direct, explicit reward to the self” (Carlo et al., 2003, p. 113). The primary focus is on the ‘other,’ whether it be a human, animal, or social cause. As shown in Table 5.1 (#tab5-1), the number one motivation for students to volunteer was to “help others.” This is a true altruistic endeavor, but it does not mean it is the only reason to volunteer. Let’s look at increasing our well-being as a motivation for volunteering.

Personal Well-Being

Research has shown that prosocial activities, including volunteering, contribute to the constructs found within well-being (Li & Ferraro, 2005; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). Volunteer experiences offer a space for you to develop your well-being, but this can be different for each individual, as personal well-being means different things to different people.

Thoits and Hewitt (2001) found that volunteering enhances well-being in six areas:

1. Happiness
2. Life satisfaction
3. Self-esteem
4. Sense of control over life
5. Physical health
6. Overcoming depression

Well-being seems like a valid reason to volunteer, but be aware that taking on too many responsibilities, including volunteering, can cause you to become over-extended, which can actually lead to being unwell. So, if you can enhance your well-being while volunteering, what else can you gain while helping in your community? Let's take a look at developing new skills while volunteering.

Skill Development

Altruism and enhancing your well-being are compelling reasons to volunteer, but focusing on skill development can lead to learning that transcends other areas in your life. It can be as easy as picking a skill and intentionally focusing on developing that skill while volunteering.

For example, maybe you want to focus on teamwork. While volunteering, you may want to ask questions to some team members about how they work together or whether they follow a particular theory or philosophy of teamwork. You may want to think about how ideas around teamwork differ or are similar to how you work as part of a team.

These are only examples, but the most important aspect of skill

development is being intentional about building a skill and focusing on it throughout your volunteering experience.

There are many skills you can develop as a volunteer. The following list includes 19 skills that young people reported developing while volunteering (Oldfield, 2006):

- Confidence
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Relationship management
- Understanding society
- Self-management
- Work preparation
- Active listening
- Leadership
- Taking responsibility
- Improved learning
- Decision-making
- Understanding diversity
- Self-awareness
- Problem-solving
- Rights and responsibilities
- Planning
- Negotiation
- Budgeting

See Career Planning and Goal Setting ([#chapter-career-planning-and-goal-setting](#)) for more information on skill development.

Networking

Another useful skill to develop while volunteering is networking. Networking can be defined as a “goal-directed behavior that occurs both inside and outside of an organization, focused on creating, cultivating, and utilizing interpersonal relationships” (Gibson et al., 2014, p. 146). Also, see Job Search Strategies ([#chapter-job-search-strategies](#)) for more information on networking.

When volunteering, you have the opportunity to create relationships with other volunteers. You likely already have a commonality with these people in that you are volunteering for the same organization. You never know who you are volunteering with; they could be your next employer or somebody who can write you a valuable reference letter. Be aware of who you are volunteering

with, but do not be presumptuous with what you want. It takes time to build relationships.

Now that you have at least three reasons to volunteer, let's look at how to find that next volunteer experience.

How to Volunteer?

The following section will not only help you find the right volunteer experience, but it will also help you get the most out of your experience. (If you require accommodations for your volunteer experience due to a disability or health condition, see Experience More Access ([#chapter-experience-more-access](#)) for information on how to navigate the process.) After reading this section, check out the volunteer action plan ([#actionplan](#)), which will help you during your volunteer experience.

Finding the Right Experience

The following is a quick, step-by-step guide to help you find your next volunteer experience.

1. Find a Volunteer Organization With Which You Share Common Interests

It is important to think about the skills you already possess and your interests to find an organization that will be a good “fit” for you. This will keep you engaged and encourage you to continue your work with the organization. For example, if you are interested in animals,

you may want to contact the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

2. Look Online or Talk With Friends & Family to Find Opportunities

You will find many volunteer opportunities online, such as Volunteer Canada (<https://volunteer.ca/>) (n.d.), or check with your local volunteer centre, which can be found in most communities. Also, check with family and friends about any opportunities they may know about in your community. See Appendix A: Places to Volunteer in Your Community ([#back-matter-appendix-a-places-to-volunteer-in-your-community](#)) for a list of community organizations you may want to volunteer with in your own community.

3. Pick an Organization That Will Help You Develop New Skills

You may bring many skills to an organization, but be mindful of the skills that you may develop there. Many organizations offer training and professional development for their volunteers.

4. Manage Your Time

It is important that you are able to manage all the responsibilities in your life. Although volunteer work is unpaid, it requires the same commitment as a job or class. Volunteer organizations rely heavily on their volunteers. Be realistic about how much time you have

to volunteer and try not to overcommit. See [Preparing for Your First Professional Position \(#chapter-preparing-for-your-first-professional-position\)](#) for more information on time management.

5. Be Aware of On-Site Training & Requests for Criminal Record Checks

Some volunteer organizations will offer on-site training. Be sure to take advantage of any required training offered and be willing to take more training if needed. You may also gain certification for certain training. This will help build your skills and develop your resume.

Some organizations will request a criminal record check before you can volunteer. This is normally done if you are working with “at-risk” populations, including children or vulnerable adults. In Canada, every province is different, so be sure to look into this well in advance, as some criminal record checks can take several weeks to complete. There may also be a fee associated with criminal record checks, although some volunteer organizations will pay this fee for you. Be sure to find this out before you start the criminal record check process.

Getting the Most From Your Experience

Once you have found an organization that interests you, follow these steps to get the most from your experience.

1. Contact the Organization

The first contact with a volunteer organization is important! It is a time to ask any questions you may have, but also a time for the organization to find out about you. Some organizations expect you to contact them in person, phone, or email, while other organizations will have you fill out a questionnaire (possibly online). Each organization is different, so do not hesitate to contact as many organizations as you want until you find the right fit.

2. Expectations

Every volunteer experience will be different, but if you treat volunteering like a job or class, you will have more success. Always ask what is expected of you, and be sure to communicate what you can offer the organization in terms of time and resources. Communication is key when working with organizations, as they rely on you to be a committed member of their team.

3. On the Day

Be on time! If you are unable to volunteer for some reason, contact your volunteer coordinator or supervisor in advance and let them know. They are relying on you to help on the day. When volunteering, if you do not know something, ask for help. And finally, have fun and remember to focus on developing your skills and network!

4. Receiving Feedback

It is really important to ask your volunteer coordinator or supervisor for any feedback they have about your involvement in their organization. This will help you the next time you are volunteering. It is also important to take some time and reflect on your experience, which will be discussed in the next section.

Taking Your Volunteer Experience to the Next Level Through Reflection

The following section will outline using reflective practice alongside your volunteering experience. Reflection accentuates your experiences and allows for more meaningful learning to take place. Let's see how reflection can become part of your next volunteer experience.

What Is Reflection?

As one of the pioneers of reflective practice, John Dewey (1933) defined reflection as, “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (p. 9). In your volunteer experience, this means being intentional about the skills you are developing and reflecting upon your experience once you are done. This process is what David Kolb (1984) developed and named the “Cycle for Experiential Learning,” as outlined in Figure 5.1 (#fig5-1).

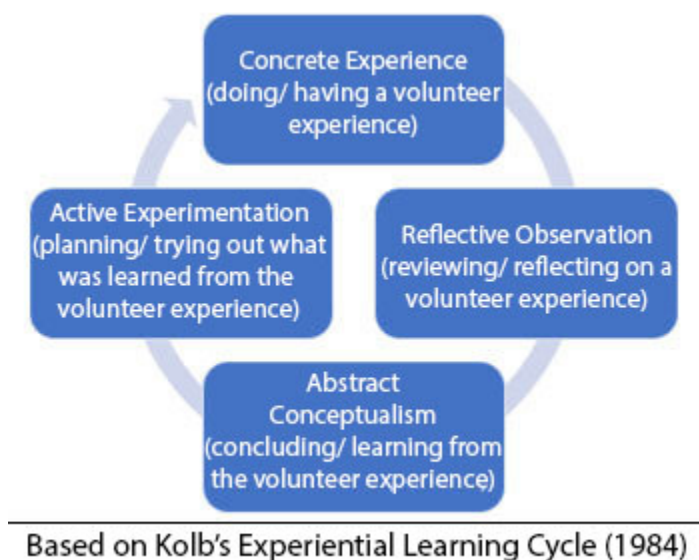


Figure 5.1 Experiential learning cycle (Harasymchuk, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) [Long Description (#fig5-1longdesc)]

When the experiential cycle is modeled through a volunteer experience, the **concrete experience** is the actual volunteer experience.

When you move into **reflective observation**, you need to be reflective about your experience. Reflection is not about describing your experience but more about unpacking the learning that came from the experience. It is engaging with the sensory experiences that come from volunteering or asking critical questions about your experience. Check out Section 3 of the volunteer action plan (#actionplan) for examples of critical reflective questions.

The next stage in the model is **abstract conceptualization**; this is the new learning that takes place through your reflective practice, which can include new skills, ideas, or concepts. This is why it

is imperative that you are intentional about the skills you are developing.

The final stage is **active experimentation**, whereby you take your new learning and adapt it to a new experience. This may be taking a new skill you learned and transferring that skill to your classes, work, or next volunteer experience.

The cycle is continuous and can be used with any experiential learning opportunities. Reflection is truly where your learning comes full circle. Let's now look at how you can take all this information and create a plan for your next volunteer experience.

Volunteer Action Plan

The volunteer action plan provided below is meant to be used before, during, and after your volunteer experience.

Section 1 of the plan outlines the demographic information that may be needed when selecting a volunteer experience, including when, where, and who you are volunteering with. It will allow you to keep track of any email addresses or phone numbers you may need.

Section 2 outlines the reasons you are volunteering and any skills you would like to develop while engaging in your experience. This is where you need to be intentional about the learning that can take place. This may change once you are involved in your volunteer experience, as you may not be able to work on a skill that you have outlined or your experience may not accommodate that learning at that time. So, be flexible, and choose another skill that may be more appropriate.

Section 3 is meant to be completed after your volunteering experience. This is the descriptive and reflective component to your

plan. Take a bit of time and describe your experience: What were some of your duties, and what did you accomplish? Finally, answer as many of the reflective questions provided as you can. This is an important step in your learning. Get to the heart of the learning that has taken place, and be sure to be reflective.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Volunteer Action Plan Online Version
(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/volunteering/#h5p-10>)



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

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=289#h5p-10>
(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=289#h5p-10>)

This Volunteer-Activity-Plan (<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Volunteer-Activity-Plan.pdf>) is also available in PDF form.

Conclusion

Well done! You made it to the end and now have a better understanding of volunteering and its many components. The previous sections have taken you from the beginning of understanding volunteerism right through to finding an opportunity, creating a volunteer action plan, and finally reflecting upon your experiences. It is now up to you to take this information and put it into action. Go out and find that opportunity to help your community and build those valuable skills that you can use in your life.

Media Attributions

- **Figure 5.1** “Figure 4.1 Experiential Learning Cycle (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/volunteering/>)” [based on Kolb’s (1984) “Experiential Learning Cycle” in *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*] by Brad Harasymchuk (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) license.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 5.1 Long Description: The following four stages are presented in a circular format with one stage moving to the next then back to the first stage.

1. Concrete Experience (doing/having a volunteer experience)

2. Reflective Observation (reviewing/ reflecting on a volunteer experience)
3. Abstract Conceptualism (concluding/ learning form the volunteer experience)
4. Active Experimentation (planning/trying out what was learned from the volunteer experience)

[Return to Figure 5.1 (#fig5-1)]

SECTION III

BRANDING

6. Application Documents

NOAH ARNEY

Introduction

Until now, this book has focused on who you are (Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment)) and where you intend to go (Labour Market Information (#chapter-labour-market-information) and Career Planning & Goal Setting (#chapter-career-planning-and-goal-setting)). Now, we are going to look at what employers are looking for and how you can show them that you have it. The job application is often one of the more stressful aspects of career development.

When we talk about application documents, what we mean are resumes, CVs, cover letters, references, and portfolios. This chapter is not going to cover that last one, but it will:

- Explain the purpose of a resume, a CV, a cover letter, and references.
- Lay out a process for creating an effective resume and cover letter.
- Show you the difference between talking about your duties and talking about your experiences.

The resume and cover letter are distinct genres of business writing and are persuasive writing. That means that we can think of them in terms of genre conventions and the audience/purpose.

A convention is a way things are done in a genre. Think of it as the way that you know when reading a romance book that the main character will end up in a relationship at the end of the book; if

they did not, then it would not be a romance book. Just like any other genres, resumes and cover letters have specific conventions to follow, certain conventions that are optional but common, and changes that evolve over time. What this means is that the resume of today may not look like the resume of 20 years ago or like the resume in the next 20 years, but it will still be identifiable as a resume and serve the same purpose. In the same way that you adapt your essays to the genre conventions expected by your professors in various departments, you will need to adapt your resume based on the conventions of different industries and, sometimes, even different organizations.

The purpose of application documents is to move you from the application phase into the interview phase. That means that the audience is the hiring manager for the position you are applying for, and the documents need to be written for and targeted at that hiring manager. The best application packages present a narrative that shows how the applicant connects to the position and how well they might perform in the posted role.

Creating a tailored, well-polished, professional application package takes time, but it is worth it if you want to obtain that perfect job. This chapter will provide a step-by-step guide on how to select, create, and format a resume and cover letter that will help you secure an interview.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify the distinct purpose, structure, and conventions of an effective resume and cover letter.
- Use the key components and conventions for writing a resume and cover letter.
- Develop an effective and persuasive resume and cover letter that aligns your skills with a job description.

The Resume

Resumes are an important tool for securing employment, as they provide the employer with their first impression of you. You might be surprised what an employer can learn, or assume, about you based on only two pages! When your resume is well laid out, tailored to the position you are applying for, and properly explains your experience, it shows employers that your skills are aligned with the job description and that you are a great fit for their company and job opening.

The term “tailored” means you have created a resume specifically aimed at the job you are applying for. Many parts of your resume will

remain the same between applications, but proper tailoring ensures the employer sees what they are looking for or expecting. Many employers see generic resumes as evidence that you do not care about their specific position or organization.

Resumes are usually the first thing an employer looks at when “short listing” applicants. Because of this, it needs to be competitive. Tailoring your resume involves using industry-specific terminology so your resume speaks directly to the hiring committee or individual.

Two things to keep in mind when tailoring your resume:

1. Employers want to hire people who are enthusiastic about the organization and position being advertised.
2. A tailored resume shows a company that you care about working for them.

One way to develop your tailored resume is to start with a master resume for each type of position you are looking for. This is a resume that includes everything you could possibly include, with the wording tailored to the field and position type. They are much longer than the two page maximum of your final resumes.

For example, say you are a Bachelor of Business Administration student who is interested in marketing and accounting. It would be wise to have two master resumes, one for marketing and one for accounting, with the way you describe your experience being a little different in each. When an accounting position comes up that you want to apply for, you start from the accounting master resume and do final tailoring to the specific job posting from it, cutting out anything that is not relevant to the narrative you are telling through your application.

The resume genre’s conventions differ by country and industry. But, in general, the key conventions to remember in Canada are:

- Two pages maximum
- Easily accessible contact information
- Use bullets for formatting
- Can be read by an applicant tracking system

If that last one was new to you, then you are not the only one. An applicant tracking system (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applicant_tracking_system) (ATS) is software used by organizations to accept, track, and organize job postings and applications (“Applicant tracking system,” 2025). You will learn more about what an ATS does in the Social Shadow (#chapter-social-shadow) chapter, but most importantly for now, if you are applying for a job where you are required to upload your resume instead of emailing it directly to a person, you have just submitted your application through an ATS and need to make sure your resume can be read by it.

An **applicant tracking system (ATS)** at its core is designed to collect resumes, cover letters, and other data from candidates and store them in a database to make it easier for hiring managers to view, organize, and contact candidates. The more advanced versions will parse resumes and cover letters for key information required by the employer and display it in a way that the hiring manager can quickly and easily review it. The most advanced versions will assess the years of experience candidates have and run keyword searches of resumes and cover letters to help filter candidates and identify the most qualified candidates quickly. Likely, they will soon also point out wording choices that the ATS feels were created by generative AI.

Resume Types

As mentioned, resumes differ by country and industry, but in Canada, there are four resume styles: chronological, functional, combination, and curricula vitae (discussed in the sections below).

1. Chronological

A chronological resume is the most common resume style in Canada. In this style, you list your experience and qualifications under various headings—starting with the most recent (which is why they are often referred to as “reverse chronological” resumes)—and provide information about your achievements and experiences. Recent research confirms that chronological resumes are the most favoured layout preferred by hiring managers (Smith & Berg, 2020).

2. Functional

A functional resume is also called a “skill set resume.” In this style, you list your experience clustered by the skills you have. This resume focuses on your transferable skills; it does not include dates for employment history. This resume type is rarely used today as most employers want to see the specific dates of employment on the resume.

3. Combination

A combination resume takes the functional format and adds dates

and specific employment history. Because it emphasizes skills, it is best for people who have large gaps in their employment history, are new to the workforce, or are changing careers. Many students use a combination resume when first looking for work, but its main strength is for those who have been out of the workforce for a few years.

4. Curricula Vitae

In Canada, a curricula vitae (CV) is primarily used for academic or research-based careers. In a CV, the emphasis is on the candidate's research experience. If a job posting requests a CV or is a research-focused role, make sure you submit a CV rather than one of the other resume formats.

You will want to select a resume style based on the position you are applying for and your level of experience.

Resume Type Comparison

Table 6.1 (#tab6-1) provides a quick comparison of the four styles. Many resume sections are the same or have minor differences. The next section will explain some of these sections and give examples of how each resume might look. These sections are listed below in their traditional order, but the order may differ according to the resume layout.

Table 6.1: Comparing Resume Types

Chronological	Functional	Combination	Curricula Vitae
General Contact Information	General Contact Information	General Contact Information	Full Contact Information
Objective Statement (optional)	Objective Statement	Objective Statement	Education
Summary of Qualifications (optional)	Summary of Qualifications	Summary of Qualifications	Academic Appointments (if any)
Work Experience	Skills & Accomplishments	Skills & Accomplishments	Areas of Teaching
Education & Training (for new or recent grads this will go before work experience)	Work/Volunteer History (optional)	Work History	Professional Employment
Volunteer/Interests (optional)	Education/Training	Education/Training	Publications
Awards and Achievements (optional)	Interests (optional)	Volunteer/Interests (optional)	Presentations
References (optional)	References	References (optional)	Research Funding/Grants/Honours/Awards/Service

Choosing a Resume Type

Although **functional** and **combination** resumes are valid formats, their use should be limited to very specific situations. The older version of **chronological** resumes, which has the list of jobs but

includes very little information about them or the skills involved, has generally fallen out of favour with hiring managers and recruiters.

In its place, over the last twenty years, a new method of writing a **chronological** resume has arisen. We could call this a different form of **combination** resume because instead of listing skills and aligning jobs under it, this chronological resume lists jobs in reverse chronological order and then explains the job in a way that highlights specific skills the job posting is looking for. It is this type of **chronological** resume that this chapter will focus on, as it is the expected convention for most hiring managers. However, the tools provided here could be used for any resume style.

Questions to ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of my resume?
- Who is the audience of my resume?
- What is unique about the resume format for my industry?

Accomplishment Statements

Before we move into your resume layout we are going to talk about the core of your resume: the accomplishment statement. These are sentences that explain what you did, why, how, or for who you did it, and what the impact of it was. The most popular formats are:

1. **Situation, Task, Action, Result (STAR):**

- **Example:** “Provided quality customer service in a team of six, working quickly and efficiently, which resulted in our store receiving an award.”
- The STAR method is discussed in depth in the Interviews (#chapter-interviews) chapter.

2. **Challenge, Actions, Results (CAR):**

- **Example:** “Working in a team of six to ensure accurate and efficient service to customers, resulting in our store receiving an award from the head company.”
- The CAR method can be seen in depth on the Career Uprising (<https://web.archive.org/web/20240523215901/https://www.careeruprising.com/blog/2017/02/27/c-a-r-challenge-action-result#expand>) blog (Rise, 2017).

3. **Result, Action, Situation (Reverse):**

- **Example:** “Earned an award for the best franchise in the city by collaborating with a team of six to deliver accurate and efficient service to customers.”
- This method puts the result first, then describes the actions that led to the result, and finally explains the challenge or situation that brought about your actions and results.

4. **Situation, Action, Outcome:**

- **Example:** “As part of a customer service team, I provided exceptional support, resulting in our store earning an award.”
- Similar to the Result, Action, Situation example, this method focuses more on the key information the employer is interested in.

5. **Action/Skill, How, Why, How Well:**

- **Example:** “Collaborated with team members and effectively delegated workload to best use individual strengths and maximize efficiency, resulting in project completion one week early.”
- This method is further explored in Exercise 6.1

(#exercise6-1). This method illustrates your accomplishments as more than just a list of the tasks and duties performed, and highlights what you bring specifically to the position for the employer.

Creating Your Accomplishment Statements

Accomplishment statements will allow you to avoid generic, unspecific, and over-used language. They begin with a technical skill, transferable skill, or responsibility, and finish with a description of how, why, or how well you demonstrated it. These statements describe your abilities and skills and prove that you understand your role.

An accomplishment statement moves beyond talking about job duties. A job duty is short description of the specific tasks done, but an accomplishment statement tells an employer how the work you did before has prepared you to succeed in the job you have applied for. It is what moves working at Tim Hortons from a survival job to something that prepared you for teamwork in a fast-paced environment.

The structure we are using for these accomplishment statements is:

1. **Action or skill**
2. **How** you did it
3. **Why** you did it
4. **How well** you did it

This helps you move away from boring or uninformative use of space to tightly packed interesting sentences. It gives you an opportunity to show how great you might be if they interview you and will set you apart from competitors' generative AI written resumes and cover letters.

A strong accomplishment statement is not just for the resume, it will help you work out how to speak about your past experience in a cover letter and is even useful in preparing for an interview.

Table 6.2 (#tab6-2) provides examples of how to create accomplishment statements. Feel free to adapt the wording based on the needs of your application document, or to exclude any parts of it. Including an action or skill with how well you did it is often enough. These statements are most useful when they mention specific things you did or specific numbers within it, such as “managed daily cash receipts of \$2,500” or “collaborated with a team of eight.”

Table 6.2: Creating Accomplishment Statements Examples

Duty or Buzzword (Poor)	Action or Skill (Starting)	How/Why/How Well (Explaining)	Accomplishment (Accomplishment)
Operated cash	Managed daily cash receipts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How: Using digital sales system. • Why: To ensure accuracy. • How Well: Accurately balanced cash register daily. 	Managed daily cash receipts using a digital sales system to ensure accuracy and accurately balanced cash register.
Security system installation	Installed and maintained a security system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How: Following code and company procedures. • Why: To maintain security in an industrial agricultural complex. • How Well: Was praised for efficiency and accuracy. 	Installed and maintained an intensive security system according to code and procedures in an industrial agriculture complex, being praised for efficiency and accuracy.
Motivated	Planned and prioritized work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How: By using work breakdown structures and Gantt charts • Why: To complete tasks on time and budget while adapting to issues. • How Well: Predicted obstacles and created structure to persevere through them 	Planned and prioritized work using work breakdown structures and Gantt charts to complete tasks on time and budget while adapting to both predicted and unexpected obstacles and persevering through them.

Worked in a team	Collaborated with team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How: By effectively delegating workload. • Why: To best use individual strengths and maximize efficiency. • How Well: Resulted in project completion one week early. 	Collaborated with team members and effectively delegated workload to best use individual strengths and maximize efficiency, resulting in project completion one week early.
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Note. Adapted from Ladd (2017)

Regardless of how you write your accomplishment statements, you need to make sure they show what **impact** your actions had. This could be your impact on the organization as a whole, the department you worked in, the finances of the organization, clients or customers, or even your colleagues. Accomplishment statements should include specific words from the job posting, if possible, and demonstrate your technical and transferable skills. Including quantifiable information in your accomplishment statements ensures employers understand your skills and abilities.

Exercise 6.1

Creating Accomplishment Statements

Using one of the formats explained in Accomplishment Statements (#accomplishment), write three accomplishment statements for your resume based on the following:

1. Something you did at work.
2. Something you did in school.
3. Something you did in a volunteer role or with friends.

For ideas, refer back to what you learned about yourself during the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter, and remember that the goal is to demonstrate your impact.

Resume Sections & Layout

As mentioned in Resumes Types (#resumetypes), there is some overlap between the main resume types in terms of sections. Because the new chronological resume is the expected format, the sections are presented and described in the order they appear in that style. Skills and accomplishments is a section mostly only used in functional and combination resumes, so it is described at the end of this section. The order of sections, and how to title them,

depends on the industry conventions for the position you are applying for and your own preferences.

The whole purpose here is to showcase your skills and abilities in a way that a potential employer will understand (Hunt et al, 2017). To help you build your resume, review the following main sections and how they can look in your resume. You can see more examples in Appendix B: Resume Catalogue ([#back-matter-appendix-b-resume-catalogue](#)) or in the Resume Catalogue (<http://resumecatalogue.pressbooks.tru.ca>) OER (Arney et al. 2022).

General Contact Information

The first thing an employer needs to see in your resume is your contact information (Figure 6.1 ([#fig6-1](#)))—it needs to be at the top of your first page.

Contact information needs to include your:

- Full name
- Phone number
- Email
- City

Use the name you go by professionally, as it will going to be what the employer calls you. If you have formally or informally changed your name for any reason, use the one you changed it to, rather than whatever is on your birth certificate. If you have a short and long version of your name and go by both in different situations, use the name that you feel is more formal. Make sure you include the full phone number with your area code.

Ensure your email address appears professional—the best email address to use on a resume includes your name or part of your

name. Feel free to use your university email on your resume. Including your post office or mailing address is now optional, as the employer will likely contact you by phone or email, not by letter. If the application instructions specifically require your mailing address, you will need to add it in.

Some people like to put their contact information at the top of the second page, which can be helpful if organizations print out resumes. If you are short on space, you can always put it in a header that appears only on the second page—ATS may not read the contact information if it is in the header on the first page, so make sure it is in the body of the resume.

AMRIT SINGH

Anytown, BC

AmritSingh@emailprovider.com – 250-000-0000 – linkedin.com/in/yourname

Figure 6.1 Contact information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long
Description (#fig6-1longdesc)]

Objective Statement

Alternate headings may include “Objective” or “Purpose.”

Objective statements (Figure 6.2 (#fig6-2)) are very specific statements, in sentence form, that demonstrate how you can support the organization. This is not an appropriate space to talk about your personal career goals but rather to connect your resume to the job and industry you are applying for. The more specific your objective statement, the better. Imagine this as the most important sentence you want to say to the hiring manager (your audience).

There has been plenty of debate over the last few decades about

whether an objective statement is needed or helpful anymore. In some industries it is expected, in others it is allowed, and in some it will detract from the first page of your resume. This is where you need to do some networking and research. In many industries, this section is being replaced by a summary of qualifications.

Ask someone you know who has started working in the field in the last three years that you would like to be in, and see what their resume looks like.

Objective

To use my programming and project management skills to support Stark Industries Business Analysis department as a junior programmer.

Figure 6.2 Objective information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-2longdesc)]

Summary of Qualifications

Alternate headings may include “Summary,” “Technical Skills,” “Qualifications,” or “Profile.”

The purpose of the summary of qualifications section is to quickly link your resume to the job posting. This is a point-form section that lists the top four to seven skills or qualifications you offer the employer (see Figure 6.3 (#fig6-3)). Just like an objective statement, these are directed to the hiring manager as your audience, so they should be written in a way that they would understand.

You may need to research some resumes in your industry, such as through Appendix B: Resume Catalogue (#back-matter-appendix-b-resume-catalogue). These need to be directly connected to the job posting, and it is best if you use the key terms from the posting in this section. What this section looks like will vary, but in general, the important part is that it lists technical and required skills.

Do not say things like “hard worker” or other subjective skills—you should demonstrate those skills through your accomplishment statements later in the resume.

Instead, your summary of qualifications will include:

- Specific software or tools that you are skilled at (which are called for in the posting)
- Specific skills that you have gained in other industries that are applicable to the posting
- Required certifications

It is best to use examples and data in this section. When saying you have experience with an industry-specific tool, say how many years of experience you have. When you list any transferable skills that the posting asks for—like customer service or communication—say how you gained these skills. This is also a great section to mention any additional languages you speak that may be useful in the role you are applying for.

Qualifications

- Languages: **Java, C#, Python, SQL, JavaScript, React.**
- Applications & Platforms: **Power BI, Unix, MySQL, MS Access, Unity.**
- Excellent customer service skills from working in a fast-paced customer-oriented environment.
- 20 months experience leading projects using PMBOK and Agile methodology.
- Organized and ran events with between 10 and 400 attendees.

Figure 6.3 Qualifications information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-3longdesc)]

Education & Training

Alternate headings may include “Education” and “Education and Professional Development.”

The education and training section (Figure 6.4 (#fig6-4)) is where you will list any post-secondary programs you have completed or are currently enrolled in.

For each entry, you need to include the:

- Formal name of the program or degree
- Institution
- Location
- Date of completion or date of expected completion

You will list your most recent education first. If you are enrolled in or have completed any post-secondary education, there is no need to list your secondary school education.

Note. If you have more than three items to list as professional development, put it in its own section after your volunteer experience.

Many people put additional information in bullets under each program, such as minors, relevant courses (the title of the course, not its course number), scholarships, awards, or projects they are especially proud of.

Below the post-secondary education are certificates or other professional development achievements.

For continuing education like this, list the:

- Name of the program or certificate
- Issuer or training provider
- Date completed (and expiry, if applicable)

This could also include workshops, special trainings, and seminars relevant to the posting.

Education and Professional Development		
Bachelor of Science, Computing Science	– Greendale University	2019 – present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computing Science Major, Project Management Minor• Second place presentation at Greendale University Hackathon 2020• Expected Graduation 2023		
Accounting Diploma	– Greendale University	2018
Continuing Education		
• Project Management 1, Greendale University		2020
• Standard First Aid CPR-C, St. John Ambulance		2019 – 2022 (exp.)
• Intro to Coaching, Anytown Hockey		2016

Figure 6.4 Education and professional development information (Arney, 2023)
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-4longdesc)]

Work Experience

Alternate headings may include “Work History,” “Experience,” and “Professional Experience.”

Note. Any co-ops, internships, or practicums, even if unpaid, should be listed here.

The work experience section (Figure 6.5 (#fig6-5)) is the most important section on your resume. This is where an employer will look to see how much experience you have, where it was, what it was, what skills you gained, and what impact you had on the organization, customers, clients, or budget you worked with.

The key information that must be included for each entry is:

- Job title
- Organization
- Location
- Dates
- What you did there

Each entry in the work experience section needs to be formatted exactly the same as the others. The job title should be bolded and left-aligned. You can put the job title and organization name on the same line or different lines, and you can list the title or organization first. Location is just the city and province, or if it was not in Canada, city and country.

Dates need to include the month and year of starting and finishing that role and should be right-aligned. It is best to have it on the first line of the entry, across from either the title or organization. If it was seasonal, you will mention that in the bullet points, just include the month and year you started and when you finished. If this is your current employer, you will replace the end date with the word “present.” It used to be the convention, and in some industries it still is, to only list the years and not months, so make sure you research the industry you are looking to find work in.

In chronological resumes, the information about the position is followed by a bulleted list that explains what you did there. This will explain your duties, responsibilities, and special projects or initiatives.

The best format for these is the accomplishment statements you have already practiced writing (see Exercise 2.1 Creating Accomplishment Statements (#exercise2-1)). You can use any format for accomplishment statements that works for you, but the important thing is to show what **impact** you had on the organization, customers, clients, and budget. It is not enough to list the duties you performed, you also need to show why it was important that you were there. This gives you the opportunity to

better connect your resume with the posting and give examples of your technical and transferable skills.

Work History

Business Analyst Co-Op Student

Jan 2021 – Present

Globex, Anytown BC

- Implemented new business analysis methods by gathering requirements, developing code, and testing software solution which provides up-to-date analysis to stakeholders.
- Led project to create standard operating procedures for hardware and software refresh cycles across five departments with 300 staff, completing on time and within scope.
- Organized company wide communications regarding IT security, ensuring accuracy timeliness of information.

Billing Clerk

Dec 2018 – Dec 2020

Bailey Building and Loan Association, Anytown BC

- Processed accounts receivable and billing of up to \$40,000 per transaction for small credit union, ensuring accuracy and improving efficiency in the department.
- Prepared, reviewed, and processed electronic invoices and troubleshooted e-billing issues with multiple systems and clients.
- Led project for moving the accounting department to Sage 50cloud, supporting four other staff in their training with the new program.

Figure 6.5 Work history information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-5longdesc)]

Volunteer Experience

Alternate headings may include “Volunteer History” and “Community Involvement.”

If you have a substantial amount of volunteer experience, you should lay this section out exactly like the work experience section (Figure 6.6 (#fig6-6)). If you do not have much volunteer experience, you can instead list it in point form with the organization, title, and years involved. Do not include any volunteer experience that was less than a week. If you have very little or no volunteer experience, you will omit this section.

Volunteer Experience

Tax preparation volunteer Greendale University Accounting Student Association, Anytown BC	2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Supported students by helping them with tax preparation and filing as part of the Greendale University Accounting Student Association's annual Volunteer Income Tax Program.	
Vice-President, Events Greendale University Accounting Student Association, Anytown BC	2016 – 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Organized events for over 400 students, including the annual Volunteer Income Tax Program.Raised \$6,000 for scholarships for accounting students.	
Hockey Coach Anytown U7 Hockey, Anytown BC	2016 – 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Coached team of 15 players aged 5-6, focusing on providing a positive environment for children to learn and experience hockey.	

Figure 6.6 Volunteer experience information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-6longdesc)]

Awards & Achievements

Alternate headings may include “Awards.”

This optional section lets you list any awards, scholarships, grants, or other professional recognition you have received that are relevant to the posting. Only include awards that have not been mentioned elsewhere in the resume. They should be listed in point-form and include the year you received the award.

Interests

Alternate headings may include “Hobbies” and “Hobbies and Interests.”

If you have interests or hobbies that you do in your spare time that are relevant to the position, you should list them in point-form

under this heading (Figure 6.7 (#fig6-7)). This can make you seem like a more well-rounded person to a hiring manager. It is also a great section to include if your resume is a bit short and you need to fill up space on the second page.

Interests

- Developing video games in Unity
- Hockey, 13 years, 1 year as captain of U21 team
- Event Management

Figure 6.7 Interests information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-7longdesc)]

References

The references section (Figure 6.8 (#fig6-8)) is optional in most industries today, as it is rare for an employer to check references before meeting with you. However, some postings will require them, and it is still standard in some industries to list references.

When listing references, make sure they are appropriate for the role you are applying for.

Each reference should include the person's:

- Full name
- Title
- Organization
- City
- Phone
- Email

Make sure to contact any references before listing them to ask

if they are comfortable being a reference and to know what they would say about you.

Note. I recommend you phrase it as “would you be a positive reference for me?”

People who have seen (or better, supervised) your work in the field you are applying to work in are the best references, followed by people who have supervised your work in other fields, and then professors who know you well. Finally, personal references who have never worked with you are your last resort.

References

Ruth Wong, Business Analyst Lead
Globex, Anytown BC
250-000-000
rwong@globex.com

Jaspaul Sidhu, Manager
Bailey Building and Loan Association, Anytown, BC
250-000-000
JSidhu@BaileyBLA.com

Figure 6.8 *References information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-8longdesc)]*

Skills & Accomplishments

Alternate headings may include “Skills,” “Professional Accomplishments,” “Areas of Expertise,” “Experience Highlights,” and “Skills Summary.”

In functional and combination resumes, the skills and

accomplishments section is your opportunity to explain, with accomplishment statements, why you have the skills required on the posting. This is normally done by listing a skill or ability that the posting calls for in bold and then having two to five accomplishment statements below it in a bulleted list (Figure 6.9 (#fig6-9)).

RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Communication / Customer Service

- Handled customer’s enquiries effectively, developing and encouraging repeat business.
- Handled customer concerns in a caring, professional way, guaranteeing complete satisfaction.
- Maintained a clean, safe work environment for both customer and staff.

Organizational

- Managed a small business in the absence of the manager.
- Performed opening and closing procedures for a small business operation.
- Arranged work schedules on a weekly and monthly basis to ensure timely completion.
- Directed, trained and evaluated new employees making recommendations to management.
- Operated office machines, computerized and manual cash registers, and credit card terminals.

Accounting

- Recorded accounts payable, accounts receivable and general ledger entries on a daily basis.
- Verified all credit card and cheque transactions.
- Handled and balanced all cash reports and used computerized registers.
- Experienced in computer inventory control, recording video rental and product sales.
- Prepared monthly accounts and year-end statements for submission to the accountants.

Figure 6.9 Skills and accomplishments information (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig6-9longdesc)]

More Resume Examples

You can find several sector specific examples of resumes in Appendix B: Resume Catalogue (#back-matter-appendix-b-resume-catalogue).

Layout Examples

The following illustrates a number of layout examples you can try. Most word processing programs allow you to use “styles” to assist with layout, using a title for your name and then various heading levels for your headings and subheadings. This way, you can quickly and easily change the look of your resume.

To view different examples, click the arrows left and right.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Layout Examples

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents/#h5p-1>)



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

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=323#h5p-1>
(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=323#h5p-1>)

Curricula Vitae Sections & Layout

The curricula vitae (CV) is a specialized genre of resume for academics and researchers. It is much longer than the two page maximum in a normal resume and has unique sections. The purpose of a CV is to provide a complete understanding of your academic career, including research, teaching, grants, and service.

CV conventions vary by discipline and focus. A CV for a research role in the sciences will look very different from a CV for a teaching role in the humanities. Just as you would with other resume formats, talk to people in similar roles to what you hope to obtain, and ask them what their CV looks like. Professors are great resources for this!

A CV generally has the following sections:

- **Full Contact Information:** Include an institutional address (if you have one), mailing address, email, and phone number.
- **Education:** Start with your highest level of education and work toward your lowest.
- **Academic Appointments:** Include full positions of at least a year in an academic or research role; do not include individual course contract roles.
- **Areas of Teaching:** List your teaching experience and the courses you taught.
- **Professional Employment:** Include any work experience you have that relates to the posting.
- **Publications:** Include all peer-reviewed and non-reviewed publications you have, in separate sections, using the standard academic citation style format for the discipline.
- **Presentations:** Include any presentations, talks, conference talks, or posters you have presented.
- **Research Funding/Grants/Honours/Awards:** Include any funding you have received, including scholarships, or any honours or awards you have been given that relate to the

posting.

- **Service:** Include any committees you have served on, organizations you have worked with, and talks or conferences you have helped organize.

CV Example

Below is an example of a CV. Use the left and right arrows to move through it. This example may also be viewed as a Word document: Example-CV

(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Example-CV.docx>).

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to CV Example

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents/#h5p-2>)





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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=323#h5p-2>

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=323#h5p-2>)

Resume Formatting

The modern resume needs to be readable by both an ATS and a human being. That means many of the formatting and design choices that have been popular for resumes—which are built into many word processing programs—actually hurt your chances of being selected by a potential employer.

An ATS is not a terrible thing that is out to stop your resume; it is just a way for organizations to deal with the large volume of resumes that comes in for each job posting. Their main function is to scan your resume and check for simple things, like your contact information or if you are using any of the keywords from the posting. Some ATS will filter incoming resumes to determine how much experience you have based on what is on the resume, or it may assess whether you have the correct education. Sometimes, it will rank the resumes, but not every ATS does that, and not every organization wants it to do that. The most advanced ATS programs use algorithms to evaluate everything from whether your work experience meets the minimum requirements for a posting

to whether your grammar is acceptable. The information in this section is designed to make your resume as readable as possible—by both the ATS and a person.

Here are some simple formatting tips for your resume to make sure that it is readable by both people and an ATS.

What to do:

- Maximum two pages
- Contact information at the top of the first page
- Web-safe fonts (Arial, Georgia, Tahoma, Times New Roman, and Verdana) (see Figure 6.10 (#fig6-10))
- Font size between 10 point and 12 point, except for name and headings
- Good grammar and spelling

Arial (sans-serif)

Georgia (serif)

Tahoma (sans-serif)

Times New Roman (serif)

Verdana (sans-serif)

Figure 6.10 Fonts (Arney, 2023) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>)

What not to do:

- Putting contact information in the header
- Using textboxes
- Using columns or tables for layout
- Images, backgrounds, graphics
- Multiple fonts in the same document
- Special characters
- Altered kerning or adding extra spaces between letters or words

As long as you follow these tips, your resume should look professional and will not cause any problems with online systems or ATS.

Here are some more tips about formatting and language that will make sure your resume has the best chance of being shortlisted.

- **Tense:** When laying out your resume, use the past tense for all your accomplishment statements for each position (including the current one).
- **Formatting and Spelling Errors:** These errors distract the reader and make them less likely to want to read your resume, or suspect you are sloppy.
- **Abbreviations and Acronyms:** Do not use abbreviations or acronyms unless they are commonly used (e.g., abbreviate degrees like MBA).
- **Section Layout:** Ensure all sections are laid out in reverse chronological order so the most recent things are higher on the page.
- **General Formatting:** Your formatting should be the same throughout the whole resume—any changes in format will distract from your skills.
- **Two-Page Resume:** The format used to be a single page for resumes, but for most professional positions today, a two-page resume is expected. This gives you more space to work with to make sure your resume is readable.
- **Design:** Major design elements like tables, columns, and large

graphics cause problems, but that does not mean you cannot make some design choices, such as:

- Using bold font to draw the readers' eye to titles and levels of education completed is a good idea.
- Adding elements like text, colour, colour bars, or a personal logo—as long as they do not distract from the rest of the resume.

Resume Examples

Below are a few examples to compare with your resume. Use the left and right arrows to look at different pages. Word document versions are available below.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Resume Examples

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents/#h5p-3>)





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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=323#h5p-3>

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=323#h5p-3>)

Word document versions:

- Example-Resume-1
(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Example-Resume-1.docx>)
- Example-Resume-2
(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Example-Resume-2.docx>)
- Example-Resume-3
(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Example-Resume-3.docx>)
- Example-CV
(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Example-CV.docx>)
- Example-Resume-Combination-Trades
(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Example-Resume-Combination-Trades.docx>)

Exercise 6.2

Building Your Resume

1. Instead of starting from a template or your current resume, open a blank word processor document, and type in the following without doing any formatting yet:
 - Name and contact information
 - Current education and any prior post-secondary education
 - Most recent two jobs and at least two accomplishment statements for each
 - One volunteer experience you have had in the last five years
2. Now that you have done that, begin changing the formatting of your resume—use tabs (instead of tables or columns) to move things around on the page, and use the default headers in your program to add headers to your sections.
3. Finally, go back to your most recent resume, and add anything you had in that resume into your new document without copying over the formatting.
4. Give a copy of your old resume and your new resume to a friend or family member, and ask them to give you feedback on both.

The Cover Letter

Some hiring managers ignore cover letters, but there are many more hiring managers in Canada who see it as the most important part of an application. In general, if the posting specifies the application documents, submit whichever documents they request. If they do not specify which application documents, make sure to include a cover letter.

Just like a resume, a cover letter is a persuasive document that has its own genre and conventions and has a specific audience and purpose. This time you need to accomplish it in only one page.

The cover letter is a genre of business letter, but some of its conventions are a bit different. In many cases, a cover letter is the only type of formalized business letter that people write. Once you learn the conventions, and the reasons for the conventions, building a cover letter tailored to an employer and posting becomes much easier. A generalized cover letter implies that you are not actually interested in their specific job.

The cover letter audience is the hiring manager and the employer broadly. It has three purposes:

1. Gives them their first impression of you
2. Tests your communication skills
3. Is an opportunity to introduce yourself to the person reading your application

The cover letter shows them how you align with the job posting and how you can contribute to their organization. It is a place where you can show your passion to work for the organization and why you applied for that specific role out of all the jobs available.

Preparing a Strong Cover Letter

To write a good cover letter, you need to know what you bring to the table and why you are applying for that specific role in that specific organization. This goes back to the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter and to your creation of accomplishment statements in Exercise 2.1 (#exercise2-1).

Step 1: Research

The first step is to research the organization and the role. Make sure you actually see an alignment between what you offer and what they want because your cover letter should respond to what they are asking for. Make sure you know what and why the organization does what they do, and figure out if you want to help them do it. Once you know that, you need to work out how your experience aligns with the posting and the organization. Ask yourself this question: “What do you need to highlight in your experience?” Next, look at the posting. Most postings have the most important duties and skills listed first. Those are the ones you need to connect with in your cover letter, and you will probably only be able to cover three major points.

Your cover letter will answer four questions for the employer:

1. Is this applicant actually interested in the position and organization?
2. Are they going to make a difference at the organization?
3. How good are their communication skills?
4. Will they fit in at the organization?

Step 2: Formatting

Once you have done that preparation work, it is time to get to the formatting. As mentioned, a cover letter is a specific type of business letter. That means it has a standardized format and order. Most cover letters are only one page single-spaced, and you will lose a good quarter to third of that page to the formatting. If you are applying for a position requiring more than eight years of experience then you may be moving onto a second page, and for upper management roles, you may reach three pages.

The cover letter sections are:

1. Your contact information
2. Date
3. The employer's contact information
4. Salutation
5. Introduction (Paragraph 1)
6. Body (Paragraphs 2–4)
7. Conclusion (Paragraph 5)
8. Close

For your contact information, there are two options. The classic version is to use the formal address block for both yourself and the hiring manager (see the sample cover letter (#coverlettera) below). The more modern version is to use the same contact information “letterhead” you used for your resume. There is no major difference, so use the one you feel looks better for your industry.

Targeting a Cover Letter

There are a lot of ways to write a cover letter, and because it is a test of your communication skills, you should try not to be

too constrained by templates. With the rise of generative AI, many people are able to meet the basic conventions of a resume easily. But the resumes created that way often do not understand how to properly target a cover letter to a job posting or an industry and feel like they are simply a collection of generic platitudes that hiring managers hate to read.

Instead of a fill-in template, here is a cover letter concept that you can use and adapt to your needs and think about how you would say what you want to say directly to a hiring manager:

Cover Letter Concept A

Your Name

Your Address (optional)

City, Province, Postal Code

Phone Number

Email

Current Date

Employer Name

Employer Title

Company Name

Address

Dear Firstname Lastname,

Re: Job Title and Company's Job Number (*Identify what position you are applying for and the employers job/competition number if there is one. Bold this line so it stands out.*)

First Paragraph: *State your interest in the position and organization and your value to the employer. You should also*

list your relevant education in the opening. Your goal is to capture the reader's attention and encourage them to read on! This paragraph highlights what you will expand on and demonstrate in your resume by summarizing your top two or three skills that make you a great fit for the position. Also, try demonstrating your knowledge/interest in the organization by integrating something specific about what you know about them (i.e., mission/mandate, projects/activities, research interests, and/or strategic goals) in relation to how you can contribute or skills you offer.

Middle Paragraphs: Further highlight your suitability for the position by expanding on your skills through specific examples of your previous accomplishments (i.e., work experience and roles, volunteer experience, and/or academic examples). Think from the employer's point of view as you write. In what ways are you a good fit for the organization? Be sure to emphasize impact, outcomes, and results whenever possible. Try to keep your paragraphs to 3–5 concise, confident statements. Remember that this letter will serve as a writing sample, so grammar and spelling are critical.

Closing Paragraph: Express your appreciation for reviewing your cover letter and resume. This is also a great place to let them know how they can easily contact you.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (John Henry) This is optional, as many applications are forgoing the signature in favour of the typed name for online applications. If you want a signature here you might want to scan your signature and insert it for emailed applications.

Typed Name

(Adapted from Ladd & Forseille (2016). Used with permission)

Remember, the cover letter is your first impression—it demonstrates your communication skills and your interest in that specific role.

Another way of formatting the cover letter can be found below.

Cover Letter Concept B

Your Name

Your Address (optional)

City, Province, Postal Code

Phone Number

Email

Current Date

Employer Name

Employer Title

Company Name

Address

Dear Firstname Lastname,

Introductory Paragraph: Says what you are applying for, gets them to want to read it, and lists the top three things you bring. **Example:** I am applying for the role of XYZ with ABC Department at Company. I appreciate how your company focuses on ***** and would love to be part of that work. To the role, I bring my experience in Thing 1, Thing 2, and Thing 3.

Body Paragraphs: Explain the things you bring and use some of the keywords from the postings or longer versions of your accomplishment statements. Each of the three things you mentioned in the introductory paragraph will get their own paragraph, and they will be in the order they were listed in.

Example: In my time at Company A, I worked on Thing 1 for three years. As part of this, I *****. In addition, during my education at XYZ University, I practiced Thing 1 in my ABC classes. When doing Thing 1, I have [How] [Why] [How Well].

Concluding Paragraph: Restates why you would be good, thanks them for reading, and asks for an interview. Some people like to restate their contact information here, but it is not needed unless there are limitations on your contactability. If they have requested you give your availability it should be listed here. **Example:** Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope that we can meet to discuss the role and my experience with Thing 2 and Thing 3 soon. Working for Company doing Role would allow me to continue to excel at Thing 1 and improve the already great work of ABC Department. My final classes for my [Degree name] end [date], and I would be able to start shortly after then.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Now that you have seen two versions of the cover letter, it is time to try it yourself.

Exercise 6.3

Writing a Cover Letter

1. Find a job posting for a job you want to have sometime in the next three years.
2. Research the company and determine the top skills they are looking for that you already have.
3. As part of your research, determine who to address the cover letter to.
4. Write a professional cover letter that demonstrates how your experience and skills meets the posting's needs.
5. Once you have completed the cover letter, give it to a mentor to look over and ask you questions about it.

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- **Figure 6.1** “Figure 5.1 General Contact Information (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) license.

- **Figure 6.2** “Figure 5.2 Objective Statement (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) license.
- **Figure 6.3** “Figure 5.3 List of Qualifications (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) license.
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- **Figure 6.6** “Figure 5.6 Volunteer Experience (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via

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- **Figure 6.7** “Figure 5.7 Alternate headings may include “Interests” (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) license.
- **Figure 6.8** “Figure 5.8 List of References (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) license.
- **Figure 6.9** “Figure 5.9 Summary of Skills and Accomplishments or Experience Highlights (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) license.
- **Figure 6.10** “Figure 5.10 Fonts (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/application-documents-2/>)” by Noah Arney (2023), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by

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([https://en.wikipedia.org/w/
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Long Descriptions

Figure 6.1 Long Description:

Contact format: Name centred in all capitals. Horizontal lines shown above and below name. Below the bottom line, a city location is provided. Then, on next line, different contact methods are provided: email, phone number, and LinkedIn profile.

Content shown: Amrit Singh, Anytown, BC,
AmritSingh@emailprovider.com, 250-000-0000, linkedin.com/in/
yourname

[Return to Figure 6.1 (#fig6-1)]

Figure 6.2 Long Description:

Content format: Title centred, objective sentence below, left-aligned.

Title: **Objective**

Content: To use my programming and project management skills to support Stark Industries Business Analysis department as a junior programmer.

[Return to Figure 6.2 (#fig6-2)]

Figure 6.3 Long Description:

Content Format: Title centred and bolded, bulleted list, key skills bolded.

Content:

Title: **Qualifications**

- Languages: **Java, C#, Python, SQL, JavaScript, React.**
- Applications & Platforms: **Power BI, Unix, MySQL, MS Access, Unity.**
- Excellent customer service skills from working in a fast-paced customer-oriented environment.
- 20 months experience leading projects using PMBOX and Agile methodology.
- Organized and ran event with between 10 and 400 attendees.

[Return to Figure 6.3 (#fig6-3)]

Figure 6.4 Long Description:

Content Format: Title centred and bolded, next line credentials heading bolded, followed by a bulleted list of details below; date of each bolded credential is on the far right of the first line of bolded heading.

Content:

Title: **Education and Professional Development**

Bold heading: Bachelor of Science, Computing Science – Greendale University; (right-aligned) 2019 – present

- Computing Science Major, Project Management Minor
- Second place presentation at Greendale University Hackathon 2020

- Expected Graduation 2023

Bold heading: Accounting Diploma – Greendale University; (right-aligned) 2018

Bold heading: Continuing Education

- Project Management 1, Greendale University; (right-aligned) 2020
- Standard First Aid CPR-C, St. John Ambulance; (right-aligned) 2019 – 2020 (exp.)
- Intro to Coaching, Anytown Hockey; (right-aligned) 2016

[Return to Figure 6.4 (#fig6-4)]

Figure 6.5 Long Description:

Content Format: Title centred and bolded, next line work positions or roles bolded heading, followed by a normal location subheading, and a bulleted list of details below; date of each bolded work position or role is on the far right of the first line of bolded heading.

Content:

Title: **Work History**

Bold heading: **Business Analyst Co-Op Student**; (right-aligned) Jan 2021 – Present

Subheading: Globex, Anytown BC

- Implemented new business analysis methods by gathering requirements, developing code, and testing software solution which provides up-to-date analysis to stakeholders.
- Led project to create standard operating procedures for hardware and software refresh cycles across five departments with 300 staff, completing on time and within scope.
- Organized company wide communications regarding IT

security, ensuring accuracy and timeliness of information.

Bold heading: **Billing Clerk; (right-aligned) Dec 2018 – Dec 2020;**
(right-aligned) Dec 2018 – Dec 2020

Subheading: Bailey Building and Loan Association, Anytown BC

- Processed accounts receivable and billing of up to \$40,000 per transaction for small credit union, ensuring accuracy and improving efficiency in the department.
- Prepared, reviewed, and processed electronic invoices and troubleshooted e-billing issues with multiple systems and clients.
- Led project for moving the accounting department to Sage 50cloud, supporting four other staff in their training with the new program.

[Return to Figure 6.5 (#fig6-5)]

Figure 6.6 Long Description:

Content Format: Title centred and bolded, next line volunteer positions or roles bolded heading, followed by a normal location subheading, and a bulleted list of details below; date of each bolded volunteer position or role is on the far right of the first line of bolded heading.

Content:

Title: **Volunteer Experience**

Heading: Tax preparation volunteer; (right-aligned) 2018

Subheading: Greendale University Accounting Student Association,
Anytown BC

- Supported students by helping them with tax preparation and filing as part of the Greendale University Accounting Student

Association's annual Volunteer Income Tax Program.

Heading: **Vice-President, Events;** (right-aligned) 2016 – 2018

Subheading: Greendale University Accounting Student Association,
Anytown BC

- Organized events for over 400 students, including the annual Volunteer Income Tax Program.
- Raised \$6,000 for scholarships for accounting students.

Heading: **Hockey Coach;** (right-aligned) 2016 – 2018

- Coached team of 15 players ages 5–6, focusing on providing a positive environment for children to learn and experience hockey.

[Return to Figure 6.6 (#fig6-6)]

Figure 6.7 Long Description:

Content format: Title centred and bolded, followed by a bulleted list.

Content:

Title: **Interests**

- Developing video games in Unity
- Hockey, 13 years, 1 year as captain of U21 team
- Event Management

[Return to Figure 6.7 (#fig6-7)]

Figure 6.8 Long Description:

Content format: Title centred and bolded, followed by left-aligned name of reference, their address, telephone number and email

address on separate lines; contact information is grouped together for each reference and separated between references.

Content:

Title: **References**

Ruth Wong, Business Analyst Lead
Globex, Anytown BC
250-000-000
rwong@globex.com

Jaspaul Sidhu, Manager
Bailey Building and Loan Association, Anytown BC
250-000-000
JSidhu@BaileyBLA.com

[Return to Figure 6.8 (#fig6-8)]

Figure 6.9 Long Description:

Content format: Title centred and bolded, followed by centred heading for type of skill on the next line, and then a bulleted list of details below.

Content:

Title: **RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

Heading: Communication / Customer Service

- Handled customers' enquiries effectively, developing and encouraging repeat business.
- Handled customer concerns in a caring, professional way, guaranteeing complete satisfaction.
- Maintained a clean, safe work environment for both customer and staff.

Heading: Organizational

- Managed a small business in the absence of the manager.
- Performed opening and closing procedures for a small business operation.
- Arranged work schedules on a weekly and monthly basis to ensure timely completion.
- Directed, trained, and evaluated new employees making recommendations to management.
- Operated office machines, computerized and manual cash registers, and credit card terminals.

Heading: Accounting

- Recorded accounts payable, accounts receivable and general ledger entries on a daily basis.
- Verified all credit card and cheque transactions.
- Handled and balanced all cash reports and used computerized registers.
- Experienced in computer inventory control, recording video rental and product sales.
- Prepared monthly accounts and year-end statements for submission to the accountants.

[Return to Figure 6.9 (#fig6-9)]

7. Social Shadow

LARRY ILES

Introduction

Plan Your Career Social Shadow

The advancement of technology and the emergence of AI tools like ChatGPT have revolutionized the approach to job and career searches. Employers now have access to abundant data to identify the most suitable candidates. Candidates will inevitably undergo online scrutiny, commonly referred to as being “googled,” during the application and selection process. However, what remains unclear is precisely what criteria employers are seeking and how they utilize this information in their hiring decisions. This chapter delves into research and case studies examining how employers leverage social media to assess candidates’ suitability. Additionally, it provides practical strategies for students and recent graduates to manage their social media presence effectively in the context of career planning and job hunting.

In an ever-evolving career landscape, predicting the future remains a challenge. However, advancements in artificial intelligence are opening up new and exciting possibilities—particularly in how students can develop and present their online career brand. One emerging trend is the use of AI-generated avatars, which may soon complement or even replace traditional résumés and interviews. Platforms like **Synthesia** (n.d.) are pioneering this technology by enabling users to create realistic AI avatars that can deliver personalized messages, presentations, or introductions. These digital representations could allow candidates to introduce themselves with personality, consistency, and professionalism

across platforms. As these technologies advance, job seekers and employers must consider how tools like avatars can shape recruitment, branding, and communication in the digital age.

Say hello to my Avatar using the Synthesia Platform reading the introduction to this chapter:

Career Book-Chapter 7 Social Shadow (<https://youtu.be/x4aKQyVVsj4>) [1:17 min] by Career TV (2025)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=342#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Career Book-Chapter 7 Social Shadow

(<https://youtu.be/x4aKQyVVsj4>)



Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain how hiring managers use Google for candidacy selection.
- Understand how potential employers may perceive social media posts.
- Reflect on your current social media presence in relation to future career planning.
- Develop a social media career presence.

The Digital Shadow (https://youtu.be/HtA7RzO_3Lo?si=gxHFC_h6MQIREUZS) [4:38 min] by Thompson Rivers University (2018)



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(#oembed-2)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

The Digital Shadow (https://youtu.be/HtA7RzO_3Lo?si=gxHFC_h6MQIREUZS)



Research Says....

Organizations increasingly rely on the internet to support recruitment and candidate selection. Employers commonly post positions online, collect applications, and gather data on applicants through digital platforms. Technology has expanded access to global labour markets, streamlined the screening of large applicant pools, and helped reduce recruitment costs. Despite these advancements, research on how employers use social media for candidate evaluation remains limited—particularly within the Canadian context, as most available data originates from the United States (Chauhan et al., 2013).

Career counsellors in post-secondary institutions have noted, through employer interactions, that social media is often used in

candidate screening; however, how it is used remains largely anecdotal and undocumented. Some researchers are working to identify consistent patterns or standards in employer use of social media during hiring. Brown and Vaughn (2011) suggest that online searches, like “googling” candidates, lack consistency and standardization, making it difficult for employers to make reliable, data-driven hiring decisions.

Today, employers frequently look beyond resumes and interviews to evaluate candidates. According to popular media and blogs, it is common practice for employers to search a candidate online before making a hiring decision—raising concerns around privacy, ethics, and legality. Few provincial laws regulate this practice in Canada, and employers can inadvertently access sensitive information such as a candidate’s age, gender, race, political views, or sexual orientation—details that are not typically included in job applications. Even with privacy settings in place, a candidate’s photo is often visible.

A CareerBuilder press release (2018) reported that 70% of employers used the internet to gather candidate information. An earlier survey conducted by The Harris Poll for CareerBuilder (2014) revealed that 51% of US hiring managers found social media content that led them to reject a candidate. Conversely, 46% of respondents said they had hired candidates in part because of positive impressions formed from their social media content—particularly regarding cultural fit and overall likability.

Case Study 7.1

Google Searches

Company X regularly uses Google to search for candidates that are being considered for a role. Prior to the Google search, Company X asks the following question: “When we google your name, what will we see?” This approach provides the candidate with an opportunity to explain any online presence they may have. In this particular case, the potential hire informed the employer that there are others in the social media space with the same name. The candidate reported they would find references to jail time with someone with the same name but assured the company they were not this person. Company X did, in fact, find this information in a Google search, and due to the candidate’s disclosure, could discount what they found. This is only part of the story.

As with many companies, Company X does not have a policy nor do they follow a scoring rubric based on information found from a Google search. Company X uses the information they find to form an overall perception of the candidate and uses that perception to make their final hiring decisions.

Case Study 7.1 Reflection

Reflect on the following questions:

1. How would you answer the interview question by Company X?
2. What can you do to control your social media presence?

As you prepare for future employment—whether that means working for an organization or launching your own business—it is important to consider how your online presence can influence hiring decisions. Social media is increasingly used by employers during the recruitment process, which means your digital footprint can either support or hinder your chances.

One of the main goals of pursuing higher education is to increase opportunities for meaningful employment and personal advancement. Many students cite career prospects and improved financial stability as key motivators for enrolling in post-secondary programs. At the same time, higher education offers exposure to new ideas, diverse perspectives, and the chance to build professional networks—all of which can enhance employability.

With these goals in mind, managing your online presence becomes a strategic part of your career development. Use this reflection to

think critically about how you present yourself online and how it aligns with the professional image you want to convey.

How Are Employers Using the Information Found in Social Media Searches?

As discussed in the previous section, Research Says... (#research-says), employers are utilizing social media as part of the recruiting and selection process. How effective is social media in recruiting new candidates? According to a 2020 Jobvite survey, 49% of employers using social media to hire found a 49% improvement in candidate quality over candidates sourced through traditional recruiting channels. Prior to 2012, 56% of companies in Canada indicated they recruited through social media; this jumped to 84% in 2017 (Jobvite, 2012).

It is hard to determine precisely how employers use social media for recruiting. In 2023, the top four platforms used for recruiting were LinkedIn, Facebook, Indeed, and Instagram. Based on the number of web articles on this subject, employers are using these platforms to post jobs, brand their company as a top employer, post information on trends in their sector, etc. Employers are also scrubbing these sites to peer into the lives of potential candidates and make inferences on “hireability.”

Early in their job or career planning process, candidates need to consider how their social media activity may affect future opportunities. Each person has a **vision** of themselves; it is how they see themselves. The next lens is how others see us. The intersection of the two lenses is our social media presence. It is in this area that we can control others' perceptions by developing a personal social media brand. See the Venn diagram in Figure 7.1 (#fig7-1).

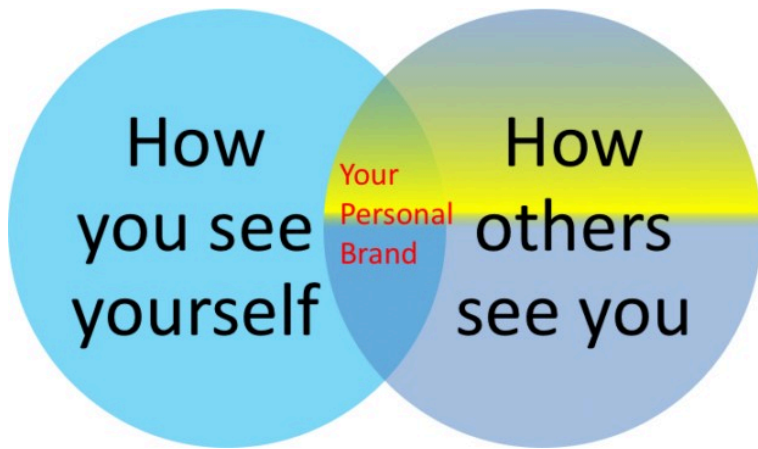


Figure 7.1 The social media lens (Iles, 2019) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>)

According to Forbes (Strauss, 2016), 87% of recent graduates felt well-prepared for the job market, whereas only 50% of hiring managers agreed with that assessment. This highlights a clear gap between candidates' self-perceptions and employers' evaluations. Research indicates that hiring managers often use social media to assess candidates, and these impressions can significantly influence hiring decisions. A study by Becton et al. (2021) found that viewing applicants' social media posts about controversial political issues affected hiring managers' perceptions of similarity, likability, and ultimately, hireability. This underscores the importance of managing one's online presence, as content unrelated to job performance can still impact employment opportunities.

The perceptions of candidates were potentially affected by:

- References to illegal drugs
- Posts/tweets of a sexual nature
- Profanity in posts/tweets
- Spelling/grammar errors in posts/tweets
- References to guns

- Pictures showing the consumption of alcohol
- Volunteering/donations to charity
- Political posts/tweets
- Overtly religious posts/tweets

Part of the findings in this study demonstrate that employers bring in their own biases and perceptions when conducting a Google search for candidates.

Candidates must be aware that these inferences or perceptions occur during a Google search. For most candidates, a Google search will uncover mostly positive attributes of a candidate, especially those candidates who have taken some control over their social media brand (discussed later in this chapter). For items that may be questionable in Canada, there are no legal precedents to prevent employers from making hiring decisions based on what they uncovered in a Google search. Outside of individual company policies or union agreements, employers are under no obligation to inform a candidate they were not hired based on candidate perception from a Google search.

Controlling a Social Shadow, (#controlling-shadow) in this chapter, outlines how candidates can control these perceptions by developing a personal social media brand, or what this author refers to as a “social shadow.” To illustrate how employers’ bias may affect candidate selection, give the Employer Perception of Candidates Game in Exercise 7.1 (#exercise7-1) a try. After attempting this game, reflect on your social shadow and how employers may view the results of their Google search on you!

Exercise 7.1

Employer Perception of Candidate Google Search Game

Which of these perceptions, “negative,” “positive” or “neutral,” would apply? For each image, select ALL perceptions that you think may apply, and click “check.”

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Exercise 7.1 Employer Perception of Candidate Google Search Game

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/social-shadow/#h5p-4>)





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

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=342#h5p-4>

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=342#h5p-4>)

Controlling a Social Shadow

Once candidates are aware that their social media presence could be used as the basis of hiring, decisions need to be made early in the employment-seeking process. Candidates need to determine if they are required to be active on social media based on their industry. Social media has many benefits for modern job seekers. Information that was impossible to locate even 10 years ago is now readily available to candidates and employers.

Social media allows job seekers to do at least four important actions for career planning:

1. Discover new ideas and trends.
2. Connect and network with existing and new employers and contacts in deeper ways.
3. Bring attention and traffic to your resume and career experience.
4. Build, craft, and enhance your career brand.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on crafting and enhancing your career branding.

Many people have a social shadow—for billions of people, this typically means a candidate will at least have a Facebook or LinkedIn account. Depending on the privacy settings chosen, candidates can control the level of information employers can view during a Google search. The question is, how should you manage your social shadow?

Perform a Personal Google Audit

Google your name. Do this search from an external computer, not a personal phone or the computer you typically use. The reason is stored cookies; you may see items that only you can see, or you may be logged into a social media channel. It is better to use a computer that you do not typically use so that your search shows you what a prospective employer might see. If you find potentially offending results on Google or another search engine, ask them to remove the pages from their results. Google has a process for removing your personal information (<https://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=164734>) (Google Search Help, n.d.) from Google search results, and another for preventing images on your page from appearing (http://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35308?visit_id=636842978795339190-1579103853&rd=1) (Google Search Central, 2024).

Determine the Level of Social Media Presence Needed

Do you need a social media presence? From their Google search, a candidate may find they have no social media presence. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Candidates will have to determine the level of social media presence needed or appropriate for their future career goals and plans and for their employment sector. For example, some career areas, such as marketing and human resources, may expect to find a strong social media presence during a Google search, while other areas may not.

This information is difficult to determine, and it is best to research these trends before making your decision. Luckily, this information is easy to come by, as most colleges and universities bring multiple employers on campus each semester through mentorship events, presentations, or career fairs. A few simple questions to an employer will guide you in your decision on the level of social media presence required.

Example questions include:

- Do you Google your candidates prior to hiring?
- What type of information are you looking for during a Google search?
- How are you using the information from a Google search in your hiring decisions?
- Does it matter if a candidate does not have a social media presence?

Case Study 7.2

Social Media Presence

Every fall, a comprehensive university in British Columbia, Canada hosts an accounting hiring networking event. The event is structured to provide employers with the opportunity to meet future candidates. Students attend to meet future employers and learn about the various accounting positions and firms available to them.

At the most recent event, the Career Centre faculty asked accounting employers if they googled their candidates before hiring. Each firm indicated this is common practice. The firms were then asked what they are looking for and how the information is used. Again, each firm responded similarly: they were looking to gain an overall impression of the candidate, and none of the firms had a quantitative process to use the information in their candidate selection process. The most surprising item that arose from the responses is that all firms expected the candidate to have some social media presence, and each indicated it would be odd if a candidate did not have any social media presence through channels such as LinkedIn or Facebook.

Control Your Brand

As reviewed, performing a Google audit is the first step in controlling your career social shadow. The second step is to determine the level of social media presence needed. If the need for a social media presence is determined, candidates should develop a plan. What follows are suggestions for an “advanced plan” and a “basic plan.”

Each plan has the following in common:

- The intended audience needs to be determined.
- The language needs to be purposeful for the career choice.
- Personal profiles need to be loaded with keywords that match the future career sector.
- The photos and descriptions used for all social media need to be consistent—use a close-cropped and professionally edited photo.

The Basic Plan: Developing a Professional Mindset

With over **1.1 billion members worldwide** (Column Content, 2025) and more than **65 million people actively searching for jobs on the platform each week** (Kinsta, 2025), LinkedIn serves as both a powerful branding tool and a professional networking platform for job seekers. These numbers highlight the platform's significance in today's labour market, providing users with opportunities to showcase their skills, connect with employers, and access job opportunities on a global scale.

The difference between other social media platforms and LinkedIn can be illustrated as follows

Non-professional posts about a product on social media channels could look like this:

- I like donuts.
- Here's a cool photo of my donut.
- Does anyone want a donut?
- I'm listening to "Donuts."
- Here's a donut recipe.
- Watch me eat a donut.

On LinkedIn, users will post for a professional audience:

- I hope to operate a donut franchise one day.
- I have three years' of experience making donuts.
- Here are three recommendations from former donut colleagues.
- My top skills are donut production and sales.
- I'm looking for a job at a donut company.

This example highlights how candidates can use LinkedIn to build a professional online presence. Unlike other social media platforms, LinkedIn is specifically designed for professional branding and career development. By following the suggestions provided below, candidates can create a basic career-focused social media strategy that is both **free to use** and **searchable by potential employers**.

LinkedIn operates through a system of searchable profile fields. Each section of a user's profile—such as the headline, summary, work experience, and skills—can be indexed and matched to recruiter searches. Larger organizations often invest in **LinkedIn Recruiter** (LinkedIn, n.d.b), a premium tool that allows employers to filter candidates using specific keywords or criteria. For example, a marketing firm looking for talent with "digital media" expertise can use LinkedIn Recruiter to scan profiles containing that term. For job seekers, this means that **every part of their profile becomes**

an opportunity to appear in recruiter searches, making thoughtful keyword use and profile optimization essential.

Main Features to Focus on in LinkedIn

1. Add a Professional Photo

According to LinkedIn's research, having a profile photo makes your profile **14 times more likely to be viewed by others** (Mann, 2020). This underscores the importance of including a professional photo to enhance your visibility and networking opportunities on the platform. It is important to consider your audience when choosing which photo to add. For example, if a marketing candidate is applying for a position at a ski resort in the marketing department, it would be perfectly acceptable to use a picture of blasting through trees in deep powder. However, for a law graduate, this same photo could potentially give a negative candidate perception.

2. Write a Compelling Description Under Your Photo

This is important for two reasons. First, for companies using the LinkedIn Recruiter platform, this is a searchable field. Secondly, it is the first impression companies see when they review your profile. Avoid using “student at...” in this section; it is not unique or compelling, and the employer may move on. Instead, use some adjectives that grab their attention and immediately demonstrate your passion and value. For example, “passionate, results-oriented marketing professional with more than four years of progressive experience and education in marketing and communication” or “transforming creative storytelling into meaningful social media & digital marketing.” In these examples, the candidate has identified

their passion, their targeted career industry, and some quick facts about themselves.

3. Use the Additional Space Under Your Profile Picture to Expand on Your Description

In LinkedIn, the profile section allows candidates to provide details on their accomplishments, skills, attributes, passions, career goals, and more. The writing in this section should be creative and passionate while also matching the keywords used for a particular industry. There is no rule as to the length of this section; however, the average recruiter spends about six seconds scanning a resume, so this may be true for a LinkedIn review as well. Therefore, candidates should focus on up to 60 words and highlight keywords for their career choice and accomplishments.

This profile description section also allows the user to upload media—the more examples provided of your skill set, the better. If in the profile section, a candidate highlights public speaking skills, then a video presenting to a group would back this up. At the very least, candidates should upload a current resume in this section.

4. Write Your Experience Like You Would Your Resume

The one advantage of the experience section is that you can put all your experiences in—you are not limited to space. You can provide full details of your roles, tasks, responsibilities, achievements and results without worrying about space or character limitations. Additionally, you can add images, videos, media, or links in these sections to provide a visually appealing and dynamic view of your experience.

5. Use Personal Recommendations as Another Key Area of Your Profile

In Canada, the use of a personally written recommendation letter has fallen out of fashion, except in certain cases such as scholarships, awards, and graduate school applications. For employment, LinkedIn has filled the gap with a section that provides candidates with an area to post written recommendations. According to hiring managers this author has worked with, candidates with written recommendations are more likely to be viewed. Candidates are encouraged to drive this process by requesting a recommendation from a person in their LinkedIn network. The candidate may wish to post the recommendation following a review.

This is a powerful section for candidates! Imagine “teamwork” is highlighted as a key skill in a resume, but most resumes have this skill set listed. Now, imagine a hiring manager reading a written recommendation from a team member who worked with the candidate, which describes the role of the person in the team and their result. The recommendation strongly supports the candidate’s “teamwork” skill set.

6. Include Volunteer Experiences & Personal Causes

Experience is valued regardless of the remuneration provided. Therefore, include all volunteer activities and explain the role, responsibilities, tasks, and results for each one. Similar to the work experience section, include a media element to make the section relevant and visually appealing if you can. This section is valuable for recognizing gaps in the profile.

Candidates should research to find out if volunteering is an expected aspect of a position or in their chosen industry. For

example, accounting firms are typically involved in their communities and have expectations that their associates will be involved as well. In reviewing accounting candidates' LinkedIn profiles, a recruiter scans for information on volunteerism and community work.

7. Include Projects You Have Completed During Your Education or Work Experience

Projects are an effective method to demonstrate your unique skill sets to hiring managers and illustrate your individual strengths. The project can indicate a passion for a career area, and exemplify your key skill sets, such as writing, teamwork, research, and industry awareness, to name a few. As with the other sections, uploading media and recommendations in this section presents a dynamic profile that hiring managers will be compelled to review in detail.

8. Drive Traffic to Your Profile Using Groups and Posts.

The power of LinkedIn, and any social media platform, is the ability to drive traffic to a candidate's information. Candidates can join groups of interest, both personally and professionally. For example, a new graduate in supply chain management could join the Canadian Supply Chain Management Association LinkedIn Group. Through this group, a candidate can research industry trends, news, hiring, etc. However, the power to push traffic to a profile is in the posts. Candidates need to be active by posting on LinkedIn. The posts can take the form of questions (e.g., requesting information) or providing interesting information related to a career choice or industry. In this way, LinkedIn becomes a dynamic career tool rather than a passive platform where you wait to be discovered among billions of profiles.

9. *Get Some Help*

Review The Job Insiders (n.d.) checklist (<https://www.thejobinsiders.com/checklist>) to see how well you did developing your LinkedIn profile.

The Advanced Plan

For some candidates, there may be a need to go beyond a basic professional social media plan based on industry expectations; you may also need to provide more information to support industry requirements and show exceptionality in the use of social media platforms. Candidates are encouraged to discuss how involved they need to be on social media platforms with potential future career industry contacts. Employers from some career paths may expect candidates to have a heavy professional social media shadow and take this further by adding social media as part of the interview process.

For example, two interview questions may be:

1. Do you follow our organization on social media?
2. If so, what is the last thing we posted on one of our social media channels?

The following represents a possible advanced plan for candidates to develop a professional social media brand.

X

According to Dixon (2022a), X (formerly Twitter) was estimated to

reach 7.4 million monthly active users, up from 7.3 million users in 2015. These users were compared to monthly active US X users, which amounted to 67 million—a decrease from 68 million in the previous period. With more than 336 million monthly active users worldwide as of the first quarter of 2018, X is one of the biggest global social networks (Dixon, 2022b).

In Canada, X does not have the powerhouse of users that Facebook and LinkedIn have. However, a significant number of Canadian companies use X to recruit candidates. For job seekers, the advantage of being active on X is knowing real-time developments in your areas of interest. Using X to share, comment, and post interesting developments allows you to be part of a global discussion in your career field and to share your thoughts with a global audience that extends past immediate friend groups. Utilize the X platform to support skill sets used in your resume, such as communications, understanding of media, and industry currency.

Facebook

Although Facebook is primarily a personal social networking site, employers are using this platform to post opportunities and scan potential candidates. Employers are increasingly using Facebook to brand their organization, post positions, and encourage future candidates to follow their posts. At Sun Peaks Resort (<https://www.facebook.com/SunPeaksResort/>) in British Columbia, a Facebook group called “Sun Peaks Survivors” (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/331577613562395/>) was established. The resort, corporation, and private businesses regularly post jobs and news on this Facebook page to recruit candidates for various positions. The ethics of using personal platforms such as Facebook to source candidates is beyond the scope of this chapter. You may recall earlier in this chapter that we

reviewed how to change privacy settings as needed—you may want to revisit this advice when considering the Facebook platform.

While not intended to be a career platform, there are aspects of Facebook that can be used as part of the advanced plan. A candidate could develop two Facebook accounts: one for posts of a personal nature and a second for a professional page with open access for employers to view. The candidate could have two variations of their name: one for personal use and the other for professional use. In this way, a candidate can provide media, links, videos, and a career message to complement other social media sites, promote their career brand, and control their social shadow.

Facebook can be used for:

- Connecting with influencers in a career field
- Sharing articles of interest of a professional nature
- Using your personal network to assist in developing employer contacts
- Shaping the perception that potential employers will have through a Google candidate search

Instagram

Instagram has features that are not immediately obvious as part of career social media branding. However, Instagram allows a candidate to tell a story using multiple photos and videos—all of which can be used to control employers' perceptions of a candidate. Like other platforms, job hunting on Instagram is about connecting with relevant companies and individuals. Instagram can be used to learn about particular companies and their culture and to find out what and who is influencing the industry. For a professional social media brand, Instagram can be an effective way to support a skill set a candidate has described in their resume.

The following pictures (Figure 7.2 (#fig7-2)) are an effective use of Instagram Stories to demonstrate some industry skill sets and provide an impactful visual for hiring managers that is more dynamic than the traditional resume format.

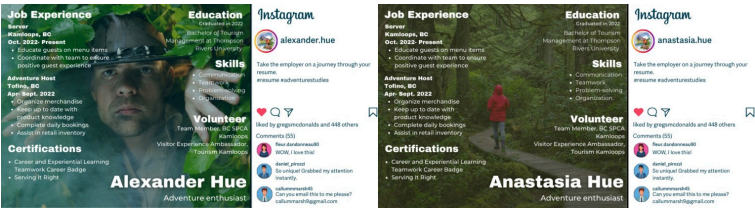


Figure 7.2 Resume stories on Instagram (Patton, 2023) Used with permission [Long Description (#fig7-3longdesc)]

Websites

Develop a personal.com page! While not technically a social media platform, career portfolio products such as WordPress and Wix are customizable websites that candidates can use to enhance their professional brand. Each of these provides numerous examples of career portfolios and comes with a plethora of career branding templates. Both are free to use, and for those with advanced HTML and PHP coding skills, the templates are customizable.

The difference with this approach compared to other social media platforms is that the user controls all the content and how viewers find the site. These platforms are essentially websites that a candidate can build and customize while utilizing all the key features of other social media sites. An extra advantage of this type of branding would be to illustrate your skill sets in design, web development, marketing, and communication skills to employers.

Wix Career Template Example

To wrap up this section on the advanced career branding plan, look at Robby Leonardi's (n.d.) interactive resume (<http://www.rleonardi.com/interactive-resume/>). This is a truly innovative use of social media and website development!

Developing an Online Social Media Career Presence Using AI Tools

With the advent of language models like ChatGPT, students developing a social media career presence have more advanced tools at their disposal. Depending on their program area, some students may not need to use this information. However, students in programs related to human resources, marketing, sales, and entrepreneurship may find the following AI tools particularly useful for planning a digital social media presence.

In the digital age, building a robust online presence is crucial for career advancement. Social media platforms offer unparalleled opportunities for networking, personal branding, and professional growth. Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) tools can significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of managing your social

media career presence. This guide explores how AI tools can be utilized to develop and sustain a compelling online presence.

Using Open AI Models

Use ChatGPT to develop your online career social media presence by generating engaging content, drafting professional bios, brainstorming post ideas, and responding to audience queries. It can also provide insights on trending topics and help you plan content strategies, ensuring consistent and impactful online engagement. The power of this model is the effective use of prompts. Try out the examples in the textbox below to get started.

Open AI Prompt Examples

When using prompts with OpenAI models, try the same prompts across different platforms and compare the results since not all platforms pull from the same dataset for information. At the time writing, a few of the main OpenAI platforms are ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) (n.d.), Gemini (<https://gemini.google.com/>) (n.d.), Copilot (https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/microsoft-copilot/?ef_id=_k_EAIaIQobChMI9qX37ImxhgMVx1N_AB1CZQqMEAAAYASAAEgLeWPD_BwE_k_&OCID=AIDcmml4otzwfr_SEM__k_EAIaIQobChMI9qX37ImxhgMVx1N_AB1CZQqMEAAAYASAAEgLeWPD_BwE_k_&gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI9qX37ImxhgMVx1N_AB1CZQqMEAAAYASAAEgLeWPD_BwE) (n.d.), and Perplexity (<https://www.perplexity.ai/>) (n.d.). The quality of the prompts can also be controlled to some extent. Try asking the AI to think first before posting, or tell it the request is urgent and has to be of high quality.

- **Personal Branding:** “Help me create a compelling LinkedIn summary that highlights my skills, academic achievements, and career aspirations as a [your field of study] student.”
- **Content Creation:** “Suggest five engaging and informative post ideas for my social media account that showcase my knowledge and passion for [your field of study].”

- **Networking:** “How can I effectively use social media platforms to connect with professionals and organizations in [your field of study]? Provide tips on content types, hashtags, and engagement strategies.”

Using Other AI Tools

Understanding Your Brand & Audience

- **Audience Analysis and Segmentation** AI tools can analyze vast amounts of data to provide insights into your audience's demographics, preferences, and behaviours. Platforms like Hootsuite Insights and Sprout Social utilize machine learning algorithms to segment your audience effectively. These insights allow you to tailor your content to meet the specific needs and interests of different audience segments, enhancing engagement and reach.
- **Sentiment Analysis:** Sentiment analysis tools, such as Brandwatch and Lexalytics, use natural language processing (NLP) to gauge public sentiment towards your content and brand. By understanding how your audience feels about your posts, you can adjust your strategy to foster a more positive relationship with your followers.

Content Creation & Curation

- **Automated Content Generation:** AI-driven content generation tools, like Jasper (formerly Jarvis) and Copy.ai, can help create engaging posts, articles, and captions. These tools use deep learning models to produce human-like text, allowing you to maintain a consistent posting schedule without the burden of writing every piece of content manually.
- **Visual Content Creation:** Tools like Canva Pro and Adobe Spark use AI to assist in designing visually appealing graphics, infographics, and videos. They offer templates and design suggestions based on current trends, ensuring that your visual content is both professional and eye-catching.
- **Content Curation:** AI-powered content curation platforms, like Feedly and Curata, can help you stay updated with industry news and trends. These tools aggregate relevant content from various sources, allowing you to share valuable and timely information with your audience, positioning you as a thought leader in your field.

Scheduling & Social Media Posting

- **Smart Scheduling:** AI tools like Buffer and Later analyze your audience's online behaviour to determine the optimal times for posting. By scheduling your posts when your audience is most active, you can maximize engagement and reach.
- **Automated Posting:** Tools like SocialBee and Agorapulse enable automated posting across multiple social media platforms. These tools ensure that your content is published consistently, maintaining a continuous online presence even when you are busy with other tasks.

Employer Engagement & Interaction

- **Chatbots and Virtual Assistants:** AI chatbots, such as those powered by ManyChat and MobileMonkey, can handle routine inquiries and interactions on your social media platforms. These bots can answer frequently asked questions, provide information, and even guide users through processes, ensuring timely and efficient interaction with your audience.
- **Personalized Interactions:** AI tools can analyze user data to personalize interactions. Platforms like HubSpot CRM and Salesforce Einstein use AI to track user behaviour and preferences, enabling you to send personalized messages and recommendations that enhance user experience and loyalty.

Performance Tracking

- **Performance Analytics:** AI-driven analytics tools like Google Analytics and Socialbakers provide comprehensive insights into your social media performance. These tools can track metrics such as engagement rates, follower growth, and content reach, helping you understand what works and what does not.
- **Predictive Analytics:** Predictive analytics tools, such as PaveAI and Crystal Knows, use machine learning to forecast future trends and outcomes based on historical data. By predicting which types of content are likely to succeed, you can make data-driven decisions to optimize your social media strategy.

Enhancing Security & Compliance

- **Social Media Monitoring for Security:** Tools like ZeroFOX and

Digital Shadows use AI to monitor social media platforms for potential security threats, such as phishing attacks or unauthorized access attempts. These tools help protect your online presence and maintain the integrity of your brand.

- **Compliance Monitoring:** For professionals in regulated industries, tools like Smarsh and Actiance ensure that your social media activities comply with industry regulations. These AI tools monitor your posts and interactions, flagging any content that might breach compliance requirements.

Case Study 7.3

AI Use in Personal Branding & Influencer Marketing

Personal Branding: Consider the example of a professional like Neil Patel, a renowned digital marketer. Patel uses AI tools like BuzzSumo for content research and Hootsuite for social media management. By leveraging AI, Patel consistently produces high-quality content, engages effectively with his audience, and monitors his brand's performance, solidifying his status as an industry leader.

Influencer Marketing: Influencers like Huda Kattan, founder of Huda Beauty, use AI tools to manage their massive followings. Tools like Influencity and Klear help influencers analyze their audience, track engagement metrics, and identify trending content, enabling them to maintain relevance and grow their influence.

Best Practices

- **Consistency and Authenticity:** While AI tools can automate and optimize many aspects of social media management, maintaining authenticity is crucial. Ensure that your content reflects your genuine voice and values. AI tools should enhance, not replace, the human touch in your interactions.
- **Continuous Learning and Adaptation:** The digital landscape is constantly evolving, and so should your strategies. Regularly review the performance analytics provided by AI tools, stay updated with the latest trends, and be willing to adapt your approach based on data-driven insights.
- **Ethical Considerations:** When using AI tools, be mindful of ethical considerations, such as data privacy and transparency. Ensure that you are using AI responsibly, respecting user privacy, and being transparent about any automated interactions.

Why Should I Use AI Tools?

Developing a successful online social media career presence in today's competitive environment requires more than just regular posting. By leveraging AI tools, you can gain deeper insights into your audience, create compelling content, optimize your posting schedule, and maintain meaningful interactions. These tools not only enhance your efficiency but also allow you to make informed, strategic decisions that can significantly boost your career prospects.

Embracing AI tools is not about replacing the human element but augmenting your capabilities to build a stronger, more engaging, and influential online presence. Whether you are a budding

professional or an established figure, integrating AI into your social media strategy can propel you toward achieving your career goals.

Conclusion

Technology has radically transformed the way job searching, recruitment, and candidate evaluation are conducted. Social media, online platforms like LinkedIn, and even AI-driven tools are now standard components of the hiring process. Employers are not only googling candidates—they are increasingly using AI-powered systems to screen resumes, assess digital presence, and even predict job fit based on publicly available online data. Tools like ChatGPT are also empowering candidates to craft stronger applications, practice interviews, and optimize their professional branding.

In this landscape, **digital visibility and personal branding have never been more critical**. Candidates must recognize that hiring decisions are often influenced by what employers find online—whether it is social media profiles, online portfolios, or comments on public forums. While this might seem daunting, the advantage is that **candidates still have significant control** over how they present themselves online.

To stay competitive, job seekers should actively monitor and manage their digital footprint. This includes reviewing what information is publicly accessible, building a consistent and professional online presence, and developing a clear career branding strategy that aligns with their goals. In an era of intelligent technologies and instant access to information, **intentional digital storytelling can make all the difference**.

Reflection

Reflect on the following questions:

1. How would you determine the level of social media presence needed for your career path?
2. If you decided **not** to have a social media presence, should you address this in an application or job interview?
3. Who is the audience for your social media content?
4. How will you use tools like OpenAI as part of your “digital shadow”?

Media Attributions

- **Figure 7.1** “Figure 6.1 The Social Lens Venn diagram (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/social-shadow/>)” by Larry Iles (2019), via University to Career (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) [edited by Jamie Noakes], is used under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>) license.
- **Figure 7.2** “Resume Stories on Instagram” by Taylor Patton (2023) is used with permission.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 7.2 Long Description: Two examples of a brief resume posted on social media, Instagram: one is for user anastasia.hue, and the other is for alexander.hue. In the first post by anastasia.hue, the resume information is formatted in two columns, framing a background image of a woman in rain gear hiking in a dense forest on a wooden path. The second post is by alexander.hue. Although the resume information and comments are identical with the first image, this background image is of a young Indiana Jones in his fedora-style hat, peeking out from some forest foliage.

The resume information is as follows:

Large heading, bold, aligned left: Job Experience

Medium Heading, bold, left aligned, single spaced: Server

Kamloops, BC

Oct. 2022-Present

Normal font; bullets:

- Educate guests on menu items
- Coordinate with team to ensure positive guest experience

Medium Heading, bold, left aligned: Adventure Host

Tofino, BC

Apr-Sept. 2022

Normal font; bullets:

- Organize merchandise
- Keep up to date with product knowledge
- Complete daily bookings
- Assist in retail inventory

Large heading, bold, aligned left: Certifications

Normal font; bullets:

- Career and Experiential Learning Teamwork Career Badge
- Serving it Right

Large heading, bold, right aligned: Education

Small font, aligned right: Graduated in 2022

Normal font, aligned right, single spaced: Bachelor of Tourism

Management at Thompson Rivers University

Large Heading, bold, aligned right: Skills

Normal font, bullets:

- Communication

- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Organization

Large heading, bold, aligned right: Volunteer

Normal font, single spaced, aligned right: Team Member, BC SPCA
Kamloops

Visitor Experience Ambassador,
Tourism Kamloops

Large heading, bold, bottom right aligned: Anastasia Hue

Medium heading, right aligned, single spaced: Adventure Enthusiast

In the Instagram comments section is the Instagram logo, with the profile picture and username: anastasia.hue, or alexander.hue for the second image.

The following caption is written single spaced below: Take the employer on a journey through your resume.

#resume #adventurestudies

Icons: heart (like), speech bubble (comment), (paper airplane) send

liked by gregsmcdonalds and 448 others

Comments (55)

Profile: fleur.dandonneau90

WOW, I love this!

Profile: daniel_pirozzi

So unique! Grabbed my attention instantly.

Profile: callummarsh45

Can you email this to me please?

Callummarsh9@gmail.com

[Return to Figure 7.2 (#fig7-2)]

8. Job Search Strategies

JAMIE NOAKES

[This chapter is adapted from a previous version by Tara Bond]

Introduction

The job search process can feel overwhelming, but this chapter will guide you through it step by step. As job searching continues to evolve, staying informed about current trends and refining your approach will help you remain competitive in the job market. Many job seekers limit their search to online postings, yet effective job searching involves a diverse set of strategies to stand out and secure opportunities.

New trends in job searching include:

- The growing influence of **AI-driven job matching tools**, such as LinkedIn's "Easy Apply," which personalize job recommendations based on user profiles.
- The increasing significance of **personal branding** through social media and digital portfolios to attract employers (see the Social Shadow (#chapter-social-shadow) chapter)
- The rise of **remote work opportunities** and access to **global job markets**, allowing candidates to apply beyond geographical boundaries.

A successful job search begins with a structured plan that incorporates diverse job search strategies. These strategies help

job seekers build meaningful connections, increase visibility among employers, secure interviews, and, ultimately, receive job offers.

Before diving into the job search, it is essential to assess your skills, values, and personal traits (see the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter). This self-reflection makes it easier to:

- Identify careers that align with your strengths and interests.
- Analyze job descriptions and understand employer expectations.
- Recognize key personal traits and skills that employers seek.
- Evaluate potential employers based on their mission, values, and culture.
- Determine which jobs align with your preferences and long-term goals.
- Pinpoint areas for skill development to enhance your qualifications.

Although job postings remain a primary job-seeking tool, they are not the primary method that employers use to hire candidates. A well-rounded job search strategy integrates multiple approaches, including networking and optimizing your online presence. Networking offers invaluable insights into industries, organizations, and career pathways. It can enhance your professional reputation and reveal **hidden job opportunities** that may not be publicly advertised.

This chapter explores the essential elements of an effective job search strategy through three key sections:

1. Research
2. Contact
3. Decode

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Define and explain effective job search strategies.
- Develop a comprehensive job search plan that goes beyond traditional application methods.
- Create a job leads list and a structured job search action plan to stay organized.
- Identify best practices for arranging and conducting informational interviews.
- Analyze job postings effectively to extract key information and tailor your applications accordingly.

Job Search: Research

Understanding the Job Market: Visible & Hidden Opportunities

The job market can be divided into two categories: **visible** and **hidden**.

1. The **visible job market** includes publicly posted job openings that anyone can access. These positions often attract high

competition since they are easy to find.

2. The **hidden job market** consists of opportunities that are not publicly advertised. These positions are typically discovered through networking and direct outreach to employers (Camosun College, 2021).

To access the hidden job market, job seekers must:

1. Identify and research the companies they are interested in.
2. Reach out to these companies to inquire about potential openings.

Many employment opportunities are never advertised, making it essential to use multiple job search strategies, including networking, to uncover these hidden roles. While applying for publicly posted positions is important, it should not be your sole strategy. Networking plays a key role in learning about opportunities that are not yet visible to the general public (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023).

The Role of Research in Job Hunting

Research is a crucial but often overlooked part of the job search process. It helps you:

- Identify specific jobs, organizations, and industries that align with your career goals.
- Tailor your personal marketing or branding to match those opportunities (see the Social Shadow (#chapter-social-shadow) chapter).

Start by brainstorming your **personal network**—people from various parts of your life who might assist with your job search.

Networking: Your Gateway to the Hidden Job Market

Networking is about building lasting, mutually beneficial relationships that can help you discover hidden opportunities and advance your career (University of British Columbia Student Services, n.d.). Many job leads come through networking, which often provides access to unadvertised roles. Networking can occur anywhere, not just at formal events. Daily interactions with classmates, professors, family, friends, and colleagues can create opportunities to connect with others in your field.

Networking helps you tap into insider knowledge and opportunities that are not widely available. To build an effective network, you need to maintain ongoing relationships and continually expand your connections.

Networking Examples

- Meeting with a friend for coffee to learn more about their job.
- Attending job fairs and trade shows to discover new companies.
- Joining industry associations and attending professional events.
- Conducting informational interviews with decision-makers in your field (see the Interviews (#chapter-interviews) chapter).

Building & Maintaining Your Network

Networking should not be limited to times when you are actively job searching. Instead, it should be a continuous effort. When networking:

- Share your career goals, and ask if your contacts can connect you with others in their network.
- Offer support in return to make the relationship mutually beneficial.

Steps to build your network:

1. **Brainstorm Your Connections:** List the people you already

know and trust (e.g., family, friends, professors, and colleagues).

2. **Engage With Your Network:** Let them know you are job hunting, and explain your career interests.
3. **Ask for Introductions:** Request referrals to people in their networks who can offer advice or opportunities.

The strength of your network depends on both the number of people you know and the quality of your relationships. Regularly adding new contacts—especially those who work at companies you are interested in—enhances your access to career opportunities. Take a few minutes to fill out the names of people you know and trust in each of the categories in Exercise 8.1 (#exercise8-1).

Exercise 8.1

Current Network

Use the diagram in Figure 8.1 (#fig8-1) to record and organize the people in your existing network to whom you can reach out for advice and referrals.

This diagram is also available as a fillable PDF: Network Diagram Fillable PDF version
(<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/Network-Diagram-Fillable-PDF-version.pdf>)

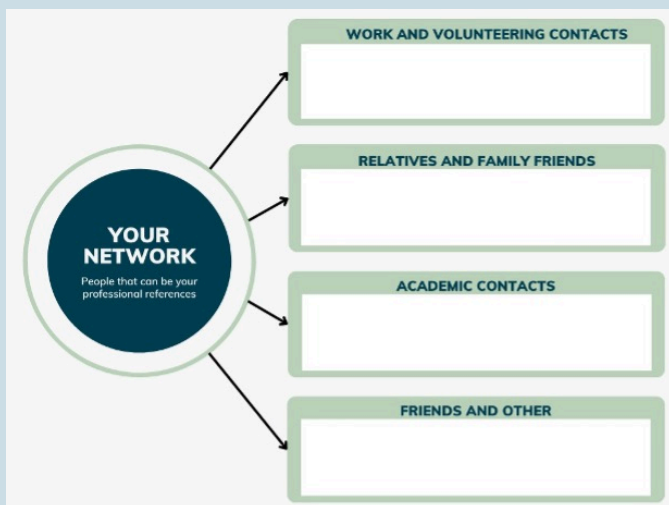


Figure 8.1 Determine your current network (Bond & Brydges, 2023)
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>)

After brainstorming your network and doing some initial research, the next step is to organize your contacts. It is crucial to research companies and roles before attending job fairs (#jobfairs) or conducting informational interviews (#informational). Informational interviews work best as two-way conversations, not just opportunities to ask questions you could have answered on your own.

By researching beforehand, you show the interviewee that you are serious and prepared. This allows you to ask insightful, specific questions and engage in meaningful dialogue. In turn, your research will deepen your understanding of industries, companies, and roles, helping you focus your job search more effectively.

Researching Jobs, Organizations & Industries

Job seekers should gather information about specific roles, companies, and industries to tailor their applications and job search strategies. Key areas to research include:

- Company culture, mission, and values
- Skills and experience valued by the company
- Recent news and events about the company

This research helps you verify that a company aligns with your career goals and enables you to tailor your resume, cover letter, and networking approach. The information you collect can also form the foundation of a job leads list, guiding your search efforts.

Resources for Job & Industry Research

Before engaging in activities like informational interviews, use a variety of resources to build your knowledge, such as:

- **Online Job Boards:** Platforms like Indeed, Glassdoor, and LinkedIn.
- **Company Websites:** Career pages, press releases, and corporate information.
- **Trade and Professional Associations:** Industry-specific reports and events.
- **Social Media:** Company LinkedIn pages, Twitter accounts, and other platforms.
- **University Career Services:** Resources like the TRU Career and Experiential Learning (n.d.a) Department (<https://www.tru.ca/cel.html>).

Research is a crucial step that strengthens your understanding of

industries and companies, allowing you to make informed choices and stand out in the job market.

Modern Job Search Techniques

Use the latest tools to stay ahead in your job search:

- **AI-Powered Job Alerts:** Platforms like LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and Indeed offer customized job alerts based on your skills and preferences.
- **Google Alerts:** Receive regular updates on industry trends, company news, and relevant job postings.
- **Company Deep Dives:** Track companies of interest by following their websites, press releases, and LinkedIn profiles to stay informed about hiring trends and developments.
- **Personal Branding:** Optimize your LinkedIn profile with industry-relevant keywords, a professional summary, and a portfolio that highlights your accomplishments.

By leveraging these tools and conducting thorough research, you can enhance your job search and increase your chances of finding the right opportunity.

Job Search Action Plan

Once you complete your research and organize your network, your next impulse may be to surf the web for job advertisements. However, your job search will be more effective if you first create a structured action plan. Developing a schedule helps you stay on track and consistently take steps toward your job search goals.

Consider committing to the following activities:

- Take self-assessments to identify your skills, interests, and values (see the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter).
- Prepare your resume (see the Application Documents (#chapter-application-documents) chapter).
- Reach out to your networking contacts.
- Set up informational interviews.
- Research potential employers.
- Attend job fairs and trade shows.

Creating a clear plan with specific goals, tasks, and timelines is key. Tables 8.1 (#tab8-1), 8.2 (#tab8-2), and 8.3 (#tab8-3) below provide a sample job search action plan with three primary goals. Each goal includes tasks, the estimated time to complete each step, and target completion dates.

Table 8.1: Goal #1 – Update Resume

Steps/Tasks	Estimated Time to Complete	Due Date
Make changes to resume	1 hour	Week of 05/17
Bring resume to Career & Experiential Learning Department for review	1 hour	Week of 05/17
Edit based on feedback	1 hour	Week of 05/17
Tailor resume to companies of interest	1 hour	05/24

Table 8.2: Goal #2 – Apply to 5–7 Jobs in the Field

Steps/Tasks	Estimated Time to Complete	Due Date
Search online databases for positions	1–3 hours	05/24
Identify organizations of interest	1–2 hours	05/25
Create tailored cover letter	30 min–1 hour	05/26
Have someone review the cover letter	30 min	05/27
Edit and finalize the cover letter	1 hour	05/27
Submit applications	2–3 days	05/28

Table 8.3: Goal #3 – Build and Maintain Your Network

Steps/Tasks	Estimated Time to Complete	Due Date
Set up or update LinkedIn profile	1–3 hours	06/01
Search LinkedIn alumni groups for contacts	1 hour	06/02
Make a list of current connections	30 min	06/02
Contact Career Services	15–30 min	06/03
Send update emails to contacts	1 hour	06/04
Reach out to new contacts	1 hour	06/05

Tracking Your Applications

Since you will likely apply to multiple positions over a short period, maintaining a job search log (Table 8.4 (#tab8-4)) is crucial. This log allows you to track job applications and follow-up activities, including phone calls, emails, and meetings with employers.

Table 8.4: Job Search Log

Date	Position	Contact Information	Follow-Up Notes
05/24/23	Customer Service Rep at Service Canada	Ms. Jane Smith	Resume submitted 05/24/23. Received interview email for 05/30/23. Job Number: 025540SC

For ongoing updates about job opportunities, companies, and industries, set up Google Alerts (<https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/4815696?hl=en>) (Google Search Help, n.d.) for relevant keywords. Google will notify you with search results either daily or weekly. Conducting regular, in-depth research is essential for refining your job search strategy and preparing for informational interviews.

Exercise 8.2

Research

Once you complete your research and organize your network, your next step should be to create a **structured job search plan**. Begin creating your **job leads list** and **job search action plan**:

1. Identify and record sources of job leads, including networking contacts, friends, and family.
2. Create a sample job search action plan.
3. Conduct research on at least one company for which you are interested in working.

Best Practices for Job Search Time Management

- Dedicate 1-2 hours per day to searching and applying.
- Allocate 30 minutes per day to networking and follow-ups.
- Use a spreadsheet or job tracking tool (e.g., TealHQ or Huntr) to track applications.
- Set weekly goals (e.g., apply to five positions or reach out to three new contacts).

Expanding Your Job Search

- Leverage recruiters and staffing agencies.
- Explore freelancing or gig work to build experience.
- Consider international job postings in remote-friendly companies.

Job Search: Contact

Research plays a crucial role in advancing your job search, particularly through networking and informational interviews. By connecting with employers via personal or professional networks, job seekers can uncover opportunities, gather career insights, and build meaningful relationships. Your connections—whether they are friends, family, professors, employers, or peers—are invaluable resources. It is essential to appreciate these relationships and continually expand your network, especially in your field of interest.

This section covers two key networking methods:

1. Networking through job fairs, trade shows, and industry associations.
2. Networking through informational interviews.

Previously, you identified your personal network in Exercise 8.1 (#exercise8-1) and created a job leads list and job search action plan in Exercise 8.2 (#exercise8-2). You also researched a company of interest. Now, it is time to broaden your network by engaging with job fairs, trade shows, and professional associations, particularly through informational interviews.

Networking Through Job Fairs, Trade Shows & Industry Associations

Attending job fairs, trade shows, and industry events offers direct opportunities to network, arrange informational interviews, and collect valuable contact information. Professors and the Career & Experiential Learning (CEL) team at Thompson Rivers University (TRU) can guide you to networking events, job openings, internships, and research opportunities.

You can discover networking events through community calendars, newspapers, professional journals, and organizational websites, including those of TRU. These events help you market yourself and learn about companies that may be hiring for roles that match your career interests.

The video below offers practical advice on making the most of job fairs.

Job Fair do's & don'ts (<https://youtu.be/-ptcNGviK5M?si=IOUCpubdD-DX30RB>) [1:43 min] by Thompson Rivers University (2019)



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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=47#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Job Fair do's & don'ts (<https://youtu.be/-ptcNGviK5M?si=IOUCpubdD-DX30RB>)



Preparation Tips for Job Fairs & Trade Shows

- **Research:** Learn about the participating companies ahead of time to demonstrate your knowledge.
- **Resume:** Ensure your resume is updated, printed on quality paper, and tailored to the companies you want to approach.
- **Availability:** Know when you are available to start work if you are seeking a job.
- **Target List:** Prioritize the companies you want to meet to manage your time effectively.
- **Know Your Strengths:** Be clear about the skills and qualifications you bring to the table.
- **Anticipate Questions:** Prepare answers to potential questions from employers.
- **Plan Questions:** Have a list of thoughtful questions for the recruiters.

- **Portfolio:** Bring a portfolio to organize your materials, including extra resumes, pens, and paper for note-taking.
- **Professional Presentation:** Dress in business attire and practice your self-introduction. Make a strong first impression by maintaining eye contact, offering a firm handshake, and acting professionally.

During Job Fairs & Trade Shows

- Display enthusiasm, confidence, and professionalism.
- Introduce yourself with your name, major, and graduation date.
- Present your resume to the recruiter.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization.
- Summarize your key experiences and skills.
- Ask about the application process and job opportunities.
- Request a business card, and follow up with a thank-you email afterward.
- Stay attentive to what representatives share, and be considerate of others waiting to speak.
- Keep an open mind about opportunities from all organizations.
- Avoid asking about salary or benefits until the employer shows a clear interest in you.

After the event, follow up with the contacts you made. Send a brief email to thank them, mentioning key takeaways from your conversation and expressing enthusiasm for their company.

TRU Career & Experiential Learning Job Fair

TRU's Career & Experiential Learning Department hosts the largest job fair in BC's Interior, featuring around 90 employer booths and

over 2,000+ student attendees annually. Employers recruit students and graduates from various disciplines—arts, business, education, fine arts, health, journalism, science, social work, tourism, and trades—for roles ranging from volunteer work to graduate jobs. Attending TRU's Job Fair (<https://www.tru.ca/cel/events/job-fair.html>) (TRU Career & Experiential Learning, n.d.b), whether you are a first-year or final-year student, is a valuable way to develop networking skills and explore career opportunities.

The video below highlights moments from a past TRU job fair.

TRU Job Fair – Thompson Rivers University (<https://youtu.be/dA82-s6Cpzc?si=TV5kcGqx4SL4FNAP>) [0:59 min] by Thompson Rivers University (2015)



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(#oembed-2)*

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

TRU Job Fair – Thompson Rivers University

(<https://youtu.be/dA82-s6Cpzc?si=TV5kcGqx4SL4FNAP>)



Additional Networking Through Industry Associations

Joining professional associations allows you to connect with influential people at meetings and events. Research organizations related to your field to explore membership benefits, including student discounts. Membership often grants access to directories and resources that can further expand your network.

Networking Through Informational Interviewing

Informational interviews are designed to:

- Explore specific career fields.
- Uncover or refine career options.
- Get advice on how your skills apply to the field.
- Learn about key issues in the industry.
- Expand your professional network.

Networking through informational interviews begins by identifying your current contacts and understanding how they can help you reach potential employers or advisors.

Opportunities to Network

Events such as **job fairs**, **trade shows**, and **industry association meetings** offer valuable chances to meet professionals in your field (Ryerson Career & Co-op Centre, 2018). Conversations at these events can naturally lead to opportunities to request informational interviews.

How to Approach an Informational Interview

When you reach out to someone for an informational interview, etiquette matters. You can contact them by email, phone, or in person, but regardless of how you reach out, be concise and professional. Here is how to craft a compelling request:

- **Introduce Yourself:** Share your name and a brief background.
- **Explain the Connection:** Mention how you found them or who referred you.
- **Be Clear About Your Goal:** State that you are seeking information about their role or industry.
- **Specify Time Expectations:** Let them know how long the

meeting will take (e.g., 20–30 minutes).

The more respectful and prepared you are, the more likely they will agree to meet with you.

Preparing Your Questions

Come prepared with thoughtful questions to demonstrate your interest and gather useful insights. Informational interviews are an opportunity to ask questions you might not feel comfortable raising in a formal job interview, such as those about work culture, career progression, and even salary. Below are common question categories:

- **Job Specifics:** What does a typical day look like?
- **Industry Trends:** What are the current challenges and opportunities?
- **Education and Skills:** What qualifications and personal qualities lead to success?
- **Career Growth:** What advice would they give to someone starting in the field?
- **Company Culture:** What makes this organization unique?

Questions can be based on (Florida State University Career Center, 2018):

- Work environment
- Required prerequisites or education
- Occupation and company information
- Personal qualities suited for this occupation and company job search
- Career-building advice
- Closing questions

Bringing an updated resume (see the Application Documents (#chapter-application-documents) chapter) can also be beneficial. Ask open-ended questions, such as the questions categorized and listed below.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Preparing Your Questions

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/job-search-strategies/#h5p-11>)



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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=47#h5p-11>

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=47#h5p-11>)

At the end of the informational interview, verbally thank the interviewee for taking the time to offer advice and career information. Ask the interviewee for referrals to other individuals for additional informational interviews. A follow-up handwritten thank you card, or an email update and/or words of thanks is

appropriate. Record information you have obtained from your informational interview, including names, comments and new referrals for future reference, in your **job leads list** and **job search action plan**, which you started in Exercise 8.2 (#exercise8-2).

During & After the Interview

At the end of the interview, thank your contact for their time and insights. You can also ask for referrals to other professionals who might be open to an informational interview.

Follow-up is essential:

- **Document Your Experience:** Write down what you learned, key takeaways, and any referrals you received.
- **Send a Thank-You Note:** Within 1–2 days, send a thank-you email or handwritten card expressing your appreciation (see examples in Thank You and Follow-Up Letter Example (#thankyou-ex)).
- **Stay Connected:** Keep the person updated on your progress, especially if you act on their advice or meet with someone they referred.
- **Explore Suggested Opportunities:** If you cannot afford to attend an event they mentioned, look into volunteering as a way to participate.

Building a strong professional network is an ongoing process. It is not just about quantity—quality connections with people who can offer advice and opportunities are invaluable. Networking regularly helps you hear about unadvertised roles and develop long-term relationships that support your career growth.

Thank You & Follow-Up Letter Example

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Thank You & Follow-Up Letter Example (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/job-search-strategies/#h5p-12>)





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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=47#h5p-12>)

[Adapted from “Informational Interview: Thank-You Letter With Tips” (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190707231527/https://www.thebalancecareers.com/informational-interview-thank-you-letter-example-2063970#expand>) (Doyle, 2019)]

Exercise 8.3

Preparing for Informational Interviews

To prepare for your informational interviews and build contacts:

1. Research and record the dates of TRU's Job Fair and any industry-specific trade shows that are offered locally.
2. Record five questions that you can use in your informational interview, based on your research to date.
3. Do you have some ideas for people you can interview now? Try to practice with family and friends before your first informational interview.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Exercise 8.3 Preparing for Informational Interviews

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/job-search-strategies/#h5p-13>)



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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=47#h5p-13>)

Job Search: Decode

Job postings typically follow a consistent structure. By analyzing job descriptions carefully, you can streamline your job search by focusing on roles aligned with your goals, writing compelling applications, and preparing confidently for interviews.

Although section names may vary, most job postings are divided into:

- Job title (and sometimes a job number)
- Company and role description
- List of key responsibilities
- Desired qualifications for applicants

As a rule of thumb, the most critical details appear at the top of each section. If you meet four out of five of the listed qualifications, take that as a positive sign.

Job Title

The job title, sometimes accompanied by a job number, is vital for tailoring your resume, summary statements, and profiles (see the [Application Documents \(#chapter-application-documents\)](#) chapter). Titles can vary significantly across companies in terms of responsibility level, required experience, and salary range. Some companies may use broad titles, while others are very specific. Decode the job description to gain clarity on these details. Always include the company's job number when referring to the title.

Job Description

To extract key information from the job description, analyze or “decode” the text. Research the company (#research) through its website and other sources to understand its goals. This research can help you target positions and organizations that match your career aspirations.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities section outlines the tasks and duties expected in the role. Typically, job postings list five to 10 responsibilities. These may range from broad statements (e.g., “lead the team in generating...”) to detailed tasks (e.g., “create weekly reports...”). Use these details to customize your resume by highlighting relevant experiences, achievements, and skills. If you encounter unfamiliar responsibilities, research the terms online to understand them better. Do not let unfamiliar tasks deter you from applying if they seem learnable.

Qualifications

Also referred to as “requirements” or “experience,” the qualifications section highlights the desired skills, education, and background for applicants. Employers might specify prior experience (e.g., “experience in...”) or accomplishments they expect candidates to have. Clearly state how you meet these qualifications in your resume’s summary section. If you do not meet all the criteria, emphasize transferable skills and strengths that position you as a strong candidate (see the Application Documents (#chapter-application-documents) chapter).

Understand the Jargon

Think of the job posting as a map to getting the position. Read the description several times, carefully, and be on the lookout for repeating themes.

For example, you may notice the qualifications lists “self-starters” or the responsibilities section specifies that the applicant will “independently develop a project.” These are good indications that the employer wants someone who is comfortable working without supervision and in a leadership role.

Analyzing job postings and tailoring your resume to match job titles, descriptions, responsibilities, and qualifications can determine whether you get an interview or are screened out. Keep in mind that it is rare for anyone to perfectly match every requirement in a posting.

Exercise 8.4

Decoding Job Postings

Decode three job postings with the same job title in a field of work you may be interested in:

1. Identify the key responsibilities within each job posting.
2. Identify the key qualifications within each job posting.
3. Research the companies who posted the jobs. Will they be of interest to you?

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9. Interviews

LEANNE MIHALICZ

[This chapter is adapted from a previous version by Sarah Ladd]



Figure 9.1 Interviews (Bartlett, 2024) CC BY 4.0
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Introduction

The work you have put into your job search and career exploration journey will become incredibly useful to you again as you land

yourself some job interviews. In this chapter, you will learn what to do to prepare ahead, and how to reflect and improve after each interview you attend. The largest part of this chapter introduces the different types of job interviews you may encounter, helps you recognize the types of questions you may be asked, and identifies an effective strategy to use when you answer each question. Importantly, you will learn how to draw on the knowledge you gained about yourself while conducting your self-assessment (see the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter) and expand upon the information you put in your resume and cover letters (see the Application Documents (#chapter-application-documents) chapter) to show employers that you are a good fit for their position. Hopefully, as you implement the techniques here, your confidence in interview settings will grow, and you will represent yourself as more positive and self-assured.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Discuss the purpose of a job interview.
- Identify interview formats and questions.
- Align skills and knowledge with the position to prepare for interviewing.
- Practice interview responses using STAR and storytelling approaches.
- Analyze interview feedback.

Overview: What is a Job Interview?

You've applied for a job and received an interview request! Congratulations! Now, you need to prepare.

Job Interviews Defined

Employers review sometimes hundreds or even thousands of applications and make a short list of candidates they feel have a reasonable chance of being able to do the job; in other words, they meet or exceed the requirements and have desirable qualities. This is where the term being “shortlisted” for an interview comes from. If you are shortlisted for an interview, this means the employer believes you can do the job. Now, you must prove to them that you are the best candidate among those being interviewed. Employers use valuable resources to recruit potential candidates and if you are chosen for an interview, they believe you have the qualifications. Remember this when you are feeling nervous about an interview: they already like you on paper, so you have every right to feel confident when you interview.

A job interview is a two-way conversation between yourself and a potential employer. The employer must learn if you are the best choice for their position:

- Will you fit in with their team?
- Will you learn quickly and perform well in the short- and long-term?

- Will you bring skills, ability, or knowledge that will make their company better?

You also need to find out if this employer can provide you with what you need to meet your own workplace values (see the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter). Later in this chapter (During the Interview (#during)), you will learn how to ask great questions at the end of the interview to help you evaluate employers during job interviews.

Interview Formats

To determine if you have the right qualification and passion, employers assess their shortlisted candidates using a variety of interview formats or techniques. There are several ways in which they can do this:

1. Pre-Screening

Some employers will speak briefly with a large number of possible candidates—typically by phone—before interviewing a smaller number of candidates. This is usually referred to as pre-screening. Employers may use pre-screening to identify which candidates have the specific requirements for the position or to see if a candidate is enthusiastic about their job. If you are contacted for a pre-screening interview, you should still prepare as if it were a full interview, just in case they ask further questions. It is always best to be prepared.

Pre-screening Example

A forestry employer might require all candidates to have a valid Class 5 driver's license, experience with camping or wilderness hiking, and knowledge of wildlife. They would not want to interview four great candidates and discover two of them only have a Class 7 driver's license and cannot be hired. Therefore, a pre-screen of 5–10 candidates before scheduling interviews with three candidates will save them time and ensure they are only interviewing candidates who meet those absolute requirements.

2. Pre-recorded Video Interviews

Pre-recorded video interviews are becoming more common as there are a variety of software applications that can assist companies in creating a platform for candidates to record and upload responses to interview questions. Like the phone interview, video interviews are often utilized as a pre-screening option. Advantages of using this format are that candidates can schedule the video interview for a time that suits them and the interview can be done in a setting of their choice. Sometimes, the questions are given in advance, and a video response can be uploaded; for other automated formats, there may be specific software and time restrictions for completion. Some companies suggest that the pre-

recorded interviews support diversity and inclusion, making these formats more accessible (Cpl, 2022).

3. Technical Interviews

Depending on the industry, company, and position, technical and knowledge-based interviews are also part of the interview process, either as a pre-screening or within an interview. For instance, many technology companies require candidates to demonstrate their technical competencies and problem-solving abilities. There are some online practice sites, such as LeetCode (<https://leetcode.com/>) (n.d.), for people to practice their coding prior to interviewing. Other types of technical or knowledge-based interviews may include writing or knowledge testing.

4. One-on-One & Panel Interviews

A common type of job interview is a one-on-one in-person interview with a single hiring manager, during which you will sit down together and you will answer a series of pre-determined questions. The questions asked will help them decide if you have the fit, skills, and passion for their job.

Often, you will be met with more than one interviewer, which is referred to as a panel interview. Many people are nervous about panel interviews because they feel the pressure of having multiple people observing them as they speak. However, panel interviews are ideal because the more people there are observing you, the more they learn about you collectively. Each person will see and appreciate different qualities about you. Another great benefit of panel interviews is that you can switch eye contact from one person to another while speaking, instead of making direct eye contact with

one person for a longer period of time. This can be much more comfortable for you when you are nervous.

5. Group Interviews

A group interview is where there are several candidates being evaluated at one time during one interview. This is not a common occurrence but does happen when a company is hiring large numbers of staff at one time. For example, seasonal hiring in the tourism industry sometimes requires hiring dozens of staff at a time. The employer may not have time to interview that many people one at a time. If the job requires group work, the employer may want to see how candidates interact with each other.

It can be difficult to stand out in a group interview. You will want to make sure that you step up, fully participate, speak whenever there is an opportunity, and join in any group activities during the interview.

6. Long-Distance Virtual Interviews

Long-distance interviews are growing in popularity with the advancement of technology in today's more globally-minded world. It is now possible to interview easily for jobs in other cities using telephone conferencing or video conferencing (e.g., via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or other software). While some employers still prefer in-person interviews, more and more are accepting long-distance interviews as a valid alternative for out-of-town candidates. There are both disadvantages and advantages to long-distance virtual interviews. See Appendix C: Tips for Long Distance Interviews (#back-matter-appendix-c-tips-for-long-distance-interviews) for specific tips on long-distance interviews.

7. Informal Interviews

All of the interview formats described so far have been structured, formal interviews. Occasionally, you will find yourself in a casual or informal interview. Some very small companies with no set hiring practices may use this style of interviewing, and other times, an informal interview occurs when you are being offered a job that has been created just for you as a result of your networking efforts. Informal interviews might occur in a coffee shop, over lunch, or even at a networking event.

No matter the reason or location of an informal interview, it is your job to make sure that you prepare just as you would for a structured interview, and then look for opportunities to offer the interviewer key information about why you are a good candidate for them. You might have to be creative in how you work this into your conversation with the interviewer, but it is especially important that you do so. Look for opportunities in the conversation to share stories about your skills, or gently return the conversation yourself back to the job if it goes off topic. Ask “Is there anything else you’d like to know about me to see if I’m a good fit for your position?” The good news is, most entry-level, student, and co-op job interviews will be structured interviews, and if you are invited to an informal interview, you can meet with a career counselor or co-op coordinator first to get advice.

Regardless of the type of interview you are being asked to attend, preparation and practice are essential to increase your chance of receiving a job offer. The information and activities in the sections Before the Interview (#before) and During the Interview (#during) will help you be at your best.

Unethical Questions & Discrimination

Each province in Canada has employment standards, which prohibit employers from asking questions that could lead to discrimination.

Some examples of illegal or unethical questions include, but are not limited to:

- What is your marital status?
- Do you have or plan to have children?
- What is your sexual orientation?
- What is your race or religion?

Employers are allowed to ask you questions that pertain directly to the job. For example, they cannot ask you if you are from a different country, but they can ask you if you are legally entitled to work in Canada. They cannot ask you about your sexual orientation, but they are allowed to ask about your gender if that is important for the job. For example, only women may be hired to work in a women's shelter, where men may not be allowed to be present. Similarly, an employer cannot ask you if you are physically disabled, but they can ask you if you are able to lift up to 25 kg if the job requires regular lifting.

If you find yourself being asked illegal or unethical questions, this is a possible sign that the employer you are meeting might not be good to work for. Or, it might mean the interviewer is inexperienced and does not know what not to ask, so proceed with caution and try to suspend your judgement.

If you are asked an illegal question, or you are uncertain, the best thing to do is ask them why they are inquiring. If they cannot provide a valid reason relating to the job and you do not feel comfortable answering it, you should politely decline to answer and ask them to move to the next question. As a student, your next step after the interview should be to write down exactly what

you were asked, and then advise someone in the TRU Career & Experiential Learning (n.d.) Department (<https://www.tru.ca/cel/contact-us.html>) that you were asked illegal or inappropriate questions.

Exercise 9.1

Understanding the Employer's Perspective

Every employer must design their interview strategy and come up with questions. You can begin to learn to anticipate what you might be asked by understanding the employer's perspective. To try this out:

1. Imagine you are an employer creating interview questions for a job.
2. Choose a job description that interests you from TRU Career Connections (<https://tru-csm.symplicity.com/>) (n.d.) or other sources.* Since you are not actually applying, do not worry about the location of the job or whether you fully qualify; simply choose a position that sounds enjoyable to you.
3. Write a list of skills you would like the candidate to have for that job. Include at least three technical and three non-technical skills in your list.
4. Reflect on what personal qualities you would want in a co-worker or employee.
5. Write out a list of possible questions you might ask in order to test candidates for those skills.

*A few other possible sources to find job descriptions include (but are not limited to): WorkBC (<https://www.workbc.ca/>) (n.d.), Indeed (<https://ca.indeed.com/>) (n.d.), Eluta

(<https://www.eluta.ca/>) (n.d.), and Glassdoor (<https://www.glassdoor.ca/>) (n.d.).

Before the Interview

Importance of Preparation

The most important thing you can do before an interview is to prepare. This includes practicing questions you might be asked and having answers to standard questions ready in advance. In order to begin doing that, you must first understand the job, and you must learn more about the employer. You will need to conduct some research on this.

Start with the most obvious piece of information available to you: the job description!

Tip. Keep copies of all job descriptions you apply to; this will make your preparation much easier.

Review the job description from top to bottom; look for keywords about the skills and qualities emphasized most, and highlight those items you are the best at. Review information the employer has included about their organization and the job duties—there are

often valuable clues here that will tell you about the employer's work culture.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the job description, it is time to look beyond that. Begin looking at the company website, and also at reviews about the company in the news or other media, on their own social media sites, and on sites like Glassdoor (<https://www.glassdoor.ca/>) (n.d.). Find out the names of your interviewers, then look them up on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com>) (n.d) and get an idea of their career progression. When researching, however, try to avoid just memorizing facts about the company. Look for reasons why you are a good fit for their team, the role, and the whole organization.

Choose your interview outfit. A good rule for choosing an interview outfit is to dress a little better than you would every day in that job.

Interview Outfit Examples

Here are some examples of interview outfits for specific types of jobs:

- **For a Field-Work Job:** Hiking boots, khaki pants, and a button-up or polo shirt.
- **For an Office Job:** A suit and tie or dress shirt.
- **For High-Technology Work:** Dark-coloured pants and a collared shirt or blouse.

Choosing an interview outfit can cause a lot of anxiety, so you will

need to use common sense and your own best judgement. Here are some basic rules that will work for every interview, no matter the industry:

- Keep clothing neutral in colour, pattern, and style so as not to distract the interviewer(s).
- Avoid large pieces of jewelry.
- Make sure your clothes are all clean, in good shape, and not wrinkled.
- Groom your hair well, and if it is long hair, tie it back from your face.
- Attend to your personal hygiene (e.g., brush your teeth, trim and scrub your fingernails, and use deodorant).
- Avoid strongly scented body lotions, colognes, and perfumes, as many workplaces have scent-free policies to protect those with allergies and sensitivities.

If you still have specific concerns about your appearance, it is best to get advice from a career counselor or co-op coordinator. When in doubt, go for something conservative, but above all, do not worry too much about your interview outfit.

What to Bring

Find yourself a folder or notebook in which you can place 2–3 copies of your resume and cover letter, your reference list, a list of questions you wish to ask at the end of the interview, and any other documents you may need for the interview. This might include samples of your work, the interviewer's address and contact information in case of emergency, or anything the interviewer may have asked you to bring. Remember to bring a pen and blank paper to make notes during or after the interview.

Arriving on Time

Canadian employers and most professionals have specific expectations about time and punctuality. A good way to remember North American time standards is: Early = On time; On time = Late, and Late = Unacceptable (see Figure 9.2 (#fig9-2)).

Early = On time
On time = Late
Late = Unacceptable

Figure 9.2 North American time standards (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>)

It is best to arrive approximately 10 to 15 minutes before your interview and politely advise the receptionist that you have arrived. Never arrive exactly on time, as this may cause employers to perceive you as being unprepared or that you might be someone who always waits until the last moment on tasks. This is not a good first impression. Canadians often remark that “time is money” or “the early bird gets the worm” because time is considered to be valuable. If you waste someone’s time by making them wait for you, they can become very upset.

Arriving too early may also make the employer feel uncomfortable. If you arrive more than 20 minutes early, it is better to find somewhere else to wait; at a nearby coffee shop, a sunny park bench, or even in your car if you drove. You can use this extra time to take deep breaths, relax, and practise your interview questions.

If you are running late because of something completely outside

of your control (such as a car accident or medical emergency), phone your interviewer and alert them that you are on your way but running late. Be sure to apologize when you do this and be prepared that they may choose not to continue with the interview.

Make Travel Plans

To make sure you are able to get to your interview on time (remembering that on time = early), plan your travel carefully. Look up the address on the internet and decide how you will get there. Will you take the bus? Check the bus schedules, and plan to catch one that arrives well before your interview. Driving? Make sure you know where to park and bring money for parking. If you have never been to the location before, consider going there the day before to make sure you know exactly where it is, which entrance to use (especially for large buildings), and how long it will take you to arrive.

Greeting the Interviewer(s)

Politely greet the receptionist or other staff that you meet upon arrival. When your interviewer comes to greet you, make good eye contact, smile, and shake their hand firmly. They will likely make small talk with you after they introduce themselves and ask you a question such as “how was your weekend?” or “did you have any trouble finding our office?” You should make small talk in return and keep it light and positive. Complaining that you spent the whole weekend studying for an exam or about how you had to drive around the block three times to find a parking spot will set a poor first impression. Of course, you should also ask them a polite

question or two in response and start building that initial relationship with them.

It is normal to feel nervous about being interviewed. Preparation, practice, and research will help tremendously. To clear your nerves, breathe deeply, keep your posture straight before and during the interview, and remember that a certain amount of nervousness is normal and completely acceptable. Trust that your interviewers already believe you have good potential. This means that they already like you. Now, it is your job to provide them with more proof that you have the fit, skills, and passion for their job. For a little more inspiration in overcoming interview nervousness, watch the video below.

Scared of a Job Interview? Watch This! (<https://youtu.be/MSDBY1Eeqyw?si=363ShIat9aWxGO->) [4:35 min] by Dayvon Goddard (2016)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

*<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=49#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)*

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Scared of a Job Interview? Watch This!

([https://youtu.be/MSDBY1Eeqyw?si=363ShIat9aWxGO-_
](https://youtu.be/MSDBY1Eeqyw?si=363ShIat9aWxGO-))



During the Interview

During the interview, the interviewer(s) will ask you questions to determine if you have the fit, skills, and passion for their job. The best way to prepare for this is to understand the basic types of questions, and know the strategies for each.

Then, no matter what question you are asked, you will be able to pause and think:

- What type of question are they asking me?
- What are they trying to learn about me?
- What is my best strategy for answering this question?

You will want to have a variety of stories in mind as well, starting

with the skills and accomplishments you referred to in your resume and cover letter.

Interview questions come in several types or categories, and we break interview questions into six distinct question types:

1. Introductory questions
2. Behavioural-based interviewing (BBI)
3. Strength and weakness questions
4. Knowledge-based questions
5. Scenario or situational questions
6. Unusual questions

You can find a list of sample questions for each of the six categories listed in Appendix D: Six Types of Interview Questions — Samples ([#back-matter-appendix-d-six-types-of-interview-questions-samples](#)).

Introductory Questions

At the beginning of every interview, you will likely be asked at least one introductory question to help the interviewer get to know you better. Introductory questions come in many different forms but can usually be broken down into a few key categories:

- What can you tell us about yourself?
- What do you know about our company or position?
- What are your goals or interests?
- Why do you want to work for us?

Essentially, all these questions are attempting to achieve the same goal: to determine if you are a good fit for the position or company. What the employer is really asking is “Why should we hire you?” Further strategies for answering introductory questions are

included in Appendix E: Answering Introductory Questions ([#back-matter-appendix-e-answering-introductory-questions](#)).

Behavioural-Based Interviewing

Behavioural-based interview (BBI) questions are the most frequently asked interview questions. The name sounds complex but works on the heavily researched idea that past behaviour is the best predictor of future performance (Janz, 1982). BBI questions ask you to describe a specific example, or story, of a time you performed a task or demonstrated a skill.

Behavioural Based Interview (BBI) Question Examples

- Tell us about a time you used creative problem solving in school or on the job.
- Describe a situation where you had to resolve a conflict with a difficult customer or client.
- Provide an example of a time that your attention to detail prevented a problem from occurring.

(See Appendix F: BBI Question Samples ([#back-matter-appendix-f-bbi-question-samples](#)) for more!)

Before the interview, review the job description and write a list

of the transferable and technical skills you think are the most important. Then, prepare examples ahead of time that are relevant to the job.

It is crucial that you have a collection of examples already in your mind that you can choose from. This is sometimes called an example bank. This may still sound intimidating, but there is a very widely used technique called the STAR method (Figure 9.3 (#fig9-3)) that you can use to help you prepare your example bank. Think of each example as a story and STAR as a way to tell that story clearly and concisely.



Figure 9.3 STAR stands for: Situation, Task, Actions, Results (by the author)
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>)

The actions are the most important part of the STAR example because this is where you will go into very specific detail about the actions you took that showed your skills, knowledge, or ability. Below is an example of STAR to help you get started.

STAR Answer Example

At TRU last semester, during my geography course project **(SITUATION)**, I worked in a team of three to write a short paper on climate change in Northern Canada. My job was to find data on temperatures, precipitation, and bird migration patterns **(TASK)**. To find this, I contacted Environment Canada to gain access to their archives, spoke with two faculty members for other places to find data, and I was able to compile all the data into several charts and tables **(ACTIONS)**. My information allowed the rest of the team to work together to draw several conclusions, and we did well on the report. This experience taught me that there are many ways to conduct research and shows that I am able to find the information I need to complete tasks with minimal guidance when working in your office **(RESULTS)**.

Once you have five to 10 examples in STAR format in your example bank, you can begin practicing behavioural-based questions. Before answering each question you practice, think about which example from your example bank would fit it best, then tell that story. If you find you do not have anything in your example bank, it is probably time to add another example or find a way to gain more experience through your school, hobbies, extracurricular activities, a part-time job, or volunteering. Please see Appendix F: BBI Question Samples ([#back-matter-appendix-f-bbi-question-samples](#)) for a list of commonly asked behavioural-based questions.

Storytelling vs. Bullet Approach

In addition to using a STAR format in structuring your responses, consider using a storytelling approach when explaining your interview examples. This method can be more effective than using a bulleted list format. Not only is storytelling easier for the interviewee to deliver, responding to questions by telling a genuine story that is unique to you can have a lasting impact and be one the interviewer may remember. Review the YouTube video by Neil Bearden (2020) describing the benefits of using a storytelling approach in an interview below. When interviewees can tell their career stories in an engaging way, this approach can be a very effective way to communicate and connect with the interviewer (Alastair MacFadden, 2020).

Storytelling for Job Interviews #bicycle guy (https://youtu.be/2dGfcGJugT4?si=V_7Uomvh2mbNQr-M) [3:16 min] by Neil Bearden (2020)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=49#oembed-2>
(#oembed-2)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Storytelling for Job Interviews #bicycle guy

([https://youtu.be/](https://youtu.be/2dGfcGJugT4?si=V_7Uomvh2mbNQr-M)

[2dGfcGJugT4?si=V_7Uomvh2mbNQr-M](https://youtu.be/2dGfcGJugT4?si=V_7Uomvh2mbNQr-M))



Exercise 9.2

Pair, Share Video Interview

Prepare responses for two interview questions and share with two peers. Your peers will use the rubric provided and give oral and written feedback. Prepare your stories using the STAR method.

Choose from the following: **Tell me about a time when you...**

- handled a challenging situation or made a mistake.
- were in conflict with a peer and how the situation was resolved.
- took specific steps before making a decision.
- were uncertain of the next steps in a task but unsure who to ask for help.
- had an interaction with a customer/client you wish you had dealt with differently.
- were given a list of tasks and had to make decisions about priorities.
- worked with a team member who did not do their share of the work.
- arrived at a compromise in order to meet a team objective.
- went above and beyond to get a task or job finished.
- showcased leadership in school or work
- were proud of an accomplishment

- showed initiative

Once you receive feedback from both your peers, record your video responses to the two questions. Only upload one video responding to both behavioral interview questions.

Strength & Weakness Questions

Almost every interviewer will ask you about your strengths and weaknesses at some point during your interview. You can easily be ready for strengths questions by preparing two to three stories, using the STAR format, that describe the strengths you have that best match the job description. Appendix G: Strength Questions — Strategies ([#back-matter-appendix-g-strength-questions-strategies](#)) talks about strategies for answering strength questions.

Weakness questions require a different strategy than strength questions. Many people believe weakness questions are used to uncover bad things about the candidate so that the employer can decide not to hire them. STOP!



Figure 9.3 Stop! (Prawny, 2016) Pixabay Content License
(<https://pixabay.com/service/license-summary/>)

Do not create fake weaknesses or lie. Employers ask about your weaknesses to see if you are honest and self-aware and to find out if you have a plan to improve yourself in the future. You can find a list of do's and don'ts and an example of bad and good answers for weakness questions in Appendix H: Weakness Questions — Strategies (#back-matter-appendix-h-weakness-questions-strategies).

Strength & Weakness Question Examples

Sometimes employers will ask you a strength or weakness question in a way that is not obvious. Here are some examples:

- What would your last supervisor say are your best and worst abilities?
- Could you tell us about a recent project you are proud of?
- Can you tell us about a recent mistake you have made?
- Of the skills listed in the job description, which skills do you think you will bring to the job and which do you need to work on further?
- What tasks might take you a bit more time to achieve in our role and which ones do you think you can do well with very little effort?

Knowledge-Based Questions

A knowledge-based question tests your knowledge of a specific subject or concept. You can, and should, try to use concepts you have learned in your school studies if applicable, but unlike school, you should not think of knowledge-based questions as a test with an absolute right or wrong answer.

Instead, think of them as a sliding scale, with an answer of zero on one end of the scale and 100 on the other end.

Knowledge-Based Interviewing Technique (Ladd, 2021)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Knowledge-Based Interviewing Technique (Ladd, 2021) (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/interviews/#h5p-14>)



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

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=49#h5p-14>
(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=49#h5p-14>)

Your job in answering a knowledge-based question is to show the employer what level of knowledge you have. If you know 50% of

the answer, describe every bit that you know. Be honest about your knowledge level, but do not stop your answer there. If it makes sense, you can explain what you think might be the next logical step or concept, or how you would learn. For example, you might say, “I have only learned to this point so far, but based on that, I would guess the next thing we will learn will be....” Even if you get the answer partially wrong at this point, you will show the employer that you are smart and can think.

If you make a mistake but your overall answer shows that you are smart, can think critically, and have the desire to learn more, the employer will be able to see that and will know exactly what training you might require to get you past your error. Simply do your best, and if you do not get the job because another candidate had more knowledge, this will be valuable practice for future interviews. Most companies will be happy to have you reapply the next time they have an opening, and they will be excited to see you are improving.

Scenario or Situational Questions

Scenario or situational questions test your judgement and decision-making ability. You are presented with a specific, hypothetical scenario or situation and asked how you would react. There is no single correct answer to a scenario question, so your strategy should be to demonstrate how you think through the problem presented. Be detailed and specific in your answer, and do not be afraid to ask them to repeat the question if there are multiple components to the scenario. An employer asking this type of question will typically choose a scenario you might actually encounter in this job, which gives them a good idea of how you might react.

Scenario Question Examples

- **Conflicting Tasks:** Your manager has asked you to complete an important task, and another senior-level coworker has also asked you to work on something important. Both have similar time frames and deadlines, and you do not believe you can handle both. How do you deal with this scenario?
- **Equipment Failure:** You are out in the field collecting animal population data, and your GPS equipment does not appear to be working correctly. What are some of the problems this may cause? What will you do?
- **Client Complaints:** A client has contacted you to complain about an error they claim that one of your colleagues made. What do you say to this person? What steps do you take next?

Unusual Questions

You may have heard of, or even been asked, an odd or unusual question during an interview, such as, “why are manhole covers round?” or “if you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?” Unusual questions are not favoured by all employers, but those who use them believe they can help understand how candidates think.

When asked an unusual question, pause briefly and think to yourself, “what are they trying to learn about me from this question?” Even if the question does not sound like it is about you, it is always about you. For example, in the case of the question “why are manhole covers round?” the interviewer does not really need to know why. What they do need to know is how you think, and how you express your thoughts. A good strategy here is to answer the question but also provide the rationale as to why you came up with your answer.

For the question “if you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?” the employer is most likely looking to learn more about your personality, which helps them see how you might fit into their team. With something like this, it is not important what tree you name but how you describe yourself in terms of being that tree. Poor answers might include “I don’t know the names of any types of trees,” or “I’d be an apple tree.” These are poor because the employer cannot learn anything about you. A better answer might be, “I would be an apple tree because they are very strong and useful. Apples can be used in hundreds of kinds of recipes to feed people, and I like that because I am very helpful and creative and have lots of different ideas.”

Anticipating Questions Using AI

Artificial intelligence (AI) software such as ChatGPT, HURU, and others may be useful for anticipating possible interview questions and even in crafting an effective response (Grady, 2024; Rozel, 2023). For example, AI tools can assist by pulling out keywords or competencies that can be clues into possible behavioural questions. Receiving feedback on potential interview responses and even mock interviewing are other ways to use AI tools for interview preparation. While these tools can be useful, they should be used with caution as your responses need to be genuine and delivered in ways that are natural and real to you and your experiences.

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

At the end of almost every interview, the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions for them. This piece of the interview is one of the most important parts, and yet many people fail to ask questions or come up with only a few basic questions about the start date, work hours, or even salary. The reason you should ask questions at the end of the interview is to show further interest and so that you can learn enough about the position and company to help you decide if this is the right job for you. You can find tips on how to ask questions as well as sample questions in Appendix I: Questions to Ask the Employer at the End of the Interview (Tips & Samples) ([#back-matter-appendix-i-questions-to-ask-the-employer-at-the-end-of-the-interview-tips-and-samples](#)).

Never ask questions about the salary during the interview. This is either posted on the job, so you will know what it is already, or it will become clear during the job offer stage. If you are interviewing for a full-time job, you will be in a better position to negotiate salary at the offer stage when the employer already knows they want to hire you. Asking at the job interview might make the employer think that salary is your only concern, and they may choose not to make you an offer. For co-op positions, which are generally paid well, the salary should not be your main priority; your learning experience should be your primary goal. If you have financial concerns, you should speak with your co-op coordinator who can help you navigate this to make sure you are not accepting a position that causes you financial distress.

Exercise 9.3

Recognizing Interview Questions

One of the best ways to succeed at interviewing is to be able to recognize what type of question you are being asked so that you can use the correct strategy to answer it. The best way to do this is to practise!

1. Write out a list of interview questions you have heard of or been asked before. Make a note of which type of question each one fits best, and reflect on the strategy that might be used to answer it.
2. Look back at the list of interview questions you wrote for Exercise 9.1 (#exercise9-1). Which types of questions did you choose? Would you change your questions now that you have learned more? What other questions would you add to that list?
3. For even more practice, look up common interview questions on the internet, and try to determine what type of question each one falls into.

Exercise 9.4

Example Bank

Behavioural-based interviews are very common, and STAR examples are crucial. It is not easy to think of examples on the spot during an interview. To help you feel confident and prepared, you should create an example bank.

1. Prepare five to 10 STAR examples that relate to the skills you identified from the job description you chose in Exercise 9.1 (#exercise9-1).
2. Create an example bank with these five to 10 examples, and plan to expand your bank over time by adding more STAR examples whenever you achieve something you think will be useful to share with employers.
3. Your example bank can be created using Microsoft Word, an Excel spreadsheet, a handwritten journal, or you can get fancy and create colour-coded index cards. Your example bank should be in whatever format works best for you.

After the Interview

Post-Interview Reflection

Before you do anything else, take some time immediately after each job interview to write down the questions you were asked and a brief summary of how you answered each question. Reflect on each question and evaluate your performance:

- Did you recognize the type of question being asked and choose an appropriate strategy?
- Do you feel confident you answered with relevant detail?
- Were your answers too short, too long, or just right?

Make note of what you felt went very well so that you remember to repeat that in future interviews, and reflect on what you could have done better so you can continue to improve.

Seek assistance from a career counselor or co-op coordinator to debrief the interview experience each time. Above all, be gentle with yourself and celebrate what went well. You are your own worst critic, and it is not healthy to only focus on what you feel might have been the negative aspects of the interview. See Appendix J: Post-Interview Reflection Form ([#back-matter-appendix-j-post-interview-reflection-form](#)) for a sample post-interview reflection form you can print and use to help track your progress.

Thank-You Notes

Within a day of the interview, you should contact the interviewer(s) with a thank-you email. Keep your message short and to the point

but also remind them that you are genuinely interested in the role. A personalized thank-you note shows the employer that you are respectful, eager, and professional. Three samples of thank-you notes are included in Appendix K: Sample “Thank-You” Emails (#back-matter-appendix-k-sample-thank-you-emails).

Contact Your References

Your reference list should already be prepared and ready when you begin a job search, but it is also important that you contact your references before the interview to ensure they are available and again after an interview to let them know that they might be called within the next few days. When you do this, you can also let them know more about the interview and send them a copy of the job description. If the interview emphasized teamwork, computer programming, and customer service, you could let your references know that, so they can be sure to mention those skills if they are contacted. If you feel that the interview went very well except for one question you wish you had answered better, you could ask your references to help you by specifically mentioning something that they saw you do well that would improve upon your answer.

Finally, be sure to thank your references, and update them on the status of your job search from time to time, especially when you are successful and get a job offer. They will be pleased to hear this and know that they helped you. Your references are not just ‘tools’ to be used to your benefit—they are real people with whom you have developed a working or personal relationship. They should be treated with respect and gratitude, and you should reach out to them from time to time to say hello without any expectations.

Follow Up With the Employer

The interview is complete, you have sent a thank-you note, and now, you must wait. It is not acceptable to contact the employer repeatedly for a decision. If you have not heard from them and have followed up by phone or email one or two times, you might send one final message stating that you are still interested and hope to hear from them. If you do not hear back after that, then it is probably safe to assume they are not interested in hiring you.

If you do hear back and are told that you are not being offered the role, you should politely and tactfully accept their decision and thank them for their time. You are certainly welcome to ask them if they would be willing to provide you with some feedback either right then or at a time that would be convenient for them. You might say something like “I am sorry to hear that, but hope you found the perfect candidate. I am still committed to one day working for your company and would love to know if there is anything I can do to improve for the future. Would you have time to share some feedback with me?”

Be Kind to Yourself & Never Give Up

Above all, if you are not offered a position, do not give up. Some students are lucky and receive a job offer after their first interview, but the majority of job seekers attend multiple interviews before a job offer comes. It is difficult to learn that you were not the successful candidate, but try not to take it personally. Look back at what you could have done differently, and look for ways to build whatever skills you might still be lacking. Keep applying to more jobs; your turn will come so long as you keep trying and never stop improving your own skill set. Meet with your co-op coordinator

or a career counselor after interviewing to debrief and continue improving.

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SECTION IV
WORK-INTEGRATED
LEARNING

10. Preparing for Your First Professional Position

LEANNE MIHALICZ AND SARAH GIBSON

Introduction

The day has finally arrived—all your job-search efforts have paid off, and you are about to start your first professional position. This chapter will help you prepare for your first week and give you suggestions on how to optimize your learning opportunities. Just as the first few minutes of an interview are critical to your success in securing the position, how you navigate on the job will influence your overall experiences and your career journey.

Whether it is your first professional experience or a work-integrated learning opportunity (WIL), it may create feelings of excitement and nervousness.

- What will your new team be like?
- What projects will you be given?
- Will you make a good first impression?
- Where will you be three months from now? Six months? A year?

These are common questions and are part of pre-reflection, a process that will help you to become more self-aware and support your career development (Center for Teaching Excellence, n.d.).

This chapter will use the work-integrated learning (#WIL) reference (WIL), which may include students in an experiential

program such as co-operative education, practicum, apprenticeship, and service learning.

“Work-integrated learning is a form of curricular experiential education that formally integrates a student’s academic studies with quality experiences within a workplace or practice setting. WIL experiences include an engaged partnership of at least: an academic institution, a host organization, and a student.” (CEWIL Canada, n.d.)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Confirm the expectations of the position, and prepare for your first week.
- Consider skills and behaviours that will optimize your workplace experiences.
- Identify opportunities to develop workplace relationships, including potential mentors.
- Reflect on how your work and educational experiences connect to your career development.

Preparing to Launch: Before You Start Your New Role

You already know a lot about where you will be working, having researched the organization during the job search process and for your interview; but do not stop now. Review your offer letter and any important instructions, such as whom you are reporting to. Visit the organization's website to understand their goals, current projects, and mission statement, which can help orientate you to the organization's culture and values.

The sample worksheet and checklist in Exercises 10.1 (#exercise10-1) and 10.2 (#exercise10-2) will help you prepare for the first day.

Exercise 10.1

Critical Information About the Organization & Role Worksheet

Use this sample worksheet in Table 10.1 (#tab10-1) to organize critical information you have collected about the company and role.

Table 10.1: Sample Worksheet

Information to Collect	Details
Organization Name and Web Link	–
Mission Statement	–
Values	–
Current Projects/ Items in the News	–
Supervisor(s) Name and Title	–
Contact Information (Phone and Email)	–

Exercise 10.2

Before Your First Day Checklist

Use the following checklist for the first day of your professional career journey:

1. Determine the location and your route to the workplace OR set up an ergonomic, functional, and professional workspace in your home or remote setting.
2. Communicate with the supervisor—confirm start time, dress code, and if there is anything you can do to prepare in advance of your first day.
3. Review the company website, organizational mission, values, and current projects (see Exercise 10.1 (#exercise10-1)).
4. Ensure you have a hard copy or electronic notebook or planner.

Onboarding & First Impressions

During onboarding, you will be introduced to important information and administrative tasks to get you set up on the job. Sometimes, this can be overwhelming, as you meet many new people and are introduced to the organization's procedures. It is common to feel

a mix of excitement and exhaustion as you navigate your new workplace.

The checklist in Exercise 10.3 (#exercise10-3) will help you prepare for the first week.

Exercise 10.3

Onboarding Tips for Your First Week

Consider the following actions to create a positive first impression:

- Bring a notebook or journal to track all the new information you will learn.
- Fill out any paperwork for HR requirements or bring your identification and SIN.
- Confirm with your supervisor if there are any training or orientation documents to review.
- Introduce yourself and greet everyone on the team with a smile and positive attitude.
- Join a coffee break or lunchtime conversation with your new colleagues.
- Be ready to learn and experience new tasks and ideas.
- Connect with your colleagues near the end of the day for a brief review and to say goodbye.

Developing good working relationships with your colleagues and demonstrating strong interpersonal skills will create a solid foundation for your work experiences. Remembering names and learning how people work together on the team can be challenging at first. Here are a few suggestions to help develop connections with your co-workers:

- Be present in the conversation, and focus on the person or people you are talking to.
- Use people's names when speaking with them.
- Ask people questions (e.g., where they grew up or hobbies) to create an image in your mind to remember.

Time Management

Effective time management skills are crucial as you balance the many new responsibilities and tasks in your new role. Although you are used to balancing multiple deadlines while in study mode, you may find that fast-paced deadlines in the workplace add more layers of complexity and perhaps more stress. It is important that you organize your tasks and schedule to optimize your time and help you create your best work. If you are working remotely from home, this becomes especially important because you will need to create boundaries and processes to separate personal and work-related tasks.

Time Management Tips & Strategies

The following techniques, from Kuang (2022), can enhance your time management:

1. **Use a Planner or Calendar:**

- Have a consistent place that you are using to track and record deadlines, so you can see your daily, weekly, and monthly tasks in one location.
- Record the hours you are working each day. Your organization may have a formalized time sheet used for payroll, but if not, record your hours in your calendar or planner daily.

2. Treat Time Management as Energy Management:

- Set some time aside to plan your day and weeks in advance. This will add some structure to your workday, which can reduce stress about what needs to be done and when it is due.
- Develop a daily list of action items to help keep you motivated to stay on task, and provide documentation of what you have accomplished each day. This can be a helpful tool for both you and your supervisor to outline what you are working on and record your new skills and accomplishments for your resume.

3. Create Micro Deadlines (Within a Larger Project):

- Do not be intimidated by a large task or project. Identify mini-tasks and break them down into micro (bite-sized) action items.
- Map out a plan with micro deadlines that are achievable and measurable, so you can see your progress.

Coaching Tools & Strategies

Two strategies that may guide you toward better managing your time and responsibilities are the Pareto principle and the Eisenhower decision matrix.

Pareto Principle: Prioritize With the 80/20 Rule

The 80/20 rule (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2016/03/07/80-20-rule/#3e80c8173814>), also known as the Pareto principle, suggests 20% of your input and effort will account for 80% of your outcomes and results (Kruse, 2016). On a to-do list of 10 items, two of those items will be worth the other eight combined. It is a method for identifying the most important ways to spend your time.

Focus your time on the most important action items that yield the biggest results. Busy does not always mean productive!



Figure 10.1 The 80/20 rule (Pareto principle) (Adapted from Thomson, 2009) CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>)

Eisenhower Decision Matrix: A Productivity, Prioritization & Time-Management Framework

In today’s world of work, managing multiple tasks, projects, emails, meetings, and commitments can be overwhelming; the Eisenhower decision matrix can assist in acknowledging and planning for what is important verses urgent.

The first step is to begin by categorizing priorities within the matrix, which is a four-box square with an x-axis labeled “Urgent” and “Not Urgent” and a y-axis labeled “Important” and “Not Important.” Grouping the items you have identified into one of the four boxes will help you focus your effort and energy, understanding that a balanced approach within the four quadrants can help with productivity and well-being.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<u>Quadrant I</u> <i>urgent and important</i> DO	<u>Quadrant II</u> <i>not urgent but important</i> PLAN
NOT IMPORTANT	<u>Quadrant III</u> <i>urgent but not important</i> DELEGATE	<u>Quadrant IV</u> <i>not urgent and not important</i> ELIMINATE

Figure 10.2 The Eisenhower decision matrix (Davidjcmorris, 2018) CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig10-2longdesc)]

Be Mindful of Wellness & Self-Care

The transition from the classroom to your first professional position highlights the need for good self-care practices. Ensuring that you are taking care of your body, mind, and soul is important! It is important to have support along the way. For example, Thompson Rivers University is committed to supporting co-op students during every phase of their co-op journey.

Self-Care Tips for Students

- Stay connected to your instructors or coordinators, and reach out if you are having any troubles or concerns.
- If you are a student at Thompson Rivers University (TRU), utilize the wellness resources provided by TRU and your workplace. (Wellness resources and tips will be available in your co-op work term Moodle course).
- Get up and stretch at least once an hour.
- If you are stuck or blocked on a task, get up, grab a coffee, tea, or water, and then return to the task.

“If I ever feel stuck, I’ll step away from my desk, fix a cup of tea, take a quick walk, connect with another colleague, and then get back to work.” — Co-op Student

Optimizing Your Skill Development

Once you begin to feel comfortable in your new role as a professional, it may be time to move outside this comfort zone and show engagement. The following are discussion topics and ideas to help you engage and develop essential employability skills.

1. Be Curious

Do not be afraid to ask questions—not only does this help you, but it also demonstrates your interest and attention in the tasks you are involved in and regarding the workplace.

“It shows that you’re actively listening, reflecting on your performance, and thinking about the work.” — Co-op Student

2. Learn to Problem-Solve

Employers want you to ask questions, but they also want you to take initiative, seek out solutions, and be resourceful. Before you ask a question, stop to reflect on whether you can problem-solve to answer it on your own.

“The COVID era has pushed me to work and think independently. You couldn’t just walk down the hall to ask a question; I found I was problem-solving more before reaching out to a colleague, ultimately bringing a more fully formed idea to the table.” – Co-op Student

3. Take Initiative

Consider opportunities to participate in projects or roles that will help you gain additional skills, whether they are technical or transferable. For example, participate in meetings and offer to be assigned a task, such as taking notes or leading a discussion. If you find yourself completing work efficiently, seek out additional tasks or offer to help others.

“Taking initiative and thinking outside of the box; how to successfully plan large and small-scaled events while accounting for the smaller logistical details; and how to prioritize and manage my time at an entirely new level.”

— Co-op Student

4. Build Relationships

Expanding your network is essential to career success; this includes building and enhancing the relationships you are creating during your work experience. Here are a few ways that you can foster relationship building:

- Say hello and goodbye to your colleagues.
- Participate in small talk and/or “water cooler” sessions.
- Learn to navigate the “informal work culture.”
- Even if you are an introvert, attempt to take part in social interactions, such as coffee breaks, a lunch, group walks, or other planned events.
- Remember to be grateful and say, “Thank you.”
- Be genuine, and offer to assist others.
- Seek mentorship from others.

“Co-op gave me the technical skills and confidence to embark on a career path in machine learning that I couldn’t envision before the program.” — Co-op Student

5. Ask for Feedback

It is essential to ask for feedback to ensure you are completing the quality of work that is required, but it also demonstrates your commitment to learning and growing. Mistakes are opportunities for improvement and are often just as valuable as achievements in your career discovery and journey.

“Don’t take critiques too emotionally—it’s not an attack on your character; it’s an opportunity to grow. It’s called constructive criticism for a reason.” — Co-op Student

6. Continue to Network

Just as it is important to network to find desirable work, once you are on a co-op work term, you will want to continue to expand your professional network. Learn about other areas of the organization and be open to meeting people outside your direct team. Before you

transition back to school, ensure you have a plan to stay connected. For example, ask for contact information and a reference.

Co-op Work Term Course at TRU

“We do not learn from experience; we learn from reflecting on experience.” – John Dewey (1933)

Note. This section describes the co-op work term course at TRU. If you are not a TRU student, check your own institutional website for WIL course information.

The co-op work term is more than just a job; it is integrated into your academics. Your professional position is also a three-credit elective course that can be used toward your graduation requirements. Your co-op experiences are integrated into your on-campus academic semesters and reflect an educational model that promotes continuous learning (Canadian Association for Co-operative Education, 2000). The co-operative education program at TRU is accredited and has met the specific criteria outlined by the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education.

You will be enrolled in a required online work term course that will keep you connected to your co-op coordinator. The work term course is designed to reflect experiential learning (EL) principles

that are foundational to co-operative education. EL incorporates hands-on experience, assessment, and reflection. Assessment can be in the form of verbal feedback that is in the moment or at specified times. It can also include written evaluations that are mid-way through work term or at the end. In a similar manner, reflective activities can embrace a variety of formats that occur prior to, while engaged in, and after a work term experience.

In the following graphic depicting experiential learning elements (Figure 10.3 (#fig10-3)), it is important to see that there is a relationship between each area and that they are in balance.



Figure 10.3 Elements of experiential learning
(Inspired and adapted by the authors from CERIC & OneLifeTools (2022, p. 4)) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
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Reflective Activities

Exercise 10.4

Pre-flection: Before Your Co-op Work Term

1. What words or phrases come to mind when you begin thinking about a potential co-op experience?
2. What do you hope to experience?
3. Create a word-and-picture collage of what you expect to be changed or impacted by the co-op experience.
4. Which of the following co-op student quotes excite or interest you the most?

“Cooperative education has tremendously improved my academic experiences at Thompson Rivers University. The co-op program has brought more meaning to my current education by relating to what I learned at work.” — Co-op Student #1

“Within these learning experiences, you’re often thrown into the workforce. The “sink or swim” aspect was the best experience. There is a freedom to make decisions, but you know that you’re being supported along the way.” — Co-op Student #2

“In terms of technical and social skills, there’ve been different stages of growth. I was an introvert before and I didn’t talk a lot. I’ve gotten better at chatting with colleagues and connecting with other departments.” — Co-op Student #3

“I’ve experienced total growth and total change. Adapting to remote work was an interesting challenge, especially as I started this position without any onsite experience, but it expanded my interpersonal communication skills.” — Co-op Student #4

Exercise 10.5

Reflection: During Your Work Term

Record your work/projects for your resume, and professional portfolio (e.g., video or written journal, website, blog, and/or LinkedIn).

These are your stories, and it is valuable to continuously document and track your tasks and project work as you progress so that you can accurately account and articulate these experiences in professional documents, such as your resume or portfolio.

Exercise 10.6 Concept Review

Review some of the concepts covered in this chapter.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Exercise 10.6 Concept Review A (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/preparing-for-your-first-professional-position/#h5p-16>)





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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=52#h5p-16>)

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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=52#h5p-19>)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Exercise 10.6 Concept Review E (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/preparing-for-your-first-professional-position/#h5p-20>)





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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=52#h5p-20>)

Conclusion

“Your ‘career’ is the full expression of who you are and how you want to be in the world. And, it keeps on expanding as it naturally goes through cycles of stability & change” — Franklin (2015)

This professional experience is an opportunity to explore ways to further develop your career. By gaining feedback throughout this experience and reflecting on your interests, skills, and strengths, you will continue to expand your knowledge, build confidence, and enhance your career development.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 10.2 Long Description: The Eisenhower decision matrix can be broken down into four quadrants:

1. Quadrant 1 – Urgent and important – Do
2. Quadrant 2 – Not urgent but important – Plan
3. Quadrant 3 – Urgent but not important – Delegate
4. Quadrant 4 – Not urgent and not important – Eliminate

[Return to Figure 10.2 (#fig10-2)]

II. Experience More Access

JENNIFER MEI

Introduction

This chapter discusses:

- Why it is important to know what health conditions are considered a disability
- How our values and upbringing influence our idea of disability
- Ways to highlight our strengths
- Strategies for disclosing a disability to an employer

This knowledge will help us create an accessible workplace that includes and supports everyone. It is a big topic, and not everything can be covered in this short chapter, but it is a starting point to understanding why it is a good idea to find out everything we can about how to set ourselves up for success.



Figure 11.1 What makes a workplace accessible? (Kampus Production, 2020)
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Sometimes, there are a lot of steps to getting the help you need to be successful in the workplace. Also, it is important to note that the help you needed in school may be different or unnecessary in your work environment. For example, you may have needed extra time to write your final exam in school, but you might not need that accommodation in a job that does not require you to write exams. This chapter provides tools to help you figure out what kind of support you need.

One of the theories that guide this chapter recognizes that everyone is different and there is no one-size fits all approach to providing people with what they need (Barile, 2002, p. 2). In academic terms, this is referred to as anti-oppressive theory (Brown & Strega, 2015, p. 39). The other theory that guides this chapter helps us recognize what we can bring to the table with the right support. This is referred to as strength-based theory, which suggests that focusing on what we are good at can change the way employers see us as well as how we see ourselves.

It is also important that we have a good understanding of what health conditions employers consider a disability if we would like to ask them for support. Doctors and other medical professionals use the term disability to describe a permanent or temporary health condition that makes it more challenging for a person to work and learn in a “typical” way. Different industries will likely have different ways of defining what they think the “typical” ways are of doing things.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Describe how our values and upbringing influence our ideas of disability.
- Identify health conditions medically considered a disability.
- Identify ways a health condition can affect the way people work and learn.
- Explain how a universal design creates an accessible environment for everyone.
- Use strength-based language to describe what you can do with the right support.

Understanding Disability

Why Does Disability Matter in the Workplace?



Figure 11.2 Why does disability matter in the workplace? (fauxels, 2019) Pexels License (<https://www.pexels.com/license/>)

Depending on our upbringing and values, we may not think of our physical or mental differences as a disability (Stroman, 2003, p. 209). It is possible for us to honour our own cultural perspectives on disability while respecting the views of others. We have much to learn about the different ways people feel about their health and well-being and the best way to create safe workplace environments for everyone.

Canadian employers often use the medical idea of disability to make a decision about a person's need for support or accommodations in the workplace. (Robertson & Larson, 2016, p. 59). That is why it is important to know as much as we can about their perspective so that we can advocate for what we need to do our best work. According to the Centers of Disease Control (2020), “A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more

difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).”

People may prefer to use other terms to describe temporary or ongoing conditions, such as diversability, different abilities, injury, illness, diagnosis, stress and chronic pain, to name a few. This chapter will use these terms interchangeably to describe health conditions that impact a person’s mental and physical functioning.

Reflection

Your Experience With Disability

1. When you were a kid, what did you know about physical and mental health disabilities?
2. How do you think your values, beliefs, and upbringing influenced your idea of disability?
3. What kind of help was available for people who had disabilities and/or struggled with mental health?
4. What do you believe about disability as an adult? What has changed?

How Common are Disabilities?

The latest information from Statistics Canada (2023) shows that the number of people with disabilities has increased from 2017 to

2022 (Figure 11.3 (#fig11-3)). This includes non-apparent disabilities like mental health. If we want to create a workplace that includes everyone, we will need to remember that we might not know if someone has a non-apparent disability and continue to treat our co-workers as valued members of our teams.

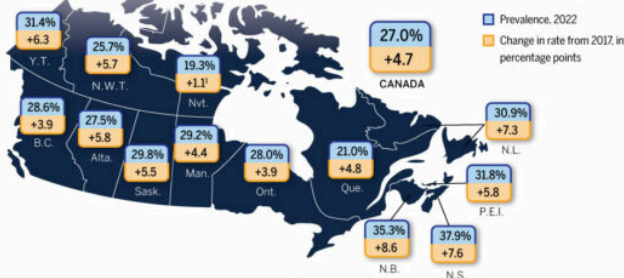
NEW DATA ON DISABILITY

in Canada, 2022

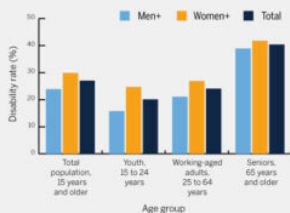
In 2022, 27.0% of Canadians aged 15 and older, or 8.0 million people, had at least one disability. This represents an increase of 4.7 percentage points from 2017.



From 2017 to 2022, the disability rate rose in all provinces and most of the territories



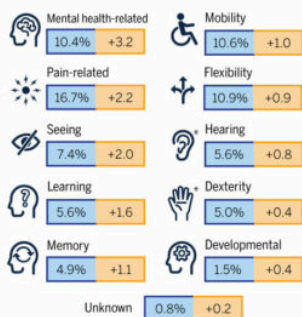
The disability rate increases with age. Growth of Canada's senior population between 2017 and 2022 contributed to the overall increase in the disability rate.



Women of all ages are more likely than men to have a disability²

From 2017 to 2022, mental health-related, pain-related, and seeing disabilities had the largest increases, contributing the most to the rise in the Canadian disability rate.

Prevalence among the total Canadian population, 2022
Change in rate from 2017, in percentage points



¹ Updated image

² The change observed since 2017 is not statistically significant at a 5% significance level, meaning that it is likely due to sampling variability.

³ The category "Women+" includes women and some non-binary persons, while the category "Men+" includes men and some non-binary persons. Given the small size of the non-binary population, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is most of the time necessary to protect the confidentiality of the responses provided.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022.

ISBN: 978-0-660-68707-0 | Catalogue number: 11-627-M

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Figure 11.3 New data on disability in Canada, 2022 (Statistics Canada, 2023)

Different Kinds of Disabilities

Employers will often rely on the assessment and recommendations of a doctor, specialist, and/or other healthcare professional to make decisions about eligibility for workplace accommodations. Medical professionals may attribute a person's diagnosis to the area most affected by their symptoms. Descriptions for these different types of disabilities are outlined in this section.

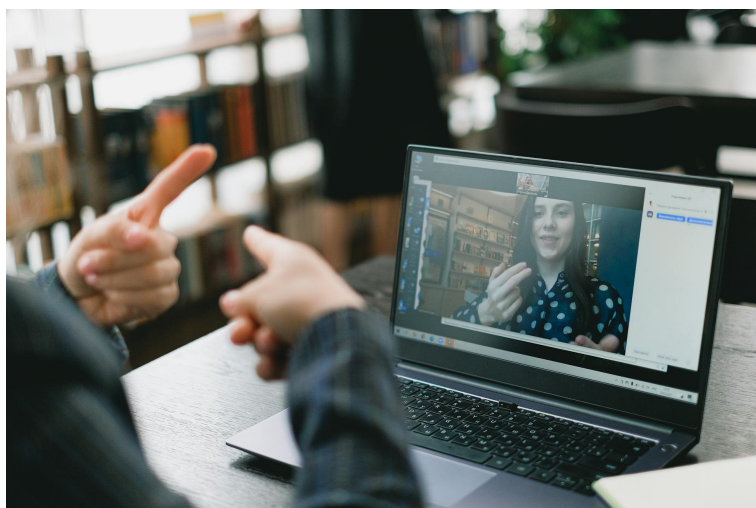


Figure 11.4 Having a sign language interpreter is one kind of workplace accommodation (SHVETS production, 2021) Pexels License (<https://www.pexels.com/license/>)

Disabilities are usually categorized by type. Figure 11.5 (#fig11-5) below gives a general idea of what kinds of disabilities are out there and the employability traits that might come along with a diagnosis.



Figure 11.5 Disability types (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig11-5longdesc)]

Note. Figure 11.5 (#fig11-5) reflects the common Western medical view of disability and does not intend to replace people's freedom to approach health and wellness from their own cultural perspectives and ways of knowing. There is a lot of stigma surrounding the term disability, and some people prefer to avoid it all together.

Knowing what type of disability we have can help with determining ways our working and learning environments can be set up to give us the best outcomes. Now that we have identified different types of disabilities, let's explore what conditions may be considered a disability from a Western medical perspective.

Health Conditions Considered a Disability

Whether temporary or permanent, disabilities can impact people unexpectedly. For example, a person may experience a car accident or sports injury that changes how they move about and experience the world; these changes can include difficulties with mobility, chronic pain, fatigue, or distress. In these instances, people may need to request temporary or permanent accommodations to support the new ways they work and learn. Figure 11.6 (#fig11-6) gives just a few examples of what might be considered a disability that may require accommodations in the workplace. This is not a complete list, but you can find out more about conditions considered disabilities on the Canadian Disability Benefits (n.d.) website (<https://canadiandisabilitybenefits.ca/types-of-disabilities/>).

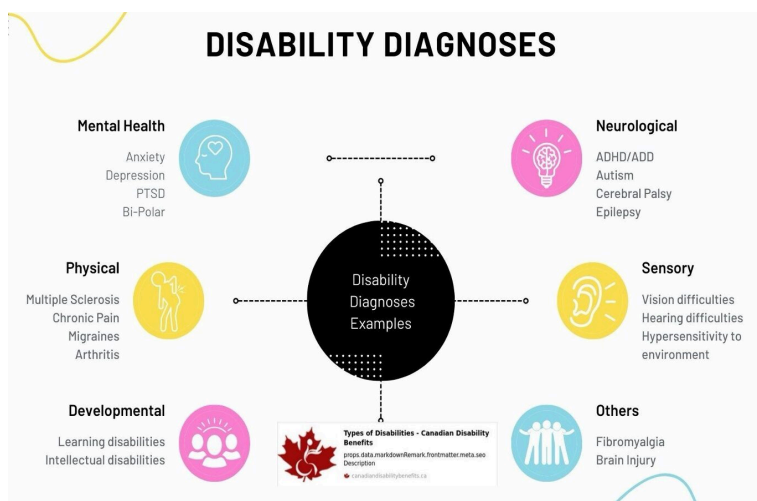


Figure 11.6 Disability diagnoses (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig11-6longdesc)]

Humans also age, and aging may come with various levels of physical and mental health challenges. Changing our outlook on

disability—whether acquired, genetic, or naturally occurring—could open further education and employment opportunities if we know we can be successful with right support in place. Now that we have a better idea of what diagnoses may be considered a disability, let's discuss how accommodations can help set us up for academic and workplace success.

Academic & Workplace Accommodations

What are Accommodations?

Accommodations are adaptations made to a working and learning environment that help people with health conditions or disabilities meet the essential requirements of their job or educational program (Figure 11.7 (#fig11-7)). This can include changes to our schedule, workload distribution, or physical environment. The way people are impacted by their condition may be different, which means that accommodations can vary from person to person. Some people with diagnoses may need accommodations, while others with the same diagnoses may not, depending on the level of mental or physical coping strategies they have learned over time.

Accommodations for Working and Learning Environments

Physical & Mental Impacts	Things That May Help
EXAMPLES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting • Standing • Stair Climbing • Social Interactions • Communication • Fatigue • Handwriting/Dexterity • Focus/Concentration • Processing Information 	EXAMPLES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretch breaks, sit to stand desk • Stool or chair for environments that require standing • Wheel chair ramp, railings • Redistribution of workload based on strengths • Assistant, interpreter, tutoring • Stretch breaks, extra time, flexible schedule • Speech to text software; dictation app • Quiet environment; noise cancelling earphones • Extra time; verbal, written, visual, hands on instruction

Figure 11.7 Accommodations for working and learning environments (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig11-7longdesc)]

People with disabilities have a legal right to accommodations as per the BC Human Rights Code (https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01) (1996) and the Accessible Canada Act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/a-0.6/>) (2019). Make sure to read through your employer or educational institution's accessibility policy for steps to accessing accommodations and what to do if you would like to appeal a decision. More information about legal rights to accommodations can be found on the TRU Career and Experiential Learning's (n.d.b) Career Equity Resources (<https://www.tru.ca/cel/career-equity-resources.html>) page.

Exploring Learning Styles

Regardless of whether or not you have a disability, everyone works and learns in different ways. Knowing the ways you work best will help us identify the kinds of working and learning environments

that suit our strengths. This exercise will give you a visual of the kind of learner you are: Learning Style Questionnaire (<https://learningstylequiz.com/>) (LearningStyleQuiz.com, n.d.).

Reflection

Learning Style Questionnaire

1. Based on your results, how would you best receive instructions from an instructor or employer?
2. What kinds of jobs do you think would best suit your learning style?
3. If you have a disability, what are the ways it impacts the way you work and learn?
4. What accommodations do you think you would need to request to set you up for success?

This Self Evaluation Tool (https://www.tru.ca/__shared/assets/accommodations-self-assessment-template52641.pdf) (TRU Career and Experiential Learning, n.d.a) may also help you think about the kinds of accommodations that would best suit your needs.

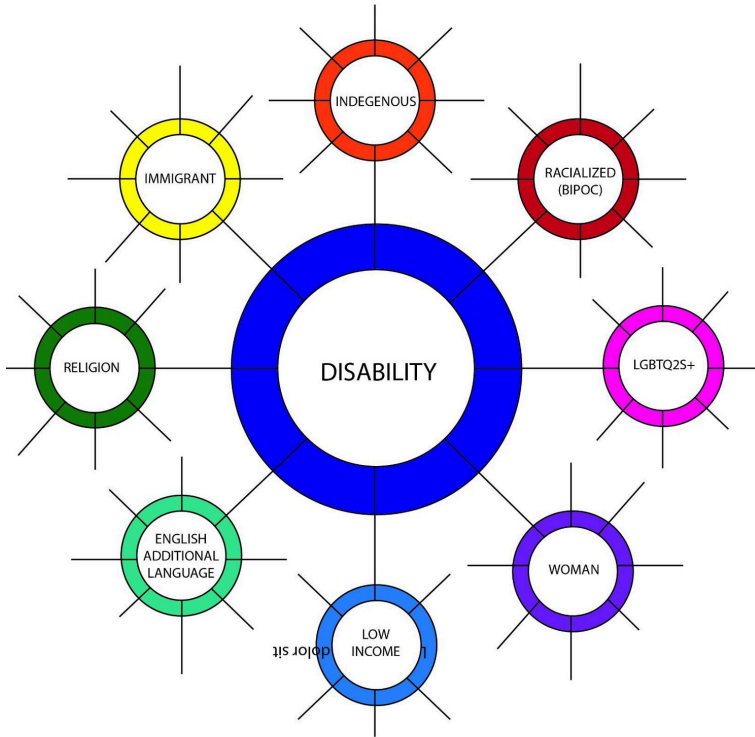
Understanding the ways we learn gives us additional knowledge to self-advocate for what we need in the classroom or workplace to set ourselves up for success. Now that we have explored how learning styles and functioning relate to workplace and academic accommodations, let's move on to why we need accommodations in the first place.

Why Do We Need Accommodations?

Depending on where we live in the world, societies may create a standard set of policies, laws, and systems that everyone is expected to follow. While we need systems to organize ourselves, not everyone is able to navigate these societal expectations in the same way. Many companies and educational institutions incorporate this standard way of doing things into their everyday operations, which can cause challenges for people who have different ways of working and learning. That is why some people need adaptations to level their access to employment and education. This idea is often described using the terms “equity” or “equitable” to indicate that sometimes adjustments are needed to ensure everyone gets the same chance to succeed.

In Western society, more complex challenges can arise for people who have more than one difference that does not fit within the expectations of our society. This can happen for those of us from different cultures or lived experiences who view our health and well-being in ways other than what is considered standard (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Kimberlee Crenshaw, an American civil rights activist, professor, and legal scholar, coined the term “intersectionality” to explain the idea that people’s differences and commonalities can intersect, making it easier or more difficult for individuals to achieve equitable access to employment or education (Cooper, 2016). Figure 11.8 (#fig11-8) provides a visual representation of intersectionality.

INTERSECTIONALITY MODEL



*This model is intended to illustrate intersectionality but is not representative of all marginalized populations

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Figure 11.8 Intersectionality model (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
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Knowing how our similarities and differences affect how easy or hard it can be to navigate society's rules can help us identify multiple resources that may support equitable access to education and employment.

Asking for Accommodations

Disclosing Your Disability

Some people may feel that disclosing the nature of their disability will help their employer or instructor understand how to best work with them. However, we are not required to share any medical information about ourselves if we feel unsafe to do so. This includes the specific condition a person is diagnosed with. The amount of information you would like to share in an academic or employment environment is a personal choice. If a person would like to disclose, it is recommended that they find out the right employee or department to speak to about accessibility.

Getting Asked for Medical Documentation

Your employer may ask you for medical documentation to support an accommodation. Make sure to clarify which healthcare professionals are considered qualified to provide this information. Examples of certified healthcare professionals include:

- Family physician
- Specialist
- Psychiatrist
- Audiologist
- Optometrist
- Surgeon

Keep in mind that some medical professionals charge a fee to fill out forms. Documentation from certain healthcare professionals—such as a naturopathic doctor, counselor, nurse, social worker, or physiotherapist—may not be considered valid medical documentation because these clinicians are unable to confirm the presence of a clinical diagnosis.

Visiting Your Medical Professional

When asking your healthcare professional to provide documentation, ask that they include:

- Information about how your disability impacts your functioning
- Recommendations for your accommodation(s)
- Confirmation of a diagnosed disability/health condition

Using a Strength-Based Approach

Using a strengths-based approach to requesting accommodations shows the employer that a person is capable and qualified for the job. Disclosing a disability is not necessary in an informational interview, employment interview, cover letter, or resume. However, it is important to notice how we speak about ourselves. Sometimes, we unconsciously use negative or deficit-based language to describe our skills and abilities (University of Michigan, n.d.). Figure 11.9 (#fig11-9) shows the contrast between using deficit-based and strengths-based language.

Deficit vs. Strength-Based Language

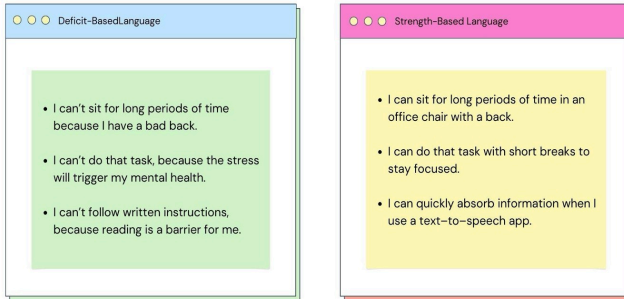


Figure 11.9 Using strength-based language (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig11-9longdesc)]

Tip. When presenting yourself during the job search process, remember your unique abilities may positively set you apart from other candidates. Using a strengths-based perspective, focus on why you believe you are capable and qualified for the job.

Reflection

Deficit-Based vs. Strength-Based

1. How would you change the following statements from deficit-based to strength-based?
 - a. I do not understand verbal instructions.
 - b. I cannot stand for long periods of time.
 - c. I have trouble with time management.
 - d. I do not understand social cues or interactions.
 - e. I cannot focus or concentrate on my work sometimes.
2. Are there ways you could change the language you use to describe your own situation to be more strengths-based?

What Are My Rights?

Legislation

People with disabilities have the right to equal access to employment (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2015), which

includes workplace accommodations if needed. According to the BC *Human Rights Code* (1996):

A person must not, without a bona fide and reasonable justification, deny to a person or class of persons any accommodation, service, or facility customarily available to the public, or discriminate against a person or class of persons regarding any accommodation, service, or facility customarily available to the public because of the race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or class of persons (Section 8[1]).

Tip. If you feel your employer has not honored this right, you may choose to make a formal complaint. If so, make sure to document your experiences and review your company's policy on the complaint process. Then, follow the steps required to get your complaint heard. If you need assistance with the process, contact your designated human resources officer for support. It is important to understand your human rights and what to expect if your complaint is not resolved internally. You may choose to take your case to the BC Human Rights Tribunal (<http://www.bchrt.bc.ca/>) (n.d.).

Further Reading

- BC Human Rights Code
(https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01) (1996)
- BC Human Rights Tribunal
(<http://www.bchrt.bc.ca/>) (n.d.)
- BC Human Rights Clinic (<https://bchrc.net/>) (n.d.)

Universal Design: Access for Everyone

Universal design is the idea that we can make workplaces and classrooms accessible for everyone. Depending on current policies and procedures, some workplaces or classrooms may be more ready than others to make a shift in this direction. However, there may be some simple ways that employers and educators can start making working and learning environments more inclusive. For example, earplugs could be made available to all employees in a workplace that has lots of distractions or for students writing an exam. Universal design reduces the need for accommodations because the environment is already accessible (Figure 11.10 (#fig11-10)).

<div> <div>Accommodations vs. Universal Design</div> <div> <div>Accommodations are meant to minimize barriers for people with disabilities so that they can meet the essential requirements of their job. (medical model)</div> <div>Universal design means making work environments inclusive and accessible for everyone so that accommodations aren't necessary. (social model)</div> </div> </div>		
Functional Impact	Accommodation	Universal Design
Focus & Concentration	Distraction reduced environment	Earplugs/sound block headphones available for employees as needed.
Social anxiety	Re-distribution of workload (e.g.minimize public speaking maximize less social responsibilities)	Hybrid work options (e.g. work remotely from time to time)
Fatigue	Stretch breaks, Personalized work schedule	A policy/process that allows for all employees to request a personalized work schedule.
Reading/Writing	Speech to Text/Text to Speech software approved	Access to Speech to Text/Text to Speech software for all employees

Figure 11.10 Accommodations vs. universal design (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig11-10longdesc)]

Now that we have explored ways to make working and learning environments more accessible for everyone, let’s learn more on how we can be even more inclusive as colleagues and classmates.

Allyship

Allyship is a gift.

If a person discloses that they have a disability, approach the topic with curiosity. People who have disabilities are the best ones to tell you what it is like. In Understanding Disability (#understanding), we discussed how our values, culture, and upbringing influences our understanding of disability. It is important to reflect on your biases

and beliefs about disability before making assumptions about the person's experience.

It is also important to note that allyship is gifted to the person who does not have experience living with a disability. The person vulnerable to discrimination chooses who they feel safe discussing their lived experiences with. This includes people with intersectional experiences (see Figure 11.8 (#fig11-8)).

Conclusion

Living with a condition that impacts your functioning is not always easy, especially when it comes to equitable access to employment or education and requesting accommodations. The information provided in this chapter is intended to provide information and practical tools to help people navigate a system that does not always make sense.

To better understand the importance of accessibility, we discussed how values influence our ideas about disability, identified conditions that may be considered a disability, explored our learning styles, developed strategies for requesting accommodations, learned ways universal design can benefit everyone, and gained a better understanding of allyship. This knowledge is intended to broaden opportunities and create accessible environments for people with diverse lived experiences and needs.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 11.3 Long Description: In 2022, 27% of Canadians aged 15 and older, or 8 million people, had at least one disability. This represents an increase of 4.7 percentage points from 2017.

From 2017 to 2022, the disability rate rose in all provinces and most of the territories:

Disability Rate Changes		
Province/Territory	Prevalence, 2022	Change in Rate From 2017, in percentage points
Canada	27%	+4.7
Alberta	27.5%	+5.8
British Columbia	28.6%	+3.9
Manitoba	29.2%	+4.4
New Brunswick	35.3%	+8.6
Newfoundland & Labrador	30.9%	+7.3
Northwest Territories	25.7%	+5.7
Nova Scotia	37.9%	+7.6
Nunavut	19.3%	+1.1
Ontario	28%	+3.9
Quebec	21%	+4.8
Prince Edward Island	31.8%	+5.8
Saskatchewan	29.8%	+5.5
Yukon	31.4%	+6.3

The disability rate increases with age. Growth of Canada’s senior population between 2017 and 2022 contributed to the overall increase in the disability rate.

Women of all ages are more likely than men to have a disability:

Disability Rate Changes With Age

Age Group	Men+	Women+	Total
Total population, 15 years and older	23.9%	29.9%	27%
Youth, 15 to 24 years	15.8%	24.7%	20.1%
Working-Age Adults, 25 to 64 years	21.1%	26.9%	24.1%
Seniors, 65 years and over	38.9%	41.8%	40.4%

From 2017 to 2022, mental health-related, pain-related, and seeing disabilities had the largest increases, contributing the most to the rise in the Canadian disability rate.

Disability Type	Prevalence Among the Total Canadian Population, 2022	Change in Rate From 2017, in percentage points
Mental Health-Related	10.4%	+3.2
Pain-Related	16.7%	+2.2
Seeing	7.4%	+2
Learning	5.6%	+1.6
Memory	4.9%	+1.1
Mobility	10.6%	+1
Flexibility	10.9%	+0.9
Hearing	5.6%	+0.8
Dexterity	5%	+0.4
Developmental	1.5%	+0.4
Unknown	0.8%	+0.2

[Return to Figure 11.3 (#fig11-3)]

Figure 11.5 Long Description: Disability types include:

- **Mental Health:** Mental health can be unpredictable. Therefore, a person with a mental health condition may require workplace flexibility.
- **Physical Health:** A person with a physical health condition may require adaptations to make a person's physical work environment safe.
- **Developmental:** People with developmental differences, like learning, may bring new communication strategies to the workplace.
- **Neurological:** People who are neurodiverse or neurodivergent, like having autism, may bring innovative problem-solving skills to specific industries.
- **Sensory:** People with different sensory abilities, like hearing, can meet the expectations of their job with available technology if needed.
- **Others:** A person's diagnosis may also fall into more than one category or a different medical category not listed here.

[Return to Figure 11.5 (#fig11-5)]

Figure 11.6 Long Description: Disability diagnoses for each disability type include:

- **Mental Health:** Anxiety, depression, PTSD, and bi-polar.
- **Physical:** Multiple sclerosis, chronic pain, migraines, and arthritis.
- **Developmental:** Learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities.
- **Neurological:** ADHD/ADD, autism, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy.
- **Sensory:** Vision difficulties, hearing difficulties, and hypersensitivity to environment.

- **Others:** Fibromyalgia and brain injury.

[Return to Figure 11.6 (#fig11-6)]

Figure 11.7 Long Description:

Accommodations for Working and Learning Environments	
Physical and Mental Impacts	Things That May Help
Sitting	Stretch breaks; a sit to stand desk
Standing	Stool or chair for environments that require standing
Stair climbing	Wheel chair ramp; railings
Social interactions	Redistribution of workload based on strengths
Communication	Assistant; interpreter; tutoring
Fatigue	Stretch breaks; extra time; a flexible schedule
Handwriting/Dexterity	Speech to text software; a dictation app
Focus/Concentration	Quiet environment; noise-cancelling earphones
Processing information	Extra time; verbal, written, visual, or hands on instruction

[Return to Figure 11.7 (#fig11-7)]

Figure 11.9 Long Description:

Deficit vs. Strength-Based Language	
Deficit-Based Language	Strength-Based Language
I can't sit for long periods of time because I have a bad back.	I can sit for long periods of time in an office chair with a back.
I can't do that task because the stress will trigger my mental health.	I can do that task with short breaks to stay focused
I can't follow written instructions because reading is a barrier for me.	I can quickly absorb information when I use a text-to-speech app.

[Return to Figure 11.9 (#fig11-9)]

Figure 11.10 Long Description:

Accommodations are meant to minimize barriers for people with disabilities so that they can meet the essential requirements of their job (medical model).

Universal design means making work environments inclusive and accessible for everyone so that accommodations aren't necessary (social model).

Accommodations vs. Universal Design

Functional Impact	Accommodation	Universal Design
Focus and concentration	Distraction-reduced environment	Earplugs/sound block headphones available for employees as needed
Social anxiety	Redistribution of workload (e.g., minimize public speaking and maximize less social responsibilities)	Hybrid work options (e.g., work remotely from time to time)
Fatigue	Stretch breaks; personalized work schedule	A policy/process that allows for all employees to request a personalized work schedule
Reading/Writing	Speech-to-text/ text-to-speech software approved	Access to speech-to-text/ text-to-speech software for all employees

[Return to Figure 11.10 (#fig11-10)]

12. Cultural Diversity & Workplace Barriers

HARSHITA DHIMAN

Introduction

“Culture is the coherent, learned, shared view of a group of people about life’s concerns, expressed in symbols and activities, that ranks what is important, furnishes attitudes about what things are appropriate, and dictates behavior” — Varner & Beamer (2011, p.36)

Individuals have their own unique perspective of the world, derived from the cultures they identify with. In today’s fast-paced global environment, organizations are increasingly diversifying their workplace, hiring individuals from different geographical backgrounds to create culturally diverse work environments. Workplace culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, behaviours, and attitudes that form the foundation of an organization and guide its interactions with employees, customers, and other stakeholders. Understanding workplace culture is crucial in building and achieving a successful career; it provides equal importance to other key abilities, such as comprehending job responsibilities.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Describe your understanding of workplace culture.
- Identify different kinds of workplace cultures.
- Self-evaluate potential challenges in a diverse workplace.
- Outline ways to overcome cultural differences in the workplace.

What is Organizational Culture?

An organizational culture plays a critical role in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of employees. It sets the tone for the work environment and guides the interactions between employees, managers, and customers. A positive workplace culture fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and respect among employees, which enhances their motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment. When we look at how organizations can be healthier by considering culture instead of just using a set program, employees are more likely to improve mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially (Spiers, 2007).

As per the *Employment Equity Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/>

eng/acts/e-5.401/) (1995) of Canada, it is prohibited to refuse someone a job opportunity or benefits based on factors unrelated to their abilities. To achieve this, it is necessary to address the disadvantages faced in employment by women, Aboriginal peoples, individuals with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. This involves not only treating everyone equally but also taking specific measures and accommodating differences to ensure employment equity.

However, workplace culture is not always conducive to employee well-being, and it may contain various barriers that hinder employees from performing to their full potential. This chapter discusses workplace culture and the barriers that impede employee productivity, job satisfaction, and well-being.

Dimensions of Organizational Culture

Organizations have more than one culture. There is usually a main culture shared by most members, but there can also be other smaller cultures within the organization. According to Cameron and Quinn (2006), there are four main types of organizational cultures: clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, and market (Figure 12.1 (#fig12-1)).

Quinn & Cameron's Culture Model

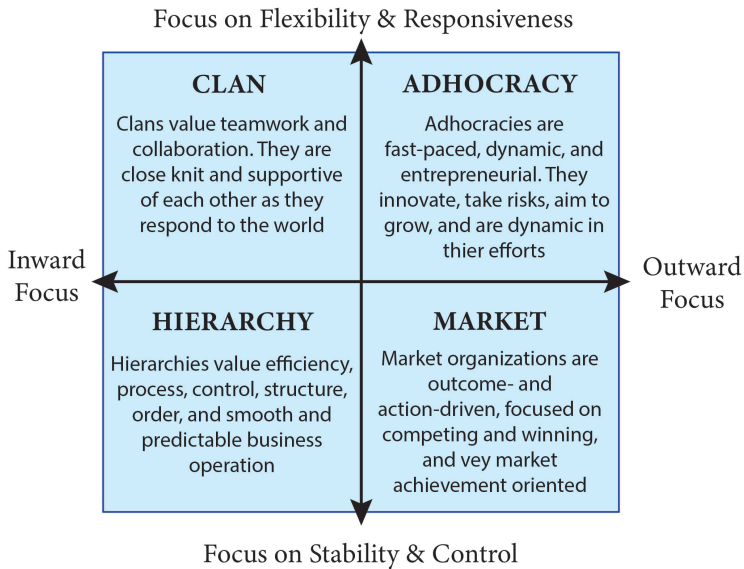


Figure 12.1 Quinn and Cameron's culture model (Meyers, 2025) CC0 1.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>) [Long Description (#fig12-1longdesc)]

Quinn and Cameron: Competing Values Model of Organizational Culture (<https://youtu.be/eOnCetNa7Zc?si=huwFfFDsY-F1FTgS>) [6:03 min] by Management Courses – Mike Clayton (2021)



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Quinn and Cameron: Competing Values Model of Organizational Culture (<https://youtu.be/eOnCetNa7Zc?si=huwFfFDsY-F1FTgS>)



1. Clan Culture

Clan culture organizations are like big families with shared values and goals. They work together and support each other. Leaders act as mentors, and they are interested in knowing what employees care about, what changes they would like to see, and their ideas for growth.

2. Adhocracy Culture

An adhocracy (derived from “ad hoc” and “bureaucracy”) culture operates outside of the traditional bureaucratic procedures and policies. These organizations are unified by their shared drive to

experiment, innovate, and create rapidly. In this culture of flexibility, all employees are encouraged to contribute, irrespective of their position. The leaders in this culture are perceived as innovators who foster experimentation and innovation as means of cohesion.

3. Hierarchy Culture

Hierarchy culture is all about rules and control. It is a formal environment with strict procedures, where leaders focus on making things run smoothly and predictably. They value consistency and do not like to change quickly. Everything follows set rules and policies. Because of this rigidity, these organizations might not react as quickly to changes in the market compared to others.

4. Market Culture

In market culture, the focus of the workplace is on competition and achieving goals. Leaders are determined, tough, and expect a lot. The organization's main aim is to outperform its competitors, so things like market share and profit matter most. Leaders in these places are strong and expect a lot. Winning is what matters most, along with having a good reputation and being successful.

Potential Challenges in Diverse Workplaces

Employees engage with each other based on their cultural norms; therefore, workplace cultural barriers can impede the development of a positive work environment and hinder employee productivity,

job satisfaction, and well-being. Some of the common cultural barriers in the workplace include:

1. Communication Barriers

Culture and communication go hand in hand. There are two distinct types of communication styles (Ramlan et al., 2018):

1. **Verbal:** Communication through words.
2. **Nonverbal:** Communication through tone of voice, body language, and physical settings.

We learn about culture by talking to each other, and both our verbal and nonverbal communication styles are influenced by our cultural norms. In multicultural workplaces, more employees speak different languages. Though someone can become bilingual to overcome a language barrier, learning a new language cannot help an employee learn a new culture.

Effective communication is a critical aspect of workplace culture. It helps employees learn their job responsibilities, understand policies of the organization, and receive performance feedback (Schuler, 1995). However, language barriers can lead to misunderstanding, conflict, and a sense of disconnection among employees. To overcome communication barriers, it is important for employees to analyze cross-cultural communication to understand intercultural communication. For further insight into intercultural communication, refer to the Intercultural Communication in the Workplace (#chapter-intercultural-communication-in-the-workplace) chapter.

Moreover, establishing an environment where all individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves and are empowered to address issues promptly to reduce misunderstandings and

miscommunication is essential in providing an equitable workplace for everyone. Celebrating cultural festivals at the workplace can also increase awareness and understanding of various cultures and traditions, which can promote cross-cultural communication.

Reflection Communication Style

Describe a time when you encountered a communication challenge due to cultural differences.

1. What was the result?
2. How did you or could you have navigated it differently?

2. Discrimination & Harassment

Discrimination and harassment are significant barriers to workplace culture. As per the BC *Human Rights Code* (https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96210_01) (1996), discrimination refers to treating employees differently based on their personal characteristics, such as:

- Indigenous identity
- Race
- Colour
- Ancestry
- Place of origin
- Religion

- Family status
- Marital status
- Physical disability
- Mental disability
- Sex
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity or expression
- Political belief
- Conviction of a criminal or summary conviction offence unrelated to their employment

Harassment refers to humiliating or intimidating an employee with inappropriate conduct or comments (*Human Rights Code*, 1996).

Employees who experience discrimination and harassment may feel isolated, powerless, and demotivated, leading to poor performance and mental health issues. The BC Public Service's (2024b) HR Policy 11 – Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace ([https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/managers-supervisors/managing-employee-labour-relations/hr-policy-pdf-documents/](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/managers-supervisors/managing-employee-labour-relations/hr-policy-pdf-documents/hr_policy_11_discrimination_bullying_and_harassment_in_the_workplace.pdf)

[hr_policy_11_discrimination_bullying_and_harassment_in_the_workplace.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/managers-supervisors/managing-employee-labour-relations/hr-policy-pdf-documents/hr_policy_11_discrimination_bullying_and_harassment_in_the_workplace.pdf)) states that employees are tasked with upholding a safe and constructive work atmosphere. It is their duty to respond to any inappropriate or disrespectful behaviours they encounter directly or witness firsthand. Actions employees can take include:

- Addressing the behaviour directly with the individual (if it is safe to do so)
- Seeking guidance from their supervisor, higher management, or their union/employer association
- Making a formal report

To prevent workplace discrimination, it is important for an organization to educate their employees about the companies' anti-discrimination policies and provide anti-discriminatory training on a regular basis.

3. Microaggressions

Everyone has biases; however, by reflecting upon our worldviews and biases, we can avoid microaggressions that occur when we are uninformed about our colleagues' various backgrounds. A microaggression is defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.) dictionary as "a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)." The comment or action usually creates discomfort in others. For example, if you learned that someone is Indigenous and blurted out "But you don't look Indigenous!" this statement may create discomfort.

Our cultural worldviews impact how we see others. There are few examples in the Merriam-Webster (n.d.) definition of microaggression, and you can locate more examples in the article "What Exactly is a Microaggression?" (<https://www.vox.com/2015/2/16/8031073/what-are-microaggressions>) by Jenée Desmond-Harris (2015). The Experience More Access (#chapter-experience-more-access) chapter goes into more detail on social location, bias, and microaggressions—if you have not read this section, it is worth going back to.

It is important to remain open and curious and actively work against our own personal biases that have been reinforced by society, community, or family norms. This supports personal growth and development toward building healthy interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Challenging our own assumptions often requires reflection and facilitation. There are many ways to improve our education in this area. Some resources for education from an Indigenous lens can be found through workplace training or online modules in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) by Indigenous Canada (University of Alberta, n.d.), workplace or private EDI workshops, other employment modules and diversity workshops,

and resources such as Indigenous Corporate Training Inc (<https://www.ictinc.ca/>) (n.d.).

Exercise 12.2

Identifying Microaggressions

1. Complete the following multiple-choice quiz to test your knowledge on microaggressions.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Exercise 12.2 Identifying Microaggressions (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/cultural-diversity-and-workplace-barriers/#h5p-30>)





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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=58#h5p-30>)

2. After completing the quiz, reflect on how language can affect people in the workplace:
 - a. Have you ever said or heard something that may have unintentionally caused discomfort?
 - b. What would you do differently now?

4. Social Location & Intersectionality

Privilege offers an easier path when navigating the world, and this is not often recognized by those who possess the most privilege. Social location can be defined as the combination of factors that impact our experiences within society—such as gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic location—resulting in our social location being specific to us as individuals (National Council on Family Relations, 2019). Social location contains a description of how several intersecting identities, such as gender, income status, partner status, family origin, religion, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, impact us differently. Have a look at Figure 11.8 (#fig11-8) in the Experience

More Access chapter for an illustration of how intersecting identities can impact us differently.

Now, go complete the *What is Privilege?* in Exercise 12.3 (#exercise12-3). This activity is relevant to those who identify as Indigenous, female, or any number of identities that locate us outside the dominant group, which is comprised of individuals who are White and male. Also, watch the video *What Is Privilege? (As/Is, 2015)* to get a sense of how the identity exercise plays out in person.

What Is Privilege? (<https://youtu.be/hD5f8GuNuGQ?si=Fe1UbOTfQOw77g9a>) [3:59 min] by As/Is (2015)



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(#oembed-2)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

What Is Privilege? (<https://youtu.be/hD5f8GuNuGQ?si=Fe1UbOTfQOw77g9a>)



Exercise 12.3

Identify Your Social Location

1. Take the What is Privilege? [PDF] (<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/01/What-is-Privilege.pdf>) quiz, and watch the *What Is Privilege?* (As/Is, 2015) video above to put your results into context. These questions will help you better understand your social location by illustrating your areas of advantage (i.e., your privilege) and disadvantage in society.
2. Now, reflect on what you learned about your identity with these questions:
 - a. Were you surprised?
 - b. Does your understanding of your social location change anything?
 - c. How does your identity relate to the Canadian employment context?
 - d. Does this change your views of employment equity?
 - e. How does this new knowledge support you when navigating the job search process?

Conclusion

Cultural diversity in a workplace does not always create barriers. While it may present challenges, such as communication barriers, discrimination, and microaggressions, organizations that embrace diversity gain a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent (Amaram, 2007). A diverse organization is more adept at catering to a varied global clientele in an ever-expanding international market. These organizations possess a deeper comprehension of the needs stemming from the legal, political, social, economic, and cultural landscapes of foreign countries (Adler, 1991). By recognizing and addressing workplace barriers, promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity, and providing ongoing education and training, organizations can cultivate a culture of inclusivity, where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered. As organizations continue to evolve in a rapidly changing global landscape, embracing cultural diversity will remain essential for driving innovation, creativity, and success.

Media Attributions

- **Figure 12.1** “Quinn and Cameron’s culture model” by Kaitlyn Meyers (2025) is used under a CC0 1.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>) license.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 12.1 Long Description: Quinn and Cameron's culture model can be broken down into four types:

1. Clan

- Inward focus and focus on flexibility and responsiveness
- Clans value teamwork and collaboration. They are close knit and supportive of each other as they respond to the world.

2. Adhocracy

- Outward focus and focus on flexibility and responsiveness
- Adhocracies are fast-paced, dynamic, and entrepreneurial. They innovate, take risks, aim to grow, and are dynamic in their efforts

3. Hierarchy

- Inward focus and focus on stability and control
- Hierarchies value efficiency, process, control, and smooth and predictable business operation

4. Market

- Outward focus and focus on stability and control
- Market organizations are outcome- and action-driven, focused on competing and winning, and very market achievement oriented

[Return to Figure 12.1 (#fig12-1)]

13. Intercultural Communication in the Workplace

KYRA GARSON AND AMIE MCLEAN

Introduction

Effective communication is important for professional and career development, the creation of a positive workplace environment, and avoiding miscommunication and conflict amongst colleagues, clients, and community members alike. At the same time, in an increasingly globalized world, there are extremely few—if any—careers that involve interacting and communicating only with people who share the same cultural background. Research is clear that communicating across cultural differences can be complex and challenging in ways that go far beyond language.

In this chapter, you will explore the fundamentals of intercultural communication skills for the workplace and build your capacity to engage in empowering communication across cultural differences.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Explain what intercultural communication is and why intercultural communication skills are valuable career skills.
- Identify how cultural dimensions influence intercultural communication.
- Explain how cultural norms and values influence verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Consider strategies to help avoid, minimize, and resolve conflicts arising from intercultural miscommunication.

Communication & Intercultural Communication

All communication involves exchanges between individuals or groups. When we think of the word 'communication', many of us think immediately about spoken language. However, there is incredible diversity when it comes to the verbal, written, and non-verbal ways that human beings communicate with each other. Broadly speaking, communication involves the production and transmission of messages through language, symbols, signs,

behaviours, writing, and/or physical expressions. The rise of new technologies has enabled communication as never seen before; we can communicate by phone, video, text, instant message, email and many other methods and we can send our messages across the globe with the click of a button. But what happens when our messages are received by people whose cultural practices around communication are very different from our own?

Communication involves forming perceptions of one another. When people differ in terms of how they are communicating (and why), there is a risk of misperception and/or misunderstanding. Conflict, disagreement, or tension can arise less because of the issues being discussed but because of differences in communication styles and norms. These potentials are magnified in cross-cultural contexts because cultures differ when it comes to the rules or norms for communication. According to Macionis and Gerber (2011), norms are “the rules and expectations by which a society guides the expectations of its members” (p. 608). Cultural norms around communication are also very often tied to deeply held values and worldviews. Every culture has its own communication norms, which also set the characteristics and criteria for judging ‘good’ and ‘bad’ communication. Miscommunication and conflict can arise when communicating across cultural differences because the sender(s) and receiver(s) of the messages may be operating from very different communicative norms, values, and worldviews.

Sometimes, these norms are explicit, but more often, they are simply learned and considered the normal, appropriate way of doing things. Edward T. Hall (1959), considered by many to be the founder of intercultural communication studies, famously said that “Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study has convinced me that the real job is not to understand other cultures but to understand our own” (p. 39). Understanding how our own culture(s) influence our communication practices is one of the most powerful intercultural communication skills we can

develop. In an era of online communications and globalisation, it is increasingly likely that we will not know the cultural background or communicative norms and preferences of the people we are engaging with. Understanding ourselves and the broad range or ways that other people's communicative norms, values and preferences may differ from ours is an increasingly important skill in modern workplaces.

In fact, there is very strong evidence that employers are looking for graduates who have intercultural communication skills. A large body of academic research and industry reports have shown that these skills, and those associated with them, are very highly valued by employers (Agnew, 2018; Andrews & Higson, 2008; British Council, 2018; Diamond et al., 2011; Deloitte & Global Business Coalition for Education, 2018; Royal Bank of Canada, 2019). An American study found that 96% of employers agreed that “students should have experiences that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own” (p.3) and close to 80% agreed that students should gain intercultural skills (Hart Research Associates, 2015). Partly as a result of globalisation, employers often value intercultural skills more highly than academic performance; however, research also shows that “many employers are dissatisfied with their newly hired graduates’ communication skills” (Dauber & Spencer-Oatley, 2023, p. 1082–1083).

This chapter is meant to empower you with some foundational intercultural communication knowledge and abilities to ensure that you have some of the most highly valued career skills in today's increasingly diverse, global, and interconnected workplaces.

Intercultural Communication, Ethnocentrism & Power Dynamics

It is important to keep in mind that intercultural communication is about more than knowledge, skills, or attitudes. It is also about power. How power shows up in intercultural communication is always contextual and locally specific. However, there are some global contexts and specific power dynamics that can guide us to engaging in more inclusive and equitable intercultural communication. The long, ongoing, and complicated legacy of Western European colonialism across the globe has meant that, in many parts of the world, the communication norms and practices of able-bodied, elite White men have been or are dominant. As a result, the communications of members of equity-denied groups are often marginalized.

What does this look like in practice? When it comes to gender, study after study has shown that women are disadvantaged in workplace communications. Research (Brescoll, 2012; Cutler & Scott, 1990; Hancock & Rubin, 2014; Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014) shows that:

- Men speak far more than women at meetings.
- Women are interrupted far more often than men.
- Women are far more likely to have their competence questioned when they do speak.
- Men who speak more at work are viewed as more competent, while women who speak more are viewed as less competent.

Research also shows that White people tend to penalize authoritative behaviour of people of Asian heritage at work and that Black and Latinx people often face workplace stereotypes (Berdhal & Min, 2012; Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2003).

This matters in the workplace because research shows us that both companies and workplaces benefit immensely from a diverse

workforce where everyone is valued and able to contribute to their fullest potential. If members of some groups are silenced, have their thoughts and ideas ignored or given less weight, or are excluded from the conversation altogether, then it is not just those individuals who suffer. Workplace innovation, initiatives, culture, efficiency, engagement, and output are negatively impacted as well.

Building your intercultural communication skills is about creating a more inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. Understanding some of the cultural dimensions that influence communication is a good starting point for improving your inclusive communication skills.

Cultural Dimensions That Influence Communication

Intercultural theory includes what are known as culture general frameworks, which are different from culture specific knowledge. Culture specific knowledge refers to how we build understanding of specific cultures we may interact with. For example, you are going on a trip to Vietnam, so you try to discover as much as you can about the behaviours and practices common to the Vietnamese. You might do this through web searches, movies, or people you know who are Vietnamese or have an understanding of Vietnamese culture. Culture general frameworks are different; they can help us to understand differences and commonalities across a variety of cultural contexts. They provide us with insights on cultural behaviours and practices by considering cultural values, which then inform the norms and influence the behaviours. It is also important not to essentialize these frameworks but to use them as “tools in our toolkit” that can help us to understand the influence of culture on communication.

While there are numerous culture general frameworks from a variety of academic disciplines (e.g., business, sociology, and communication studies), for the purpose of this chapter, we will focus on four cultural dimensions that most influence communication styles and preferences:

1. High and low power distance
2. Individualism and collectivism
3. Universalism and particularism
4. Monochronic and polychronic

As we explore these dimensions, it is important to view each of them as a continuum. For example, while we may have very high power distance cultures, or very low power distance cultures, we may have many orientations that are somewhere in between—either on the higher or lower side of the continuum. It is also important to recognize that these values, norms, and behaviours are contextual, so in the workplace, we may adhere to high power distance norms, while in a family or friend situation, we may find the hierarchy more relaxed. When using culture general frameworks, it is best not to think about your individual behaviours but about broader societal values and norms that influence behaviours.

1. High & Low Power Distance

The terms high and low power distance come from the work of Geert Hofstede (1980), who developed his frameworks using factor analysis of a worldwide survey of IBM employee values in the 1960s and 1970s. Hofstede's frameworks have been refined and critiqued since but are still regarded as valid frameworks to explore values differences across cultures. In essence, this dimension of culture explores variations of how power is distributed in society through hierarchical structures.

Table 13.1: High vs. Low Power Distance

High Power Distance	Low Power Distance
Hierarchy respected and valued	Equality respected and valued
Centralized authority	Decentralized authority
Subordinates are dependent on superiors	Subordinates and superiors are interdependent
Subordinates defer to direction of superiors	Subordinates expect consultation
Status is ascribed	Status is achieved
Age is valued	Youth is valued

In very high power cultures, hierarchies are embedded in workplace cultures, families, and society at large. Authority tends to be centralized, with those at the top of the hierarchy expected to provide directions and decision-making. In low power cultures, there may be some hierarchy in certain contexts, but its valuing of equality creates more decentralized power structures, where consultation is the norm. While there is still a boss or executive responsible for decision-making, subordinates may be asked for opinions, and multiple perspectives may be invited.

In low power distance cultures, youth and innovation are valued, and status can be achieved. There may be more opportunities for social mobility since status is conferred by what one does rather than who one is. Who one is is more important in high power cultures, where status may be conferred by age, rank, title, or standing.

Consider how these different orientations might influence communication. In a low power culture, it may be normal to set up a meeting with one's boss to discuss an issue. While this may happen in a high power culture, it is unlikely that regular workers would have access to the boss; they would need to work within the hierarchy to have their concerns brought to higher levels. In some high power cultures, there are multiple ways to address someone

depending on their status. For example, how you address someone who is only slightly older than you is quite different from how you would address your peers. Similarly, there is a degree of formality required in both spoken and written communication. This formality is quite different from a low power orientation, where we may be on a first name basis with our bosses, professors, or senior family members.

2. Individualism & Collectivism

Individualism and collectivism is perhaps the most well-known cultural dimension influencing communication. This dimension is also part of Hofstede's framework but has been conceptualized by numerous other theorists before and since (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). Ultimately, the difference between more collectivist orientations and more individualist orientations is tied to identity. Do we identify primarily as individuals with our own goals and freedoms, or do we identify primarily as a member of a collective where the group's goals are at the forefront.

Table 13.2: Individualism vs. Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
Identity as individual – “I”	Identity in membership – “We”
Value independence	Value interdependence
Individual goals	Group goals
Independent decisions	Collective decisions
Individual initiatives valued	Group stability valued
Heroes and champions are revered	The whole is credited for success

Consider how this dimension might influence communication. Collectivist cultures may communicate with more awareness of how

their communication reflects on their group. Individualist cultures may display more willingness to say what is on their mind and understand their individual perspective to be independent of others in their networks.

In addition, this cultural dimension is complicated by what Ting-Toomey (1988) has called face negotiation theory. Face negotiation involves how people save face. As you can imagine, people who are oriented toward individualism communicate with awareness of saving their own face. They are careful not to say anything that would embarrass themselves or cause them to lose face. Face negotiation is more complex in collectivist orientations. People will be aware of losing their own face but will also communicate in ways that ensure that face is saved for their group. In addition, they are more aware of saving the face of those they are in communication with.

3. Universalism & Particularism

Universalism and particularism is a dimension first introduced by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997). This cultural dimension is about rules and relationships, and is dependent on whether cultural values and norms emphasize the universal application of rules, where everyone is subject the same application of rules, or if the particular situation makes the rules more flexible. This dimension is often related to individualism and collectivism and high and low power distance, since relationships are often at the core of how particular situations require more flexible rules. Moreover, universalist cultures tend to be more task-focused, whereas particularist cultures tend to be more process-focused. For particularist cultures, both relationships and the process of building them may not be as important as timely results or moving to the result, contract, legal action that universalist cultures tend to favour.

Table 13.3: Universalism vs. Particularism

Universalism	Particularism
Focus on rules	Focus on relationships
Consistency of rules	Flexibility of rules
Legal frameworks upheld	Legal frameworks negotiated
Reality as truth	Multiple truths depending on situation
Results-oriented	Process-oriented
“Get the job done”	“Get to know each other”

Consider how these different values and preferences might influence communication. Imagine a team where some members are focused on results and others on process and require a relational approach to proceed. Or, a situation where there is a relationship between a boss and an employee. In a universalist orientation, the relationship would be inconsequential; whereas, for a more particularist orientation, the relationship might influence the application of rules.

4. Polychronic & Monochronic

Polychronic and monochronic refers to how cultures vary in how time is conceptualized. The term polychronic literally means “many times” while monochronic means “one time.” The differentiation relates to both how time is perceived and managed.

Table 13.4: Monochronic vs. Polychronic

Monochronic	Polychronic
Time is measurable	Time is cyclical/fluid
Schedules are strict	Schedules are flexible
Punctuality equals respect	Arrival times are dependent on multiple factors
Concentrate on one thing at a time	Concentrate on the end goal
Follow steps (process is methodical)	Manage multiple steps simultaneously

Monochronic cultures tend to value time. Time is viewed as a commodity, as evidenced by the terms “time is money” or “don’t waste my time.” Polychronic cultures do not quantify time to the same degree. Monochronic workplaces value punctuality, deadlines, and schedules, where process is often a series of steps designed to meet deadlines in a timely manner. Monochronic cultures value turn taking and order, whereas polychronic cultures may often follow other cultural norms that prioritize relationships or hierarchies. For example, imagine a service situation where people line up to be served one at a time (monochronic); compare that to one where people gather around and multiple people may be served at once or where the elderly or regular customers might be prioritized (polychronic). Polychronic workplaces tend to focus on the overall objectives and may engage in multiple steps or activities in various orders depending on the context. Polychronic cultures tend to be high context, as discussed in the next section.

Exercise 13.1

Cultural Dimensions

On a piece of paper, write down the four cultural dimensions discussed in this chapter with an arrow between them, like this:

High Power Distance <-----> Low Power Distance

Individualism <-----> Collectivism

Universalism <-----> Particularism

Monochronic <-----> Polychronic

1. Consider how your cultural background(s) have influenced you on each of these dimensions. For each dimension, chart a line on the arrow for where you feel you roughly fall on the spectrum between high power distance and low power distance, individualism and collectivism, universalism and collectivism, and monochronic and polychronic.
2. Take a moment to reflect. How do you think your placement in relation to these cultural dimensions may influence your experiences and relationships at work?

High- & Low-Context Communication

Hall (1959) was the first to theorize and conceptualize the concept of high- and low-context cultures and how culture influences communication in many ways. Hall’s thinking has influenced research and study on how culture informs not only communication but values, norms, and behaviours. A summary of high- and low-context characteristics is provided in Table 13.5 (#tab13-5). Many of the dimensions discussed above were influenced by Hall; however, as you review the chart below, you will notice how both the cultural dimensions and the communication preferences are explicit in Hall’s model. For example, the first rows of the table refer to values and norms where the lower rows refer to communication.

Table 13.5: High Context vs. Low Context

High Context	Low Context
Hierarchy	Equality
Formality	Informality
Collectivist	Individualist
Relationship-focused	Task-focused
Process	Results
Indirect communication	Direct communication
Listener responsible	Speaker responsible
Non-verbal cues are important	Emphasis on spoken messages

High-context cultures tend to be more collectivist in nature with a relational emphasis that focuses on process. Low-context cultures tend to be more individualist with a task focused on results. High-context cultures normally rely on forms of hierarchy, which may or may not be detected by those outside of the culture but are recognized in subtle ways by members who understand certain protocols, such as who speaks first, who is deferred to, and the level of formality required depending on positions within the hierarchy.

Low-context cultures may have some hierarchies but value a flatter structure with a desire for equality and therefore may display less formality. As a result, low-context communicative cultures prefer direct communication styles where the speaker is responsible for delivering direct, clear, concise messages. This is different from the more indirect communication styles favoured by low-context cultures where the listener is responsible for decoding messages that may be nuanced or non-verbal. Another interesting thing to note is that high-context cultures place the responsibility for the message on the listener (or in written communication the reader), who has the job of decoding nuanced, indirect, and non-verbal cues. In low-context communicative cultures, the spoken words are emphasized, and the speaker is responsible for encoding their messages in clear, concise, direct ways.

Communication Styles & Culture

The degree to which a culture is high or low context influence whether the preferred style is more direct or indirect. As illustrated in Table 13.5 (#tab13-5), high-context cultures tend to be more indirect and rely more on non-verbal cues. In comparison, low-context cultures favour a more direct communication style where words carry the majority of the message.

Table 13.6: Indirect vs. Direct

Indirect	Direct
Suggest/Imply	Straight to the point
Implicit	Explicit
Relational/Intuitive	Linear/Logical
Rely on non-verbal cues	Spoken word carries the meaning
Goal is preserving the relationship	Goal is information exchange
Tendency to avoid conflict	Tell it like it is
Face saving	Honesty is the best policy

Differences in communication styles influenced by culture can easily cause misunderstandings and misperceptions. Consider that we are always forming perceptions of each other when communicating. When a direct communicator gets straight to the point and tells it like it is, a colleague who favours a more indirect style may think they are rude or pushy. Conversely, an indirect communicator who is conscious of avoiding conflict and saving face may soften a message in ways that their colleague who favours a more direct style may think, “why don’t they get to the point? Why don’t they say what they mean?” Challenges can also arise when direct communicators miss subtle inferences or non-verbal cues. If they are relying on only the verbal message and not “listening between the lines,” they may miss the message.

All communication involves a sender who encodes the message and a receiver who decodes the message. When communicating across cultures, we need carefully consider the communication style of the sender when decoding. For example, if a direct communicator decodes all messages as though they were encoded by a direct communicator, it is likely they will misinterpret the message. The challenges of different styles can be mediated by recognizing your own communication style and trying to adapt it when communicating with others who may prefer a different style.

If you are more direct, try to:

- Avoid blunt statements.
- Consider that softening criticism may be more important than honest feedback.
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues, especially when they do not align with the verbal message.

If you are more indirect, try to:

- Recognize that subtle message may not be understood in the way you intended.
- Accept that direct communicators respect and expect direct messages.

Regardless of style, when communicating across cultures, it is always good practice to use verification techniques. For example, you can restate the message you heard:

- “So, what I understood you say was...”
- “Let me make sure I understand...”
- “Could you say a bit more about that so that I am sure I understand your meaning...”

Watch the video below to learn more about direct and indirect communication.

Direct and Indirect Communication Between Cultures
(https://youtu.be/6eq37Q_dKao?si=6ffuENBrgz7uX--D) [2:11 min]
by SFU Co-operative Education (2016)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=60#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:
Direct and Indirect Communication Between Cultures
(https://youtu.be/6eq37Q_dKao?si=6ffuENBrgz7uX--D)



Non-Verbal Communication & Culture

Edward T. Hall's (1976) theorizing also introduced how cultures differ in non-verbal communication, such as the degree of emotion displayed, the use of physical gestures, touch, and even the distance between communicators. He noted that cultures vary in the degree of neutrality or emotion displayed when communicating. In neutrally-oriented cultures, subtle behaviours that do not reveal

emotions are favoured. People do not overtly display emotion, especially in the public sphere or workplace. Affective cultures tend to display emotions more readily, use facial expressions to convey interest or agreement, and often use physical gestures, referred to as kinesics, such as talking with the hands.

Consider how this cultural dimension might influence our perceptions of those communicating. When members of more neutral cultures are interacting with members of more affective cultures, they may find their emotional and physical displays alarming or inappropriate. At the same time, members of affective cultural orientations may perceive neutrally-orientated culture groups disinterested or cold. When we combine neutral- and high-power orientations, it highlights behaviours such as eye contact. A member of a neutral, high-power culture may not engage in eye contact with a superior; unfortunately, this may be perceived as disinterest or shame instead of a sign of deference and calm.

Culture also influences haptics, which refers to the use of touch and proxemics (i.e., the degree of physical closeness). In some cultures, touching someone while communicating relays interest and care, whereas in another cultural context, touching someone you are not in an intimate relationship with might be seen as intrusive. There are also unwritten rules about how close one should be when in communication. In fact, in 2006, Morrison and Conway published a best-selling book titled *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands* that details the does and don'ts of haptics in more than 60 cultures worldwide. Research has also shown that concepts of personal space are variable by culture. In a study involving more than 9,000 participants in 42 countries, Sorowkowska et al. (2017) quantified social, personal, and intimate proxemics to provide compelling evidence that cultural norms provide rules for closeness in communication.

Conclusion

In today's increasingly globalized world, the job skills associated with intercultural development are in high demand. Being able to communicate effectively and respectfully with people who are different from yourself is important for your own professional development and for fostering productive, innovative, inclusive, and equitable work environments. Self-awareness and empathy are important to intercultural development, as is having a foundational understanding of the cultural dimensions that influence intercultural communication. The knowledge you have gained in this chapter is just a starting point. Intercultural development is a richly rewarding, lifelong process of learning and unlearning. As you move forward on your career journey, remain open to new opportunities to develop your intercultural communication skills even further!

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14. Indigenous Inclusion in Employment

ROBLINE DAVEY

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Complete a holistic self-assessment to inventory your unique characteristics that will benefit an employer, using a strengths-based approach to job searching and career planning. (Indigenous)
- Translate skills and competencies that have been developed within Indigenous community-based roles into skills recognized by the employment sector. (Indigenous)
- Identify and describe how your social location might influence your employment options in Canada. (Indigenous)
- Evaluate and critique an organization's equity and inclusion policies to understand if an organization is a right fit for you. (Indigenous)
- Create a plan including resources to advocate for yourself in an employment or volunteer context. (Indigenous)

Economic Stability

Social Determinants of Health

Variations among population groups are referred to as the “social gradient,” which is the concept that a disparity exists between health outcomes depending on income levels. As a historically disadvantaged group, Indigenous Peoples have experienced lower rates of education and skills. Compared to the rest of Canadians, Indigenous peoples have experienced significant labour market disadvantages due to the historical and current oppressive laws and policies of the Canadian government.

Because of the importance of economic stability, employment is key to self-development and long-term quality of life across the lifespan. Economic stability—including income and income distribution, unemployment and job security, and employment and working conditions—is a major social determinant of health (SDH) (Commission on Social Determinants of Health, 2008; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). As such, securing and sustaining employment is important to numerous social and economic goals.

Economic well-being does not exclusively hinge on having a job; aligning your values and goals is an important exercise in ensuring you are engaging in meaningful work that gives you purpose, quality of life, and access to other SDHs. Employment is clearly important, particularly in the Canadian labour market, which is characterized by a pool of low-wage, precarious employment (Jackson, 2005).

Indigenous Perspectives

Holistic Assessment

Ensure that you assess a potential employer and make informed decisions in your employment search. Indigenous Peoples across Canada share similar values, despite the richness and differences in cultures. The four dimensions (spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional) are aspects of every person's nature, and they can be used to frame all aspects of our lives. Indigenous Peoples believe that wholeness and balance are important and result when a person has all four of these dimensions in balance. Imbalances in any area result in disharmony.

Different groups interpret the circle differently, but in summary: each of the four directions or dimensions (east, south, west, and north) typically represents an organizing framework and a worldview summarized by balance. The circle can be used to align and frame all aspects of life. Employment decisions are no different than any other decisions. Efforts and energy should be taken to align your values with an organization.



Figure 14.1 Circle of four dimensions for career decision-making (McCormick et al., n.d.) Used with permission [Long Description (#fig14-1longdesc)]

Figure 14.1 (#fig14-1) is just one of the circle diagrams representing part of a much more involved Indigenous values-based career decision-making process designed by Rod McCormick, Norm Amundsen, and Gray Poehnell (2002) in their workbook and workshops, *Guiding Circles: An Aboriginal Guide to Finding Career Paths*. “Guiding Circles Step 1 Workbook: Understanding Yourself” (<https://www.iworks.org/product/guiding-circles-step-1-workbook-understanding-yourself>) (McCormick et al., 2002) can now be found at IndigenousWorks (previously known as the Aboriginal Human Resources Council). These resources were developed in response to the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/>

aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx) (RCAP) to improve Indigenous inclusion in employment.

For our purposes, this circle can support you in identifying and evaluating your activities within various aspects of your life, including your academics, career, volunteer work, and personal life. Follow Exercise 14.1 (#exercise14-1) or use the circle with four dimensions as a general framework. You can re-draw the circle on a blank sheet of paper, and re-use it anytime you need to guide your process.

This is a good time to perform a general self-assessment if you have not done so already. You might have already read the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter in this textbook and performed the self-assessment. Go back and do a self-inventory again using the Holland Code (RIASEC) Test (<https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/RIASEC/>) from the Open-Source Psychometric Project (2019). After doing this self-assessment, compare your results and place them into the four dimensions in the circle to ensure that your decisions will result in the balance you are seeking. You can do this to determine if an employer's values align with your own interests, goals, and values.

Exercise 14.1

Using the Four Dimensions to Guide Your Career & Job Search

Use Figure 14.1 (#fig14-1) to assess your career goals and determine if a workplace is a good fit.

1. Write aspects of the potential position you are considering and place them in the quadrants that they align with. Jot what you know down. Do some research on the company's website, ask peers or colleagues about a potential organization, or record what you have discovered from a job interview. Here are some questions to consider:
 - Are the company's values evident?
 - What is the company's culture?
 - What is important to the company?
 - Is there a company mandate?
 - Does the website describe their equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policy, training, or priorities?
 - Is family important to the organization?
2. Write about your values. By now, you will have listed those and done some reflection on what is important to you. Jot these down in the various areas in the circle that match, and list the characteristics you are

aware of in the organization or career you are considering. Is one part of the circle too heavy with content?

This exercise is exploratory, so take some time and fill this out for each employer. You may not be able to figure this out until you are in your first work term, but that is what co-op is for: to determine from experience what you want to do.

Family Responsibilities

Indigenous individuals commit more hours per week to household and caring tasks than non-Indigenous Canadians. For example, in 2001, 25% of working-age Indigenous respondents spent more than 30 hours per week involved in housework, compared to 16% of non-Indigenous respondents (Ciceri & Scott, 2006). The percentage of Indigenous women working more than 30 hours a week on household tasks was higher than the percentage of Indigenous men (33% compared to 16%) (Ciceri & Scott, 2006). Even so, Indigenous men were twice as likely as non-Indigenous men to be in this group.

Similarly, Indigenous people were almost twice as likely as non-Indigenous people to report that they spent more than 30 hours per week caring for children (28% compared to 16%) (Ciceri & Scott, 2006). Again, this was true for both Indigenous men and women. By contrast, over half of the non-Indigenous working-age population (53%) reported that they did not spend any time caring for children, compared to 43% of the Indigenous population. This may be linked to the higher birth rate, as noted in Current State of Employment for Indigenous Canadians, as well as the higher proportion of lone-

parent families within the Indigenous community. Additionally, working-age adults in the Indigenous community are more likely to provide more than 10 hours per week of care to an Elder.

But what do all these statistics mean, and how are they related to employment? Basically, family responsibilities fall largely upon Indigenous women, which is a disadvantage in terms of employment opportunities. Reliable and safe childcare, along with a position that earns a sufficient income to also pay for childcare, are integral to enabling Indigenous women to work. This may be a good point to discuss the ways in which identities are intersectional and how that intersectionality impacts our earning potential.

Cultural Humility

Self-promotion is not a common characteristic among Indigenous cultures (Deloitte, 2012) or various other cultural backgrounds. Yet describing oneself in what may seem like boastful ways is normalized in North America. It can be uncomfortable for some people to describe themselves and list their qualities in the way that job-seekers are counseled, and you may need to teach yourself the skill. Indigenous employees may grapple with different cultural definitions of success and the cultural bias toward humility instead of “selling yourself” (Deloitte, 2012). Presenting yourself in resumes and cover letters can feel uncomfortable at first. Learning new cultural skills is challenging, but it can be helpful in terms of finding meaningful employment. Consider how members of your family, community members, and relations would talk about you, and challenge yourself to learn to market your unique and valuable characteristics by putting your best foot forward in a way that employers recognize. You can refer to the strengths finder in the Self-Assessment (#chapter-self-assessment) chapter if you want to go through a reflective exercise to brainstorm your strengths.

Exercise 14.3

Describe Your Strengths Through a Family Member's Eyes

Brainstorm! List your skills and competencies. Do not edit the list while you write. You can always edit later, but for now, jot down all the strengths and skills that you recognize, or that a family member would say about you.

Use paper and a pen or open a Word document and type it out. Practice bragging!

Application Process

Employer Assessment

In response to TRC's (2015a) *Calls to Action*, which includes mandates to diversify the Canadian workforce, many employers are seeking Indigenous applicants, and several organizations have developed specific Indigenous recruitment strategies. These provide opportunities for Indigenous students starting out after graduation and can also be great first work terms.

It is important to evaluate these Indigenous recruitment

opportunities for yourself. One way to do this is to identify the equity policies at these organizations. Look for an employer that:

- Creates an empowering workplace
- Displays evidence of accountability
- Demonstrates a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion

An exemplary organization that values EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion) and seeks to diversify and celebrate the diversity of their employees will have an EDI policy, mandate, or commitment on their website. Committed organizations may also have mentorship groups for Indigenous employees, which can support and increase a sense of belonging for Indigenous employees, which is important for employee retention (Morris, 2017).

Researching an employer's equity and inclusion policy to evaluate whether the employer feels like a good fit can support your decision-making process. Indigenous employees, and all employees, feel more psychologically safe in a workplace that values diversity and welcomes and fosters employee skills and talents. As part of your research process, locate an exemplary EDI policy or commitment to diversity, either through an employer's website or your networks. Describe the values that are stated within the policy and how those motivate you to work for the organization. Evidence of this is when managers put these policies into practice by developing teams in which Indigenous employees are heard, recognized, valued, and challenged with meaningful work (Thorpe-Moscon & Ohm, 2021).

There are many mentorship and leadership development opportunities with organizations and companies that have already implemented these practices. As mentioned before, mentorship and opportunities to build connections with other Indigenous people in the organization are important supports to look for in a potential workplace (Deloitte, 2012). Explore those organizations that interest

you in your sector and ensure that you are highlighting your Indigenous identity to be considered for these positions.

Indigenous Recruitment in Organizations Example

The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC, n.d.) has Indigenous recruitment programs (<https://jobs.rbc.com/ca/en/IndigenousPeoples>) along with student training and mentorship opportunities. RBC is an organization that not only hires Indigenous interns but also has a post-graduate internship program that is supported by a group of Indigenous advisors, mentors, or Elders. The organization maintains a group of Indigenous mentors who are available to support new and existing employees, culturally and professionally.

Exercise 14.4

Assessing an Organization's EDI Policy

Research a few employers you would like to work for to assess their EDI commitment.

1. Go to the employer's website, and locate their EDI policy, diversity mandate, or statement of inclusion.
2. Summarize the policies that you find, and reflect upon how the policy creates more safety and space for Indigenous employees.
3. Take note of any Indigenous recruitment programs or supports. You may find this information on the internet, or you may also have heard about an organization's reputation in this area through your networks.
4. Describe any details you discover that encourage you to feel that your Indigeneity will be supported.

Self-Identification

Ensure that you find a way to self-identify in your application package, even if the position you are seeking is not described as a specifically Indigenous position. Resulting from TRC's *Calls to Action*, many organizations have developed diversity and inclusion

policies. What this means is that there are more Indigenous recruitment programs, and organizations are striving to diversify their workforce. To self-identify, ensure that you use one of the paragraphs in your cover letter to introduce yourself, including the Nation and/or community that you belong to. An additional method to reference your identity is to include any competencies and skills you have developed through volunteering, paid work, or cultural roles you have performed in your community. For example, by naming the community in which you have planned events or supported Elders, it will be evident to those reading your application that you belong to an Indigenous community.

To ensure that you are considered Indigenous, using the introduction method is more direct. Knowing that diversity initiatives potentially increase the opportunities for Indigenous and BIPOC job-seekers, for many reasons, you may not want to identify yourself. Make the decision that works best for you, in your circumstances, and take the advice in this section to enable your employment search to work for you.

Cover Letter Self-Identification Examples

Example 1: “As a T'exelcenc person, I have extensive knowledge of the land.”

Example 2: “Because of my role as an event organizer in my community of Frog Lake, Alberta, I have developed a number of project management skills...”

Exercise 14.5

Create a List of Indigenous Recruitment Programs

1. Create a list of Indigenous recruitment programs that include explicit support for Indigenous employees.
2. Describe how this support would influence your decision to apply to these organizations.

Example: The Royal Bank of Canada (<https://jobs.rbc.com/ca/en/IndigenousPeoples>) (n.d.) has a number of initiatives to support Indigenous graduates, including co-op opportunities, post-graduate internships, and a mentorship program called Royal Eagles, comprised of Indigenous employees.

Transferable Skills

Do not forget to outline and detail the skills and competencies you have developed as a result of your roles in your community. Various roles such as acting as an Elder helper, having extensive knowledge of the land, medicines, or cultural knowledge, and organizing cultural and community events have been instrumental in developing certain skill sets. Ensure that you are connecting these valuable skills and responsibilities into skills that an employer recognizes. This is especially important if you are applying for a

position with an employer who is seeking an Indigenous applicant or for an opportunity in a community or Indigenous organization. These competencies should be highlighted and front and centre for an Indigenous organization. This allows you to explicitly tie the traditional skills to your identity as an Indigenous person and highlight this for an employer.

Cultural Skill Examples

- Community involvement = Extensive network, relational skills
- Community event planning = Project management and networking skills
- Youth/Wellness programs = Team player and/or teacher/coach
- Elder helper = Emotional intelligence/wisdom

Exercise 14.6

List your Cultural Skills and Competencies

1. Identify and write down a list of cultural skills and competencies from the various community-based roles or jobs that you have held. Think about how those skills are transferable to an organization you are considering.
2. In one column, include cultural skills and competencies.
3. In the second column, transfer those skills into competencies in ways that the organization will value.

Employment Trends

You can learn more about various careers from an Indigenous perspective. The Career Journeys for First Nations Role Model Program (<https://vimeo.com/user7569998>) (FNESC and FNSEA, n.d.) was created primarily for secondary students by the First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) and First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC). However, no matter where you are in your journey, these videos are still great resources. They include interviews with professionals in various careers, discussing many factors that contributed to their success like family support,

educational requirements, and how their choice of profession has enriched their lives (FNESC and FNSA, n.d.).

Watch the following collection of videos (<https://vimeo.com/user7569998>) (FNESC and FNSA, n.d.) and meet the Career Journey Role Models in *An Introduction to the Career Journeys Role Models Series*, by FNESC and FNSA (2015) on Vimeo.

An Introduction to the Career Journeys Role Models Series, by FNESC and FNSA (<https://vimeo.com/146848444>) [64 videos, 2–4 min each] by FNESC and FNSA (2015)



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=62#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

An Introduction to the Career Journeys Role Models Series, by FNESC and FNSA (<https://vimeo.com/146848444>)



Conclusion

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has identified Indigenous youth between the ages of 15 and 34 as the fastest-growing population segment in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018). That means that our organizations are going to require your perspective and skill set in order to maintain a competitive advantage. Attracting Indigenous talent is a necessity; Catalyst described it as an imperative—not just a diversity exercise (Thorpe-Moscon & Ohm, 2021). Remember your value to the workplace and that the perspective you bring is integral to growth in the sector you choose. As one participant in Deloitte’s (2012) Dialogue on Diversity stated: “There are thousands of bright young people getting ready to seize opportunities. We’re not living in the 60s or 70s anymore.”

Media Attributions

- **Figure 14.1** “Guiding Circles Career Decision Making” [Diagram] by Rod McCormick, Norm Amundson, Gray Poehnell [© Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada], via Indigenous Works, is used with permission.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 14.1 Long Description: A circle can be used to assess your career goals and determine if a workplace is a good fit. The circle is

divided evenly into four quadrants: Mental, Spiritual, Emotional, and Physical. The circle is made of three concentric circles, with “too little” being nearest the centre, then moving out is “just enough” and the outermost circle is “too much.” A person could write aspects of the potential position they are considering and place them in the quadrants that they align with. To further understand how to use the circle, follow Exercise 14.1 (#exercise14-1).

[Return to Figure 14.1 (#fig14-1)]

15. TRC & Employment

ROBLINE DAVEY

Introduction

Depending on your context, you may discover that you are already familiar with the information in this chapter. For some, it may be brand new. Whether you are an international student in Canada, a domestic student, or an Indigenous student, it is important to educate or remind us of the difficult history experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada because it has led to the current employment context today. This chapter aims to describe the Canadian employment context as it relates to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC, 2015a) *Calls to Action* (CTA), specifically CTA 92 which can be summarized by calling for reconciliation in the workplace, including improved intercultural skills for employees and administration.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Locate and list government policies, initiatives, and institutions that have historically and currently oppressed Indigenous Peoples, resulting in the current employment context in Canada. (Land acknowledgement)
- Describe the impact colonialism has had on Indigenous communities, and detail how that has caused a lower representation of and/or increased barriers for Indigenous Peoples in various employment sectors. (Land acknowledgement)
- Explain the significance of rights-based documents, such as the TRC's Calls to Action or UNDRIP, and articulate the impact that adopting these principles has in an employment context or potential workplace environment. (Land acknowledgement)
- Develop several strategies to support reconciliation within a prospective workplace. (Land acknowledgement)

Who Are the Indigenous Peoples of Canada?

Indigenous Peoples make up 4.9% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2018a). A long history of colonialism, genocide, and racism has led to inequities in many areas of life for Indigenous Peoples living in Canada. The term “Indigenous” is an overarching term that refers to the three legally recognized groups who lived in Canada before it was colonized by settlers: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (see Table 15.1 (#tab15-1)). These three groups are legally recognized as “Aboriginal” in Section 35(2) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) in the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Table 15.1 Indigenous Groups

Indigenous Group	Definition
First Nations	A diverse group of Indigenous Peoples who are not Inuit or Métis and who live in cities, towns, and First Nations communities across Canada.
Inuit	Indigenous Peoples who have traditionally lived in Inuit Nunangat, which is composed of land, water, and ice in the Arctic region, including the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (in the Northern Yukon and the Northwestern parts of Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (in Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (in Northern Labrador).
Métis	People descended from Indigenous and European Ancestors during the fur trade, who self-identify as Métis, and can trace their roots to the ancestral Métis homeland are accepted by the Métis Nation.

Current State of Employment for Indigenous Canadians

Indigenous Peoples are the fastest-growing segment of the population, and those aged 25 to 39 will be a significant percentage of the workforce in the coming years (see Figure 15.1 (#fig15-1)). Statistics Canada (2012) reported that 46.2% of the Indigenous population was younger than 24 years old, compared to only 30% of the non-Indigenous population. That number has not changed much since then. In 2020, 44% of those identifying as Indigenous were younger than 25 years old (Statistics Canada, 2020). Yet according to a report by Catalyst, Indigenous Peoples are underrepresented in the employment sector, are impacted by a wage gap, and may experience isolation due to a lack of Indigenous role models in organizations (Thorpe-Moscon et al., 2021; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018). Using data from Statistics Canada, it is reported that the unemployment rate for the Indigenous population was 9.8% in 2024 (Statistics Canada, 2025), slightly more for men and slightly less for women.

Indigenous employees are under-represented in many fields, including finance, consulting, law, banking, and financial institutions (Deschamps, 2021; Canadian Human Rights Commission [CHRC], 2020). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015b) observed that disparities in education and skills were closely tied to these employment outcomes. Educational attainment and employment rates are positively correlated; those with the lowest levels of educational attainment will also experience the lowest levels of employment rates (OECD, 2018). This correlation should mean that Indigenous Peoples engaged in post-secondary education are more likely to find employment.

Yet in her dissertation, Overmars (2019) indicates that looking only

at educational attainment is an oversimplification, emphasizing that colonization has played a role in lower rates of employment participation. The researcher also cites a lack of culturally appropriate workplaces and values misalignment, which may contribute to lower rates of employment or employee well-being. For more information on demographics and statistics, visit Statistics Canada (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm>) (2017b). The graph in Figure 15.1 (#fig15-1) from Statistics Canada (2021) illustrates the high percentage of Indigenous youth compared to non-Indigenous Canadians.

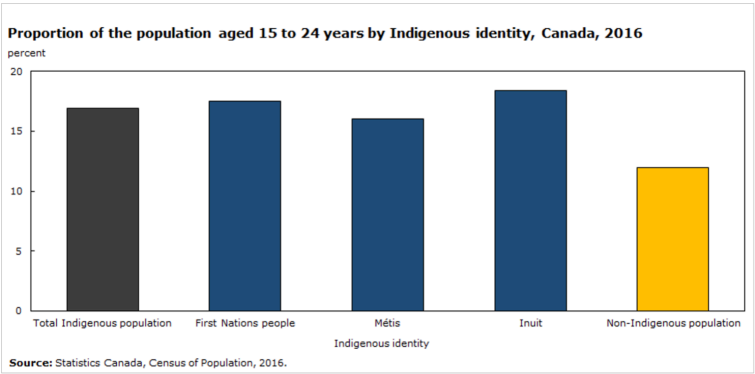


Figure 15.1 Proportion of population by Indigenous identity and age (Anderson, 2021) Statistics Canada Open License (<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/reference/licence>) [Long Description (#fig15-1longdesc)]

The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-skills-employment-training.html>) (Employment and Social Development Canada [ESDC], 2023) is an initiative by the federal government in partnership with Indigenous organizations. This program aims to close the gap in educational and employment outcomes. ISET increases access to post-secondary education for Indigenous Peoples and supports those seeking employment and career pathways for Indigenous workers. The program offers “job-finding skills and training, wage subsidies

to encourage employers to hire Indigenous workers, financial subsidies to help individuals access employment or obtain skills for employment, entrepreneurial skills development supports to help with returning to school, and childcare for parents in training” (OECD, 2018).

Microaggressions in the Workplace

In fact, 60% of Indigenous employees surveyed in Canada described feeling emotionally unsafe at work (Deschamps, 2021). Your colleagues, even in mainstream organizations, may not understand the history, cultures, or burdens that Indigenous Peoples carry (Julien et al., 2017); this can lead to microaggressions, myths, and misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples (Deloitte, 2012). For example, Indigenous individuals are often questioned about the notion that they do not pay income taxes (Joseph, 2018). However, Section 87 of the Indian Act (1985) states that the “personal property of an Indian or a band situated on a reserve” is tax-exempt, as is income earned from employment on a reserve. The majority of Indigenous workers live or work off-reserve, so they pay the same taxes as other Canadians. Inuit and Métis people are not eligible for this exemption, as they generally do not live on reserves (Joseph, 2018).

A particularly good resource to counter common myths is Bob Joseph’s (2021) free e-book *Dispelling Common Myths About Indigenous Peoples: 9 Myths and Realities*. You can read more about this at the Indigenous Corporate Training website, and the Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples blog in the post “Insight on 10 Myths About Indigenous Peoples” (<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/insight-on-10-myths-about-indigenous-peoples>) (Joseph, 2018).

How to Be an Ally to Indigenous Peoples

For our purposes, this chapter focuses on what actions colleagues can take to become allies in an employment context. Regardless of your level of understanding of the differences in worldviews and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, reflecting upon your biases and assumptions is an excellent starting place in terms of understanding unexamined beliefs about Indigenous cultures. Taking steps to understand Indigenous values, and specifically, the values of your Indigenous colleagues is important. Several online courses support professional development and provide an increased understanding of the various and different worldviews of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Online Professional Development Course Examples

Two robust resources are the following online courses (MOOCs) developed and delivered by the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the University of Alberta (UofA). Unless you desire a certificate of completion, both are free. They are self-paced asynchronous modules, so you can learn at your own pace.

- Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education (<https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/reconciliation-2/>) (UBC, n.d.): A 6-week online course.
- Indigenous Canada (<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>) (UofA, n.d.): A 12-week online course. UofA students can receive credit for the course.

Education and competency training can foster understanding, relationships, and work environments that support Indigenous employees' sense of belonging and contribute to their ability to thrive in the workplace. Make it a priority to learn about local Indigenous cultures where you live and work. Acknowledge the diversity among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and learn about your colleagues. Look for ways to learn about Indigenous values, and specifically seek out information about the values of communities in your area. For example, at Thompson Rivers

University, many students are Secwépemc and from the communities around Secwepemc'uluw. Understand that Indigenous Peoples are not a homogeneous group, despite the fact that many Indigenous cultures share values and belief systems.

Exercise 15.1

Locate the Traditional Indigenous Territory Where You Live or Work

Do research to find out more about the Indigenous Peoples whose land you work or live on. The following maps can be used to locate the territory you are on and learn more about treaties, treaty work in progress, and languages spoken in each area.

- First Peoples' Map of BC (<https://maps.fpcc.ca/>) (First Peoples Cultural Council, n.d.)
- BC Treaty Commission (n.d.) interactive map (<http://www.bctreaty.ca/map>): Offers more about the status of treaty negotiations.
- Native Land Interactive Map (<https://native-land.ca/>) (Native Land Digital, n.d.): Can be used to search and filter by treaty, language, and ancestral territory from a global perspective.

Next, you can use your research to answer the following questions:

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Exercise 15.1 Locate the Traditional Indigenous Territory Where You Live or Work (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/trc-and-employment/#h5p-21>)



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

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=64#h5p-21>

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=64#h5p-21>)

Further Reading

To learn more about Indigenous cultures in Canada, explore the following resources (also see Appendix N: Resources to Increase Your Knowledge About Indigenous Peoples (#back-matter-appendix-n-resources-to-increase-your-knowledge-about-indigenous-peoples)):

- **Indigenous Canada** (<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>): A free, online course at the UofA (n.d.)
- **Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education** (<https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/reconciliation-2/>): A free, online course at UBC (n.d.)
- **Indigenous Foundations** (<https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/>): An information resource by UBC (First Nations & Indigenous Studies, 2009)

Barriers & Obstacles to Employment

A number of barriers disproportionately impact Indigenous Peoples in accessing stable employment and economic stability. Many of these obstacles are rooted in historical racism and have resulted

in existing societal circumstances which prevent equitable access to economic stability. Eight barriers are listed by Bob Joseph (2019) in his blog post: “8 Basic Barriers to Indigenous Employment” (<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/8-basic-barriers-to-indigenous-employment>). These same barriers existed 20 years ago and have not significantly changed.

Many government assimilation laws and policies—such as the residential school system, Sixties Scoop, and Indian Act policies—created conditions in which intergenerational trauma combined with discriminatory practices and laws. This combination caused a lack of access to standard services that the average Canadian has access to. For example, poverty, poor health, and lower-than-average education levels have resulted from these systems. We must also include the lack of clean drinking water and less access to completing high school education in remote locations.

Other barriers and obstacles to employment for Indigenous Peoples include:

- Poverty and poor housing
- Literacy and education
- Cultural differences
- Racism, discrimination, and stereotypes
- Self-esteem
- Driving licences
- Transportation
- Child care

Because higher levels of numeracy and literacy have been correlated with increased labour force participation (Arriagado & Hango, 2016), it is important to create opportunities to increase these levels for Indigenous Peoples. For the many reasons listed above, literacy and numeracy levels have been historically lower for Indigenous Peoples than for the general population of Canada. Because of the documented lower educational levels, Indigenous Peoples may be impacted negatively and may be more vulnerable to shifts in the economy. Cultural differences between employers and colleagues can influence the extent to which mutual respectful relationships are built, which is integral for a safe workplace environment.

Similarly, racism, discrimination, stereotypes, and bias all influence our worldviews and how we view our colleagues.

Various myths are perpetuated about the perceived benefits that Indigenous Peoples are entitled to in Canada. One particular myth that continues is that Indigenous Peoples are perceived as having special treatment. While this is not true, in the current employment context, there are numerous Indigenous employment pathways that have developed as a result of the TRC's (2015a) *Calls to Action* report, with organizations specifically seeking Indigenous applicants. Recently, a shift towards EDI has resulted in interest and a legal requirement to diversify the employment sector. In fact, there is sufficient evidence to support the notion that diversity in all areas of decision-making results in more equitable policies for Canadians (Rao & Tilt, 2015). Ensure that you self-identify in support of any application, even if not specifically as Indigenous, and view yourself from a strengths-based place because your voice and perspectives are important and highly sought after in many sectors. Healthy self-esteem is a key factor in presenting oneself well in interviews.

It is important to note that Indigenous Peoples often feel that they need to leave their Indigenous identity and culture at the door when entering and engaging in non-Indigenous spaces. Corporate culture is definitely a specific environment requiring various communication skills and styles. It can be helpful to develop the skill set required for communicating in the workplace and recognizing the dominant corporate culture. For example, is it relaxed, or formal? What types of communication do employees use?

For those of us who are new to a certain sector or workplace, it can feel like we are taking on a different identity. This feeling is common. It may be that you have various identities—a professional identity that you switch to at work and various other social identities that you switch to for connecting with friends or family. People refer to this as code-switching. Indigenous peoples may be impacted by this more than non-Indigenous employees, due to the

fact that the worldviews we espouse can be very different than colleagues or the organization itself.

The ability to navigate various cultures is an advantage and may allow you to bring your Indigenous or your unique cultural perspective to your chosen organization. For example, adjusting how we communicate in the workplace can be helpful for meetings, championing ideas, and promoting oneself. That said, employers are advised to create new spaces and processes in the workplace culture that are inclusive, so that other perspectives are more easily recognized without employees being required to adjust to workplace culture.

For this reason, many Indigenous Peoples—whether students or employees—may develop multiple ways of communicating, depending on what context they find themselves in. In one environment, we may communicate in ways that are culturally grounded, but in non-Indigenous spaces, we may develop an identity that is more congruent with the implicit or explicit values of the non-Indigenous space. The term code-switching is often used to describe the ways in which individuals adapt ways of relating and communicating with others in various and different spaces such as school, community, family, employment contexts, and social spaces. Code-switching can be cognitively tiring; it can be mentally taxing to continually change your communication style to adapt to cultural contexts that differ from your culture of origin. This experience is common among Black, Indigenous, and people-of-colour (BIPOC) individuals.

It is worth reflecting upon communication styles, considering this as a factor in decision-making regarding where you see yourself working. Various communication styles are often required but are not always explicitly described by organizations. Adapting to a corporate culture may require an employee to adopt specific ways of communicating that are recognized in the organization but may be different than what we are used to using in other environments.

Some challenges Indigenous Peoples face in terms of employment include issues of isolation, especially those who transition from remote areas and have to become accustomed to a new city or urban culture. Additional challenges include developing ways to adapt to new cultural norms, such as workplace culture, and navigating institutions that are predominantly based on Western values. A lack of role models in senior positions can contribute to low retention and recruitment. As Deloitte (2012) reported, retention is impacted by the lack of familiar faces. Not seeing ourselves in the company impacts our sense of belonging. One way to support employees who find themselves in this situation is to develop mentorship programs and create support systems for Indigenous employees.

Not possessing a driver's license can also be a barrier to employment opportunities. It is often a requirement of employment, and the ability to drive can be necessary to transport you to an interview, your workplace, or to testing centres, which are often part of an application process depending on the type of employment you are looking for. Remote communities seldom have reliable public transportation, and it can be difficult to find an automobile in remote communities to learn how to drive or to take the license road test. The high cost of insurance for younger people, who are just starting out, is another barrier.

Lastly, reliable, safe childcare in BC is costly and challenging to find. There are often long waitlists for out-of-home childcare in urban centres, which can disadvantage women disproportionately, creating even more obstacles to entering the workplace.

Further Reading

- “8 Basic Barriers to Indigenous Employment” (<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/8-basic-barriers-to-indigenous-employment>) (Joseph, 2019)
- “Insight on 10 Myths About Indigenous Peoples” (<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/insight-on-10-myths-about-indigenous-peoples>) (Joseph, 2018)
- *Dispelling Common Myths about Indigenous Peoples* (<https://www.ictinc.ca/dispelling-common-myths-about-indigenous-peoples>) (Joseph, 2021)
- Dispelling the Misconceptions About Indigenous People (<https://circlesforreconciliation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/8-202203-Dispelling-the-Misconceptions-about-Indigenous-People-MB-Version.pdf>) (Circles for Reconciliation, 2020)
- “Pulling Together: Foundations Guide — Appendix C: Myths and Fact?” (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/back-matter/appendix-c-myth-or-fact/>) (Wilson, 2014)
- “What Exactly Is a Microaggression?” (<https://www.vox.com/2015/2/16/8031073/what-are-microaggressions>) (Desmond-Harris, 2015)

Rights & Responsibilities Frameworks

Truth & Reconciliation: Calls to Action

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) recommended a series of 94 *Calls to Action* ([https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca/what-are-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-94-calls-to-action#:~:text=The%2094%20Calls%20to%20Action%20\(CTAs\)%20are%20actionable%20policy%20recommendations,happening%20a gain%20in%20the%20future.](https://www.reconciliationeducation.ca/what-are-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-94-calls-to-action#:~:text=The%2094%20Calls%20to%20Action%20(CTAs)%20are%20actionable%20policy%20recommendations,happening%20a gain%20in%20the%20future.)) (CTA) (Reconciliation Education, n.d.) that outlined various actions by several sectors to support, foster, and develop reconciliatory action that would transform institutions and systems for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Everything from education, sports, employment, and more was tasked with action.

Specifically, CTA 92 called for the “corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework, and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources” (TRC, 2015a). In fact, it was not until 2019 that BC adopted UNDRIP.

In terms of employment and career planning, CTA 92ii and 92iii are particularly important to explore. The TRC uses wording that welcomes expansive action on the part of employers and individuals. CTA 92ii mandates that employers ensure that Indigenous Peoples have “equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector” (TRC, 2015a). The second aspect of CTA 92ii calls for communities to gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects, which also has an impact on potential employment for Indigenous community members.

TRC Call to Action 92: Business & Reconciliation

We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- **92i:** Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- **92ii:** Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
- **92iii:** Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in

intercultural competency, conflict resolution,
human rights, and anti-racism
(TRC, 2015a).

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The second framework is the United Nations (2007) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (<https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>) (UNDRIP), and it was only recently adopted in BC. UNDRIP was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. It was only in 2019 that Canada officially supported UNDRIP, having voted against it in 2007. It is a framework that asserts that Indigenous peoples should be free from discrimination. The framework can be summarized as a mechanism to protect Indigenous peoples' rights to cultural integrity, education, health, and political participation. UNDRIP also recognizes Indigenous Peoples' rights to their lands and natural resources and the observation of their treaty rights.

This has significant implications for employment rights and, along with the TRC's *Calls to Action*, has influenced organizations to create more Indigenous recruitment programs and focus on diversifying their organizations. UNDRIP Article 17 (Parts 1 and 3) and Article 21 refer to economic protections and employment. Explore Article 17, which asserts the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the area of labour law and establishes the right to not be discriminated against, below.

UNDRIP Article 17

- **Article 17-1.** Indigenous individuals and peoples have the right to enjoy fully all rights established under applicable international and domestic labour law.
- **Article 17-3.** Indigenous individuals have the right not to be subjected to any discriminatory conditions of labour and, inter alia, employment or salary.

(United Nations, 2007)

Parts 1 and 3 of Article 17 mean that the rights of Indigenous peoples are protected, and they should be able to enjoy a harassment-free environment at work. It also means that you cannot be refused employment or be discriminated against based on your cultural background. If you find that this is the case, steps to rectify the discrimination would be to consult your university co-op coordinator (if you are a co-op student) and/or your human resources advisor at your organization.

The Labour Program: Changes to the Canada Labour Code (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/laws-regulations/labour/forward-regulatory-plan.html>) (ESDC, 2021) lists recent improvements to employee rights. It is a good resource to review, whether you are just entering the workforce or if you have already been a part of the workforce because it details your rights and entitlements. For example, did you

know Indigenous employees are entitled to five days off for cultural practices?

This brings us to a discussion about UNDRIP Article 21, which details provisions for economic conditions and areas regarding employment and training, as well as particular attention to those who are historically marginalized: women, Elders, youth, children, and those with disabilities.

UNDRIP Article 21

- Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions [emphasis added], including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining [emphasis added], housing, sanitation, health and social security.
- States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions [emphasis added]. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

(United Nations, 2007)

Article 21 speaks to the fact that the government has a commitment to supporting Indigenous individuals to improve their economic

conditions, including employment, and it codifies taking special measures for continuous improvement. The result of this mandate is increasing opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in employment, in which organizations are answering the call to increase diversity. Yet despite adopting UNDRIP, it still has no legal authority in Canada.

The following timeline is not an exhaustive list of events, but it identifies key events in the Indigenous rights framework. See Appendix O: Indigenous Rights Based Framework Timeline – TRC, UNDRIP & Reports (#back-matter-appendix-o-indigenous-rights-based-framework-timeline-trc-undrip-reports) for a long description of this timeline.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Timeline: Canada's Reconciliation and Rights — Some Key Milestones TRC, UNDRIP (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/trc-and-employment/#h5p-28>)





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

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=64#h5p-28>

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=64#h5p-28>)

What Does This Mean for Indigenous Canadians Seeking Employment?

As a result of the TRC, many organizations have increased their attention to developing recruitment strategies designed to employ Indigenous Canadians, with a goal to diversify their workplace in the hope of closing the gap that exists between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Canadians regarding employment statistics. This can result in increased opportunities for Indigenous employment candidates.

As Canadians become aware of the history and legacy of cultural oppression, genocide, and the resulting lack of access to education and employment opportunities for Indigenous Canadians, employers have been urged to take action to close this gap in employment between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Canadians. CTA 92ii is integral to educating employers and supporting leaders and management with intercultural training, human rights awareness, anti-racism, and implicit bias training that may improve hiring practices. This training is key to increasing Indigenous employment, improving diversity in the workplace, and creating safer employment spaces for Indigenous Canadians.

Exercise 15.2

Reflect on the Implications of TRC's Calls to Action

Take a look at the TRC's (2015a) *Calls to Action* report, and locate the specific CTA(s) for the sector in which you plan to work. Reflect on the following questions:

1. What do the CTAs mean for you in the workplace, and what do they mean for the organization?
2. Is there evidence of action on the organization's website?
3. Does the organization have evidence of professional development or educational opportunities for its employees?
4. What are some reconciliatory actions you can do to support diversity in the workplace?

Further Reading

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf) (2015a), full report
- Beyond 94: Truth and Reconciliation in Canada (<https://www.cbc.ca/newsinteractives/beyond-94?cta=1>) (Barrera. et al., 2021), CBC report on the progress toward TRC Calls to Action
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf) (United Nations, 2007)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [PDF] (<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>) (United Nations, 2007), the full document and overview
- United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: Frequently Asked Questions on Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (<https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/>)

documents/faq_drips_en.pdf) (United Nations, n.d.), a summary and FAQ

- International Human Rights Principles What Are Human Rights? (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/indigenous-peoples/>) (Amnesty International, n.d.), a summary of UNDRIP
- What Does “Implementing UNDRIP” Actually Mean? (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/implementing-undrip-bc-nwt-1.5344825>) (Last, 2019), CBC News analysis
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_on_the_Rights_of_Indigenous_Peoples) (“Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” 2021)

Racism & Implicit Bias

Indigenous students are not always in culturally-safe on campus. The concept of cultural safety recognizes that we need to be aware of and challenge unequal power relations at all levels: individual, family, community, and society (Cull et al., 2018). The reality is that many Indigenous students experience racial microaggressions daily, and this ongoing harm creates feelings of isolation and not being welcome. A racial microaggression is a “subtle behaviour that [conveys] hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to persons of marginalized groups” (Shotton, 2017, p. 33).

A Catalyst survey defines the concept of an “emotional tax” as an

extra psychological burden at work (Thorpe-Moscon et al., 2019). This emotional tax, and the low levels of psychological safety that Indigenous Peoples experience, are not shared by mainstream or non-marginalized employees. In more detail, emotional tax is “the combination of feeling different from peers at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity, being on guard to experiences of bias” (Thorpe-Moscon et al., 2019) and it is linked to employee retention and health and well-being.

According to a recent article, Indigenous workers describe feeling “on guard” and that they have to follow a higher code of conduct than their non-Indigenous peers (Deschamps, 2021). They may take special care not to reinforce stereotypes about Indigenous peoples; for example, they may feel added pressure to always show up on time, never over-drink at work functions, and present as “agreeable” so as not to appear “angry” (Deschamps, 2021). These behaviours are ways that Indigenous employees protect themselves from bias and discrimination because they do not have the same privilege as their non-Indigenous peers. Feeling on guard or unsafe has ramifications for diversity in the workplace.

Because a large proportion (60%) of Indigenous workers feel unsafe on the job, their overall sense of belonging is impacted (Deschamps, 2021). This influences the way these workers navigate employment and career choices. It may influence how many Indigenous individuals seek work in their home communities where they have connections, support, and resources.

The Indigenous artist Jarrid Poitras outlines ways in which comments made in the workplace impact Indigenous Peoples and how complicated it is to advocate for yourself. You can read more about Jarrid Poitras’s story in the CBC News article “‘Pawn it’ Comment Prompts Indigenous Artist to Call out Discrimination in Sask. Country Music Industry” (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/sask-country-music-association-remarks-1.5916861>) (Latimer, 2021).

Unfortunately, Indigenous women are impacted by this “on guard” feeling disproportionately—67% of Indigenous women, as opposed to 38% of men—and this lack of comfort leads to reduced progression, inability to voice their opinions, and ignoring microaggressions or colleague’s unconscious biases out of fear of not being amenable to corporate culture (Deschamps, 2021). The high percentage of Indigenous workers who feel unsafe in the workplace has implications for company leadership. Leaders must provide a safe and welcoming space for Indigenous employees to be themselves. Indigenous workers should not feel penalized for raising concerns or challenges. They should feel their Indigeneity is accepted, rather than having to educate colleagues or the company. Determining whether an employer has a solid reconciliation or decolonization initiative is a good sign that there is progress in that particular workplace.

Finding Support

Many organizations are realizing the need for Indigenous support, and they are adapting their practices to include cultural awareness or sensitivity training for employees at all levels (Deloitte, 2012). Take advantage of these workshops and professional development, so you can develop cultural sensitivity and improve your allyship with Indigenous colleagues. While organizations are improving their practices and policies, looking for support and mentorship is important. For example, Krystal Abotossaway, TD Bank Group’s Senior Manager of Diversity and Inclusion, indicates that “being able to draw on the organization’s network and connect with people who have faced challenges like hers has helped her professionally, where she finds the need to be ‘on guard’ has been melting away” (Deschamps, 2021).

Indigenous employees in mainstream workplaces often feel burdened, and they experience challenges that adversely influence

their cultural safety and well-being. The concept of “working in two worlds” might be new to many cross-sector agencies, but for Indigenous employees, it can be a barrier to career satisfaction and progression. Often, Indigenous peoples are asked to educate their colleagues or be the go-to person for bringing cultural awareness to a team or department.

Suggestions are for organizations to maintain their own resources and ensure they are providing professional development for staff, so the onus for this development is not on Indigenous employees. Deloitte (2012) reported that Indigenous employees remarked on how “exhausting” it is to constantly be providing this cultural education. If you find that is occurring in your workplace, you can always suggest that your colleagues or workplace engage in external training. Some of those courses and resources can be found in Appendix N: Resources To Increase Your Knowledge About Indigenous Peoples ([#back-matter-appendix-n-resources-to-increase-your-knowledge-about-indigenous-peoples](#)).

Cultural sensitivity education and knowledge about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada can support non-Indigenous employees to be better allies to our Indigenous colleagues without putting the burden of education on them. Additionally, non-Indigenous employees can support Indigenous colleagues by advocating and supporting a colleague if they find themselves witnessing an instance of cultural bias, derogatory comment, or racism in the workplace. As a victim or target of racism or cultural bias, it is difficult to advocate for oneself. If a non-Indigenous colleague notices this behaviour and calls it out, it can be more effective and create an increasingly safe environment for those impacted by these incidents. If you have more privilege or psychological safety than others, it is important that you use your voice as an ally.

The lack of psychological safety inhibits the career progress made by Indigenous employees, and it can limit the potential of the

organization (Deschamps, 2021). High psychological safety is associated with many positive outcomes, both for Indigenous employees and their companies. Previous research indicates that the “emotional tax” may be diminished when leaders create an empowering work environment so that BIPOC employees have the autonomy, resources, and support they need to succeed (Thorpe-Mascon et al., 2019).

Allyship Strategies For Your Workplace

- Build relationships with Indigenous colleagues.
- Call out racist or biased comments.
- Demonstrate inclusivity.
- Create more space for Indigenous voices by encouraging everyone to be heard, especially in meetings.
- Champion your colleagues' ideas and creativity.
- Educate yourself on the history of racism and oppression in Canada. Do not ask your colleague to educate the department or organization, unless that is their role in the company.

By modeling these behaviours, you will be signaling to other colleagues how to conduct themselves in an ethical fashion that supports reconciliation. The Application Process (#application) section in the Indigenous Inclusion in Employment chapter discusses how to determine the fit of a potential workplace by carefully assessing the organization's EDI plan. This is a good first step and may reduce the challenges you face with regard to racism, bias, and inclusion if there is evidence that the organization has begun to do some of this work. Figure 15.2 (#fig15-2) includes various actions that can support reconciliation efforts, either as a non-Indigenous ally or as an Indigenous person (Thorpe-Moscon et al., 2019). Most of the actions are directed at managers and those who supervise employees. However, this infographic is helpful for

outlining various collegial strategies that can be used across many positions in the organization, all the way from leadership positions to peers.

EMPOWERMENT	ACCOUNTABILITY	HUMILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure all team members have what they need to succeed and flourish at work and that they can bring their full selves to work by expressing and sharing their culture.• Model your own learning, vulnerabilities, and challenges related to tackling inequities and moving out of your comfort zone.• Gather and enact suggestions for creating a more inclusive workplace.• Move toward a more collective mindset where the team's health and success are everyone's top priority—and giving back to the community is expected.• Foster opportunities for building respectful, genuine, and trusting relationships among all team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold all team members responsible for their behaviour, development, and work processes.• Openly discuss how to demonstrate that a wide variety of perspectives, identities, and cultures are valued.• Set explicit goals for learning, collaboration, and potentially uncomfortable dialogues about colonialism, racism, sexism, and other difficult topics.• Ask team members and leaders how they interrupt biased behaviours and processes.• Incorporate accountability to the community, environment, and future generations into all decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenge yourself to learn more about the historical and current experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.• Practice humble listening by setting aside preconceived notions of how the world works, and truly hear what another person's experience of the world is like.• Explore Indigenous values. One such example, of many, is the Anishinaabe People's Seven Teachings of love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, wisdom, and truth, which are shared by many Indigenous Peoples across the land.³⁸• Learn from and with team members through conversation—sharing perspectives and challenging one another, not trying to “win.”• Be willing to admit your own mistakes; find grace for coworkers to make mistakes and take risks without being penalized.

Figure 15.2 Strategies to support Indigenous colleagues in the workplace (by the author; information from Thorpe-Moscon & Ohm (2021)) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) [Long Description (#fig15-2longdesc)]

Exercise 15.3

Reflection: How Can You Support Indigenous Colleagues

Describe some of the ways that you can support an Indigenous colleague or advocate for yourself.

1. List some actions that you can perform.
2. What are some resources available to you?
3. What aspects of a workplace would encourage you to feel safe coming forward?
4. Give some thought about why you may not feel safe doing so. Link this with a recent or current experience.

Further Reading

- “‘Pawn it’ Comment Prompts Indigenous Artist to Call Out discrimination in Sask. Country Music Industry” (https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/sask-country-music-association-remarks-1.5916861?fbclid=IwAR3mbd_frgkWjJMdVhSPabiHWTsHlcqQoXAsUOnapVC8ff-bqgbUg2TgQEk) (Latimer, 2021)
- “60% of Indigenous Workers Feel Emotionally Unsafe on the Job: Catalyst Survey” (<https://www.thestar.com/business/2021/02/10/60-of-indigenous-workers-feel-emotionally-unsafe-on-the-job-catalyst-survey.html>) (Deschamps, 2021)
- Building Inclusion for Indigenous Peoples in Canadian Workplaces (<https://www.catalyst.org/insights/2021/inclusion-indigenous-peoples-canada-workplace>) (Thorpe-Moscon & Ohm, 2020)
- Empowering workplaces combat emotional tax for people of colour in Canada (<https://www.catalyst.org/insights/2019/emotional-tax-canada>) (Thorpe-Moscon et al., 2019)

Media Attributions

- **Figure 15.1** “Chart 1: Proportion of the population aged 15 to 24 years by Indigenous identity, Canada, 2016 (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/42-28-0001/2021001/article/00004-eng.htm>)” [data from Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016] by Thomas Anderson (2021) is used under the Statistics Canada Open License (<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/reference/licence>).
- **Figure 15.2** “Strategies to support Indigenous colleagues in the workplace” [using information from Thorpe-Moscon & Ohm (2021)] by the author is under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>) license.

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([https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2016001/
article/14630-eng.htm](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2016001/article/14630-eng.htm))

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https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/significant-employment-barriers-remain-indigenous-people-banking-and-financial-sector](http://web.archive.org/web/20241110093226/https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/significant-employment-barriers-remain-indigenous-people-banking-and-financial-sector) ([http://web.archive.org/web/20241110093226/
https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/significant-employment-barriers-remain-indigenous-people-banking-and-financial-sector](http://web.archive.org/web/20241110093226/https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/resources/significant-employment-barriers-remain-indigenous-people-banking-and-financial-sector))

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Long Descriptions

Figure 15.1 Long Description:

Chart 1: Proportion of the Population Aged 15 to 24 Years by Indigenous Identity, Canada, 2016

Indigenous Identity	Percent
Total Indigenous Population	16.9
First Nations People	17.5
Métis	16
Inuit	18.4
Non-Indigenous Population	12

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016

[Return to Figure 15.1 (#fig15-1)]

Figure 15.2 Long Description: Thorpe-Moscon & Ohm (2021) identify strategies for supporting Indigenous colleagues in the workplace (p. 8). The supporting strategies, divided into three categories—empowerment, accountability and humility—are as follows:

Empowerment:

- Make sure all team members have what they need to succeed and flourish at work and that they can bring their full selves to work by expressing and sharing their culture.
- Model your own learning, vulnerabilities, and challenges related to tackling inequities and moving outside your comfort zone.
- Gather and enact suggestions for creating a more inclusive workplace.
- Move toward a more collective mindset where the team’s health and success are everyone’s top priority—and giving back to the community is expected.
- Foster opportunities for building respectful, genuine, and trusting relationships among all team members.

Accountability:

- Hold all team members responsible for their behaviour, development, and work processes.
- Openly discuss how to demonstrate that a wide variety of perspectives, identities, and cultures are valued.
- Set explicit goals for learning, collaboration, and potentially uncomfortable dialogues about colonialism, racism, sexism, and other difficult topics.
- Ask team members and leaders how they interrupt biased behaviours and processes.
- Incorporate accountability to the community, environment, and future generations into all decisions.

Humility:

- Challenge yourself to learn more about the historical and current experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
- Practice humble listening by setting aside preconceived notions of how the world works, and truly hear what another person's experience of the world is like.
- Explore Indigenous values. One such example, of many, is the Anishinaabe People's Seven Teachings of Love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, wisdom, and truth, which are shared by many Indigenous Peoples across the land.*
- Learn from and with team members through conversation-sharing perspectives and challenging one another, not trying to "win."
- Be willing to admit your own mistakes; find grace for coworkers to make mistakes and take risks without being penalized.

*The Seven Teachings (<https://www.southernnetwork.org/site/seven-teachings>) (Southern First Nations Network of Care, n.d.); The Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers (<https://ojibwe.net/projects/the-gifts-of-the-seven-grandfathers/>) (Ojibwe.net, n.d.).

[Return to Figure 15.2 (#fig15-2)]

16. Professional Ethics in the Workplace

JAMIE NOAKES

Introduction

Professionalism in the workplace regarding ethical behaviour can be a sharp learning curve for many students, especially when navigating cultural norms. This chapter focuses on professionalism in the workplace in terms of ethics, employment laws, and human rights. This chapter is packed full of resources and activities that will help you further understand your rights in the workplace plus help you understand and develop appropriate ethical behaviours in a variety of industries.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapters, you should be able to:

- Define what ethics means to you.
- Recognize an industry and corresponding ethical issues that may occur within it.
- Identify ethical issues that students may face in the workplace.

What are Professional Ethics?

Professional ethics are the foundation of responsible behaviour within a specific profession or workplace. They consist of principles and standards that guide individuals in their professional conduct, emphasizing values such as integrity, honesty, accountability, and respect. By adhering to these ethical standards, professionals contribute to fostering a positive work environment, maintaining trust among colleagues and clients, and upholding the reputation of their profession.

The term “ethics,” derived from the Greek word *ethikos*, refers to the study of right and wrong conduct (Gundugurti et al., 2022). Ethics serve as a guiding framework for individuals and organizations, influencing decisions and actions that reflect core values. In the context of professional ethics, this framework focuses

on the specific ethical standards and behaviours expected within various industries or professions.

Understanding and applying professional ethics are essential for ensuring consistent, fair, and ethical decision-making across different work environments. To begin, let's start with the definition of professional ethics.

Definition of Professional Ethics

The term “professional ethics” refers to the principles, standards, and codes of conduct that govern the behaviour and interactions of individuals within a particular profession (Navran, 2024). It outlines the moral obligations and responsibilities that professionals are expected to uphold in their professional practice (Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, 2020). Professional ethics play a pivotal role in fostering trust, integrity, and accountability within the workplace (Crane, et al., 2019). By adhering to ethical standards, professionals demonstrate their commitment to honesty, fairness, and respect, thereby enhancing the reputation and credibility of both themselves and their organizations. Moreover, upholding professional ethics is essential for maintaining the welfare and safety of clients, colleagues, and the broader community.

Professional ethics play a crucial role in shaping the workplace environment and the relationships between colleagues, clients, and stakeholders (Pless, & Maak, 2004). By adhering to professional ethics, individuals can maintain trust, credibility, and integrity in their professional interactions. This, in turn, contributes to a positive work culture and helps organizations achieve their goals effectively.

Professional ethics can be defined as the moral guidelines that govern the behaviour of individuals in a professional setting. These

guidelines are based on values such as honesty, integrity, and fairness, and they help individuals make ethical decisions and conduct themselves ethically in their professional roles.

Exercise 16.1 Personal Ethics Definition

Think about what ethics means to you, and create your own personalized definition in just a short sentence or two.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Exercise 16.1 Personal Ethics Definition (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/professional-ethics-in-the-workplace/#h5p-22>)





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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#h5p-22>)

History of Professional Ethics

Professional ethics has its origins in ancient times when various fields, such as medicine and law, began to establish codes of conduct to guide the behaviour of practitioners. These early codes were grounded in moral principles, aimed at ensuring that professionals acted in the best interests of their clients, patients, or the public (Jonsen, 2000). Ethical guidance often emphasizes treating others with fairness and respect, as exemplified by the Golden Rule: “Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you.” This idea underlines the importance of reciprocal moral responsibility and is foundational to many professional ethical frameworks.

Oaths

In many professions, practitioners are required to take oaths,

signifying their commitment to uphold ethical standards. One notable example is the Hippocratic Oath, traditionally taken by physicians. This oath emphasizes key ethical duties, including the responsibility to prioritize patient well-being, practice medicine ethically, and do no harm (Greiner & Kaldjian, 2018). These oaths serve as enduring symbols of ethical accountability and trust between professionals and society.

Code of Ethics

Beyond oaths, many professions have established formal codes of ethics, which provide detailed principles and guidelines for ethical conduct. A code of ethics is a formal document that serves as a roadmap for professional behaviour, helping practitioners navigate ethical dilemmas and resolve conflicts. It outlines core responsibilities, acceptable actions, and mechanisms for maintaining integrity within the profession.

One of the earliest formal codes of ethics was developed by Thomas Percival, who published a code of medical ethics for physicians in 1803. This code was the first of its kind for any professional field and served as the foundation for the American Medical Association (AMA) when it adopted its own code of ethics in 1847, setting a precedent for other professions to follow (Riddick, 2003).

Ethics Videos

Watch the following videos on ethics.

What is Ethics? (<https://youtu.be/u399XmkjeXo?si=TvicBRnYxDJxoObU>) [4:54 min] by The Ethics Centre (2020a)



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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

What is Ethics? (<https://youtu.be/u399XmkjeXo?si=TvicBRnYxDJxoObU>)



Purpose, Values, Principles - An Ethics Framework (<https://youtu.be/KLvWMoFUBoo?si=KQwA-t23RV9rwaNY>) [3:43 min] by The Ethics Centre (2020b)



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If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Purpose, Values, Principles – An Ethics Framework
(<https://youtu.be/KLvWMoFUboo?si=KQwA-t23RV9rwaNY>)



Key Behaviours in Professional Ethics

In any workplace, adhering to basic professional ethics and behaviours is crucial for maintaining a positive work environment, building trust with colleagues and clients, and upholding the reputation of the organization. Understanding and following these ethics are especially important when starting in a new workplace, as they set the foundation for how you will be perceived and how you will interact with others.

Integrity

Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles (McFall, 1987). In a professional setting, integrity involves being truthful in your interactions, keeping promises, and acting in a way that is consistent with your values and the values of the organization. Demonstrating integrity helps build trust with colleagues and clients and enhances your credibility in the workplace.

Honesty

Honesty is essential in building trust and maintaining open communication in the workplace. Being honest means providing accurate information, admitting mistakes, and avoiding deception or misleading behaviour. Honesty fosters a culture of transparency and integrity within the organization (Bennis et al., 2008).

Respect

Respect involves treating others with consideration, courtesy, and fairness (Caldwell, 2017). In a professional setting, it is important to respect the opinions, beliefs, and boundaries of others, even when you disagree with them. Respecting your colleagues and clients helps create a positive and inclusive work environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

Responsibility

Taking responsibility for your actions and decisions is a key aspect of professional ethics (Postema, 1980). This includes owning up to mistakes, fulfilling your commitments, and acting in the best interests of the organization and its stakeholders. Being responsible demonstrates your reliability and commitment to your role and contributes to a culture of accountability in the workplace.

Fairness

Fairness involves treating all individuals impartially and without bias (Gottfredson, 1988). In a professional setting, it is important to base decisions and actions on objective criteria and to avoid favouritism or discrimination. Being fair promotes a sense of equity and justice in the workplace and helps maintain harmonious relationships among colleagues.

Transparency

Transparency involves being open and honest in your communication and actions (Turilli & Floridi, 2009). It means providing relevant information to colleagues and clients, explaining your decisions and reasoning, and being willing to address concerns or questions openly. Transparency builds trust and credibility and fosters a culture of openness and collaboration in the workplace.

Accountability

Being accountable means taking responsibility for your actions and their outcomes. This is more around individual accountability than collective responsibility (Afdal & Afdal, 2019). It involves acknowledging mistakes, learning from them, and taking steps to rectify them. Being accountable demonstrates your reliability and integrity and contributes to a culture of trust and responsibility in the workplace (d'Oronzio, 2002).

In a new workplace, understanding and following these basic professional ethics and behaviours are essential for establishing yourself as a trustworthy and respected member of the team. By demonstrating integrity, honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, transparency, and accountability, you can build positive relationships with your colleagues and clients and contribute to a positive and ethical work environment (Petrick & Quinn, 1997).

What is an Ethical Dilemma?

An ethical dilemma is when a problem presents itself and the potential solutions are conflicting moral obligations. It is important to understand what an ethical dilemma is and how to use a framework to navigate these within a professional work environment.

When faced with ethical dilemmas in the workplace, professionals can use established ethical frameworks to guide decision-making. These frameworks offer different perspectives on morality, helping individuals weigh conflicting obligations. The Center for Professional Personnel Development (n.d.) at the PennState College of Agricultural Sciences outlines five dominant frameworks that can be applied:

I. Virtue Ethics

- **Definition:** What is moral is what makes us the best person we could be.
- **Core Idea:** Decisions should align with virtues such as integrity, honesty, and empathy. The goal is to cultivate a strong moral character that naturally leads to ethical actions.
- **Application:** In the workplace, professionals act with virtues that foster trust, collaboration, and ethical leadership. (Center for Professional Personnel Development, n.d.)

Virtue Ethics Example

A project manager refuses to cut corners on safety protocols despite budget pressures because they value responsibility and professionalism.

2. Deontological Ethics

- **Definition:** What is moral is what follows from absolute moral duties.
- **Core Idea:** Ethics are grounded in duties and rules that must always be followed, regardless of the outcomes. These duties may come from laws, organizational policies, or universal moral principles.
- **Application:** Professionals adhere to established codes of

conduct, even if it results in difficult consequences. (Center for Professional Personnel Development, n.d.)

Deontological Ethics Example

An auditor reports a regulatory violation to authorities, knowing it could harm the company's reputation, because it is their duty to uphold financial integrity.

3. Utilitarianism Ethics

- **Definition:** What is morally right is what generates the best outcome for the largest number of people.
- **Core Idea:** The morality of an action is judged by its consequences. Ethical actions aim to maximize well-being and minimize harm across all stakeholders.
- **Application:** Organizations often use this approach to balance competing interests and determine policies that promote the greatest overall benefit. (Center for Professional Personnel Development, n.d.)

Utilitarianism Ethics Example

A CEO decides to close a division of the company to save the rest of the organization, ensuring job stability for the majority of employees.

4. Rights-Based Ethics

- **Definition:** What is moral is that which is in accord with everyone's rights.
- **Core Idea:** Ethical actions respect and protect individual rights, such as the right to equality, freedom, privacy, and safety.
- **Application:** Professionals prioritize policies that safeguard these rights in decision-making, ensuring that no one's fundamental rights are violated. (Center for Professional Personnel Development, n.d.)

Rights-Based Ethics Example

A human resources director enforces anti-discrimination policies to uphold employees' right to a fair and equitable workplace.

5. Care-Based Ethics

- **Definition:** What is moral is that which promotes healthy relationships, the well-being of individuals, and their interdependence.
- **Core Idea:** Ethics emphasize empathy, compassion, and nurturing relationships. Decisions are guided by a commitment to care for others and support their well-being.
- **Application:** Professionals focus on building strong, supportive environments that prioritize relationships and mutual respect. (Center for Professional Personnel Development, n.d.)

Care-Based Ethics Example

A team leader offers flexibility to an employee experiencing personal challenges, prioritizing care and support to maintain a healthy and productive relationship.

By understanding these frameworks, professionals can approach ethical dilemmas with greater clarity and consistency, ensuring that their decisions reflect both personal and organizational values.

Ethical Dilemma Videos

To fully understand each of these concepts, review the following video explanations:

Overview: What is an ethical dilemma? (<https://youtu.be/cyj1wbFukUw?si=kDvsSSJVzclikZA5>) [4:33 min] by Universidad de Deusto / Deustuko Unibertsitatea (2021)



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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#oembed-3>
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If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

What is an ethical dilemma? (<https://youtu.be/cyj1wbfulUw?si=kDvsSSJVzclikZA5>)



Virtue Ethics: Aristotle & Virtue Theory: Crash Course Philosophy #38 (<https://youtu.be/PrvtOWEXDIQ?si=048F7OcJTt7QZLGp>) [9:21 min] by CrashCourse (2016d)



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If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Aristotle & Virtue Theory: Crash Course Philosophy #38 (<https://youtu.be/PrvtOWEXDIQ?si=048F7OcJTt7QZLGp>)



Deontological Ethics: Kant & Categorical Imperatives: Crash Course Philosophy #35 (https://youtu.be/8bIys6JoEDw?si=UNXy_aTIMNQDt9aX) [10:26 min] by CrashCourse (2016a)



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If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Kant & Categorical Imperatives: Crash Course

Philosophy #35 (https://youtu.be/8bIys6JoEDw?si=UNXy_aTlMNQDt9aX)



Utilitarianism Ethics: Utilitarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #36 (<https://youtu.be/-a739VjqdSI?si=mjSolVOe7rFTARcG>)
[10:00 min] by CrashCourse (2016b)



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If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Utilitarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #36

(<https://youtu.be/-a739VjqdSI?si=mjSolVOe7rFTARcG>)



Rights-Based Ethics: Contractarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #37 (<https://youtu.be/2Co6pNvd9mc?si=DvsqOnKg7JpvcaT6>)
[9:31 min] by CrashCourse (2016c)



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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#oembed-7>
(#oembed-7)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Contractarianism: Crash Course Philosophy #37

(<https://youtu.be/2Co6pNvd9mc?si=DvsqOnKg7JpvcaT6>)



Case-Based Ethics: Alternative Paradigms: Care Ethics and Feminine Ethics

(<https://youtu.be/4iaCpAFypq8?si=GdKi8iw4sQSUDy3d>) [5:25 min] by UvA ComScience Microlectures (2017)



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<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#oembed-8>
(#oembed-8)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Alternative Paradigms: Care Ethics and Feminine Ethics (<https://youtu.be/4iaCpAFypq8?si=GdKi8iw4sQSUDy3d>)



Identifying Ethical Issues in Specific Industries

As you embark on your career journey, it is essential to understand the ethical issues that can arise in different industries. Even if you are not familiar with these industries yet, gaining insight into their unique challenges will prepare you to navigate ethical dilemmas effectively. The following list provides insight into a variety of industries and the ethical issues that may be present:

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Identifying Ethical Issues in Specific Industries (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/professional-ethics-in-the-workplace/#h5p-23>)



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*<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#h5p-23>
(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#h5p-23>)*

Exercise 16.2

Analyzing Ethical Issues in Different Sectors

1. Consider the industries mentioned above, and identify potential ethical issues that could arise in each sector.
2. Reflect on how you would approach these ethical dilemmas and what actions you would take to address them ethically.

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Activity 1: Ethical Challenges in Your Future Career

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/professional-ethics-in-the-workplace/#h5p-25>)



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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#h5p-25>)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Activity 2: Comparing Ethical Codes (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/professional-ethics-in-the-workplace/#h5p-26>)



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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#h5p-26>)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to Activity 3: Exploring Ethical Standards in Your Industry

(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/professional-ethics-in-the-workplace/#h5p-27>)



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(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=66#h5p-27>)

Further Reading for Specific Industries

- Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario's (n.d.) CPA Code of Professional Conduct and Student Code (<https://www.cpaontario.ca/stewardship-of-the-profession/governance/code-of-professional-conduct>)
- Ontario College of Teachers's (n.d.) Ethical Standards (<https://www.oct.ca/public/professional-standards/ethical-standards>)
- Engineers and Geoscientists BC's (n.d.) Code of Ethics (<https://www.egbc.ca/complaints-discipline/code-of-ethics/code-of-ethics>)
- Canadian Psychological Association's (n.d.) Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (<https://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/committees/ethics/codeofethics/>)
- British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives's (n.d.) Code of Ethics for Registered Psychiatric Nurses (https://www.bccnm.ca/RPN/Pages/Code_of_Ethics.aspx)

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SECTION V

APPENDICES

I. Appendix A: Places to Volunteer in Your Community

BRAD HARASYMCHUK

These are only examples of places to volunteer, but most of these do belong in many communities.

- Local school
- Local church
- Seniors home
- Daycare
- Food Bank
- United Way
- Rotary or other service group
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross
- Immigrant Services

You may also want to consider the following online volunteer websites:

- Volunteer Canada (<https://volunteer.ca/>) (n.d.a)
- Volunteer British Columbia (<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>) (n.d.)
- Canada Service Corps (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/canada-service-corps.html>) (n.d.)
- Check out this fun quiz by Volunteer Canada (n.d.b): What Type of Volunteer Are You? (<https://members.volunteer.ca/index.php?MenuItemID=410>)

2. Appendix B: Resume Catalogue

NOAH ARNEY

The resume examples below are from the *Resume Catalogue: Sector Specific Examples for Students* (<https://resumecatalogue.pressbooks.tru.ca/>) developed by Thompson Rivers University's Career & Experiential Learning faculty (Arney et al., 2022).

These examples may also be viewed as Word documents, see list below.



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

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=900#h5p-29>
(<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=900#h5p-29>)

Resume Sample Word Documents:

(Right click and Save As to download. You may get a security warning. Choose Keep as option to complete download.)

- Humanities Year 2 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Humanities-yr-2-resume_updated.docx)
- Humanities Year 4 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Humanities-yr-4-resume_updated.docx)

- Marketing Year 2 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Marketing-yr-2-resume-_updated.docx)
- Marketing Year 4 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Marketing-yr-4-resume-_updated.docx)
- MBA Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/MBA-resume_updated.docx)
- Supply Chain Management Year 2 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Supply-Chain-Management-yr-2-resume_updated.docx)
- Supply Chain Management Year 4 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Supply-Chain-Management-yr-4-resume_updated.docx)
- Computer Science Year 2 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Computer-Science-yr-2-resume_updated.docx)
- Computer Science Year 4 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Computer-Science-yr-4-resume_updated.docx)
- Field Sciences Year 2 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Field-Sciences-yr-2-resume_updated.docx)
- Field- Sciences Year 4 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Field-Sciences-yr-4-resume_updated.docx)

- Lab Sciences Year 2 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Lab-Sciences-yr-2-resume_updated.docx)
- Lab Sciences Year 4 Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Lab-Sciences-yr-4-resume_updated.docx)
- Trades Apprentice (Electrical) Resume [Word]
(http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Trades-Apprentice-resume-Electrical_updated.docx)

3. Appendix C: Tips for Long-Distance Interviews

SARAH LADD

Telephone interviews in particular have their own challenges; for example, lack of eye contact and the inability to read the body language of your interviewers. But there are also advantages; if the interviewer cannot see you, you can have one sheet of paper with quick notes on it to help you with your answers. But be careful—if you have more than one page of notes, you might be caught rustling the pages or get distracted trying to find something you wrote.

For any kind of long-distance interview, here are some general recommendations to follow:

- Dress professionally, so that you feel confident and composed.
- Smile (especially for phone interviews, as your voice will have a more uplifted quality to it than if you are not smiling).
- Make eye contact with the camera, not the screen, for Skype/video interviews.
- Test your phone or video conference tools with a friend before the interview to make sure all of your technology works correctly.
- Ensure that you have a quiet, private space to conduct your interview where you will not be interrupted or distracted.

When you have finished answering a question during a phone interview, you might be met with silence. During an in-person interview, you would see that the interviewers are busy writing down notes about your answer, but on the phone, you cannot see what they are doing. Do not feel pressured to keep talking. Instead, count out approximately four to five seconds in your head, and

then, if there is still silence, politely ask, “Would you like more information, or do you need a moment to take notes?”

The questions you will be asked in a phone or video interview will be the same as those the employer would ask during an in-person interview. Prepare yourself just as you would for an in-person interview by practising all of the other techniques taught in this textbook.

4. Appendix D: Six Types of Interview Questions — Samples

SARAH LADD

Below are sample questions for each of the six categories of questions discussed in this chapter. This is a sample list only; there are many variations of questions you can be asked in an interview. Remember to practise the techniques taught, and learn to recognize what type of question you are being asked.

Introductory Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you know about our organization?
- What are your goals for the next five years?
- What do you like about your academic program, and why did you choose that program?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why do you want this job?

Strength and Weakness Questions

- What are three of your strengths?
- Name some of your weaknesses.
- What would your most recent supervisor say are your best and worst abilities?
- Identify two or three skills you would like additional training in.
- What skills do you offer us to help you succeed in this position?

- Describe a situation where you were successful.
- Describe a situation where you failed.

Behavioural Based Interviewing (BBI)

Because behavioural-based interview questions are very common, see Appendix F: BBI Question Samples (<https://universitytocareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/bbi-question-samples/>) for a full page of sample BBI questions for you to begin practising.

Knowledge-Based Questions

Knowledge-based questions will be highly specific to your industry. You should research questions for your particular field or industry. Some industries, like engineering and computer science, can include technical interviews with highly specific technical questions and problems to solve before, during, or after your job interview. Here are some generalized samples to help prepare you that are not industry-specific:

- Describe your knowledge or experience with Microsoft Excel.
- What is a theory or method you learned in class that you feel will help you in this job?
- What was the last book or article you read related to your educational background, and what do you remember most?
- Talk about a project you completed recently. What steps did you take, and what did you learn from the project?

Scenario or Situational Questions

Scenario questions will be highly specific to the type of work you are doing, and the industry and type of work the company does. Here are some examples from a variety of different industries:

- A member of your team (at work, volunteer, or school) is underperforming and you are not certain why. What would you

do to find out, and how would you assist them?

- You have been given a task for which you do not have all the information you require, and your managers are not available for assistance, but the deadline for the first draft of the task is coming soon. How do you handle this?
- It has been a few weeks on the job, and you feel your tasks are not progressing. What can you do to change this?
- You have complex tasks coming in from three different supervisors, with varying levels of detail and different deadlines. What methods or techniques will you use to keep track of all the different items and stay organized?
- You are working on site at a large industrial facility, and you see what appears to be two employees working in an area that appears to be unsafe. What do you do? Why?

Unusual Questions

- How many tennis balls can you fit into a limousine?
- If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?
- What can you teach me in only one minute? Please take a moment to think of something, and then teach it to me.
- If you were a pizza delivery man, how would you benefit from scissors?
- Can you tell me five things you would do with a pencil, other than write?

5. Appendix E: Answering Introductory Questions

SARAH LADD

The beauty of introductory questions is that, with a little preparation ahead of time, you will be able to excel at these questions in every interview you attend. Review the job description, research the company, and reflect back on your own self-assessment and workplace values to develop a multi-layered answer that can be used to answer any of these questions. Prepare some key point-form notes to review just before your interview to keep you from rambling. Never prepare a scripted answer for these questions because you might not get asked the question you were expecting and your scripted answer will not make sense. Be strategic in your answer and only include the information that is most useful for the interviewers to help them decide you are the perfect candidate. Remember to really focus on what you can offer the employer, but do not be afraid to mention what you hope to gain from the role too. It is ok to want to gain skills and experience; this shows interest and passion.

Ineffective answers will be short and generic; the employer will not be able to tell what you can offer them or why you are interested in their company over any others. A good answer to an introductory question will answer the exact question you were asked, but a great answer will answer all of the questions, including the real one (why should we hire you?).

Question: Why have you chosen to apply to our company for our junior accounting position?

Bad Answer: I have always been passionate about accounting and

want to work in a large, famous company with a strong reputation like yours. I think I can learn a lot from this job.

Good Answer: Your job description mentions that I will be helping customers with their accounts payable needs and their monthly and year-end budgeting. I am very interested in both of those and have experience from my classes and a small class project. I know that your company has a good reputation. I met one of your managers at an Accounting Night event on campus, and he mentioned that he really enjoys working there, so I think your company would be a great place for me to be.

Great Answer: When I researched your organization, I found that not only am I qualified for the job because I have taken accounting courses in three of the four skill areas you need, including budget forecasting, but also because I learned that your core values of integrity, growth mindset, and excellent customer service match my own personality. For example, I am always learning new skills and recently completed some extra customer service training for my part-time hotel clerk job. I also remember speaking with one of your managers at the TRU Accounting Night last September, and she told me that your company is big but each team is small and close-knit, like a family; that is very important to me as I am quite new to Kamloops. I am excited about the opportunity to work with your company.

In the last of the three sample answers, you can see the candidate is showing that they did their research and that they know and remember some very specific things about the company. They also highlighted some relevant knowledge and transferrable skills from their current work history. All of this helps paint a clear picture for the employer that says “yes, this person can do the job, and genuinely wants to work for our company.” Employers know you are probably applying to several other companies, and it is important that they believe that they are your preferred choice.

The great answer might seem a bit long, but a good length for any

interview question, including introductory questions, is one to two minutes per question. Much longer, and you might be rambling. Shorter than one minute, and you definitely are not giving the employer enough information to make their decision. They might hire someone else who gave them more detail, even though you might be the most qualified for the position.

6. Appendix F: BBI Question Samples

SARAH LADD

Provide an example of a time you:

- Handled an extremely stressful situation at work.
- Motivated someone who was not performing well.
- Adjusted to a colleague's work style in order to complete a project or objective.
- Had to analyze a large amount of information and make a recommendation.
- Used creative problem solving.
- Took specific steps before making a decision.
- Had to complete a task with incomplete instructions or missing information.
- Discovered an error that had been overlooked by yourself or a coworker.
- Dealt effectively with an angry customer.
- Convinced team members or a supervisor to move ahead with an idea you had.
- Used written skills to communicate a complex piece of information.
- Were uncertain of the next steps in a task, but unsure who to ask for help.
- Came up with a unique way of doing something.
- Recognized a potential problem as an opportunity.
- Had an idea or initiative that resulted in a positive change.
- Conformed to a policy you did not agree with.
- Found yourself dealing with a person you did not like.
- Had an interaction with a customer you wish you had dealt with differently.

- Were called upon to lead in a difficult situation.
- Needed to complete multiple tasks within the same timeframe.
- Were given a list of tasks and had to make decisions about priorities.
- Convinced a reluctant customer to utilize your services.
- Worked with a team member who did not do their share of the work.
- Arrived at a compromise in order to meet a team objective.
- Were faced with a personal or professional setback.
- Went above and beyond to get a task or job finished.

7. Appendix G: Strength Questions — Strategies

SARAH LADD

Strength questions are a fantastic opportunity for you to tell the employer what you really want them to know about you. You should have at least three key strengths identified before you go to the interview, and plan to have a story or example to tell them about each one. You should select strengths that are the most relevant to the job description. Be strategic and think about what you have that overlaps with what the job needs.

Have a look at the Venn diagram shown in Figure G.1 (#figG-1) below. Do you see where the two circles overlap? When preparing for an interview, and for traditional questions specifically, you should focus your answers on that overlap between yourself and the job.



Figure G.1 Venn diagram of skills and experience overlap with requirements of the job and company culture (by the author) CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>)

Definitely mention things that are directly asked for in the job description if you have them, but also remember that you might have a strength that was not asked for in the job description that might really impress them. Think of the job description as a wish list. If your mom asks you for a list of ideas for your birthday gift, you will write her a list of a few things. If you are smart, you will put your most-wanted item at the top. If your mom, however, ignores your list and buys you something really amazing that you did not know you wanted, like a diamond bracelet, a new video game console, or an autographed photo of Leonard Nimoy, you are going to be pretty happy with her choice! If you have a skill or ability that you think is the “diamond bracelet” for that particular employer’s wish list, then you should definitely mention it during your interview, and strength questions are a great place to do that.

8. Appendix H: Weakness Questions — Strategies

SARAH LADD

You should prepare a small list of weaknesses you can share with an employer during the interview. Preparing a list of three is ideal; if the employer asks you for two weaknesses, you can answer with two only. If they ask for three and you only prepared two, you might feel unprepared during the interview.

List of Do's and Don'ts for Answering Weakness Questions

Do	Don't
Be honest.	Lie or make up fake weaknesses.
Be strategic, and choose weaknesses that aren't directly related to the job.	Spend too much time describing the weakness.
Name the weakness and immediately talk about what you are doing to improve upon it.	Offer examples of a time you were bad at something unless specifically asked to do so.
Be specific about the steps you are taking to improve.	Mention anything illegal or unethical.

The difference between a bad weakness and a good weakness is in how you describe it. For example:

Bad answer: “My weakness is time management skills. I always get my work done, but I wait until the last minute and pull all-nighters to get everything done, so it really isn't a problem.”

Good answer: “My weakness is time management skills. This semester, I downloaded an app that helps me track all of my school deadlines, and I entered all the due dates from my course outlines at the beginning of the term. I also give myself a small reward

whenever I cross an item off my list early. It's really helping and I feel much less stress this term."

9. Appendix I: Questions to Ask the Employer at the End of the Interview (Tips and Samples)

SARAH LADD

Here are some tips to help you ask the right questions at the end of your interview:

- Write out your questions and bring them to the interview so that you can remember them and the interviewer can see how well-prepared you are.
- Have at least three good questions to ask.
- Ask questions that will help you see if the job has what you want/need or if it has too much of what you do not want to experience again (refer to your workplace values for ideas).
- Ask open-ended questions so that you get more information (not “Do you like your job?” but rather “Can you describe what it is that you like about your job?”).
- Ask questions you genuinely want the answers to.
- If you are comfortable doing so, ask questions that could start a conversation with the employer.

Sample questions you may wish to ask can include, but are not limited to:

- What are your favourite things about working here?
- What qualities are you most looking for in a candidate?
- Can you tell me more about the tasks and projects the last person in this job worked on?

- Could you describe the training process to me?
- What is your team like? How do they work together to complete tasks?
- What is the biggest challenge you see in this role?
- Is there any material I can read or learn about before I start the job, if hired? I would like to be well-prepared.

Above all, you should ask questions that you really want to know the answers to. This is your chance to determine if the job is the right fit for you.

10. Appendix J: Post-Interview Reflection Form

SARAH LADD

Immediately after each interview, take some time to complete a post-interview reflection. This form can help you remember what went well and explore areas for possible improvement on your own or with assistance from a co-op coordinator or career counsellor.

The post-interview reflection in Table J.1 (#tabJ-1) is also available as a PDF: [Post-Interview-Reflection-Form \[PDF\]](http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Post-Interview-Reflection-Form.pdf) (<http://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/240/2025/02/Post-Interview-Reflection-Form.pdf>)

Table J.1 Post-Interview Reflection Form

Information to Record	Details
Interview Date/Time	–
Name of Company/Organization	–
Name of Interviewer(s)	–
Position Interviewed For	–
What questions were you asked?	–
Overall, what went well with the interview? What answers seemed to please or impress the interviewers most?	–
Overall, what do you feel could have gone better with the interview?	–
Did you have enough relevant examples prepared? Did you effectively use the STAR technique to give specific examples? What could have gone better with this technique?	–
How did you demonstrate your knowledge of the position and the organization and match yourself to both with relevant experiences, skills, and personality traits?	–
Did you make good eye contact, maintain good posture throughout, and speak clearly and loudly enough to be heard? What went well, and what can you do to improve?	–
Did you gather enough information to make a decision about accepting the job? If not, what more do you need to consider and find out?	–
What else can you do better to prepare for future interviews?	–

II. Appendix K: Sample “Thank-You” Emails

SARAH LADD

Sample #1

Dear Mr. Green and Ms. Grey,

I want to thank you again for meeting with me today to consider me for your cellular biology research position. I am even more interested in this role after hearing how much each of you enjoy your work and learning about the new lab facilities you've opened. It would be my pleasure to work for you, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Gurdev Kapoor

Sample #2

Dear Ms. McGrath, Mr. Onyango, and Mr. Kim,

Thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday afternoon for your Events Coordinator position. After speaking with you, I am even more certain that I will be able to share my event management experience from my previous summer work in tourism. I would be very happy to work with your team to help make your events run even more smoothly and boost attendance with some targeted social media posts. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kevin Chiu

Sample #3

Dear Ms. Chen,

Thank you for meeting with me today to interview me for your Financial Analyst job. ABC Financial truly sounds like a welcoming team environment that I believe would allow me to show my passion.

During the interview, I mentioned my teamwork skills from a school project. After I left the interview, I remembered a much better example. I hope it is alright for me to share this with you now. When I was vice president of a student club at TRU, I organized and led a team of 9 volunteers to host a workshop. I set regular meetings with them, encouraged them to divide all tasks up between them, and checked in lots to make sure they were on track, if they needed help, and were enjoying their roles. The event went very well, and all volunteers showed up prepared and on time.

Thank you again for considering me. I would be honoured to work for your company.

Sincerely,

Allison Smith

12. Appendix L: Resources for Indigenous Employment Search

ROBLINE DAVEY

- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (<http://www.ccab.com/>) (n.d.)
- Government of Canada's Indigenous Business Directory (IBD) (<https://services.sac-isc.gc.ca/REA-IBD?lang=eng>) (Indigenous Services Canada, n.d.)
- Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada (<https://www.foa.ca/>) (n.d.)
- Indigenous Works (<https://www.iworks.org/>) (n.d.)
- Indspire (<http://indspire.ca/>) (n.d.)
- Industry Council for Aboriginal Business (<https://ammsa.com/publications/ravens-eye/industry-council-aboriginal-business-launched-bc-aboriginal-business-associa>) (Steel, 2012)
- National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (<http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/>) (n.d.)
- WorkBC (n.d.) Indigenous Resources (<https://www.workbc.ca/resources-for/indigenous-people.aspx>)

13. Appendix M: Wage Subsidy Programs for Indigenous Student Applicants

ROBLINE DAVEY

A list of wage subsidies with descriptions can be found on the TRU Career and Experiential Learning (n.d.) Department's website (<https://tru.ca/cel/employers/wage-subsidy-opportunities.html#Indigenouswagesubsidy>). Here are a few more:

- Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-skills-employment-training.html>) (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2023)
- Métis Nation Skills Training, Employment & Post Secondary (STEPS) (<https://www.mnbc.ca/STEPS>) (Métis Nation British Columbia, n.d.)
- Indigenous Youth and Internship Program (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/job-seekers/internship-co-op-opportunities/iyip>) (BC Public Service, 2024)
- ECO Canada (<https://www.eco.ca/swilp/studentquiz.aspx>) (n.d.)

14. Appendix N: Resources to Increase your Knowledge About Indigenous Peoples

ROBLINE DAVEY

To learn more about Indigenous cultures in Canada, explore the following resources:

- Indigenous Canada (<https://www.ualberta.ca/admissions-programs/online-courses/indigenous-canada/index.html>) a free, online course at the University of Alberta (n.d.)
- Reconciliation through Indigenous Education (<https://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/reconciliation/>) a free, online course at the University of British Columbia (n.d.)
- Indigenous Foundations (<https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/>) an information resource by the University of British Columbia (First Nations & Indigenous Studies, 2009)

15. Appendix O: Indigenous Rights Based Framework Timeline — TRC, UNDRIP & Reports

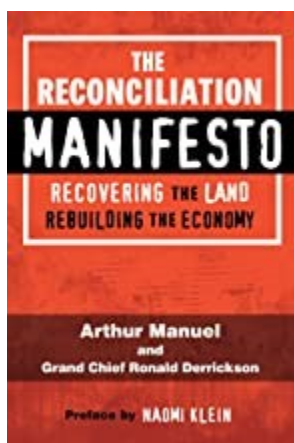


Figure O.1 *The Reconciliation Manifesto* Cover (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017) Used with permission.

This timeline borrows from *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy* (pp. 48–56) by Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson, published by James Lorimer and Company Ltd. ISBN: 9781459409668

Back to Indigenous Inclusion in Employment (#chapter-indigenous-inclusion)

May 8, 2006



Figure O.2 The Indian Residential School in Cross, Lake, Manitoba, February 1940 (Canada. Dept. Indian and Northern Affairs, 1940) Public Domain (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain)

Indian Residential Schools Settlement (IRSSA)

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement (IRSSA) was the result of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call for inquiry into the residential school system, which was a network of boarding (and day) schools run by Christian churches and funded by the Department of Indian Affairs (Government of Canada). The last residential school operated by the Canadian government, Gordon Indian Residential School (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_First_Nation) ("George Gordon First Nation," 2022) in Saskatchewan (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saskatchewan>) (2023), was closed in 1996. The total compensation granted was \$3.126 billion, with over 86,000 people entitled to compensation. Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their homes, and the Indian Act (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Act) (2023) mandated attendance with goals to assimilate Indigenous children.

The schools perpetrated sexual abuse, physical abuse, and general harm, and between 3,200 and 6,000 students died while attending these schools—a testament to the harms perpetrated on those who attended. The resulting intergenerational trauma has impacted Indigenous Peoples—from those who attended to their children and grandchildren. The network of schools has been described as a system of oppression and cultural genocide, and over 150,000 children attended across Canada. Children who attended were separated from their homes, subject to abuse, experienced cultural loss, and lost their traditional languages.

- Timeline of Residential Schools (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-timeline-of-residential-schools-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-1.724434>) (CBC News, 2008)
- A History of Residential Schools (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-history-of-residential-schools-in-canada-1.702280>) (CBC News, 2021)
- Assembly of First Nations (2022) Indian Residential Schools (<https://web.archive.org/web/20220930111109/https://www.afn.ca/residential-institutions/>)
- Wikipedia: The Indian Act (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Act) (“Indian Act,” n.d.)
- Winnipeg Public Library (n.d.): Residential Schools (<https://guides.wpl.winnipeg.ca/residentialschools>)

September 13, 2007



Figure O.3 Les Malezer, Chairperson of the Global Indigenous Caucus, and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issue (United Nations, 2007) UN Photo Usage Guidelines (<https://dam.media.un.org/CMS4/Brand/Root/UN-Photo-Usage-Guidelines>)

UN General Assembly Enacts UNDRIP

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, September 13, 2007, with a majority of 144 states in favour, 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States), and 11 abstentions (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi,

Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Samoa, and Ukraine).

June 11, 2008

Prime Minister Steven Harper's Apology

The Steven Harper Apology to Indian Residential School Survivors (<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1571589171655>) (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010), which took place a year after the Indian Residential School Settlement, recognizes that the absence of an apology had been an impediment to healing and reconciliation for Indigenous Peoples and started off an era in of Truth and Reconciliation.



Figure O.4 Stephen Harper
(World Economic Forum, 2012) CC
BY-NC-SA 2.0
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>)

The official apology was instrumental in bringing better awareness of the need for Reconciliation and education of Canadians on the dark history of the Canadian government's oppressive practices that have impacted the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples.

A snippet from the official apology:

A cornerstone of the Settlement Agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This Commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian Residential Schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect

for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us. (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010)

Watch this video, *Canadian Federal Government Apology to First Nations* (<https://youtu.be/xCpn1erzly8?si=tcxZWqdaCTbRWq6v>) [Video of Harper Apology, 8:29 min], by School District 27 Residential Schools and Reconciliation (2014).



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=926#oembed-2>
(#oembed-2)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Canadian Federal Government Apology to First Nations (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCpn1erzly8>)



November 12, 2010



Figure O.5 Aboriginal War Veterans monument in Confederation Park, Ottawa, Canada. (Padraic Ryan, 2007)
CC BY-SA 3.0
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>)

Canada Endorses UNDRIP

“Today, Canada joins other countries in supporting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In doing so, Canada reaffirms its commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples at home and abroad.

The Government of Canada would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal men and women who played an important role in the development of this Declaration.

The Declaration is an aspirational document which speaks to the individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples, taking into account their specific cultural, social and economic circumstances.

Although the Declaration is a non-legally binding document that does not reflect customary international law nor change Canadian laws, our endorsement gives us the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to continue working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples in creating a better Canada.”

(Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2010)

May 28, 2015

Canadian Government's Policies Termed “Cultural Genocide”

Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin describes Canada's various governmental policies an attempt to commit *cultural genocide* against Indigenous Peoples in what she refers to as the worst stain on Canada's human-rights record.

Watch this video, *Canada attempted 'cultural genocide' on aboriginals: Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin* (https://youtu.be/H1L2jOtJzZg?si=T1RHkbz5F1ZklYx_) [3:08 min], by The Globe and Mail (2015) on YouTube.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=926#oembed-1>
(#oembed-1)

If you are using a printed copy, you can scan the QR code with your digital device to go directly to the video:

Canada attempted 'cultural genocide' on aboriginals:

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1L2jOtJzZg>)



June 2015

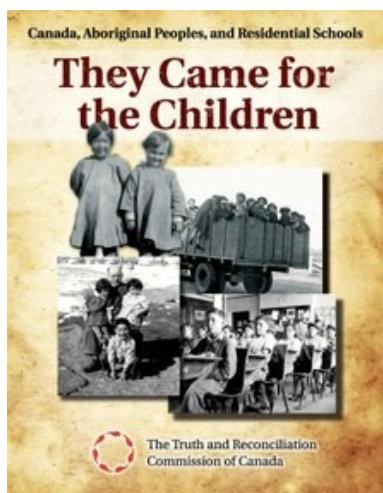


Figure O.6 TRC's *They Came for the Children* (TRC, 2012) Public Domain (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain)

Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada Summary Report

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC, 2015b) Executive Summary (<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>) report (*Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*) included the 94 Calls to Action (<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>) (TRC, 2015a)

and CBC News (2018) has an interactive update on the progress that has been made updated as of February 8, 2021 at Beyond 94: Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. (<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?cta=1>)

Of particular interest for the employment context is Call #92, which asks the corporate sector and their leadership to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. The commission calls for meaningful consultation, long-term sustainable opportunities from economic development projects, as well as education and training for managers on the history of Indigenous people, intercultural competency, human rights, and anti-racism.

- TRC Progress Report Card (https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020_TRC-Report-Card_ENG.pdf) (Assembly of First Nations, 2020)
- *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (TRC Executive Summary) (<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>) (TRC, 2015b)
- *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>) (TRC, 2015a)
- *Beyond 94: TRC in Canada* (<http://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>) (CBC News, 2018)

October 19, 2015

Carolyn Bennett Named New Minister for Indigenous & Northern Affairs

Justin Trudeau is elected Prime Minister of Canada and names Carolyn Bennett the new Minister for Indigenous and Northern Affairs. Minister Bennett is given a mandate letter directing her that her overarching goal will be to renew the relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples. This was to be a nation-to-nation relationship based on recognition, rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership.



Figure O.7 T.H. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Canada (Arctic Circle, 2017) CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

December 8, 2015



Figure 0.8 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivers remarks to the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly (Office of the Prime Minister, 2015) Prime Minister of Canada's website's Ownership & Usage (<https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/important-notice#headingTwo2>)

Trudeau Addresses the Assembly of First Nations

Trudeau replaces a “nation-to-nation” discussion with discussions with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). However, the AFN does not represent the Nations because it is not a Nation and is funded almost 100% by the government.

Manuel expressed concern that the Liberals had made bold promises in the past but had attempted to enact policies like the 1969 White Paper, which, while it talked about justice for Indigenous peoples, actually involved their assimilation into the multiculturalism of Canada.

You can read more of the text of Trudeau's speech on the official Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau (2015) webpage: “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivers remarks to the Assembly of First

Nations Special Chiefs Assembly” (<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2015/12/08/prime-minister-justin-trudeau-delivers-speech-assembly-first-nations>)

May 2016

Canada Adopts UNDRIP

Canada officially removes its objector status to UNDRIP, almost a decade after it was adopted by the General UN Assembly. By 2016, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America, who had also voted against the Declaration, had reversed their positions.

However, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr announces that the Government of Canada is developing a ‘Canadian definition of UNDRIP’, and Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould (2016) states:

“Simplistic approaches such as adopting the United Nations declaration as being Canadian law are unworkable...”



Figure O.9 Jody Wilson-Raybould (Erich Saide, 2014) CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>)

June 4, 2019

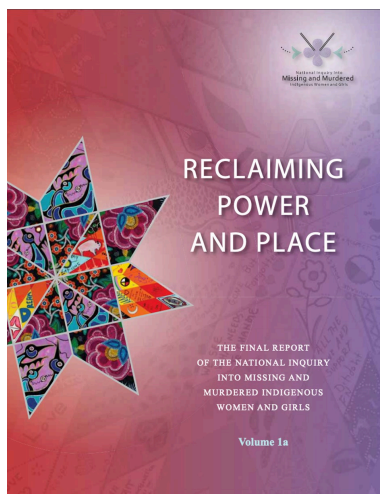


Figure O.10 *Reclaiming Power and Place* book cover (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019) Used with permission.

MMIWG2S Inquiry: Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) formally released its final report (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>)

(MMIWG, n.d.b) on June 3, including 231 Calls for Justice (https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf) (MMIWG, 2019c) and the conclusion that Canada's treatment of cases has amounted to a *genocide*.

- MMIWG (n.d.a) Home Page (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>)
- Timeline of Key Milestones (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/timeline/>) (MMIWG, n.d.c)
- MMIWG (n.d.b) Final Report (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>)
- MMIWG (2019a) Final Report (Volume 1a) [PDF] (https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf)

- MMIWG (2019b) Final Report (Volume 1b) [PDF]
(https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf)

A new framework of rights resulted from the inquiry: **Right to Culture, Health, Security, and Justice.**

November 2021

In Plain Sight: Response to Racism in Health Care

The report *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care* (<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Summary-Report.pdf>)

(Turpel-Lafond, 2020) was incepted when allegations of racism surfaced in June 2020. The report describes findings of

widespread systemic racism against Indigenous peoples in the BC healthcare system. It calls for improved cultural safety in healthcare and increased Indigenous leadership within health services, regulators, and education. It also includes recommendations for steps to solve widespread racism that should improve the safety of Indigenous Peoples in healthcare. One of the major concerns is that

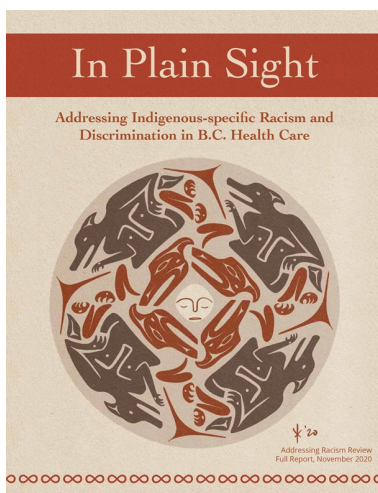


Figure O.11 *In Plain Sight* book cover (Turpel-Lafond, 2020) Used with permission.

racism has prevented Indigenous Peoples from accessing healthcare at the same levels as other Canadians, which has wide reaching impacts on the health and wellness for Indigenous Peoples.

- “Q&A with Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond on Racism in BC Healthcare” (<https://emergencycarebc.ca/lounge/qa-with-mary-ellen-turpel-lafond-on-racism-in-bc-healthcare/>) (Marsden, 2021)

Back to Indigenous Inclusion in Employment (#chapter-indigenous-inclusion)

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Version History

This page provides a record of changes made to this learning resource, [Launching Your Career](https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/) (<https://launchingyourcareer.pressbooks.tru.ca/>). Each update increases the version number by 0.1. The most recent version is reflected in the exported files for this resource.

If you identify an error in this resource, please report it using the TRU Open Education Resource Error Form ([#back-matter-tru-open-education-resource-error-form](#)).

Version	Date	Change	Details
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