



Commonwealth Government

GETTING A JOB

future**directions**



COMMONWEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
SCIENCE &
TRAINING

CAREER INFORMATION

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www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/ciproducts.htm

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Introduction

Introduction

This booklet is a useful guide if you are completing schooling, considering career options or searching for your first job. It can be used by you individually or as part of a group.

The information in this book comes from the Internet career exploration service, www.myfuture.edu.au.

The booklet will help you in one of the critical steps in achieving your career – getting yourself a job. The information and activities in the book take you through different aspects of understanding yourself – who you are and what you want to do with your life – and the processes involved in getting a job. These include how to find a job, how to apply for it, and tips about how to get through the interview process.

It combines explanations and tips about why and what to do. There are also some activities for you to complete to help you get that job that you want. It has references to many other sources of help and information.

A set of nine worksheets is also available for downloading and photocopying from the Internet at www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/ciproducts.htm. The worksheets contain summaries of information from the book.

This booklet is one of a suite of career information products published by the Department of Education, Science and Training. Two other booklets in the series, **future directions** are:

Parents Help with Careers: A booklet for parents with teenagers in their later years at school. It outlines issues parents may think about and discuss with their teenager; and

I Can Do That Too: A booklet which assists jobseekers to identify the skills they have developed in their everyday lives. These skills are presented as assets of value to employers. The book shows how they can be presented as such. It is particularly aimed at women who wish to return to the paid workforce.

The range of the Department's current and previous career information publications is available for downloading from the Department's Internet site at www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/ciproducts.htm.

1 Your career

TIPS

Australia's online career information service is myfuture at www.myfuture.edu.au

Your 'career' includes paid and unpaid work, learning and the life roles you are involved in throughout your life. This booklet will help you develop your career direction and, in particular, help you get a job.



Preparing for a job search

To be successful in getting the job that you want you need to be fully prepared. This involves:

- developing an understanding of yourself and what career suits you
- researching the career field you have chosen
- knowing what type of jobs are available and what they require
- understanding the needs of employers
- knowing the tools and techniques to use to apply for a job.

Understanding yourself

Having an understanding of yourself helps you to make choices and decisions about your career direction and is essential for presenting yourself to employers in a competitive and confident way.

Use the checklists below to find out more about yourself.

WHAT INTERESTS YOU?

Everyone has something they are good at or have an interest in (eg playing a musical instrument, mathematics, surfing, writing, caring for others). Knowing what you are good at and/or interested in gives you an idea of occupations that will suit you.

1. Talk to your teachers, family and friends and ask them what special talents they see in you. Make a list of these talents. This could include:

- an ability in
- a knack for
- know-how in
- a talent for
- good at
- expertise in

Do you, your teachers, family and friends think you are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> confident | <input type="checkbox"/> competent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> effective | <input type="checkbox"/> capable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> organised | <input type="checkbox"/> talented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> efficient | <input type="checkbox"/> practical |

Others.....

2. Make a list of the things that you think you are good at.
3. Talk to people working in an area that interests you.
 - What special talents do these people use in their work?
 - Were they aware of their talents when they were younger?
 - How have they developed them?
 - Can they give you any hints on how you can develop your talents?

WHAT LOCATIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK IN?

Think about where you would like to work. The availability of employment in the industry or occupation you have chosen will influence your decision.

Do you want to work in the ...?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> city | <input type="checkbox"/> suburbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> home | <input type="checkbox"/> country towns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> country | |

Others.....

WHAT TYPE OF WORK CONDITIONS WOULD YOU LIKE?

Think about and answer the following questions:

Do you want to work?

- indoors
- outdoors

TIPS

The My Guide section of myfuture helps you to build a personal profile based on your interests, work conditions, locations, knowledge, skills, aspirations and education. Then myfuture identifies career ideas based on your personal profile.

An example of your interest list might look like this.

Things that I enjoy and am good at:

- English, biology and drama are easy for me and I really enjoy studying them
- I like looking after children and get on really well with them
- I like performing in drama productions
- I'm really healthy but I'm not very sporty
- I'm learning dance but am not good enough to be a professional dancer
- I'm good at organising social events for school
- I like talking to people
- I'm good at solving problems.

TIPS

The Facts section of myfuture provides you with:

- labour market information
- graphs of the top 20 occupations or top 20 industries for a region.

The Australian Qualifications Framework lets you navigate your learning and career pathways.

Go to www.aqf.edu.au/schools.htm

Don't forget:

- the skills you have used for paid and unpaid work
- skills attained through completion of Certificate qualifications.

Identifying skills you would like to develop helps you to plan training goals.

- indoors/outdoors
- in a factory
- in an office
- one site or different locations

Do you want work that requires you to ...?

- sit
- stand
- climb ladders
- use your hands
- walk
- run

Would you prefer to work ...?

- during the day
- shift work
- irregular hours
- weekends
- on call
- flexible hours

List any work you would not want to do.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

WHAT KNOWLEDGE AREAS DO YOU HAVE OR WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP AND WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO YOU ENJOY USING?

List areas you have knowledge in (eg science, aromatherapy, mathematics), or areas you would like to develop.

Knowledge you have:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Knowledge you would like to develop:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What knowledge do you enjoy using?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

WHAT SKILLS DO YOU HAVE OR WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP AND WHAT SKILLS DO YOU ENJOY USING?

List the skills that you have.

Job skills

(Job/occupation specific skills such as for an administrative assistant—typing, answering telephones, filing; or in retail—customer service, processing orders, product display.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Self-management skills

(Day to day skills to get along with others such as honesty, patience, reliability.)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Transferable skills

(Skills that can transfer from one job or occupation to another.)

.....
.....
.....
.....

List the skills you have that you would like to develop further.

.....
.....
.....
.....

WHAT DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS DO YOU HAVE NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE?

To become clearer about your dreams and aspirations think and write about:

- What is important to you
- Your values
- Who you look up to and admire
- How you would like to contribute to the world.

WHAT EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU HAVE AND WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE?

List your current qualifications and education level.

.....
.....
.....
.....

List any education or training you would like to do in the future.

.....
.....
.....
.....

TIPS

Your education list might look like this:

- *CPR and Basic Life Support certificate*
- *AQF Certificate 1 in Information Technology*
- *completed conflict resolution training*
- *completed Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.*

TIPS

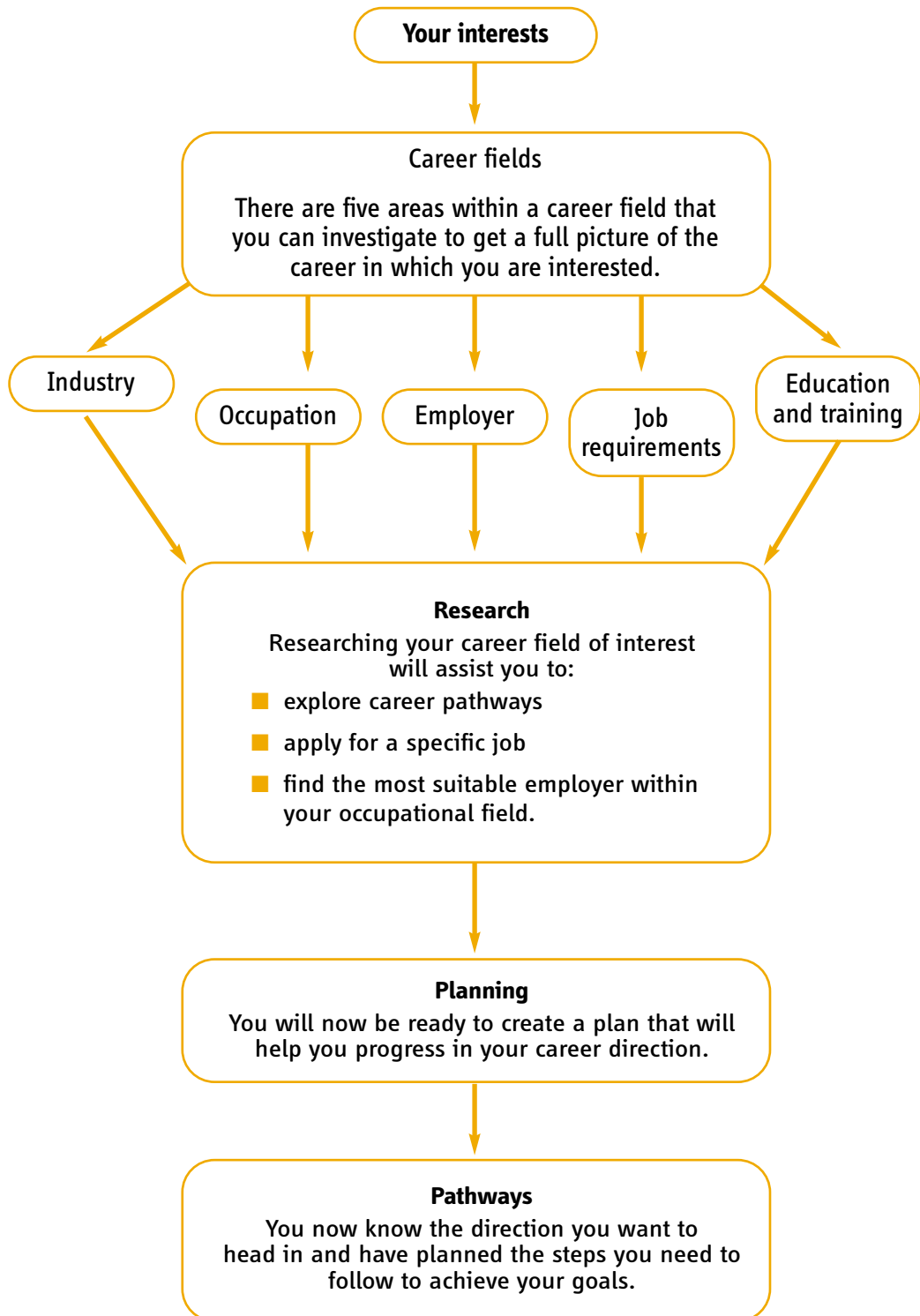
Your understanding of yourself will continue to grow and change throughout your life as you learn more about your interests, interact with people and experience life events.

Talk to a career advisor to get help in matching your personal information to career fields.

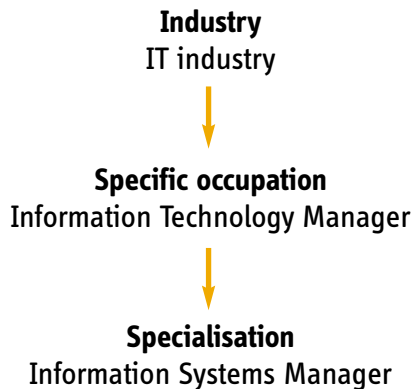
Starting your research

The information you have gathered about yourself will point out the type of career fields or broad areas of work that might suit you. This information is important for writing your resume, application letter and talking to employers.

You now need to research the world of work. Planning your research and finding out about industries and occupations you are interested in will help you to see the many pathways towards your career destination.



Start your research with the broad industry, a specific occupation or a specific job within a field but look at each to get a full picture of the career you are interested in. For example:



Where to go for information

You need to access as many sources of information as possible, including:

- **The Facts section in myfuture**
Get information on career development, career fields, work and employment, education and training in Australia, financial support, scholarships, awards, grants, contact organisations, and articles to read.
- **The World Wide Web**
Enter search words into a search engine to find information.
When searching on the web you need to know that:
 - not all industries or specific occupations will be there
 - information from other countries might not be relevant to Australia
 - you need to check that information is current and up to date
 - you need to use several search engines to get a range of sites
 - Commonwealth, state and local government websites provide an excellent starting point for initial exploration of industries.

- **Job Guide**
Job Guide, published by the Department of Education, Science and Training, is a publication on careers and occupations.
- **Career Information Centres**
Career Information Centres have print, video and computerised career information and staff available to help with your research.
- **State and territory libraries**
Libraries are a great place for information. Allow a few hours to search and find what you need. State and territory libraries around Australia provide an online reference and information service which uses their own, the nation's and world libraries.
- **Government departments**
You can visit government websites to find out about:
 - trends within industries and career fields
 - knowledge required for government funded projects
 - job requirements.
- **Employers**
To research information about employers you should:
 - access marketing material to learn about services and products
 - look up company annual reports to find information (eg company direction, organisational structure, products and services)
 - visit state and territory library reference sections for business directories
 - conduct an information interview with an employer.
- **Professional associations**
Professional associations provide a range of resources about careers. Most associations are able to answer enquiries from people exploring careers.

TIPS

Here are some search engines to use for your research:

- www.yahoo.com
- www.google.com
- www.msn.com
- www.netscape.com
- www.excite.com
- www.iwon.com
- www.about.com

Australian Journals Online at www.nla.gov.au/ajol is the National Library's database of Australian electronic journals.

Australian Libraries Gateway is at www.nla.gov.au/libraries/resource/ref.html

Don't forget that if you want to use computer facilities at a library you may need to book in advance.

You can find information about Australian Commonwealth, state and territory governments at: www.gov.au

TIPS

The Facts section of myfuture provides a listing of professional associations. See 'Contact organisations' in The Facts.

*You can access the ITAB for the industry you are interested in by visiting:
www.anta.gov.au/lhktabs.asp.*

*Visit the Australian Association of Career Counsellors (AACC) website at:
www.aacc.org.au*

AACC is a national organisation of practitioners who provide careers services for people entering the workforce.

■ Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs)

ITABs provide information and advice to government, training providers and industry on issues including industry training needs and pathways. ITABs operate at national and state and territory levels.

The information you can find includes:

- industry profiles
- industry initiatives
- state/territory and national industry training plans
- training packages
- training and education providers
- contacts for relevant organisations.

■ Career advisors

Career advisors provide advice on careers and direct you to local sources of information. Career advisors are also known as case managers, employment consultants, recruitment consultants, career counsellors, and career development professionals.

You can find career advisors at:

- high schools
- training or educational institutions
- private agencies
- Job Network providers
- Jobs Pathway Programme
- human resource departments.

■ Training and education providers

Training and education providers have a range of career resources such as:

- course information
- employer profiles and job leads
- industry information.

■ Bookshops

Find a range of resources related to careers including:

- occupation information
- current affairs and industry trends
- education/training information (eg course textbooks which give you an idea of the knowledge required for particular career fields).

■ Career expos

Recruitment agencies, universities and industries hold career expos where employers, education/training providers and employment agencies provide career information. Expos are usually advertised in the newspapers.

Attending a career expo gives you the chance to speak to people who have personal experience of the career you are interested in.

■ The Yellow Pages

Advertisements in the Yellow Pages often provide details of products and services of businesses. This can be a quick way to find out about an employer.

■ Newspapers, radio and television

In newspapers you will find:

- press releases about companies and industry trends
- information in the career section
- articles about career trends.

On the radio you will hear:

- radio programs with guest speakers discussing issues and developments in career fields.

On television you will see and hear:

- documentaries and current affairs programs that can provide insight into career fields and industries.

Questions to ask

Use the questions below to find out the kind of information that will help you with career planning and job searching.

INDUSTRY

- How large is the industry in relation to other major industries, locally, nationally and internationally?
- Does the industry provide services or products in an area of growth?
- How many major functions does the industry have?
- What are the main pathways into and through the industry?
- What opportunities for development or progression exist in the industry?
- What industry or government bodies can you contact to find out more information about the industry?
- What industry reports, websites or other references provide information about the industry?
- What other fields of work are linked or interact with this industry?

OCCUPATIONS

- What industry does this occupation belong to?
- What would a person in this occupation do?
- Are there specialist roles or new and evolving roles in this occupation?
- What are the major influences now and for the future?
- What training or education exists for this occupation?
- What key competencies are required or preferred for this occupation?
- Is there any research occurring in this occupation?
- Do you need to be registered with an authority to work in this occupation?
- Are there specific licences required to work in any area of this occupation?
- Are there any minimum age requirements?

EMPLOYERS

- What services and/or products does the organisation offer?
- Where is the organisation located, does it have branches and how long has it been established?

- What type of organisation is it (eg company, incorporated body)?
- What reputation does the organisation have?
- Who are its competitors?
- What industry trends impact on the organisation?
- What is the organisation like regarding its management style, work culture and safety record?
- What education or training does the organisation recognise?
- Does it offer professional development?
- Is the organisation not for profit? If so, where does funding come from?

JOB REQUIREMENTS

- What are the duties and responsibilities of the job?
- What qualifications are essential for this type of work?
- What qualifications are desirable for this type of work?
- What does a typical day's work involve in this job?
- Does this job require any prior experience?
- What are the hours of work?
- What is the salary range or award for this job?
- What personal characteristics are required for this job?
- What do people doing this job like about it?
- What do people doing this job not like about it?

TRAINING/EDUCATION

- What courses are available in the career area of your interest?
- Which education/training providers offer these courses?
- How is the course delivered?
- How long does the course take to complete?
- What type of work can this learning pathway lead to?

Setting goals

You will be ready to plan your career and job goals when you have:

- assessed your values, interests, strengths, skills and knowledge

- identified your career field of interest
- researched the current world of work.

When talking to employers it is important to be clear about your short-, medium- and long-term career goals and how the job you are applying for fits in with your plan.

Short-term goals are achieved approximately within one year, medium-term goals within three years and long-term goals within five years. Short-term goals consist of jobs that you can do now with your current level of skills.

When planning your job goals it is useful to think of the four categories of jobs:

- **Survival jobs**
These are jobs not in a career field of your interest but useful for immediate short-term employment. They provide an income while you do further study or training or look for another job. However, having one survival job after another or for a long period is usually not advisable.
- **Entry-level jobs**
These jobs allow you to begin a career path within your career field. The level at which you enter a job depends upon experience, education, what is available in the industry and the local job market. All industries offer entry-level jobs.
- **Transition jobs**
These are jobs that move you from an entry-level job to your 'dream job'. They are jobs in the career field of your interest and take you a step ahead and/or teach you the skills you need for your dream job.
- **Dream jobs**
These jobs give you a sense of fulfilment. They use your gifts and talents as well as your skills and match in with your passions and values. Your potential dream job will help you decide on entry-level career jobs and transition jobs.

Survival, entry-level, transition and dream jobs mean different things for different people; that is, a dream job for one person might be a survival job for someone else.

The assessment of skills that you have now will help you to decide whether the job you apply for is a survival, entry-level, transition or dream job.

Develop an action plan

When you have chosen the job you would like to aim for you need to:

- compare what you have to offer with what the employer needs
- outline gaps in your skills, knowledge and experience that are a barrier
- decide how you will overcome any barriers that you find.

Your action plan includes listing:

- any jobs that you have had from most recent to least recent
- the schools and institutions you have attended including your academic achievement there
- any additional training or licences you hold (eg driving licence)
- volunteer or other unpaid work
- steps to overcome barriers (eg further study, obtaining a driving licence, work experience).

Action plans are a useful tool for making a list of tasks that will direct you toward your goal. Be sure to estimate the targeted date of accomplishment for each objective. An example is below.

Barriers to achieving your goal

A barrier is anything that stops you from reaching your planned goal. Barriers to achieving your goals can also include reservations that employers might hold.

To identify such barriers you need to consider the following questions:

- Can I do the job?
- Am I motivated to do the job?
- Do I present myself as being dependable?
- Do I fit the image and attitude the company is looking for?
- Am I eager to learn and extend my skills?

Once you have identified your barriers think about the action you might need to take to address them.

A C T I O N P L A N W O R K S H E E T

Planned finish date	Action steps	Tasks	Tick when completed
-/-/-	Organise work area		<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-	Write resume	- write resume for different jobs - get feedback - check resume can be scanned	<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-	Do company research		<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-	Make a list of contacts		<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
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-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
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-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>
-/-/-			<input type="checkbox"/>

TIPS

Your action plan will help you write your resume. It will also be useful in job interviews or when you apply for any further training or education.

2 Finding a job

TIPS

For information about voluntary work contact your local volunteer centre:

NSW (02) 9231 4000
ACT (02) 6281 6669
NT (02) 8981 3405
QLD (07) 3229 9700
SA (08) 8221 7177
TAS (03) 6231 5550
VIC (03) 9650 5541
WA (08) 9220 0676

*Remember:
Be patient as you will not always get immediate results in your job searches.*

Don't take it personally when you don't get an answer to your phone call or application.

You need to remind yourself when you are looking for a job that this is your priority.

It is your responsibility to provide the employer with the best information to help them make a good business decision.

Considering the needs of the employer will increase your chances of a job offer.

Your business presentation starts with your first contact.

Getting started is the hardest part of a job search. You will need:

- enthusiasm, confidence and discipline
- planning and organisation.

Whether this is the first time you have looked for a job or you have done paid work, voluntary work or work experience in the past, you will be facing change. You will experience a range of emotions—some good, some not so nice.

It can take a long time to find the right job. In the meantime, volunteer and temporary work or work experience will help you to gain skills in an area of interest.

Volunteer work in an area of interest lets you:

- strengthen skills and learn new skills
- network and meet people
- find out about new ideas.

Temporary work lets you:

- earn money straight away
- allows some flexibility as the hours and days you work may vary
- train in an area of interest.

With temporary work you need to be prepared to work when you are contacted. This will show that you are reliable and available.

Organising the practical things

Plan a space that:

- is nice for you to work in
- has all of the equipment you need
- has all of the information that you need.

Things you will need for your job search include:

- a telephone, mobile phone or contact number so the employer can contact you
- pens, highlighters and notepaper for identifying jobs, taking notes from enquiries, and writing down contact numbers
- a filing system for keeping a record of applications sent, contacts made and referrals given
- access to a computer, printer and disks for writing applications.

When you decide that it is time to look for a job don't put it off. Plan to do something every day and reward yourself for reaching goals that you have set.

Be persistent and patient. If you are not getting the responses you think you should, ask yourself: Do I need to change the way I am doing things or do I need to be more flexible?

If you're not sure if you need to change the way you are looking for a job get some feedback from friends, family or a career counsellor.

Developing a routine

It is important to have a routine that you can follow.

Things to think about to help you organise your job search

Develop a routine

A routine helps you stay motivated, focused and able to see the steps you need to take next. This can include:

- having a timetable and sticking to it
- starting the day at a regular time
- dressing like you would for work.

Plan and prioritise daily

Write a 'To do' list to help you achieve your goals.

Each day you should work on all parts of your job search (eg finding new leads, following up leads, writing application letters, and preparing for interviews).

Use your time wisely

Follow up job leads but remember quality rather than quantity is important. Don't waste your time following up on leads that aren't useful.

Some tasks need more concentration than others (eg writing application letters requires a clear mind). You are the best judge of when your energy is best for these types of tasks.

Create a budget

Budget your money to pay bills while you are looking for a job.

Have a support system

You will find that you need different kinds of support when you are looking for a job. This could include:

- feedback on a letter
- an opinion on clothes for an interview
- someone to debrief with after an interview.

Planning a job search that works

To create a job search strategy that works you need to:

- find job leads
- research jobs, employers and their needs
- choose the right tools and techniques.

The job market is made up of the advertised jobs (open job market) and those not advertised (hidden job market).

Open job market

The open job market refers to advertised positions which can be found in the following ways.

- **Centrelink**
Find information about jobs at Centrelink and use the touchscreens for jobs on the National Vacancy Database.
 - **Newspapers**
Don't make newspapers your only source for job searches because:
 - only 20–30 per cent of jobs are advertised in newspapers
 - answering advertisements is very competitive.
- Important information about newspapers:**
- Wednesday and Saturday are the main days for jobs in newspapers.
 - Jobs are not always under headings that you expect.
 - Job titles can be deceiving. Read the description and requirements of a position to make sure you don't miss a suitable job.
 - Look at employers who advertise positions, and list competitors or employers working in a similar industry. Use this list to contact employers about possible or future vacancies.
 - Check your local paper for jobs.

- **The Internet**
Search by industry or job type and location. Online recruitment agencies advertise vacancies that employers lodge with them. Lodge a resume online, or subscribe to have e-mails sent about job vacancies in your area of interest. Some sites specialise in specific fields, such as information technology or hospitality.

- **Australian Job Search (AJS)**
Access the AJS via touchscreens at Centrelink, Job Network members, some community locations and via the Internet. Access the National Vacancy Database via AJS.

TIPS

The Australian WorkPlace site helps you to find information on employment, government assistance, jobs, careers, training and working conditions. Go to www.workplace.gov.au

To find information about your nearest Centrelink office visit www.centrelink.gov.au or locate them in the White Pages telephone directory.

Articles in newspapers give you information about trends, businesses or projects that are starting or expanding.

Access Australian Job Search (AJS) via the Internet at www.jobsearch.gov.au

Choose an employment agency that suits your needs.

TIPS

Register with more than one agency for a greater chance of being referred to a job.

Keep managing your job search and keep in touch with the agency.

Prepare for a meeting with the agency as you would for an interview. Always dress and act accordingly.

Ask about training as some agencies offer training to upgrade your skills.

Access more information about Job Network members and services at www.jobnetwork.gov.au/aboutjn.asp

Access the Public Service Gazette online at www.psgazetteonline.gov.au

Temporary positions can lead to full-time work as some employers use temporary agencies to evaluate workers before offering permanent employment.

- **Professional and industry journals**
Find job information and industry trends in professional and industry journals.
- **Radio**
Some radio stations broadcast local job vacancies. Find out when these 'job spots' are on and listen in.
- **Employment agencies**
Employment agencies can be a good source for job leads because:
 - you get to hear about jobs you wouldn't otherwise hear about
 - the agency contacts employers to ask about job openings
 - employers contact agencies directly to lodge vacancies
 - many employers have exclusive arrangements with agencies.

You can find employment agencies in the Yellow Pages or career section of the newspaper.

Registering with an agency:

- most agencies ask you to complete a registration or application form
- some ask you to do a skills test for certain jobs like computing.

■ The Job Network

The **Job Network** is a national network of around 200 private, community and government organisations dedicated to finding jobs for unemployed people, particularly the long term unemployed:

Job Network Members (JNM) provide the following services:

- Job Search Support (JSS) (eg job matching/access to job vacancies on JobSearch)
- Intensive Support (IS), including job search training (ISjst) to enhance job seeking skills and customised assistance (ISca) to help disadvantaged and long term unemployed job seekers into employment.

You do not have to be registered with Centrelink to access Job Search Support from a Job Network Member, however if you are unemployed they will assist you to register. Centrelink assess job seekers eligibility for the full range of Job Network services. Registering with Centrelink may give you access to other Job Network services if they assess you as eligible.

■ Public service—Commonwealth and state/territory

The Commonwealth and state/territory governments regularly advertise for staff in newspapers and occasionally recruit for entry-level (graduate) positions. Every Thursday permanent vacancies are advertised in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette. The Gazette can be accessed at public libraries and online with positions generally open to anyone.

■ Defence Services

Visit the Defence Department website and find out about recruitment and career possibilities in the Navy, Army or Air Force: go to www.defence.gov.au

■ Labour hire and temporary agencies

Labour hire engages workers through a third party or a go-between agency.

Labour hire and temporary agencies employ you after you have registered with them. You will be assigned to temporary assignments or projects.

■ Group training organisations

Group training organisations employ apprentices and trainees, and place them with 'host employers'. As an apprentice or trainee with a group training organisation you will have continuous work or training.

■ Notice boards

You will find job vacancy notices posted on:

- shop windows
- counters

- community notice boards (at supermarkets, libraries)
- entrances to businesses
- on-site projects
- factory gates.

■ **Tertiary Institution Careers Service**
Australian tertiary institutions provide careers guidance, education, information and employment services to students and graduates.

■ **Career expos and job fairs**
Employment agencies, universities and industries hold expos and fairs to provide information about employment opportunities and current vacancies. Expos and fairs provide an opportunity to apply for positions so be prepared for an impromptu interview and have copies of your resume ready.

The hidden job market

The hidden job market refers to employers who need work done but aren't advertising their vacancies or haven't advertised yet. You can access these employers through networking and 'cold calling'.

Networking

About two-thirds of jobs are found through networking. Networking is connecting with people who have information about job opportunities or can introduce you to others with this information.

Your network includes family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances, previous employers and colleagues, people you play sport with, and local business people. People in your network will also know others who might know of opportunities.

Use the following strategy for networking:

1. Make a list of all the people you know

All you need is something in common to be able to start a conversation.

2. Contact them in a systematic way

3. Let contacts know you are looking for work

Have a brief description of what you're looking for and the kind of help you'd like to get (eg background, qualifications and jobs you are interested in).

4. Ask them for job leads

Ask for tips, leads and suggestions. If they don't know of any at the time ask if they can keep you in mind and if there are other people you can contact.

5. Contact people you've been referred to and ask them the same questions

6. Follow up with your contacts

Ring contacts back to see if they have any information for you.

7. Follow up leads

Don't forget to follow up leads by meeting contacts in person, introducing yourself and getting more information or further job leads.

It is important to know who the people are in your network. Use the form on the next page to start adding names to your network of contacts.

TIPS

One way to find people you are going to contact is in directories available in employment centres and libraries. This includes:

- *Yellow Pages*
- *business directories.*

Asking for advice is a good way to build a link within the company. Most people like to help so be honest about why you are calling.

Don't forget it is important to be friendly and courteous to everyone you speak to at all times.

If the receptionist doesn't provide the information you could say that you have information you would like to submit and want to ensure that it gets to the right person.

Whatever response you receive, don't forget to thank the person for their time.

NETWORK LIST		
People	Names	Contacts
Boyfriend/girlfriend		
Parents		
Brothers/sisters		
Uncles/aunts		
Grandparents		
Classmates		
Friends		
Teachers		
Work experience contacts		
Employers		
People I have worked with		
Sports teams		
Hobby clubs		
Church clubs		
Youth clubs		

Cold calling

'Cold calling' is contacting people you have not met and is a way of finding jobs in the hidden job market. You can use cold calling to:

- gain an interview
- find out job related information
- get more networking contacts.

Because you will be speaking to someone that you don't know you need to sound confident by:

- knowing the name and title of the person you are speaking to
- knowing what you are going to say
- letting the person you are talking to know how you can benefit the company.

GETTING PAST THE RECEPTIONIST/PERSONAL ASSISTANT
Receptionists/personal assistants are

often responsible for screening calls and the more important the person you're calling, the harder they will be to reach.

Ask the receptionist the name of the person who does the hiring.

'Hello, this is Kathy Porter. Can you please give me the name of the person who is responsible for staff selection? Thank you.'

OR

'Can you please tell me the name of the manager for the IT department?'

Ask for the person's full name and the correct spelling, and find out how to say their name correctly.

If you can't get past the assistant, sell them on your experience and skills. Ask about the company and for advice about the best way to follow up about a position.

If this doesn't work call at a different time of the day and speak to someone else. If none of this works don't continue. Call other people on your list.

Knowing what you are going to say is important

Before you call the person you want to speak to rehearse your opening line. During the call:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Tell them why you are contacting them.
3. Tell them about the skills you have that relate to the type of job you are enquiring about.
4. Ask if you can give them a copy of your resume.
5. Arrange a follow-up contact.

If the person you want to speak to is unavailable

Call back later and ask for the person by their first name and department.

'Can I please speak to Jack in the IT department?'

If you get voicemail

If you get voicemail the first time you call, leave:

- your name
- telephone number
- a brief message saying you will call again.

If the recruiter says there are no jobs now

You have at least three options:

- Ask if you can send in your resume and call again in a few weeks. If the answer is yes, send a resume and cover letter immediately. Plan a follow-up call and ask again for an interview at that time.
- Ask the person for information on what they look for in new employees:

'I know you don't have any vacancies at the moment, but what sort of skills are you looking for when you do recruit?'

- Ask for a referral or other leads:

'Do you know of a company looking for someone with my skills?'

If you get a company name, ask for a contact name and phone number.

Warm calling

A 'warm call' is when you phone a likely employer because:

- you have been referred by someone from your network
- you have already sent your resume and you are following up with a phone call. (In the cover letter you should write that you will follow up, by phoning in the next three days, for example.)

You would follow the same steps for a warm call as for a cold call except that you will have the name of the person that you need to contact.

TIPS

A warm call creates an instant connection with the person you are calling and can increase your chances of an interview by up to eight times.

Don't forget to check the details and the address of your meeting.

3 *Employer's perspective*

TIPS

Don't say you have done something that you haven't.

Selling points that you highlight for one job might be very different for another job.

Summarise your skills, knowledge and experience to help you write letters, resumes, and answer questions at interviews or when you're on the phone. Your summary also highlights how much you have achieved when you are looking at job offers.

Who to employ is a business decision that involves a big risk for the employer. Showing the employer that the risk is small means a better chance of a job offer.

You can help employers make informed business decisions by:

- looking at the job from the employer's point of view
- highlighting your selling points
- removing employer concerns.

Two main questions that are important to an employer are:

- How will they benefit from employing you?
- How soon can you become productive or useful to them?

Check the following questions to look at a job from an employer's point of view

CAN YOU DO THE JOB?

- Do you have the abilities, skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications for the job?
- Could you start the job without too much extra training?

WILL YOU DO THE JOB WELL?

- Will the goals in your life benefit the company?
- Do you hold similar interests to those of the company?
- Are you someone they can depend on?
- Are you available to work for a period of time (ie will the company get value for money if it spends money on training you)?

WILL YOU FIT INTO THE ORGANISATION?

- Do you have a good attitude?
- Do you fit the company's image, values and goals?
- Do you dress and speak in a way that represents the company well?
- Are you able to communicate positively with clients and co-workers of the company?
- Will you attract valued clients to the business?

Highlighting your selling points

A 'selling point' is something that you have to offer and includes:

- your successes
- past experience
- your knowledge, skills and training
- your personal strengths.

Your selling points will meet the needs of the employer and make you a suitable choice for the job, and will answer the question: How will the employer benefit from employing you?.

Writing a selling point

To write about your selling points you will need to:

1. **Identify the job requirements**
These are the tasks, skills, qualities, knowledge and experience the employer is looking for.
2. **Identify what you have done that proves you can meet the job requirements**
The knowledge and skills you have to do the job include those gained

from part-time jobs, voluntary work, hobbies, subjects studied at school and life experiences.

3. Provide proof of your skills and knowledge

Provide a clear picture and proof of what you have achieved (eg positive outcomes, comments from teachers, education outcomes).

4. Give a timeframe

A timeframe of achievements helps to demonstrate your selling points.

Removing employer concerns

During the screening process an employer may exclude you if they are concerned you can't do the job or won't get along with colleagues and clients. They might not tell you their concerns so you need to find out what doubts they might have and prepare an answer.

An employer may have doubts about your suitability because:

- you don't give enough information about how you meet the job requirements
- your application reveals a barrier of concern to them
- information you give leads to more questions in their mind
- they hold a belief or a stereotype that excludes you.

You can overcome concerns for yourself and the employer by being confident in your answers and assisting the person interviewing you to focus on:

- the skills and knowledge you have to offer
- how quickly you will be productive in the workplace
- identifying skills you enjoy using and your areas of interest (eg hobbies, education, work experience, volunteer experience, personal abilities).

TIPS

Talk to people who are prepared to help you, for example family and friends, and let them know how they can support you.

Example of how to summarise skills, knowledge and experience

Employer needs	Selling points
Patience	A report from my work experience at a childcare centre remarked on my ability to communicate in a calm manner with both the children and parents attending the centre.
Dependability	During the past three years at school I have had only three sick days.
Good with customers	Over the past two years at school I have undertaken canteen duties on a regular basis. Feedback from my supervisor and students using the canteen is that I always provide friendly and efficient service.
Computer skills	Over the past five years I have developed an interest in the use of computers. I am proficient in Office 2000, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Photoshop, Explorer and Outlook. Over the last year I have been a peer support for other students in computing and have been employed by the school as a computer support person.

4 Applying for advertised jobs

TIPS

Don't send cover letters that are photocopied.

Use simple, natural language and avoid expressions like 'aforementioned', and clichés.

Be honest.

Use positive words and phrases such as:

*I have
I can
Able to
Capable of*

Use action words to describe what you do.

Exchange business cards when you meet someone new.

You never know when you will need your network contact again, so keep networking even after you've found a job.

Involvement with civic, social, religious or sporting organisations will broaden your network.

Always have a pen, paper, business card and a positive attitude ready because you never know who you might meet.

Record and organise network contacts on a spreadsheet or index cards, including any follow-up information.

Read the advertisement carefully. If the advertisement isn't clear about what the employer or recruiting person is looking for, contact them to find out more.

It might not say so in the advertisement, but some companies may have a 'job and person specification' or 'selection criteria'. Get a copy to find out more about the responsibilities and requirements of the position.

Responding to an advertisement

Send your application two or three working days after the advertisement appears. If there is no date on the advertisement you should respond immediately. An application should show that you match the skills, qualifications, experience and qualities the employer is looking for.

Following the instructions

- 'Apply in writing' or 'Send applications to' means that you should write a cover letter and resume using a computer. Never handwrite an application unless the advertisement says so.
- 'Handwritten application' or 'Applications in your own writing' means that you should write the cover letter in neat, legible handwriting on a clean sheet of lined A4 paper.
- If you are asked to quote a reference number you should enter the number below the salutation of your covering letter. For example:

Dear Ms Jones
Re: Ref 1234

- An instruction to 'Phone for a job description/selection criteria' means that you should phone and ask for one to be mailed, e-mailed or faxed. Often you can access this information from the company's website.
- 'Apply in person' means that you should dress appropriately and visit the employer with your resume or portfolio.

Analysing the requirements

With a highlighter pen identify all the requirements in the advertisement, and decide how well you meet them.

You should meet the requirements but you do not have to meet them exactly. For example, you may have experience with a particular software package and the job asks for experience using similar software. You need to demonstrate how you can transfer your skills. Instead of asking yourself 'Am I completely qualified?', ask 'Could I manage the job with a few weeks' experience?'

Requirements can be 'hard' requirements:

- particular, demonstrated aspects of your work background
- qualifications
- experience within a career field
- level of skills in a specific program or system.

Requirements can also be 'soft' requirements such as personal qualities (eg energetic, good communicator, organised, flexible).

5 Registration and application forms

Some employers use application forms as the first step in the selection process.

Most labour hire companies, recruitment firms and Job Network members ask you to complete a registration form and use the information to match you to positions.

Registration and application forms:

- collect information that an employer needs to make a hiring decision
- 'screen out' applicants who do not meet essential criteria
- compare applicants
- find out how well applicants can read, write and understand instructions.

If an application form is not provided then you need to write an application.

Filling in forms

Before beginning to complete your form you should:

- Read the instructions carefully.
- Photocopy the form and do a draft copy before completing the original.
- Have your resume alongside you.
- Find somewhere quiet to fill in the form.

To fill the form in you should:

- Write with a black or blue pen.
- Check spelling, grammar and punctuation. If you are unsure get someone else to check your draft before you complete the original.
- Don't use correction fluid if possible.

- Type the application if you are seeking professional or office jobs.
- If you need more space for information attach a sheet of paper. Don't try to cram everything into the space provided.
- Write in a positive way. Avoid negative words. Think about why an employer may be asking a question. What does the employer want to know?

Follow the instructions:

- Answer all questions; don't leave blank spaces. If you don't understand a question ask for help. Use 'N/A' (not applicable) if a question doesn't relate to you.
- Use block letters where the form asks you to, and don't write in sections that say 'Do not write below this line' or 'Office use only'.

Do a final check and edit:

- Is the job you are applying for clearly stated?
- Are all questions answered? (Don't miss a page if the form is double-sided.)
- Check that any dates on the form are correct.
- Check for spelling mistakes.
- Make sure you have signed the form if required.
- Photocopy the completed form for your own records.
- Keep the form clean and unfolded and deliver or post it in a large envelope.
- Ensure the form is sent in on time.

TIPS

Always be well-presented when you are obtaining, completing or returning your form because employers, Job Network members, labour hire companies or recruitment agencies are also assessing how you deal with the process.

Don't write 'Please refer to resume'. Employers want to compare applicants using the form. Include a resume only if an employer requests it.

Adjectives to describe yourself:

accurate, adaptable, calm, flexible, friendly, inclusive, independent, logical, persistent, polite, precise, responsible, sensitive, tactful, tolerant.

Verbs to describe what you have done:

achieved, analysed, assessed, chose, completed, contributed, created, demonstrated, developed, enjoyed, expressed, increased, improved, investigated, organised, planned, presented, produced, researched.

TIPS

Don't forget to:

- *Provide relevant details and experience with examples that address the needs of the job.*
- *Make sure information is accurate, brief and clear but interesting to read.*
- *Make sure your information is truthful. False information can be a basis for dismissal.*

It is very important that you understand what the declaration is saying before you sign it.

When you send your application you should include:

- A covering letter and a resume.
- A response to the person specifications, if required. Attach this after the covering letter.
- The correct number of copies of the application requested in the advertisement.

What not to include

- Don't include copies of certificates or references unless requested.
- Don't put the application in a folder or plastic envelope. This makes applications difficult to sort.

Signing declarations

A declaration is a formal statement that the applicant needs to sign. The statement asks the applicant to declare that the information provided in the form is true, and sometimes to agree to particular terms of employment.

You must make sure the statements you have made and the information you have given is correct before you sign the declaration.

Other information you need to know

Some declarations ask you to give approval to contact other organisations for further information about you. You have the right to find out whom they will contact and for what information.

If the declaration states that you will agree to follow certain company policies you should ask for details about what the policies are first.

If you have questions about the declaration, **don't sign it**, but ask politely for an explanation or more information.

6 Cover letters

Cover letters win interviews not jobs!
A cover letter should:

- capture the employer's interest
- show why you are writing
- indicate how you will benefit the company
- convince the employer to ask you for an interview.

Cover letters target your skills, highlight your selling points and answer these questions:

- Can you do the job? What are your abilities, skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications?
- Will you do the job well? Are you motivated, dependable and enthusiastic?
- Will you fit into the organisation? Do you match the company's image, values and goals? Will you get along well with clients and co-workers?

Time pressures and the number of applications give an employer approximately 30 seconds to decide whether to consider your application further.

At a glance an employer looks for:

- how you match the selection criteria
- how well you communicate, including structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation of the letter
- your experience, skills and qualifications
- your level of professionalism
- clues to your personality
- your attention to detail (eg errors or wrong information).

Types of cover letters

There are four different types of cover letters:

- advertisement response letters
- cold-call or canvassing letters
- referral letters
- online letters.

Advertisement response letters

These letters are written to respond to an advertised position, highlighting skills and requirements meeting the employer's needs.

You will write directly to the company, recruitment agency or Job Network member.

When responding to a recruitment agency or Job Network member refer to 'your client' or 'your client's organisation' rather than 'you' or 'your company'.

Cold-call or canvassing letters

This type of letter is written to express interest in jobs that may be available now or in the future.

Because you're not writing to answer a specific job advertisement you need to:

- say in the opening paragraph that you're enquiring if a position is available
- describe the type of position you're looking for
- research the company to write your selling points to the needs of the company
- interest the reader enough to contact you.

TIPS

A cover letter should accompany your resume.

Cover letters communicate 'what you can offer', not 'what you want'.

Write a rough draft first to refine, order and edit the letter, and get someone else to read it.

Keep copies of letters so that you have a record of who you have written to and what you said.

Make sure your contact details are up to date.

Use similar terms the employer uses in the advertisement or terms that are industry specific.

Don't list your work history if you already have it on your resume.

Highlight points from your resume you want to draw attention to.

Remember you have less time to catch an agency's attention. An agency wants someone who matches the hiring company's criteria, so be honest and 'quick'.

Referral letters

A referral letter is written to a person in a company or recruiting firm on the recommendation of someone else.

The main difference and advantage of a referral letter is that you begin with mentioning the person who has referred you as an introduction.

For a referral letter to be effective, the person who has referred you needs to be someone who:

- is immediately remembered by the reader and well-respected
- has given you permission to use their name.

Online letters

An online letter uses e-mail to respond to advertisements on the Internet, in the newspaper or on a touchscreen.

You need to consider the following features of an online letter:

- The letter is briefer, but still includes the top two or three selling points.
- Short paragraphs or bullet style format is common.
- The letter should be easy to read, direct and to the point.
- The title of the position you are applying for goes in the 'Subject' line of the e-mail.
- Don't put the full mailing address of the person you are sending it to in an e-mail. Use the salutation line only (eg Dear Mr Jones).
- Remember that writing in all upper case in an e-mail is seen to be a form of yelling.
- Don't use bold type or italics.

Presentation and language

WHAT SHOULD A COVER LETTER CONTAIN?

A cover letter is a business letter that has a set structure which includes:

- contact details
- date
- name and address of recipient
- salutation
- opening paragraph

- second paragraph—your qualifications and skills
- third paragraph—your interests and personal qualities
- fourth paragraph—conclusion
- closing.

HOW SHOULD I SAY IT?

Use simple, natural language and:

- be honest, professional, warm and friendly
- use positive words and phrases such as:
 - I have - Able to
 - I can - Experienced
- don't use negative statements such as 'I had personality conflicts with ...'
- don't start every sentence or paragraph with 'I'—try to limit yourself to one 'I' per paragraph or less
- make the letter interesting to read, short and to the point
- be enthusiastic and assertive but not 'pushy' or begging for a position.

WHAT SHOULD A COVER LETTER LOOK LIKE?

- Type your cover letter on a computer and print on clean, white A4 paper.
- Leave space around the edges and clear space between each paragraph.
- Use an A4 envelope if your cover letter and attachments don't fit a DL size envelope.
- Staple your cover letter neatly.
- Don't send cover letters that are photocopied.
- Use a basic font such as Arial, Bookman Old Style or Garamond.

Example layout

Kathy Porter
1 Looking Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8123 4567
Mobile: 0405 111 111
E-mail: kporter@somewhere.com.au

Name and address

- Person's full name
- Position title
- Company name
- Street number and name or PO Box
- Town or suburb, state, postcode

Date

Ms Sarah Job
After School Care Coordinator
The Hills After School Care Program
24 Hills Road
HILLTOWN SA 5000

Your contact details.

Salutation should use correct spelling of person's name.

Dear Ms Job

Ref: After School Care Worker

The opening paragraph explains the purpose of the letter and gives the reader a reason to read on.

The position of After School Care Worker, advertised in the local community paper, is a job that I would be well suited to, as I have enjoyed babysitting for families in my community over the last two years.

The second paragraph demonstrates that you can do the job, why you are the 'best fit' for the company and how your skills meet the company's needs.

As a babysitter I have been responsible for caring for children ranging from 3 to 10 years of age. This work has required that I provide supervised play, ensuring the safety of the children at all times, prepare light snacks and meals, perform simple first aid and maintain a safe and clean environment. The parents for whom I have provided this service have consistently given me good feedback and recommended my services to other parents/caregivers. My studies in Home Economics and Performing Arts at high school support me in being able to deliver a high level of service.

The third paragraph shows you are willing to do the job, motivated and enthusiastic and can fit into the organisation (eg communicate well with co-workers and clients).

Caring for the social, emotional and physical needs of young children is an area of work that I enjoy and would like to learn more about. Working at the Hills After School Care Program, which has such a high reputation in the community, would match the career path that I am pursuing. I would also look forward to working as part of a team with co-workers and parents.

The fourth and final paragraph refers to your enclosed resume, application form or other attachments. Thanks the reader for considering your application. States you would welcome an interview to discuss your suitability (include your phone number again).

Please see my resume that I have enclosed that refers to experience and courses that would support me in undertaking this position. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to meeting you and providing further information in an interview. I can be contacted at anytime on my mobile phone number which is 0405 111 111.

Yours sincerely

If you started with **Dear Ms Smith** you should end with **Yours sincerely** or **Yours truly**.

Kathy Porter

KATHY PORTER

7 Resumes

TIPS

Use good page design to make the resume easy to skim read.

Headings help a reader to find the main information.

Take 15 seconds to look at your resume and decide what stands out and what you miss.

Always keep your resume up to date.

You don't need to have had paid employment to be able to write a resume.

Don't forget who your audience is each time you write a resume.

An extensive action word list is provided in the articles section of myfuture.

A resume is a description of your education, paid employment, volunteer activities (including school activities), general interests and personal strengths. Each resume will be slightly different depending on whom it is written for.

Your resume may be an employer's first contact with you. Often they are looking at hundreds of resumes and only briefly review each one to decide whether to look more closely. The appearance is the first thing they notice; that is, is it neat and well set out and does it meet their requirements.

What to include

What you include in a resume depends on your individual career goals and the needs of the employer.

A resume provides:

- initial information to an employer to get you an interview
- a summary of your work history, skills and experience
- information about how you perform in different work situations
- information about what you have accomplished.

A resume should answer the employer's question: 'How will I benefit from employing this person?'

What not to include

- Don't say you have done something that you haven't.
- Don't include anything that relates to your personal life (except contact details).
- Don't include age, height, weight, marital status, number of children, condition of health, or religious or

political beliefs (except where religion or political beliefs are important to the position).

- Don't request a level of salary.
- Don't include negative reasons for leaving previous employment such as 'asked to leave' (fired) or 'sick of travelling'.
- Don't focus on any barriers to getting a job.
- Don't make the resume too long.

Resources needed

Use this checklist to prepare for writing your resume.

Job descriptions of past jobs, including part-time work or work experience.

An action word list to help you write your resume.

Copies of performance reviews or reports about tasks undertaken.

Records of educational achievements.

Certificates or records of seminars/conferences attended. Include courses undertaken out of school hours (eg swimming and computer courses).

Letters of appreciation. Don't forget thank you letters or cards you've received.

Types of resumes

There are three main types of resumes:

- reverse chronological
- functional (skills based)
- combination of chronological and functional.

Look at the following chart to decide which type you should use.

R E S U M E C O M P A R I S O N C H A R T

	Reverse chronological	Functional	Combination
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most recent work history is listed first ■ Provides a short and snappy picture of where you've been and what you've done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work experience and skills listed in a way that relates to the strengths important to the employer ■ Focus is on what you have done, not where and when 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Combination of reverse chronological and functional resumes ■ Focus is on skills, accomplishments and work history ■ Usually begins with a profile or key skills followed by work history
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy to write ■ Shows employment history ■ Most commonly used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brief ■ Highlights accomplishments ■ Groups together similar jobs ■ De-emphasises unstable work history ■ Can use headings featured in a job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Highlights relevant skills that are supported by a strong employment record ■ Emphasis is on transferable skills ■ Highlights accomplishments
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Emphasises gaps in employment ■ Doesn't effectively reveal skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Doesn't provide a work history ■ No emphasis on loyalty, continuity or recency of experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Longer than other formats ■ Work history is usually on the second page
Use when ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Showing career progression ■ Showing continuity in a particular career path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Entering the workforce for the first time or after a long absence ■ Work history is varied or unrelated ■ Changing fields ■ Emphasising skills not used in recent work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Each position you have had involved a different job description ■ Demonstrating a depth and range of skills
Don't use if ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ You're looking for a job for the first time ■ You have employment gaps ■ You've changed jobs often ■ You're changing careers and your work history does not relate to the job you are applying for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ You want to highlight career progression ■ Your recent jobs have had limited responsibilities and functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experience is limited ■ There are large gaps in your employment history

TIPS

Make your name stand out.

If you are moving house, include your old and new address and the date that you are able to receive mail at the new address.

Most employers contact you by phone, so list a number where you are sure you will receive a message.

An objective should:

- *be worded carefully*
- *communicate useful information about you*
- *show you are focused.*

Don't include an objective if you want to be considered for a range of jobs.

A summary is easier to write when you have finished writing your resume.

Always remember the needs of the employer and the selling points you have to meet those needs.

Make sure the information in your resume supports what you have written in the summary.

To decide on education and training information, ask yourself:

- *What will the employer know about my study?*
- *What do I need to describe or give more information about?*

Sections of a resume

The section headings of a resume match the job advertisement. The most common headings are: contact details, objectives, summary of experience, competencies, education and training, work experience, activities and interests, and referees.

Contact details

Your contact details say who you are and how you can be contacted. This includes:

- Your name
First and last name.
- Address
- Telephone number.

Include home and mobile number if applicable. Include a work number if it is all right to be contacted at work.

- E-mail/fax

This is optional. Include an e-mail address or fax number only if you check it regularly.

Objectives

An objective tells an employer what position you are seeking, the kind of work you are looking for and the next step of your career path. This section is optional.

Alternative terms for 'Objective' are:

- Professional objective
- Job objective
- Career goal
- Professional goal.

Summary of experience

The summary is a 'big picture' statement about you which describes what you do, and the strengths and abilities that you offer an employer. It is a brief description written in one short paragraph or in bullet points.

Alternative terms for 'Summary of experience' are:

- Summary
- Career summary
- Profile.

Competencies

Competencies are about your abilities and are targeted to the job. This section convinces the employer that you are capable of doing the job.

Alternative terms for 'Competencies' are:

- Key skills
- Capabilities
- Skills summary
- Work skills.

List skills and abilities gained from paid and unpaid work. Group skills under headings such as computer skills, programming skills and interpersonal skills. List accreditations and licences that you hold.

Education and training

This section shows you have the educational requirements to do the job. Include your most recent educational qualification and subjects you have studied that are relevant to the position.

Alternative terms for 'Education and training' are:

- Education
- Training
- Educational achievements
- Educational and vocational skills
- Education and qualifications
- Licences/certificates.

Education and training information includes:

- university degrees
- certificates
- short training courses
- workshops, seminars, conferences

- other professional training
- licences
- accreditations.

How to include education information in your resume

- List the most recent information first.
- Include high school details if you have just recently left school.
- List the qualification, the school and date in that order.
- Include the name of the school/institution if it has a reputation of excellence in a particular field.
- Include grades or marks if it helps to sell you to an employer. If the grades or marks don't reflect how good you are then leave them out.
- If you are still completing a degree or training, write something like this:
 - Undertaking Certificate 2 Warehousing
 OR
 - Graduate studies in Human Movement, in progress.
- If you have skills in a particular area you can put this information in a sub-section or its own section. For example, training in relevant computer packages could be listed under 'Computer competencies' instead of under your education section.

Work experience

This section explains past and present work activities. It should include full-time, part-time, casual, contract and temporary jobs; self-employment; and positions you have held as a volunteer or student.

Alternative terms for 'Work experience' are:

- Work history
- Professional experience

- Employment history
- Experience
- Employment background
- Related experience
- Employment
- Volunteer work
- Work background

Work experience should highlight past work achievements.

- List the most recent experience first.
- Use the heading 'Work experience' if you are still at school or have just left school and haven't worked before.
- Use headings and sub-headings to organise information, for example:

Heading:
Voluntary work

Sub-heading:
Counselling experience
- Put the job title first unless the employer is well-known and their name helps sell you.
- You don't need to point out whether the work is paid or unpaid. Employers are more interested in what you did and how you did it.

Each job listing should include the following elements:

1. Job title
2. Company name and location
3. Dates of employment or involvement
4. Description of responsibilities and duties
5. Description of achievement for each job.

How to include work experience in different resumes

Chronological resume – Work experience comes after the contact details or objective.

TIPS

Avoid using jargon and abbreviations because the employer might not know what they mean.

Don't put paid and unpaid work experience together under the heading 'Employment' as this heading suggests paid work.

Use who, what, why, where, when and how questions to expand your descriptions in 'Work experience'.

TIPS

Don't forget to edit and proof read for spelling, grammar and typing errors.

A disorganised, incomplete, or out-of-date resume can tell an employer you're not really interested in getting the job.

Visit www.resume.monster.com.au to see examples of a range of resumes.

Word searches in a database look for industry terms, hard skills and commonly used trade terms. Include words relevant to the target job like job titles, key functions, relevant personality traits, computer software, academic degrees, fields of study, and foreign languages spoken.

Functional resume – Work experience comes after the skills section and is more like a list.

Combination resume – Work experience is listed after the skills section.

Activities and interests

This section is optional but it helps an employer build a picture of you (eg playing sport suggests fitness). Activities and interests also highlight initiative, communication and organisational ability and skills you have gained which may be important if they are relevant to the job.

Activities are structured pursuits (eg clubs and voluntary organisations – Amnesty International member). List the organisation, your role and years of participation.

Interests are unstructured individual pursuits (eg sewing, reading, running, football). List the interest and your involvement (ie writing poetry is different from reading poetry).

If you include information in this section you need to ask yourself:

- What am I trying to tell the employer?
- What do my activities and interests say about my values and me?

Referees

A referee provides details of your experience and can comment on your personal qualities. It is common to include three referees.

Referee information goes at the end of the resume and includes:

- referee's name
- referee's title
- their employer
- work phone number
- mobile number (if applicable)
- e-mail address
- brief statement explaining how the referee knows you.

The final word on writing resumes

Language

- Complete sentences are not necessary.
- You don't need to refer to yourself as 'I' throughout the resume.
- Use plain, simple language in a professional and business-like style.
- Use bullet points and key phrases, and avoid long descriptions.
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations.
- Two to three pages is a good length for a resume.
- Don't exaggerate or include things you haven't done.

Layout and format

- Be consistent with format and style of writing throughout the resume.
- Use easy to read fonts such as Arial, Bookman Old Style or Garamond
- Font size should be no smaller than 10 and no bigger than 14.
- Print in black on white or off-white (not coloured), A4 sized paper.
- Use 2.5cm for left and right margins with a line space between paragraphs.
- Don't fold your resume too many times. If the resume doesn't fit in a DL size envelope (1/3 an A4 page) use an A4 envelope.
- Staple the resume neatly. Don't use binders.
- Don't include a title page or cover sheet.
- Don't send resumes that are photocopied.
- Don't make changes with pencil or pen and never use correction fluid.

Making your resume scanner friendly

- Don't use graphics, fancy borders, decorative lines or shading.
- Use plain text. Don't use italics, bolding or underlining.
- Choose a popular font such as Arial, Bookman Old Style or Garamond.
- Font size should be no smaller than 10 and no bigger than 14.
- Use job specific key words.
- Use a high-resolution laser printer to print your resume, and send an original, not a photocopy.

Two examples

The following two examples of resumes show the main features that you could include. Both examples show a combination style resume.

Personal

Natasha El Domino

38 Elegant Avenue
TINDALE SA 5167
Phone: (08) 8555 5555

Objective

Career Objective

I am looking for employment in the clerical/administration field. I am computer literate, have typing skills and experience in filing and reception duties. I enjoy working with people and I am committed to the delivery of quality customer service. I believe my positive attitude and willingness to give 100 per cent will be an asset to your business.

Competencies

Key Competencies

ADMINISTRATION/CLERICAL SKILLS

- Experienced in handling profit and loss reports
- Knowledge of manual payroll duties (taking out tax and doing pays for employees) as well as using MYOB
- Able to work under pressure and prioritise tasks
- Knowledge of computer packages, MS Windows, Word, Publisher, Internet and e-mail
- Sound typing and keyboarding skills
- Able to handle counter enquiries in an efficient and professional manner
- Experienced in writing letters and typing up invoices
- Highly developed organisational and time management skills
- Experienced in general bookkeeping and records keeping
- Able to carry out general office functions
- Knowledge of confidentiality practices
- Experience with the use of multi-line phone system
- Confident telephone voice and manner and experienced in taking accurate telephone messages
- Able to perform tasks in an efficient and accurate manner
- Neat and legible handwriting
- Able to fill orders and forms
- Able to use various office equipment including fax and photocopier

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Ability to communicate with a variety of people from all levels
- Ability to use commonsense and work through problems
- Experience in training new staff
- High standard of written and oral skills

Education and training

Education

Currently in Year 12

2002

Tindale East High School

- Business maths
- Child studies
- Nutrition and lifestyle
- Dance

Work experience

Work History

REPLACEMENT RECEPTIONIST (CASUAL) HOOVER HOME IMPROVEMENTS

2000 – CURRENT

- Typing letters and invoices
- Answering phones and taking messages
- Assisting in payroll–MYOB
- Filing, bookkeeping and banking

KITCHENHAND MAMA'S PIZZA HOUSE

2000 – CURRENT

- Customer service both face to face and over the phone
- Taking phone orders
- Making pizzas and pizza dough
- Money handling
- EFTPOS and credit card transactions
- General cleaning

CUSTOMER SERVICE ASSISTANT (ON CALL) JAY'S CATERING

1999 – 2001

- Taking orders
- Serving food and beverages
- Handling money
- Washing dishes
- Collecting glasses

CLERICAL ASSISTANT PROTOCOL CRASH REPAIRS

JAN – SEPT 2000

- Filing, sorting, photocopying
- Reception duties
- Money handling
- Banking, accounts payments, writing cheques
- Office cleaning
- Doing the payroll–sorting out tax and pays for employees
- General bookkeeping

Activities and interests

Interests

- Going to the beach
- Reading
- Cooking
- Looking after young children
- Going out with friends
- Listening to music

Referees

Referees

Brian Dash
Owner
Protocol Crash Repairs
Phone: 8922 2222

Josie Plack
Manager
Mama's Pizza House
Phone: 8999 9999

Personal

Brook Simmons

14 Intersection Road

Mawson Park 5159

Phone: (08) 8777 7777

Competencies

Key Work Skills

RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY

- Experienced in handling cash
- Excellent customer service skills, face to face and telephone
- Knowledge of issues related to food hygiene
- Experienced in table and beverage service
- Knowledge of food preparation skills including washing, chopping, slicing and dicing fruit and vegetables
- Able to prepare ingredients for all courses and follow menus
- Experienced in basic cooking skills—baking, pan work, frying and steaming
- Knowledge of safe handling of kitchen utensils
- Skilled in function preparation and service

Hard skills

OTHER SKILLS

- Communicate well with a variety of people from all levels
- Apply commonsense and work through problems
- Work unsupervised or as part of a team
- Effective team member

Soft skills

Personal Qualities

- Courteous and friendly
- Hardworking and honest
- Punctual
- Willing to learn

Education and training

Education Outline

2002

Currently Studying South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), Stage 2, Year 12 at Mawson Park High School

- Biology (PES)
- Food and Hospitality (PAS)
- Legal Studies (PES)
- Business Maths
- Classical Studies
- Modern European History

Activities and interests

School Activities

Participation in LAP program for younger students, since 1997

Captain of Softball A Team

Member of School Band

Present employment

Employment

1996–Present

Waitress (casual) Mawson Wine Centre

Plattering up main dishes

- Customer service
- Food service
- Setting tables
- Cleaning

Work experience

Work Experience

2000 (1 week)

Fish n' Things

- Bagged fish and fish food
- Assisted in fish maintenance
- Cleaning

1998 (1 week)

Holistic Veterinary Clinic

- Cleaning cages
- Attending to animals' needs
- Cleaning store

Voluntary Activities

Apr 99 – Present **Canteen Helper**

Wakefield Court

Interests

- Animals
- Reading
- Beach Volleyball
- Piano
- Cooking

Referees

Referees

Ms Jo Whelan

Mawson Wine Centre

Phone: (08) 8444 4444

Mr B Fawlker

Manager, Wakefield Court

Phone: (08) 8999 9999

8 Portfolios

TIPS

Here is a website with ideas for putting together a career portfolio:

www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/OTHERSRV/Placement/portbuild.htm

Save copies of things you have written, projects and ideas you have worked on, and notes on activities and decisions you have made that resulted in positive outcomes.

Some career fields require specific items in their portfolios, for example teachers and artists.

A career portfolio changes as your life changes. Even when you are working, remember to keep your portfolio current.

A portfolio is a personal collection of materials to add to your job search strategy. Your portfolio includes all the relevant materials in one place and includes:

- how you perform on the job or in the classroom
- a record of your training and professional development
- your personal reflections of you as a professional person or student
- evidence of what you have achieved; for example, certificates and awards
- how you are developing new skills.

There are three main types of portfolio:

- career portfolios
- interview portfolios
- electronic portfolios.

Career portfolios

A career portfolio includes your:

- work history
- professional development
- achievement highlights
- career planning information
- applications and other job information.

A career portfolio helps you organise information to:

- track changes and developments in your career and job searching
- plan career decisions
- apply for jobs
- prepare for job interviews
- market your skills in job interviews

- negotiate promotions or changes to work conditions
- apply for scholarships or grants
- track professional development activities
- demonstrate prior work or learning experiences for credit on training courses.

What to include

Items often found in career portfolios include:

- resumes and cover letters
- samples of work including photographs (eg items produced during work experience, class research projects)
- licences and certificates
- reference letters and referee lists
- evidence of membership of professional associations
- records of educational achievement
- evidence of specific skills (eg leadership, public speaking)
- awards
- thank you letters from customers or colleagues
- previous job applications
- articles on jobs or companies that interest you
- job search logs
- personal and career planning.

Interview portfolios

An interview portfolio is a collection of items from your career portfolio. Choices from your career portfolio should focus on the job you are being interviewed for.

Developing an interview portfolio helps you to be clear about:

- the skills, knowledge and understanding you can offer for a job
- previous experience that will add value to the position you are applying for.

During an interview your portfolio:

- shows you are prepared
- visually shows what you have to offer
- sets your application apart from other applications
- reminds you of information just in case you get nervous.

Select and organise materials for your portfolio by thinking about:

- the strengths, skills and abilities you have to offer and the ones which relate to the job
- what you have done that demonstrates your strengths, skills and abilities.

What to include

Your interview portfolio changes depending on the job you are applying for. You will go through a gathering, thinking and selecting process each time you put together an interview portfolio.

- Gathering samples of your work or reminders of your learning.
- Thinking about what you have done, want to continue to do, and want to improve.
- Selecting items from your career portfolio that represent you and your abilities.

Briefly describe each item that you include and where and when it was created and the skills developed or demonstrated by the sample; for example:

- PowerPoint presentation of work experience project

- A report produced while doing work experience
- A photograph of a pine bookcase that I designed and made at school.

How to present an interview portfolio

Don't wait for an interview to let an employer know about your portfolio. You can mention it in your cover letter and on your resume.

If you have the opportunity, share one or two items from your portfolio at the end of the interview to reinforce your skills and suitability.

If you don't have the chance to show your portfolio to an employer, send copies of items to the employer, along with your thank you letter as a follow-up to the interview.

Never leave your portfolio with an employer, as it contains personal material.

Electronic portfolios

Electronic portfolios are interactive multimedia portfolios incorporating text, graphics, animation, sound and video. These portfolios can be saved on a computer hard drive, floppy disk, Zip disk, CD or on the Internet.

Electronic portfolios allow you to choose a range of materials using a variety of media and software including:

- HTML pages
- digital video and images
- CD-ROM
- audio files
- slideshow.

You can include as much information as you like, and let the employer choose what they will look at, for how long and when and where they will look at it.

The format of your electronic portfolio can be:

TIPS

Put information relevant to the job description close to the front.

Don't number the pages so that you can add and move items around.

Use a loose-leaf binder with A4 plastic sleeves.

Use only photocopies in an interview portfolio (keep the original copy in your career portfolio).

Use coloured dividers, title pages or index tabs to separate sections and to help identify information.

Create a table of contents.

Practise using an interview portfolio by role-playing it with a friend.

Always take your portfolio to your interviews. Use your portfolio, when appropriate, to respond to interview questions.

- linear where the reader views information one slide after another
- non-linear where the reader chooses what and how they access your information through the use of hyperlinks, content pages and buttons.

Equipment needed

- A computer which has audiovisual capacity and a reasonable amount of RAM.
- A colour flat bed scanner.
- A digital camera.
- Multimedia software such as HyperStudio or PowerPoint (both are flexible and easy to learn to use).
- A web authoring program so that once the portfolio is completed it can be uploaded to the Internet.

Planning an electronic portfolio

Create a storyboard or a flowchart to organise your information and how the user will navigate through the information. Connect your information by using hyperlinks and write headings and a short narrative for each section. The design of your electronic portfolio should be very professional, and not 'homemade' looking.

Decide on:

- the information that you are going to include: text, sounds, scanned images, pictures and video
- the background and buttons you will use.

If you put your portfolio online you need to consider the following issues:

- confidentiality and privacy
- the type and amount of personal information you display
- making your site password-protected (give the password to only carefully chosen employers).

9 Marketing yourself on the telephone

Selling yourself over the phone is a skill you need to learn and requires preparation and practice.

Knowing what you are going to say and how you are going to say it will help you feel more confident. However, knowing the 'what' and 'how' is no good if you don't speak to the right person.

Finding the right person to talk to

Employers are busy people so when they answer the phone you need to:

- catch their attention immediately
- make them interested.

Employers are interested in things that help make their business profitable and successful. That is why it is important to always include a skills statement in what you plan to say. A skills statement explains how you can meet the employer's needs.

If the employer you are calling says 'I'm too busy' ask when a convenient time would be to ring them back.

Before making a call

- Plan your call.
- Have your resume and any other details ready.
- Have a pen and paper ready to take any notes.
- Know what you are going to say and practise before you call.

During the call

- Speak clearly and directly into the mouthpiece.
- Speak with a 'smile' and be friendly and confident.

- Try to make sure you are not going to be interrupted during the call.
- If you get interrupted, tell the employer 'excuse me for a moment' (the employer shouldn't have to wait more than ten seconds).
- Make sure there is no background noise when you make a call (eg no television, music, people chatting or vacuuming).

Ending the call

- End the call with the employer feeling positive about you.
- Thank the person for taking the time to speak with you.
- Be careful to place the receiver down gently.

Responding to an advertisement

Phone as soon as possible after the advertisement has appeared.

Have the advertisement in front of you and be ready to refer to the job number if there is one. Make sure you have your resume and any other details ready, including a pen and paper. Follow these steps.

Step 1 – Greet the recruiter, introduce yourself and explain the reason for your call.

Step 2 – Provide your skills statement.

Step 3 – Ask for an interview.

TIPS

Standing when you make a phone call can help you to be more alert and come across with greater confidence, as you will be 'thinking on your feet'.

Show the employer that you are thinking about their needs. Don't phone an employer and say 'Have you got any jobs?'

If specific times for calling are given make sure you call at that time.

Leaving your telephone number gives the person the option of calling you back, even though you need to take the responsibility of calling again.

If you are calling a recruitment agency or Job Network member and the job you are enquiring about is already filled ask 'Do you know of any other positions that would suit my skills?'

10 Interviews

TIPS

People you meet could be future employers so it is important to:

- *develop your skills to promote yourself*
- *always be aware and positive.*

Make sure you can explain everything on your resume.

Arrive 10 minutes early at the interview so that you can gather your thoughts and relax.

Get a good night's sleep before your interview so that you can think clearly.

The interview is not the time for:

- *true confessions*
- *discussing politics, religion, race or marital status*
- *expressing anger over previous employment*
- *talking about family problems*
- *complaining about looking for work or the number of interviews that you have had.*

If you're not sure about a question the interviewer is asking, ask them to explain or clarify that question.

Reaching the interview stage in a selection process means the company or organisation is interested in you as a possible employee.

Preparation

By being prepared, you will be able to:

- predict possible questions
- show you want the job
- show you are enthusiastic about what you have done and what you want to do
- communicate your skills and abilities clearly
- focus on the person interviewing you
- present yourself as being confident.

There are tasks you can do to be ready for an interview. These include:

- researching the structure, history, personnel and goals of the company
- preparing questions you want to ask the interviewer
- practising how you will answer possible questions
- knowing the time and place of the interview
- knowing the name of the person who will interview you (sometimes interviews are conducted by more than one person—find out who they are)
- preparing an interview portfolio.

First impressions count, so spend time on how you look and make sure that you are neat and well groomed. Imagine how the people who work there would dress if they were representing their company at a public function.

Unless you're applying for a job where you are expected to dress in the latest fashion, dress conservatively. There are employers who won't appreciate the latest trends. A more conservative look may be required because the organisation's customers expect it.

The interview process

There are different types of interviews for different purposes or situations. However, most use the following stages:

- establishing rapport
- exchanging information
- closing the interview.

Establishing rapport

The first five minutes of the interview is your opportunity to establish a link between yourself and the interviewer. You can do this by:

- smiling and shaking hands
- following their lead: if they start a casual conversation (about hobbies or the weather) join in, but keep your answers short and positive.

Exchanging information

The exchange of information takes up most of the interview. During this time you need to let the interviewer know what you have to offer.

Be positive about your skills and abilities and show the interviewer that you:

- can do the job—describe your skills, abilities, knowledge, experience and qualifications
- will do the job well—show that you are motivated, dependable and enthusiastic
- will fit into the organisation—demonstrate that you match the company’s image, values and goals and will get along well with clients and co-workers.

Closing the interview

When the interviewer has finished collecting information they will ask you if you have anything to add or any questions.

If you have said everything and have no questions you should:

- thank the interviewer for their time and consideration
- ask when you can expect to hear from them.

Questions to expect

Employers usually have issues they look at when selecting a person for the job. Not all issues will be covered in one interview but you need to be prepared. They can be divided into the following categories:

- job qualifications, job related interests and career goals (including previous experience)
- abilities, skills, talents and experience
- listening skills
- written and oral communication skills
- ability to work in teams or without supervision
- goal orientation and leadership potential
- ability to work and learn.

TIPS

If you do not get the job you have been interviewed for ask for feedback so that you can improve your interview performance. You could ask questions like:

- *Do you have any suggestions or feedback regarding my approach or attitude?*
- *Do you have any hints on how I could improve my interview skills?*

Searching for a job takes time and patience. Talk to friends who have found work and ask them what they did, or to people employed in industries that interest you about how they got their job.

Examples of questions.
The following examples of questions will give you some idea of what to expect.

Questions	Answer tips
Why do you think you are suitable for this position?	Keep your answer to one or two minutes. Use your resume summary as a base to start from.
Why would you like this job?	Don't talk about what you want; first, talk about their needs; for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ being part of a specific company project ■ solving a company problem ■ making a contribution to company goals.
What qualifications do you have for this job?	Describe your education and skills. Use your resume and career portfolio as a base.
What are your strengths, weaknesses, or faults?	Emphasise your skills. Don't say you have no weak points. If you have a lack of skill in an area refer to it as 'an area for improvement'. Turn a negative into a positive; for example, if you find it hard to say 'no' to people say that you 'tend to take on too much work'.
Do you work well with others, as part of a team?	Give examples of positive experiences of how you work well with a 'group' of people.

Questions	Answer tips
Does future study appeal to you?	Say how you would use your skills to perform in the job and if future study would help you then you would be interested in studying. If you have looked at courses of study that relate to the position, then mention your investigations.
Do you have any career plans?	Don't just answer yes or no. In your reply relate your career interests to the position and industry.
Why do you think we should employ you?	Relate your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills to the employer's needs. Be specific.
What have you got to offer us?	Present at least three points and relate them to the company and job you are being interviewed for.
What do you know about this organisation?	Spend time before the interview researching the company. Find out about its products, size, reputation, image, skills, history and philosophy. Also, show an informed interest and let the interviewer tell you about the company.
Are you a member of any clubs or organisations?	Again, don't stop at just yes or no. Mention your role in or association with any clubs or organisations. This could include associations you have researched with a view to joining.

There could also be hypothetical questions which ask you to imagine a situation and provide a solution. Answer as best you can and point out that the people involved and the place would affect the outcome in different situations. Take your time and ask for clarification if you need it. Your research into the company or organisation could help you with your answer.

Always answer the questions in a positive way that shows you are the best person for the job.

Questions you might ask

Asking your own questions shows you are prepared and interested. Things you might want to know more about include:

- more details about what the job involves, including the hours of work
- prospects for advancement and training
- the pay, but don't overemphasise its importance.

Dealing with barriers

Sometimes personal, work or education history can cause an employer concern and you will be

asked for more information. Decide if the employer needs to know. If they do need to know be honest and present the information as positively as possible.

After the interview

If the interviewer says, 'we will ring you in two days', wait until the day and if you haven't had a call, phone them. This shows your keenness.

Reflect on your experience both by yourself and with a supportive person. Use this interview experience to prepare for the next one:

- List the skills the interviewer commented on or wanted to know about that you didn't describe in your application.
- Evaluate how you think the interviewer responded to your resume. Is there anything you think you should change?
- List questions that you think you could improve the answers to. What could you do next time to increase your chances?

11 Evaluating a job offer

At last, after all the research, sending out resumes, going to interviews, making phone calls and preparing for interviews, you've been offered a job. Before you accept, there are questions that you need answers to. Most importantly, you need to know that the working conditions are:

- safe
- fair
- reasonable.

What to do when a job offer is made

Usually a job offer is made verbally. The employer may phone you days or even weeks after the interview, or an offer might be made at the end of your final interview. Whatever the case, you need to be enthusiastic and professional. Thank the employer, show your appreciation and express your interest. Be honest but don't talk about your reactions unless you are asked.

Don't make a quick decision even if you are sure you will accept the job. Ask for some time to think clearly about your decision. Find out:

- when a decision is required
- what the start date is and if it is negotiable.

There are no rules about whether a job offer is a good one or not. You are the only one who can decide.

There are questions you might like to ask yourself:

- Does the job match your interests and qualifications?
- Will the job satisfy your expectations and lifestyle?

- Does the job fit with your long-term goals?
- Are there opportunities in the company or organisation for your career development?

You may need further information from the employer about:

- main duties of the job (get a job description in writing)
- performance expectations
- days and hours of work
- starting date
- flexitime
- rate of pay/salary—make sure there is no misunderstanding
- overtime pay
- holiday and sick leave entitlements
- any conditional requirements (physical examination, drug testing, police check)
- superannuation choices
- relocation assistance if necessary.

Accepting

Once you have decided that you are going to accept the offer you should express your appreciation and let them know you are looking forward to starting.

However, it is best not to accept a job offer until you have the offer in writing. Sometimes verbal offers don't happen or what is discussed changes.

A written letter of offer outlines the terms and conditions for the job. An authorised employee of the organisation should sign the letter. The letter should include:

- date of offer
- company

TIPS

To help you make a decision, list the pros and cons of the job offer.

Don't leave your decision too long as this will frustrate employers.

It is not a good idea to accept a job and then change your mind if you get a better offer. Employers will see this as unprofessional and inconvenient.

Accepting or declining an offer can be made verbally, but it is also a good idea to formalise it with a letter.

How you react to an offer will influence future discussions and negotiations.

Most employers will not expect you to accept or reject an offer straight away.

Always get a letter of offer, or sign a contract, before giving notice to a current employer. If something changes and your new employer withdraws the job offer, you could be left without a job.

TIPS

It is important to remain on friendly terms with employers you decline as other jobs might come up in the future or you might be doing business with them in your new job.

Visit www.myfuture.edu.au and go to The Facts section of the site to find out about your work rights and responsibilities.

- job title or position offered
- department or location
- starting date
- probationary period
- salary and method of payment
- hours of work
- holiday and sick leave entitlements.

The job offer can also contain other terms of employment such as:

- details of company rules
- details of future salary reviews
- superannuation information
- conditions of use of a company car or mobile phone if applicable.

Some organisations will ask you to sign a contract or an acceptance letter attached to a letter of employment offer. It is important to read this document including the fine print before you sign. The written confirmation can be legally binding so make sure:

- any questions you have are answered before you sign anything
- you have a copy for your files.

If you don't sign a contract or an acceptance letter, you can follow up your verbal acceptance with your own letter. The letter should state job title, salary, benefits, location, start date and other relevant information. For example:

Dear (This would be to the person making the offer)

I am writing to confirm acceptance of (JOB TITLE) offered in your telephone call on (DATE). I accept the salary of (SALARY AMOUNT) for (HOURS/DAYS) at (LOCATION), and look forward to working with (COMPANY NAME), starting on (STARTING DATE).

Yours sincerely

If you have more than one offer to choose from investigate each offer to make sure you will be happy with the

job that you finally accept. You can investigate the offer by:

- reviewing the information you have about each job
- talking to someone you trust (eg a career advisor or a parent)
- making sure you have a good understanding of what each job involves
- contacting the potential employers if you need additional information.

Declining

When you decide not to take a job you should:

- thank the employer for the offer and for showing confidence in you
- say something positive about the company before declining the offer; for example:

'Hello Ms Smith, this is Emily Jones. I'm phoning in regard to the office administration position. I really appreciate the offer of employment and the confidence you have in me to be successful in the role. I was really impressed with the communication strategy that the organisation uses to include everyone in the decision-making process. I have given the position a lot of thought and, unfortunately, I am declining the offer. I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to come and work with you.'

Your work rights and responsibilities

Over recent years there have been changes to the laws affecting the rights and responsibilities of Australian workers.

Whether you are new to the workforce or changing jobs it is important to learn about your rights and responsibilities.

Questions you may need help in finding the answers to include:

- How much will I be paid?
- What are my main working conditions?
- What is the legal basis of my entitlements?
- What do I need to know about equity and safety in the workplace?
- Do I have to join a union or not?
- Under what circumstances can my employment be lawfully terminated?

Employer expectations

Don't forget your employer has given you the job because they expect you to:

- be qualified to do the job or be willing to be trained
- arrive on time and have a good attendance record
- think about the job and make suggestions
- be interested in the work and ask for help if you need it
- follow instructions and accept suggestions
- behave in a way that reflects well on the employer and your co-workers
- follow occupational health and safety rules
- dress suitably for the job
- do a fair day's work for a fair day's pay
- be responsible and take care with the job and the employer's property.

What you can expect from your employer

Your employer also has responsibilities towards you and your co-workers. You can expect your employer to:

- show you what to do or provide you with training

- encourage you and help you get experience and confidence in your work
- only give you tasks that are legal and within your capability, accepting your genuine mistakes as part of learning
- let you develop and use your skills at work
- give you a fair go and not discriminate against you
- tell you about things that affect you
- not dismiss you unfairly
- provide a safe workplace.

12 Getting help

TIPS

Touchscreen information is available on the Internet at www.jobsearch.gov.au

Job Network members advertise their vacancies on the AJS touchscreens located in national Centrelink offices, with Job Network members and in some community locations.

To find a New Apprenticeship contact your local Job Network outlet that can direct you to companies wanting to employ staff. Call 13 62 68 or visit the Job Network website at www.jobnetwork.gov.au

The New Apprenticeship website tells you how it all works, the benefits and where to get more information including information in languages other than English. Go to www.newapprenticeships.gov.au

New Apprenticeships are now 'competency based', which means you can complete your training as soon as you reach the required skill level.

These are the main ways of getting financial and practical help while you are looking for a job.

Centrelink

Centrelink is the gateway to the Job Network and many services. Call into any Centrelink office or telephone them on 13 28 50 for information in English or 13 12 02 for other languages. You can phone 13 24 90 for location details of your nearest Centrelink Career Information Centre or check out the Internet site at www.centrelink.gov.au

Help with self-employment

There are two schemes which may fit your needs:

- New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) provides assistance for unemployed people with ideas for a viable business to help them establish their own businesses
- Self Employment Development (SED) is an approved activity which gives you a period of time, generally three months, when you can work at developing your business as an alternative to seeking a job with an employer.

Job Network

This is a national network of 200 private, community and government organisations dedicated to finding jobs for unemployed people, particularly the long-term unemployed. You will find job vacancy touchscreens, computers, printers, photocopiers, facsimile machines, telephones, newspapers and relevant career and job search information. Telephone the information line on 13 62 68 or visit the Job Network Internet site at www.jobnetwork.gov.au

Job Network members provide the following employment services.

Job Matching

Job Matching canvasses for jobs and matches and places unemployed people to jobs, and prepares resumes for job seekers. This is free for eligible job seekers.

Job Search Training

This training assists unemployed job seekers to develop job search skills and find employment. Activities are designed to give the skills and confidence needed to get a job. Programs are negotiated to build skills over 15 consecutive days.

Intensive Assistance

Intensive Assistance is available for eligible long-term unemployed people or job seekers disadvantaged in the labour market. Job Network members provide:

- vocational training
- work experience
- training in literacy and numeracy, or English as a second language
- employer incentives including wage subsidies
- workplace modifications or post placement support
- assistance with fares, clothing and equipment needed to secure employment.

New Apprenticeships

New Apprenticeships provide flexible training, experience and a nationally recognised qualification.

New Apprenticeships give you the option to:

- earn while you learn
- get qualifications that lead to a real career in over 500 occupations
- begin your career in your local area.

Starting a New Apprenticeship

Your careers advisor or teachers will know if you can start a New Apprenticeship at school and can help you choose the most suitable subjects. If you don't want to start a New Apprenticeship at school or you have left secondary school you have a better chance of getting a New Apprenticeship if you have finished vocational studies, Year 12 or have a part-time job in the industry you want to work in.

Youth Allowance and other payments

You qualify for a Youth Allowance if you fit one of these categories:

- aged 16–24 and studying full-time
- aged 15, studying full-time and you are considered independent
- aged over 25 and studying full-time (if you were receiving Youth Allowance immediately before turning 25 and are still doing the same course)
- aged 16–20 and looking for work full-time, undertaking a combination of approved activities, or have a temporary exemption from the activity test requirement (eg because you are ill); and you satisfy an activity test by undertaking approved activities; and you meet certain income and assets test requirements (including parental income and/or assets tests if applicable); and meet residency requirements.

You may be eligible for:

- Newstart Allowance if you are over 21 and unemployed

- Austudy Payment if you are 25 and over and starting studies.

If you have a disability and are studying, you may not need to study full-time to be eligible for Youth Allowance or you may be eligible for a Disability Support Pension. Telephone Centrelink or visit your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre to discuss the options that are best for you.

In some cases, your parents or guardians may be entitled to Family Tax Benefit, if you are a full-time student under 25, or under 21 and looking for work. For more information, call the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

Career counselling

Career counselling supports people in making career choices. This includes help with:

- identifying your goals and matching them to your interests and abilities
- looking at the range of jobs available in your area of interest
- finding out about training or study available for your career choice
- planning a strategy to find available work in your chosen career field.

Career counselling is offered to job seekers registered with Centrelink. Also, 15 to 20-year-olds who are registered but not eligible for income support can request or be offered career counselling.

Job Placement, Employment & Training (JPET) program

This program assists students and unemployed people 15 to 21 years-old who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Priority is given to young people aged 15–19 years.

TIPS

To find out more about JPET contact your local Centrelink office on 13 24 90

or make a FREECALL to 1800 657 569.

Find out about Jobs Pathway services from the website at jpp.dest.gov.au your careers advisor, teachers or a Centrelink customer service officer. Information can also be obtained via the Centrelink Youth and Student line on 13 24 90.

Assistance is also given to young people who are, or have been, wards of the state, are refugees, or have been in the juvenile justice system.

Participants are assisted to gain accommodation, access education, get entry-level training or employment, and maintain their participation in these activities.

Jobs Pathway Programme (JPP)

The Jobs Pathway Programme (JPP) helps young people who have left school or are thinking about leaving school to find work. The programme offers a range of services and advice.

myfuture.edu.au

Planning a career in today's world opens up exciting possibilities and pathways for the individual

