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**UNDERSTANDING THE**

**JOB SEARCH  
PROCESS**

HELPING YOU  
**GET THERE**

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## Need Support?

Drop in or book an appointment in GH108 for more information about job search skills and career planning.

[career@guelphhumber.ca](mailto:career@guelphhumber.ca)

## Connect

 [/GH\\_CSPs](#)

 [/ghworks](#)

## Online

[ghworks.guelphhumber.ca](http://ghworks.guelphhumber.ca)  
[guelphhumber.ca/career](http://guelphhumber.ca/career)



# CAREER & PLACEMENT SERVICES

Welcome to **Understanding the Job Search Process**, a guide designed by your Career Centre team to help you find work and gain experience.

Inside you will find useful tips for getting started as well as a four year plan to help you work towards your career goals in manageable steps. Whether you're a first year student looking to earn some extra money from a summer job or a soon to be graduate looking for opportunities in your field of study, there is lots of great advice here.



If you need more support, Career & Placement Services is here to clarify your strategy. Visit us in person in GH108 to see a Career Support Peer (CSP) or gain more comprehensive advice from your Career & Placement Coordinator. Check the back of this book to find out how to connect with us and locate the staff member who works with your program.

Four years will fly by quickly. Start today and see how Career & Placement Services is Helping You Get There.

Susan Thomas, Manager, Career & Placement  
University of Guelph-Humber

## SERVICES TO HELP YOU GET THERE

- Placement Advising and Support
- Graduate and Professional School Advising
- Resume and Cover Letter Feedback
- Networking Events and Career Fairs
- Job Search Assistance
- Mock Interviews
- Workshops and Class Visits



- 3 First Year
- 4 Second Year
- 5 Third Year
- 6 Fourth Year

# FOUR YEAR PLAN



# FOUR YEAR PLAN



A university education should challenge you to explore new opportunities and to critically analyze information. By embracing this challenge you may begin to think about your life and to consider career and life choices that will respond to your goals and values.

While your primary goal is to achieve academic success and intellectual growth, your involvement in student life and leadership activities at the University of Guelph-Humber

will also allow you to develop invaluable social and interpersonal skills. This Four Year Plan is designed to assist you in making these connections, mapping out your future, and setting goals towards achieving them.

We challenge you to use this plan to explore and answer the question: who do you want to be, here at the University of Guelph-Humber and in the world?

## A PLAN DESIGNED FOR YOU

The Four Year Plan is designed for you – the undergraduate student. The plan clarifies what is expected of you and the support that's available from your first year to your final year. It provides you with benchmarks for planning your undergraduate career and for sharing your achievements with advisors, professors, friends, parents, graduate school admission committees and prospective employers.

The Four Year Plan is intended to provide you with a solid foundation that will allow you to maximize opportunities in your academic and your co-curricular life.

Following the **Four Year Plan** will help you to achieve the following goals:

- **Excel** in your coursework.
- **Be** an active and collaborative learner.
- **Integrate** your classroom education with community-based learning through internships, applied projects, volunteerism, senior research assignments, co-curricular activities and leadership opportunities.
- **Explore** all of the resources and support offered at the University of Guelph-Humber (staff, faculty, services, and facilities) to ensure your success.
- **Identify and apply** the skills you acquired from all of your experiences.











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# SEARCHING FOR THE RIGHT JOB



# WHERE DO I START?

One of the first steps in your job search is understanding what you can offer a potential employer. With a good understanding of your credentials, soft and hard skills, you will be able to locate opportunities that are in line with your strengths and career goals.

Below are some questions that you should ask yourself before starting a job search. Having a clear understanding of your objectives can mean the difference between being frustrated, and being successful:



## What do I have to offer the employer?

- Understand how your skills and experiences are relevant to their team. Read the job description and match your skills to their needs.
- As you build your resume, you will pull together various skills and experiences.
- Do you have a unique selling point that other candidates do not?



## What are my career goals?

- Focus on where you see yourself in a few years.
- Does the job you're interested in seem out of reach currently due to lack of experience or qualifications? If so, research opportunities that will support you in being qualified for that job in the future. This includes volunteering to gain additional experience or obtaining a different job that will give you the skills and experience relevant to the job you want.



## What specific industry or size of organization would I like to work for?

- Understand the corporate culture to assess your fit within the organization.
- Research the organization online or conduct informational interviews.



## Am I willing to relocate or commute?

- Jobs are not always available in a location you prefer. Relocation or travel may be necessary in order to gain additional experience or opportunities.
- Consider how far you are willing to commute or relocate for your career. There is no right answer.



# BEGINNING THE SEARCH

Self-assessment is the first step in the search for work and it is often the step most overlooked. Make the time to take stock of your skills. **Skills** can be separated into two general categories: **technical** and **employability**.

Most employers require you to have **technical skills** in order to qualify for the position. Technical skills are the “hard” skills that would be applied on the job. They are often very specific to the position and industry.

**Employability skills** are considered “soft” skills and are transferable to different positions. They provide the “fit” that employers need in unique work settings. These skills make you appropriate for the position.

## Examples

Technical skills:	Employability skills:
Drafting	Problem-Solving
Computer Skills	Creativity
Languages	Initiative
Report Writing	Team Player

# Employability Skills Profiles:

## The Critical Skills Required in The Canadian Workforce



### Teamwork Skills

Those skills needed to work with others on a job.

#### Working With Others:

- Understand and contribute to the organization's goals
- Understand and work within the culture of the group
- Plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group
- Exercise the "give and take" to achieve group results
- Seek a team approach as appropriate
- Lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance



### Academic Skills

Skills which provide the basic foundation to acquire, keep and develop in a job.

#### Communication:

- Understand, speak and write effectively in the languages of your field
- Listen to, understand and learn from others
- Read, comprehend and use written materials, including graphs, charts and displays

#### Thinking:

- Think critically and act logically to evaluate situations
- Use technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively
- Access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g. skilled trade, technology, physical sciences, arts and social sciences)

#### Learning:

- Continue to learn for life



### Personal Management Skills

The combination of skills, attitudes and behaviours required to get, keep and progress in a job.

#### Positive Attitudes and Behaviours:

- Self-esteem, confidence, honesty, integrity and personal ethics
- A positive attitude toward learning, growth and personal health

#### Adaptability:

- A positive attitude towards change
- Recognition of and respect for people's diversity and individual differences
- The ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get the job done

#### Responsibility:

- The ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life
- The ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals
- Accountability for actions taken

# JOB MARKETS: VISIBLE AND HIDDEN

The best way to be successful in your job search is to use as many methods as possible, since different companies may have different methods of hiring. Being flexible and adaptable in your approach can yield positive results. Don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone and try new methods of job search beyond applying to posted opportunities.

## Visible Job Market

There are many different places companies post opportunities. Remember to check out:



Online Postings



Job Banks



Newspaper Ads



Employment Agencies/  
Campus Career Centre



Company Postings



Bulletin Boards



Ads in Publications

## Where to look for posted jobs:

### GHworks Career Portal

[ghworks.guelphhumber.ca](http://ghworks.guelphhumber.ca)

- Access University of Guelph-Humber's career portal for on-campus, part-time, full-time, seasonal and entry-level employment as well as volunteer, placement and internship opportunities.
- To access postings, sign in with your Guelph-Humber account, click on the "Career" tab, and then click "Job Postings". Click on postings that you are interested in applying for, and click on the "I intend to Apply for this Position" box to save the posting and let the employer know you are interested in the job. Follow the application instructions under the "Application Information" heading in order to apply.

### LinkedIn [linkedin.com](http://linkedin.com)

- If you have created a LinkedIn profile, you can access job postings on LinkedIn and follow companies that you may be interested in working for.
- When applying, LinkedIn displays the job description, desired skills and experience, company profile and related jobs. The application instructions are usually at the top of the posting, and often you can apply through LinkedIn by attaching your resume and cover letter.

## Talent Egg [talentegg.ca](http://talentegg.ca)

- Talent Egg is an online job board and career resource for Canadian students and recent graduates. A job search can be conducted by filtering by industry and job level and application instructions are posted at the bottom of the posting. There is also an option to save the job to your “Favourites.”
- Talent Egg also offers career resources and guides such as the “Career Incubator”, an online career magazine that posts articles, success stories, and videos.

## Eluta Job Search Engine [eluta.ca](http://eluta.ca)

- Eluta is a job search engine that specializes in locating jobs in Canada by searching thousands of employer websites across Canada.

## Government of Canada Student/ Youth Job Bank [jobbank.gc.ca](http://jobbank.gc.ca)

- The student/youth section of Job Bank allows searches to be filtered by province, city, job level and industry as well as full-time, part-time and seasonal employment.
- The application instructions are at the bottom of the posting, where the employer contact information and company website is usually available.

### Additional Websites You Can Check Out:

- [workopoliscampus.com](http://workopoliscampus.com)
- [charityvillage.ca](http://charityvillage.ca)
- [monster.ca](http://monster.ca)
- [torontojobs.ca](http://torontojobs.ca)
- [indeed.ca](http://indeed.ca)
- [workinculture.ca](http://workinculture.ca)

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## Hidden (non-visible) job market:

Sometimes, job opportunities are never posted publicly, with companies choosing to hire internally or based on referrals. It is not about how many postings you apply to, but leveraging your connections and being “in the right place at the right time.” Here are some ways you can tap into the “hidden job market:”



### Internet Networking

Sites like LinkedIn are a great opportunity to join in discussions with industry professionals and gain new connections in a field of interest, even if they live far away or may otherwise be inaccessible. Other social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook may also be helpful in connecting with companies and professionals depending on the field.



## Newspaper Articles

Keep an eye out for news stories on upcoming events or businesses opening up. Underlying all these changes are job opportunities! For example, a news story about plans of a new casino being built in the city could mean potential job opportunities down the road in construction, project management, security, finance, and even counselling and childcare.



## Cold Calls

Research organizations in a field you would like to work in. Call them or show up in person to inquire into any opportunities available in your particular area of interest. *Tip: make sure you prepare and practice a great “elevator pitch” before you start cold calling so you can explain what value you will bring to the company and the job!*



## Labour Market

Research what jobs are in demand in different locations to determine where you might have the most luck. Review labour market trends by visiting the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Labour Market website: [tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket](http://tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket)



## Networking

There are many ways to network effectively, which could involve meeting new people in the industry at job fairs and networking events. It could also be as simple as letting your current network of friends, family and professional relationships know that you are looking for work in a particular area. Visit the Career Centre for networking tips and opportunities.



## Professional Associations

Joining professional associations can be a great way to meet other people who currently work in the field. It also keeps you up-to-date on any changes to the field, which is important knowledge for a job seeker.



## Informational Interviews

Arrange a meeting with someone in an industry of interest and ask them questions about their job, field, and career path. Often people are very happy to share their insights with students. If you show a keen interest in what they have to say and follow-up and keep in touch, they may think of you when a position opens up in the future.



## Chamber of Commerce Business Meetings/Listings

A Chamber of Commerce is an organization in most cities set up to support the interests of local businesses. Attend Chamber of Commerce meetings or look at their business listings. It's a great way to discover and meet many local business owners.



## GH Mentorship Program

Participate in the alumni mentoring program – a chance to connect with graduates working in your field. For more info, visit: [guelphhumber.ca/alumni](http://guelphhumber.ca/alumni)

## Cold Call Example



Hi, I'm Sue Smith. Joe Wilson suggested I call you. I understand there may be some changes in your department and was hoping you'd have a few minutes to discuss how my experience may be a good fit in your organization.

My background is in marketing and sales and I think my skills could be of benefit to your new focus on customer retention. On my last project I developed a new database for customer enquiries. Is there a possibility for us to meet? How does next week look to you?



# APPLYING FOR JOBS ELECTRONICALLY

## Before You Start:



Read the job posting carefully to ensure that you are sending all the documents in the correct format.



Have all of your information ready in case you are required to fill out an online form.



Make sure you prepare your application and apply well before the deadline.

## The Application Process:

If you set up an account to apply through an online portal, keep track of all your usernames and passwords.

Keep a running list of the online applications you make and where you are applying to update your applications every month.

Try to keep your electronic file names **consistent** across your applications on each site. You can also consider putting in the job ID or job title in the file name.

For example:

- Firstname\_Lastname\_Resume  
eg. "John\_Doe\_Resume"
- Firstname\_Lastname\_JobID1234  
eg. "John\_Doe\_JobID1234"

If the job posting provides you with instructions on how to submit your application online, read the instructions carefully and follow them.

Unless otherwise indicated, when sending attachments, always convert your documents into **PDF format**. This avoids the issue of having your resume appear different to potential employers due to variables such as different word processors, installed fonts, and operating systems.

## Keywords:

Keywords are very important for online applications because employers sometimes set up an electronic filter to pick up specific keywords that match the job posting.

Here are some examples of keywords that employers may be looking for:

- Job Titles  
(Administrative Assistant, Customer Service Representative)
- Knowledge  
(Industry guidelines, Certifications)
- Computer Skills  
(MS Office, Adobe Creative Suite)
- Education  
(Communications, Social Services, Psychology)
- Languages  
(English, French, Spanish)

## Technical Details:

Online applications may ask you to copy and paste your resume and/or cover letter into the application in plain text instead of uploading your documents. When converting to plain text make sure to replace bullets with "\*" or "-", eliminate extra tabs, and put spaces between headings.

## Application Submission

When you are about to submit your application, read it over carefully and ensure that you have attached the correct documents and/or pasted in the information correctly. When sending the application, make sure that a confirmation email is sent to you or is indicated on the website. Read the fine print and protect yourself by making sure that you never enter personal information such as your social insurance number.

### Online Application Tips:



Start your online job search early.



Use relevant keywords from the posting that can be searchable by databases.



Be prepared to invest some time answering questions.



Follow the online application instructions carefully.



Proofread your job search documents.



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# CREATING YOUR **PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO**



# NETWORKING BUSINESS CARDS

Networking business cards are a great tool to utilize whether you are attending a career networking event, job fair, or meeting a contact on an individual basis.

The purpose of a networking business card is to promote yourself as a potential business contact or employee to those you meet. It is a great way to get your basic information to employment contacts in situations where giving them a copy of your resume may not be as appropriate, such as at conferences or social gatherings.

## What to Include on Your Networking Business Card:

- **Provide your basic contact information:** Full name, address, contact number, email
- **Present your shortened summary** of skills, academic specialization and qualities
- **Use it as a “reduced resume”** or “expanded business card”. Include: school name, expected graduation, area of emphasis
- **Emphasize your “Target Career Interest”** Include a “tag line” that represents what you look for. Ex: “Seeking Relationship Marketing Position”
- **Include various forms of social media (only if content is appropriate and professional)**  
LinkedIn Profile  
Personal Blogs & Websites  
Twitter

## TIPS:

You can use a simple template in Microsoft Publisher to create a professional looking card with some basic design elements. Use both sides and create your own design like the sample below. Be creative and make sure it's an accurate, professional representation of who you are!

Remember, even though our sample shows a marketing student's networking cards, they can be used effectively in many different fields including: photography, teaching, law enforcement, finance, accounting, social services, and personal training. They are also great for students who are entrepreneurial or want to do some freelance work.

## Sample Business Card:

**John Smith, BBA**  
Toronto, ON | (647) 000-0005  
johnsmith@guelphhumber.ca  
"Success is defined by one's character"

LinkedIn:  
John Smith

Twitter:  
@JohnSmith

### Career Focus: Marketing Consultant

- Publishing bi-weekly university newsletters for upcoming events and promotions
- Implementing proactive solutions to improve marketing strategies for small businesses
- Planning and coordinating all networking events within Guelph-Humber, attended by over 500 people



## Networking Business Card Etiquette



### Do

- **Always have networking business cards available**

Make it a habit to carry business cards as you never know when you might meet an important connection

- **Include only relevant contact information**

Content must be professional; use a professional email address and only one phone number where you can be best reached

- **Include current school information**

(Name of school, anticipated graduation/ completion, area of emphasis etc.)

- **Brand yourself with a professional and catchy slogan/tagline that illuminates your professional goals**

Be creative; describe yourself in a way that makes you stand out from the crowd

- **Consider including your Twitter handle, Facebook, LinkedIn, blog sites, or other social media that will enhance your networking business card**

Check your privacy settings and ensure that anything that can be seen publicly is professional and appropriate



### Don't:

- **Select a distracting background or theme**

- **Clutter networking business card with too much information**

Only include the information that will represent you the best and is relevant for the job you want

- **Hand the person a folded/bent and dirty/ stained networking business card**

Keep them protected at all times - use a card case

- **Include disturbing or distracting pictures/graphics on the networking business card**

- **Select fonts that are difficult to read**

Font should be clear and legible

# PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

In today's job market, you need an edge over the competition. A **CAREER PORTFOLIO** may do just the trick!

Learn how to **inventory**, **present** and **self-market** your skills through a portfolio. A career portfolio will give you confidence in your employability skills by providing physical evidence to demonstrate each attribute. Interview like a pro!

Creating a portfolio, either physical or online, is an exercise in marketing. It involves the same steps as **marketing** any product... except this time the product is **you!**

## A Portfolio Can Help You Answer These Questions:

- Tell me about yourself...
- Why do you think you are qualified for this position?
- Why should we grant you credit for your prior learning experience?
- Why should we keep or promote you?

## Powerful Portfolio Ingredients

Like your resume, a career portfolio is a work in progress. Right now you may not have all the items listed on the right, but start with what you have. Once your portfolio is set up it's easy to add your new documents.

## A Portfolio Can Include:

- Table of Contents and Introduction
- Letters of recommendation/references
- Records of community service/volunteer work
- Certificates/diplomas/degrees/awards
- Work in progress/work samples
- Skills assessment
- Letter(s) from customer(s) or client(s)
- Association certificates
- Aptitude test results
- Curriculum
- Translation assessments
- Resume and cover letters
- Transcript(s)
- Professional memberships
- Business card
- Position description
- Networking Contacts
- Training applications
- Evaluations
- Questions to ask the employer

## Why Make a Portfolio?

- **Demonstrates** concrete proof of skills and learning
- **As a marketing and self-promotional tool** for job seekers to use in interviews or for the self-employed to present to a prospective client
- **Showcases** competencies
- **As a performance appraisal and promotional tool** for individuals employed within an organization
- **As a tool for students to track and record their learning experiences**, to identify transferable skills and assist in being a competitive applicant while applying to jobs

## Once you have collected your pieces, be sure to:

- Analyze** the samples: what should you include, what's your most recent work, why should you include this, what skills are communicated by certain pieces
- Group** the samples: note the skills and personal qualities the samples reflect
- Organize** samples chronologically by date, function, skill, importance to potential employer, or even theme
- Write captions** and narratives for each work sample
- Use titles** at the top of the page and a caption below

## Extra Portfolio Tips:

### **Customize**

- **Target** your industry
- **Research** the needs of the prospective employer
- **Adjust** portfolio contents for each opportunity

### **Design**

- Include a **caption** for each of the items
- Keep the portfolio content to a **maximum** of 10-15 items
- During the interview, direct the employer to documents that will meet **specific needs**
- Keep a **consistent** format of portfolio material
- Keep **extra copies** of material as backup
- Position your portfolio so that it is appealing and memorable to prospective clients
- Market your personal style
- Use a good **quality** case: let your pocket book influence your selection. Buy the best that you can reasonably afford or that suits the industry
- Use **page protectors**
- Colour copy and reduce oversized documents, such as diplomas
- Add anything else that showcases your skills

### **Digital**

- Explore websites for digital portfolio creation, such as weebly.com or wordpress.com



22 Cover Letters

27 How to Write a Resume

# CRAFTING THE PERFECT **COVER LETTER AND RESUME**



# COVER LETTERS

Your cover letter can set the tone for the rest of your job application. A cover letter isn't just a summary of your resume - it draws the reader's attention to your strengths. It serves as a personalized introduction to generate further interest in your resume.

A cover letter answers the question: What makes YOU the most suitable candidate for the job?

A cover letter needs to be customized - it's not meant to be mass emailed. It should be catered to fit each position. So if the letter reads like junk mail, be warned that it may be treated like junk mail!

Employers often receive hundreds of applications for one job opening, so they may take only 5-10 seconds to scan each one. Get to the point and keep it simple!

## Always Include:

 Your personal information at the top of the page: your name, address, email, and a number you can be best reached at.

 Recipient's work title, address, and name (check spelling).

 If you DO NOT know the name of the recipient, begin the letter with "Dear Human Resources," or "Dear Hiring Manager" **NOT** "To whom it may concern". You can call the reception desk, use Google, or search LinkedIn.  
*(See page 24)*

## Frequently Asked Questions

What information is considered unnecessary?

You can leave out headers that say "Cover Letter", or "Letter of Application". Also, information such as reasons for leaving previous jobs, lists of references, and salary expectations (unless requested by the employer) are considered inappropriate.

Does my cover letter have too many cliches?

Try to avoid unspecific, frequently used phrases. For example, many people state that they have "good interpersonal skills" but that could mean a variety of things so try and pinpoint your strengths. Do you mean that you are particularly good at resolving conflicts, following instructions, motivating a group, or making tough sales?



# Cover Letters Contain These Primary Sections:

1

## Your Contact Information

- Include your **full name**
- The **address** is optional; however, some employers want to know where you live in proximity to the organization
- Provide an **email** you are best reached at. Ensure it's professional - typically your first and last name. For example: "john.doe@gmail.com"
- Include only one **phone number** - use a number you are best reached at. If you are unable to answer, ensure you have a professional voicemail
- A personal website is optional but can include your LinkedIn profile, your online portfolio, or blog. Ensure information is up to date and current

2

## The Date You are Writing

3

## Employer's name and/or Company Information

- If possible, include the **full name** of the hiring manager. You can find this by calling the main reception of the organization, performing a Google search, or searching LinkedIn. If you cannot find this information, put "Hiring Manager"
- Include the **title** of the hiring manager
- Include the **company name** and **full address** of the company

4

## Send it to a PERSON. Avoid "To Whom it May Concern"

- If you can't send it to a person, address it to the "Hiring Manager"
- Avoid "Ms./Mr./Mrs." if you do not know the exact salutation. Never assume

5

## Body Content

- See page 25 for what to include in the content components

6

## Closing & Signature

- Send an original signed letter or if via an email, input a digital signature in your cover letter. Remember to submit as a PDF (*see page 14*)



Use white or ivory paper for print outs

# Body Content Components:

## • **First Paragraph - The Introduction**

- Who are you? What led you to write to this particular person/company?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?
- What position are you applying for and where did you hear of it?
- Let the reader know why this letter has arrived at his or her desk.

## • **Second/Third Paragraph - The Body/Highlights of Your Qualifications**

- Provide a brief background on yourself. Be concise when you state your best skills and ensure they are relevant to the job you are seeking.
- Why you are a good fit for the company?
- Include sentences that demonstrate your skills and relate them to the job requirements – show how they would benefit the company.

## • **Fourth Paragraph - Request for Further Contact**

- Closing and call to action - Clearly ask for the next step in the job search process (the interview) without apology or arrogance
- Example: "I look forward to setting up a time to meet to further discuss how I could best support your team."



# Sample Business Cover Letter

**John Smith**

7 Leland Road

Toronto, Ontario M9G 3R2

(416) 123-4567 | johnsmith@guelphhumber.ca

May 22, 2014

Ms. Nora W. Morgan, Manager

The Linkus Group Inc.

200-1920 Yonge Street

Toronto, Ontario

M4S 3E2

Dear Ms. Morgan,

In June I will graduate from the University of Guelph-Humber with an honours degree in Business Administration and a specialization in Accounting. Through the university's career portal, I see the position of Accounting Clerk with The Linkus Group Inc. as an excellent opportunity for me to apply the financial knowledge that I have developed in university while working towards a CPA designation. I believe that my energy, analytical skills, organizational abilities and creativity in tackling problems can make a positive contribution to your company.

My previous work experience as a Junior Accountant at BeneFACT Consulting Group Inc. provided me with valuable business skills such as the ability to organize and interpret social, economic and political data. My responsibilities during this position included preparing individual and corporate tax returns, and maintaining client books through financial statements. In this role, I developed a strong understanding of accounting and finance from hands on experience, which I believe is an asset to this position.

My willingness to work hard is evident from the fact that I hold part-time professional positions concurrent with my studies. As a customer service representative at TD, I am responsible for catering to customers' financial needs while extending outstanding service. Moreover, as an executive member of the Guelph-Humber Accounting Council, I am in charge of assisting students with accounting-related projects and enquiries. These experiences have enabled me to gain a realistic view of the demands and challenges of the business world, and allowed me to hone my accounting skills, as well as my interpersonal skills.

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you further regarding how the skills and experience mentioned on my resume will enhance the role of Accounting Clerk at The Linkus Group. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*John Smith*

John Smith

# HOW TO WRITE A RESUME

**Your Name**

1

page 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Profile Summary:**

2

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Education:**

3

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment Experience:**

4

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• \_\_\_\_\_  
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• \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Name**

page 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Miscellaneous Sections:**

5

\_\_\_\_\_  
• \_\_\_\_\_

# Components of a Resume:

These are some common headings used on resumes. Select only those that are relevant to your experience, education and career goal. The following format guideline is for a chronological resume.

1

## Header Information

List your personal **contact information** including **phone number, and email address**. You can also include your LinkedIn profile or webpage, if professional. Refer to page 24 for more information.

2

## Profile Summary, or Highlights of Qualifications, or Summary of Skills

Briefly highlight key skills, accomplishments and talents. Emphasize what you can offer to the employer and how your skills and experience can be applied to benefit the organization. Skill sets should be related to the job.

*Example: "A motivated and skilled individual with more than eight years of experience within the travel industry, in sales and training."*

3

## Education

University or college programs you have completed or in progress. Include degrees, diplomas, certificates, licenses and designations that you have received. This may come before work experience if within two to three years after graduation, or depending on your field. Learn more about how to present your University of Guelph-Humber experience on page 30.

4

## Employment Experience

Clearly state the name of organizations, locations, dates of employment, your job titles and key areas of responsibilities. List in point form using "bullets."

List resulting accomplishments from each position, be specific and highlight what you have achieved for your employer (e.g. systems you have improved, policies you have developed, revenues you have generated, sales you have increased, time or money you have saved).

Ensure this is presented in reverse chronological order (most recent first). For a current experience, the starting verb should be in present tense (e.g. arrange). For a past experience, the starting verb should be in past tense (e.g. arranged).

5

## Optional sections to consider

Refer to page 29 for more optional sections to include in your resume.



## References

Refer to page 36-37 for more information on references.

# Optional Sections to Consider:



## Specialized Skills:

You may have a specific section for specialized or industry specific skills.



## Professional Development:

Include all related training courses/seminars/workshops and completion date.



## Professional Affiliations:

Include associations of trades, members and licenses, the year you received them and how long you've been a member.



## Volunteer Experience:

Include community involvement particularly those relevant to work experience. Just like work experience - highlight accomplishments/skills developed.



## Extracurricular Activities:

Make sure you include any involvement you have had in school clubs, societies, etc. Many employers value an employee who can show they are well rounded, and extracurricular activities are a great way to showcase that. After a few years of employment, this can be removed. Use a co-curricular record to support your resume: [humber.ca/student-life/ccr](http://humber.ca/student-life/ccr)



## Hobbies/Interests:

It is optional to add interests, sports, hobbies, etc. Only add this section if your interests relate in some way to the position or the company.

# Resume Tips:

- Include a page number if your resume is more than one page. Your resume should not exceed two (2) pages. Page numbers can be placed in the header or the footer of your document for both pages
- If you have a second page, include a condensed version of your Header on page one. Include only your name and one piece of contact information (email or phone)
- Ensure your resume is free from typos, slang, or cliches
- Begin each description in your experiences with an action verb:  
Example: "Arranged appointments to ensure productivity..."
- Any experience that isn't directly related to the job, focus on the transferable employability skills over the tasks. (*Refer to page 10 for more information*)

# How to Write Your Education Section:

Showcase your unique University of Guelph-Humber education by using the below template:

University of Guelph-Humber  
 University of Guelph  
 Honours Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_ (see table below)  
 Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning  
 Diploma in \_\_\_\_\_ (see table below)

Toronto, Ontario  
 Completed 2016

## Proper Credential Names:

Program	University of Guelph	Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
Business	Business Administration	Business Administration
Early Childhood	Applied Science in Early Childhood Studies	Early Childhood Education
Family and Community Social Services	Applied Science in Family and Community Social Services	Social Service Worker
Justice Studies	Applied Science in Justice Studies	Community and Justice Services or Police Foundations
Kinesiology	Applied Science in Kinesiology	Fitness and Health Promotion
Media Studies	Applied Arts in Media Studies	Media Communications
Psychology*	Applied Science in Psychology	General Arts and Science

\* Psychology students may also receive an optional certificate in Intercultural Relations; Organizational Behaviour; or Research Skills and Analysis.

## Example:

**University of Guelph-Humber**  
 University of Guelph  
 Honours Bachelor of Applied Science in Justice Studies  
 Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning  
 Diploma in Police Foundations

**Toronto, Ontario**  
**2014-Present**

# Words You Can Use to Enhance Your Resume:



## Communication and People Skills:

arranged  
boosted  
composed  
communicated  
developed  
delivered  
influenced  
interviewed  
managed  
moderated  
promoted  
recruited  
reinforced  
responded



## Detail and Organizational Skills:

administered  
arranged  
collected  
consolidated  
distributed  
implemented  
monitored  
operated  
prepared  
registered  
verified



## Leadership and Management Skills:

administered  
consolidated  
coordinated  
delivered  
executed  
generated  
implemented  
organized  
produced  
scheduled  
secured  
streamlined



## Research Skills:

analyzed  
determined  
examined  
identified  
interviewed  
investigated  
researched  
surveyed



## Academic and Research Skills:

counselled  
developed  
mentored  
organized  
updated



## Accounting, Data, and Financial Skills:

administered  
allocated  
assessed  
budgeted  
compiled  
generated  
measured  
prepared  
retrieved  
researched  
reported  
reviewed



## Helping Skills:

assisted  
arranged  
collaborated  
contributed  
counselled  
encouraged  
facilitated  
supported



## Technical Skills:

advised  
developed  
operated  
programmed  
restored



## Creative Skills:

arranged  
composed  
conceptualized  
developed  
designed  
displayed  
fashioned  
illustrated  
introduced  
performed  
photographed



## Teaching Skills:

communicated  
critiqued  
encouraged  
evaluated  
facilitated  
instructed  
motivated  
supervised  
trained  
taught  
tutored



## Accomplishment Verbs for all Skill Sets:

accomplished  
expanded  
spearheaded



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- 39 Common Interview Questions

# INTERVIEW SKILLS



# PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

## Think About the Purpose of the Interview

Here are common goals of an interview. Try to keep these in mind as you prepare:



Allows the interviewer to evaluate your personality, attitude and behavior, and see if you are a good “fit” for the job and the organization.



Allows you the opportunity to demonstrate how your skills and experience will contribute to the position and the company.



Opportunity for you to collect more information on the job and the organization, and see if the opportunity is a good “fit”.

## Conduct Research:

### The Company and Industry

- What do they do?
- Who are their competitors?
- What is their main goal?
- Have they achieved a good reputation over the years?
- What is the work environment like?

### The Specific Position

- Carefully review the job description. If not previously provided, ask for a detailed job description.
- Look over the job requirements carefully and think about how your skills match the requirements.
- Research average salaries for this type of role, in case you are asked about salary expectations. Visit the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Labour Market website ([tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket](http://tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket)) to review labour market salary trends.
- Think about what unique qualities you could bring to the position that would enhance the job.

## Practice

- Practice in front of a mirror – get a sense of your facial expressions.
- Ask a friend or family member to ask you some common interview questions, and get their feedback on how you present. You can also book mock interview sessions with Career and Placement Services in GH108.
- Anticipate some questions that might be asked, and prepare answers for common interview questions.
- Keep your answers short and to the point to avoid being cut off or losing the interviewer's interest.
- Think of examples and situations that demonstrate your abilities or strengths. Try to have a couple S.T.A.R. (page 40) stories prepared for any behavioural questions that may arise.
- Put together a portfolio with professional samples that may help you convey the quality of your work.
- Prepare some appropriate questions to ask the interviewer; make sure the questions show that you have already done your research on the company and position and reinforce your interest in the position. Here are some sample questions to ask.
  - Why is this position vacant?
  - What are some common characteristics of someone who is successful in this role?
  - Describe the company culture – what are the company's values? Is there anything you would change about the culture?
  - How are candidates evaluated, and what is the measure of success?
  - What are the next steps in this process?

## On The Interview Day

- Keep a copy of your resume and re-read it before the interview
- Bring a pad of paper and pen
- Expect to be kept waiting – use that time to go over your questions and your skills
- Plan to get there 10 minutes prior to the interview, and allow yourself lots of time in case traffic is bad



## Interview Attire

Your first impression is the most important one. A large part of that first impression is formed before you even answer any interview questions. Regardless of the type of work environment, it is important to dress professionally for a job interview. A good rule is to dress one step above the dress code of the workplace.

### Interview Attire (Gender Inclusive)

- Suit (solid color - navy or dark grey)
- Long sleeve shirt (collared) or a coordinated blouse
- Belt (if applicable)
- Tie (if applicable)
- Dark socks, conservative leather shoes
- Little or no jewellery
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Light or no aftershave/cologne/perfume
- Light makeup
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

### Consider Use of Colour

Wearing the right colors can help express your confidence, professionalism and your ability to fit into an organization's environment. Adding accents of colours, such as a tie or blouse, can add energy and personality to your professional image.

## Interview Attire Tips

- Before going to an interview, organize appropriate interview attire and make sure everything fits correctly
- Get your clothes ready the night before
- Many environments are fragrance-free
- Make sure all clothes are cleaned before the interview. If the clothes are dry clean only, make sure you take them in to be cleaned with enough time to get them back before the interview
- Polish your shoes
- Bring a breath mint and use it before you enter the building
- If you have many piercings, leave some of your rings at home, or wear smaller studs so they are less distracting
- Depending on the type of work environment, you may want to cover any tattoos

### What Not To Bring To An Interview

- Gum
- Large, distracting jewelry or accessories
- Bulky items such as large purses, multiple bags/purses, or backpacks
- A cellphone that's on vibrate or ring - turn off your cell phone or put it on airplane mode

## Questions You Can Ask

Always be ready with good questions to ask at the end of your interview to show that you're interested in the job, the company and in making sure the company is a good fit for what you're seeking. **Never say "I don't have any questions!"**

- Who held this position previously? Why is he/she leaving the role?
- What do you like most about working for this company?
- Can you walk me through the typical day of someone in this role?
- How do you evaluate success here?
- How would you describe the company's culture?
- Will I have an opportunity to meet the manager and team I would be working with during the interview process?
- Can you tell me what steps need to be completed before your company can generate an offer?
- Is there anyone else I need to meet with?/Is there anyone else you would like me to meet with?
- What's your timeline for making a decision, and when can I expect to hear back from you?

## Reference List

A reference list is an important aspect of applying for a job. It provides potential employers a list of people they can contact who know you in a professional capacity and can speak about your skills. The reference list includes information such as your reference's name, job title/company, their professional relationship to you, address, city, postal code, phone number and an email-address.

## Who Can Serve as a Reference?

- Choose references who know you well in a professional capacity and who can discuss your work-related qualities/skills.
- A previous or current employer, faculty members and advisors/coaches could all potentially be references, since they will be able to provide valuable information such as your work habits, personality, academic ability, and your success. You should include at least 1 previous employer.
- Do NOT list references who only know you in a social capacity (unless specifically asked for a personal reference). These people may include your family members and friends.
- If you are not sure what type of references can be appropriate, ask! Some places are okay with any professional references, and others specify that they must all be supervisory references.

## Getting Permission From Your References

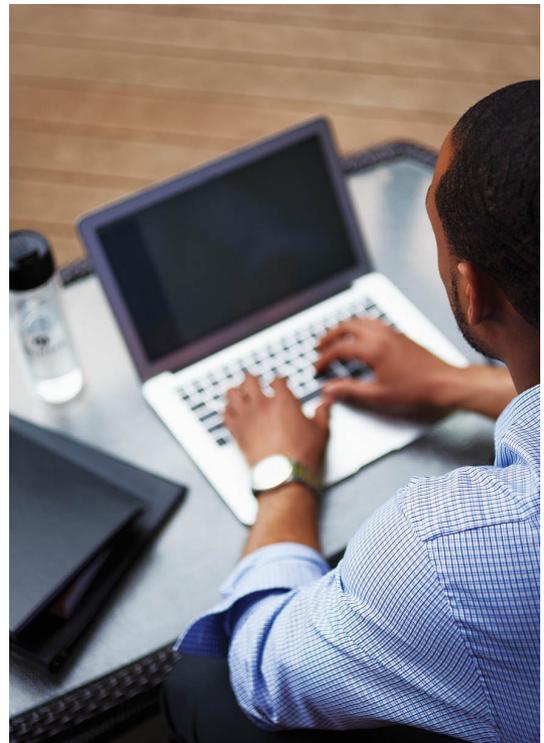
- Contact each individual you are planning to use as a reference in advance. Do not give someone's name as a reference without their permission. It will not help your cause if the employer contacts a person you have listed as your reference, only to find out they are surprised to be contacted.
- Don't assume that a person will be okay with being one of your references.
- Once you have received permission, be sure to thank them in writing for their assistance, and keep them informed about your job search success.
- **REMEMBER:** You should be asking the individual each time you are planning to use them as a reference, especially if a significant amount of time has passed since the last time they agreed to be a reference.
- If you are applying to several different jobs, it is a good idea to let them know that you are applying to several positions and may need them to be a reference for more than one.
- You may want to send them a copy of the descriptions of the jobs you have interviewed for, so they can speak to specific skills if called by a potential employer.

## When To Give Your Reference List

Provide reference information when you are asked to do so, which is most often during the interview. Do not attach your reference list to your resume. It is generally assumed by employers when they read your resume that you have references. However, if you would like to show the employer that you have references before an interview, the appropriate way is to state "References available upon request" on your resume.

## Portfolio

If you have a portfolio, bring it with you as well as a duplicate copy you can leave with your interviewer. If you have a digital portfolio, you may still want to have a physical one that allows employers to view while in an interview as well. Refer to page 19-20 for more information.



# PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS

## Be Prepared Ahead of Time

Prepare for a phone interview in the same way you would prepare for an in-person interview. Research the company you are applying for and prepare key facts to gain a clear understanding about the company and the services or programs they offer. Ensure that you have printed out a copy of your resume, a short list of accomplishments and the job description to reference during the phone call. It is also a good idea to have paper and a pen in case there is important information to jot down.

## Practice Interviewing

Have a friend or family member conduct a mock interview with you over the phone, or record yourself talking. Practising speaking over the phone will help to improve your phone mannerisms and conversation flow. Write up questions that you anticipate the employer will ask you, and prepare answers to these questions as practice.

Here are some common interview questions (Refer to page 39 for more):

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this position?
- What can you tell me about our company?
- What are some of your strengths and weaknesses?

## Before the Interview

During the time leading up to the phone interview, make sure that there are no distractions such as pets, radio, call waiting, or the television; inform anyone at home that you are on an important call. It is best to use a landline during the interview so that there is low risk of a dropped signal, no choppy background noises, and less room for misinterpretation.

## During the Interview

Answer the phone with a smile! During the interview, it is important to remain calm and take your time to answer questions. Try to focus on the questions being asked and answer each question with specific information. Make sure your answers are organized and concise. Try to keep your answers to two to three minutes at the most. At the end of the call, always thank the person for calling and for their time.

## After the Interview

It is appropriate to send a thank you email to the interviewer shortly after the phone interview. This will help to reiterate the strong points that you discussed during the interview, and let the employer know that you're interested in the position. Refer to page 42 for more information.

# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **Tell me about yourself.**

Keep it professional – walk them through your resume.

- **Why did you leave your last job?**

Keep it positive. Even if you left on a bad note. NEVER bad mouth your last employer.

- **What do you know about this company or why do you want this job?**

Show that you are familiar with their organization and that you want to work for THEM and you are not just applying to anything and everything that is out there.

- **What is your greatest strength?**

Talk about a strength that relates to the job. Be prepared to give an example.

- **What is your greatest weakness?**

Be sincere; talk about how you are going to work on fixing it. Avoid I'm a perfectionist, etc.

- **Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer or resolve a conflict.**

Tell of the SITUATION, the TASK the ACTION you took, and the RESULT. Make sure that each of these 'sections' are clear. Use a real example, not just what you would do in the situation. Refer to page 40 for more information.

- **Why should I hire you?**

Tell them your 5 greatest strengths that relate to the job. What is unique about you?

- **What are your salary expectations?**

Try to do some research before you go to the interview to find out what the range is for your field. It is best not to discuss salary until you receive a job offer. Better to let the employer bring it up. If you are pressed for an answer, give a range, based on research. Refer to page 43 for more information.

- **What is your greatest accomplishment?**

Talk about something that would reflect qualities that the employer would value; NOT "I bought a sports car".

- **What are your short and long term goals and objectives?**

Keep it career related – they don't need to know about your travel plans. Think about how you're going to get there and provide your thoughts on them.

# Preparing For Behavioural Interview Questions

Identify skills from the job description and think of a story to describe your experience in that area. Remember when telling your stories to use the **STAR** format!

## Example:

Tell me about a time when you provided customer service to an upset client:

<b>S</b> ituation:	Detail the background. Provide a context. Who? Where? When?	I was an office assistant in a school payroll department. I was on my regular Monday morning shift when...
<b>T</b> ask:	Describe the challenge and expectations. What needed to be done? Why?	...an angry employee came to the counter and explained that his cheque amount was too low and that he wasn't able to pay rent on time because of this mistake.
<b>A</b> ction:	Elaborate your specific action. List the steps you took to solve the problem. What did you do? How? What tools did you use?	I assured the man that we would figure out what happened and what could be done. I compared the payroll records logbook with the computer payroll database. I discovered a data error, which explained the incorrect amount. I explained what had happened, apologized for the mistake, and gave the man a cheque for his missing balance.
<b>R</b> esults:	Explain the results – accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc. Quantify, and keep it positive!	The client thanked me and even asked to speak with my supervisor about how helpful I was. The end result was a happy customer!



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- 45 Two Weeks' Notice

# FOLLOW UP



# THANK YOU LETTERS

A thank you letter is a form of appreciation towards someone you meet in your job search who has helped you in some way. It may be an interviewer or employer, or it may be another contact who has provided you with a good lead. During your job search process, you will meet people who will provide assistance to you. Sending a thank you letter (print/electronic) or card to each person who has had an impact on your job search is a perfect way to express your appreciation. It is a great way to follow-up after an interview.

## Format:

**Include:** Your name, address, phone number, email address, the date and your signature.

## First Paragraph:

- Express your appreciation for the interview or help.
- Thank them for their time and consideration.
- Mention the date of contact.

## Second Paragraph:

- Personalize it. Mention points that you learned from the person you are sending the letter to.
- Summarize your main credentials or mention some skills you have, if the letter is for a job interview.

## Third Paragraph:

- Reaffirm your interest in the position, if the thank you letter is for a job interview.
- Offer your thanks (appreciation) one last time.

**REMEMBER:** some employers think less of those who fail to follow-up as soon as possible.

## TIPS:

- If handwritten: use business-like notepaper or stationary cards. Ensure handwriting is neat and legible.
- Keep the letter short! Lengthy letters will be time-consuming for the interviewer and may be perceived as less genuine.
- Maintain a professional tone throughout the letter, regardless of your relationship with the interviewer.
- Send your thank you letter as soon as possible: one to two days later at the most if by mail, and several hours later is okay if by email. If it arrives after the decision has been made, it will have little to no impact. Email is often preferred.
- Proofread your letter before sending it out.

# HANDLING OFFERS

## Negotiating Your Salary

Negotiating a job offer is a discussion between you and your future employer to ensure that proper compensation is met. Negotiation may apply to salary, benefits, and other perks. Your job as a negotiator is to help the employer recognize why you deserve what you are asking for. If you need to prepare to negotiate a job offer, follow these steps:

### STEP 1:

#### **Determine a fair salary range**

- Conduct research from print and online material to determine what a fair salary range for your position and experience might be. The Workopolis salary calculator is a good start to this research: visit [www.workopolis.com](http://www.workopolis.com), under “Career Resources” at the top right side of the page, click on “Salary Calculator.”
- Arrange informational interviews with individuals already working in your field. They may be willing to give you a general salary range as well as insight into the job. Do not ask them how much they make personally.
- Ask friends, family and co-workers about their opinion on a fair salary range for your new job offer.
- Consult recruiters and employment agencies, they may be willing to help you and are often very accurate about salary information.

### STEP 2:

#### **Wait for an opportunity to discuss salary**

- You may be asked about salary expectations:
  - 1) Before the interview (or in your application)
  - 2) Right after the interview
  - 3) After the interview but before an offer is made
  - 4) When the offer is made
- Remember that asking for an amount that is too high or too low may hurt your chances of getting the job, so focus on getting the job before negotiating. Provide a salary range if asked before receiving an offer, and negotiate the details once you receive the offer. Always state you are open to discussing it and flexible.

### STEP 3:

#### **Once you are offered the job, negotiate**

- Allow the employer to offer you a number or range first, and determine if this number is fair based on your research and if it meets your financial needs. Consider all aspects of compensation to determine if the offer is fair, such as: vacation time, benefits, sick leave, etc.

# There are 5 scenarios you may find yourself in when an employer offers you a job:

## SCENARIO 1:

### If the offer is too low:

- Tell the employer that you appreciate their offer and are excited about the job.
- Explain to them your success and how you can bring value to the company.
- Let them know that you have done your research, tell them what range you believe is fair.

## SCENARIO 2:

### If the employer cannot offer a higher salary:

- Tell the employer that the salary is below your expectations but that you would be happy to negotiate an offer that is fair to both parties such as adding:
  - Bonuses
  - Increased commission
  - Vacation time
  - A flexible work schedule
  - Memberships
  - Parking/Commuting Pass
  - Overtime pay
  - Pension plans

## SCENARIO 3:

### If the employer's offer seems too high:

- Do not immediately accept the offer.
- Ask questions about the job offer to ensure that you fully understand what is required of you in the given role and that you can meet employer expectations.

## SCENARIO 4:

### If the offer is as expected:

- Think about the offer and ask for information about the compensation package.
- Discuss further benefits of the job.
- Once you have all the answers, ask the employer when they need your final decision and respond in a timely manner, typically within a few business days.

## SCENARIO 5:

### If you have more than one offer:

- When you receive multiple offers, ask each potential employer for a few days to think about it.
- Keep in mind that you want to make a good impression with all organizations.
- When deciding between the two options, make a list to determine which offer will benefit your career and compensation goals.
- Once you have made your decision, let each employer know immediately. Don't use one offer against other offers.

# TWO WEEKS' NOTICE

Leaving a job properly and respectfully can be the difference between having a great relationship with your previous employer or a bad one.

Some industries are very small - so a negative reputation can follow you. Most entry to mid-level roles will require at minimum of two weeks' notice prior to you leaving your job.

If you were hired for a new role at a different organization, it's important to understand that you should only submit your two-week notice once you've accepted and signed all necessary paperwork and worked out a potential start date.

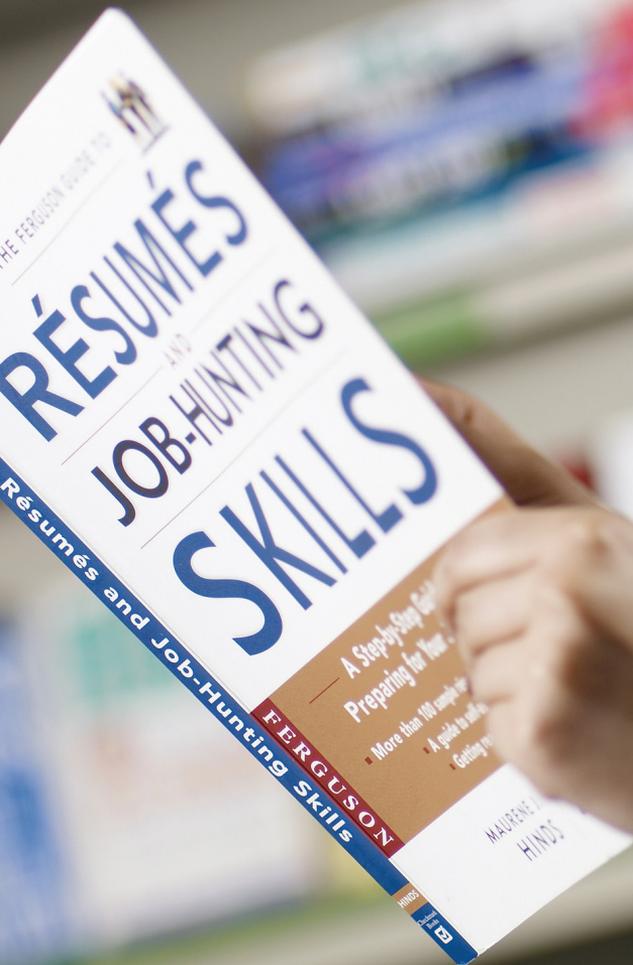
Below are some steps in providing a professional two-week notice:

- 1 Craft a professional letter detailing:**  
Your intent to resign from your current role and the date effective.
- 2 Keep it positive:**  
Do not mention anything negative about your experience.  
Keep it short and provide positive feedback about your experience in the organization.
- 3 Deliver the News:**  
Set up a meeting to speak with your direct supervisor to discuss your resignation and hand them your resignation letter/two weeks' notice.  
Be helpful and assure your employer that you will ensure all projects are wrapped up.  
If an employer requests you stay past your two-week date, you can choose to negotiate a time that would work best between your current and new employer, to keep positive relationships in tact.



FIND PLACEMENT AND  
JOB OPPORTUNITIES  
ON OUR CAREER AND  
PLACEMENT PORTAL:

[GHWORKS.GUELPHHUMBER.CA](http://GHWORKS.GUELPHHUMBER.CA)





## DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR CAREER CENTRE IS?

Located in GH108, we're here to help you in your career and placement goals. You can also find more resources and who your program's Career & Placement Coordinator is by visiting:

[guelphhumber.ca/career/contact](https://guelphhumber.ca/career/contact)

or email [career@guelphhumber.ca](mailto:career@guelphhumber.ca)





University of Guelph-Humber, Career & Placement Services  
207 Humber College Blvd.  
Toronto, Ontario M9W 5L7  
416-798-1331 ext. 6288  
[www.guelphhumber.ca/career](http://www.guelphhumber.ca/career)

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