



Workway

A joint ICTU/IBEC initiative to promote employment of people with disabilities



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A Guide for Job Seekers with Disabilities

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to offer job seekers with disabilities, as well as people working on their behalf, an insight into best practice in the important stages of a job search process. It equally offers service providers supporting people with disabilities a broad framework to follow in the provision of advice and training on the job search process.

The Guide attempts to cover a range of activities and perspectives and, by so doing, to accommodate people with varying levels of needs and abilities. Users should decide

■ People preparing for the work environment

- **Service providers** or others working with people with disabilities seeking employment.

- **Vocational training organisations.** Tutors and lecturers can use this guide when working with students who are soon to enter the labour market.

- **Third level institutions.** Career guidance professionals providing advice to students with disabilities.

Support Services - who provides these and what do they offer

Undertaking the job search - what does this involve and where to look,

Developing a CV - recognise fears/ perceptions, presenting a positive image....

Interviewing skills - what are the different types of interview and how to prepare effectively for these.

Welcome to the Workway guide for job seekers with disabilities. This guide has been developed as a tool to be used both by people with disabilities who are currently looking for employment, and by service providers who are supporting people with disabilities looking for a job. Although an individual can use this guide on their own, the ideal usage would be to combine individual activity with relevant professional advice.

This guide has been developed in response to gaps identified by Workway research about the employment preparation of people with disabilities. Work on the Guide was undertaken in consultation with the four local Workway networks that involved representatives from all stakeholders in the project, (i.e. Private Sector Employers, Union Representatives, people with disabilities, FÁS, IBEC, ICTU and other relevant service providers). Feedback received during the pilot of the Workway Employment Guidelines also contributed to the content of this guide. It is hoped that all sections will be mainstreamed within existing training and support being provided to people with disabilities or developed as a separate module to be delivered to them.



which sections are of most relevance to them and utilise the information pertinent to their particular situation.

This guide has been developed for use by:
- **People with disabilities** currently **seeking employment** in the open labour market.
This includes:

- Current and past participants of main stream education and training;
- Current and past participants of specialised training centres;
- People with an acquired disability and;

It is recommended that each of the sections in the guide is worked through in order of sequence. The Guide should be used in conjunction with the Workway Employment Guidelines and the relevant sections of the Guidelines are referenced through this resource.

Some of the key issues to be addressed in this Guide are:
Being Job ready - how to assess your personal potential in terms of realistic job opportunities

Accepting and Keeping the Job - Pointers on what to do once a job offer is received and integrating into your new workplace.

Other important issues which are very relevant to people with disabilities on a job search and are dealt with in detail in the Workway Employment Guidelines, are Dealing with Disclosure and Requesting Reasonable Accommodations. Check out www.workway.ie for further details.

Section 1: Job Readiness

This section deals with the steps you can undertake to decide your career path and how best to equip yourself to be successful in getting a job in this career area.

You need to identify the kind of work situation you want to pursue and where you need to start. Don't be overly concerned about job titles as these change a lot from one organisation to the next.

completely honest in undertaking this exercise as otherwise you might choose a career that is not suitable to you. As this is a difficult task it is a good idea to get help from relevant professionals who can provide advice on the relevance of your skills to the demands of the work environment, although this may not always be an option for you.

WHAT ARE YOUR SKILLS?

Everyone possesses a wide variety of skills and abilities ranging from specific skills resulting from job related training to the broader area of skills relating to life activities. It is important to identify all the skills you possess in identifying your career path and your level of ability for each skill. Skills can be grouped into a number of different categories as follows:



¹ Job Hunters Bible

² The Career Centre, California State University, Northridge, Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A guide to Success, Students with Disabilities Internship Project.

³ Job Hunters Bible

⁴ The Career Centre, California State University, Northridge, Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A guide to Success, Students with Disabilities Internship Project

⁵ The Career Centre, California State University, Northridge, Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A guide to Success, Students with Disabilities Internship Project

⁶ Brunel University, West London, Job hunting Resources, Placement and Careers Centre

1.1 Know Yourself

Getting to know and understand yourself is the first step in career planning. This will help you to identify the interests and activities that you enjoy and to identify the skills and talents you possess and how they can be used. It is important that you undertake an accurate assessment of your skills in relation to work and also the practicalities associated with the kind of work you would like to do. It is vital that you are

The key areas you need to assess are:

- What are my skills?
- What are my values and lifestyle preferences?
- What interests me?
- Do I need to consider my disability when choosing a career?

- Transferable or functional skills
Transferable or functional skills are also called talents or gifts, as they are your natural skills that you often possess from birth. Examples of these would be when you are good at analysing data or managing people or operating machinery. They are called transferable skills because they can be transferred from one occupation to another, and used in a variety of fields, no matter how often you change your career.

Functional skills can be broken down again into three broad groups these are :

- Data
- People
- Things

All jobs utilise data, people and things but most jobs emphasis one category over another. For example computer system analysts work with data, counsellors work with people and mechanics work with cars.

Once you have listed your skills, put them in order of preference with regard to the skills that you enjoy using the most and whether these are skills you would like to use in a work environment. (Appendix one provides a more comprehensive listing of functional skills according to the three categories above).

■ *Non transferable or Knowledge skills*
Non transferable or knowledge skills are often called your expertise. These are skills you have learned over years through

Try to list the skills you have learned over the years and prioritise those you most enjoy using.

■ *Personal skills or traits*
Personal skills or traits are attributes that you have either inherited or developed as a result of life experience. Usually when someone asks you to describe yourself you will try and list some of your positive personal attributes such as creative, dependable, caring, motivated, well organised, interested, honest etc.

Answering the question "what are your skills?" can be a difficult task. Again, this is an exercise that should be undertaken in co-operation with relevant professionals such as a career guidance expert, if possible. There are also a number of web-sites that offer you lists of skills to help you along the way. A good place to look for this information is within the career guidance section of university websites, for example, the UCC careers service website www.ucc.ie/careers offer a list of weblinks to online personality tests.

Everyone possesses a wide variety of skills and abilities ranging from specific skills resulting from job related training to the broader area of skills relating to life activities. It is important to identify all the skills you possess in identifying your career path and your level of ability for each skill.

In identifying your functional skills you need to list all the skills you possess under each of the category headings. For example:

DATA	PEOPLE	THINGS
Creating Analysing Calculating Comparing	Managing Advising Helping Instructing	Creating Repairing Operating Driving

formal or informal education and are like knowledge stored in your brain.

They are non transferable skills as they are technical skills that apply to a specific job or occupation for example sewing - tailor, writing - journalist, food preparation - chef, selling - shop keeper, answering tele-phones - receptionist, using computers - administrator, booking keeping - accountant, etc.

Personality traits can be interpreted as both positive and negative. For instance, if being critical is one of your traits, this could be a plus if you are an editor of a publishing company, or a meat inspector. It would be a negative if you are a supervisor trying to gain rapport with an employee.

No personality questionnaire is likely to be absolutely accurate but they can help you to assess what your personality is like .

Once you have your skills listing it is a good idea to order them according to your level of ability or competence in each.

WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES AND LIFESTYLE PREFERENCES?

Identifying what are your values and lifestyle preferences can be useful in getting to know yourself and your career preferences. Your values and lifestyle

Section 1: Job Readiness

preferences are what you consider to be important to you in how you live your life and interact with others.

Lifestyle preferences can relate to aspects of your life such as where you live, urban v.'s rural, how you live, material possessions v.'s environmental considerations, excitement v.'s routine, social responsibility v.'s self interest, career advancement v.'s job tranquillity etc. List out what are your lifestyle preferences and assess the level of importance you would attribute to each.

values and your work values. Draw up two lists, one stating your personal values and the other stating your work values. Compare the two lists and identify areas of possible conflict between your personal values and your work values. Try to identify what steps you can take to balance your values and avoid conflict between the two.

The list of lifestyle preferences and those of your personal and work values will help you start to draw a picture of what you expect from your career. It will also assist

interests involve you doing something that you enjoy whether that is a physical, intellectual, creative or some other activity.

Identify what your interests are. Break down the aspects of this interest you most enjoy. For example, if being a member of a club is your interest perhaps the most enjoyable part is being with other people or maybe it's the opportunity to be a leader or to organise an event that might help others in your society.

Identifying what are your values and lifestyle preferences can be useful in getting to know yourself and your career preferences.

⁷ Portland Community College Career and Employment Guide for Job Seekers and Employees with Disabilities, Office for Students with Disabilities

You might be surprised to learn you have two sets of values -- work values and personal values. Work values are what you view as being important in your work life, such as public service, entrepreneurship or leadership. Personal values are what you view as being important in your personal life, such as family, religion, and relationships.

In choosing a career path it is important to try to reconcile what are your personal

in deciding whether certain careers are in fact compatible with the lifestyle you wish to lead.

WHAT INTERESTS YOU?

Your interests are the activities, hobbies, subjects that you enjoy or like to do. Interests can vary from activities such as volunteering, fundraising, entertaining to hobbies such as acting, reading, playing sport, knitting, watching TV etc. Your

DO YOU NEED TO CONSIDER YOUR DISABILITY WHEN CHOOSING A CAREER?

At this stage of the employment preparation process it is a good idea to revisit your list of skills. You should identify what is the level of your ability relating to each skill and what, if any, accommodations you require in utilising this skill. Professionals such as occupational therapists could assist you in making an accurate and realistic assessment of your ability.

Other considerations may relate to your values and lifestyle preferences such as choosing to live in a rural location where public transport may not be available. .

At the end of this step you will have undertaken a number of exercises and these will leave you with a number of lists:

- Your skills
- Your values and lifestyle preferences
- Your interests
- Your initial disability considerations

work. At this stage you will start to use the information you have gathered about yourself and use this to identify career areas you are interested in pursuing.

- Compile list of possible occupations
- Research occupations
- Develop an action plan

COMPILE LIST OF POSSIBLE OCCUPATIONS

Compiling a list of possible occupations can seem like a daunting task. Where should you start? If you think you have a good idea of

There are other alternatives to assist in compiling your list. Refer to Appendix 2 for a listing of useful weblinks.

RESEARCH OCCUPATIONS

Once you have identified occupations you would be interested in, the next step is to get further information on what type of work is available in this career area, what are the working conditions and how well does the occupation match your skills, interests and values? It is a good idea at

part-time, shift work etc

Once you know what information you require, you need to source this information by:-

- Speaking with a career guidance counsellor in your training centre or college
- Meeting with a FÁS Employment Services Officer or other service provider
- Speaking with family and friends who might have knowledge of your chosen occupation

In choosing a career path there are a number of key actions that you can undertake to ensure you have a clear understanding of what the career entails and whether it suits your expectations from work.

Use these lists to draw up areas that are priority for you. This will help you to identify some of the skills and expectations you have when choosing a career.

1.2. Picking a Career Path

In choosing a career path there are a number of key actions that you can undertake to ensure you have a clear understanding of what the career entails and whether it suits your expectations from

what you want to do you should write up a list of the possibilities. If you want assistance in compiling this list one excellent source of information is the FÁS career directions programme. This programme is an online exercise, which takes you through a number of steps matching your skills and interests with possible job types. You can log onto to www.careerdirections.ie to undertake this exercise on your own or alternatively you can go into your local FÁS employment Office and they will assist you.

this stage to draw up an outline of the type of information you are looking for. Some of the important details include:

- Duties of the job
- Working conditions
- Training and qualifications required
- Salary scales
- Extra benefits
- Career advancement opportunities
- Location of possible employers
- Accessibility issues
- Work Schedule i.e. option of full-time,

- Reading employer literature such as recruitment brochures, annual reports, company websites etc.
- Calling into recruitment agencies or checking out their websites
- Undertaking research on the internet. You can start on some on the following websites:
www.careersworld.ie/
www.prospects.ac.uk/
www.rileyguide.com/careers.html
www.careerdirections.ie

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- If possible conduct information interviews with individuals currently employed in your chosen career area. This could give first hand information on the needs and expectations of employers within your chosen career area. In order to get full benefit from this experience it is important to be well prepared prior to the meeting.

The following is a guide on how best to prepare and it also outlines possible questions to ask.

- Prepare your questions ahead of time and leave space under each question for notes.
- During the session, pay careful attention; demonstrate that the information is important to you.
- Bring a CV along with you just in case it turns into an actual interview.
- Be prepared to answer questions about you. What do you hope to gain from the interview? How will you use the information?

- What skills, abilities, aptitudes, and backgrounds are needed?
- What values or personal qualities are important?
- What is the mission, vision, or goal of a typical organisation in this field?
- What are major issues or concerns facing this sector?
- What does the future hold? What kind of growth is anticipated?
- What is the importance of learning, training, and staff development in this field?

It is vital that you write up the information you have received directly after the information interview. This information might become relevant if you are preparing for a job interview with the company at a future date.

⁸. Job Hunting in the New Millennium, Information, Techniques and Tips on Finding the Right Job, Worksource Washington.

- Identify an employer to contact.
- Learn as much as you can about the organisation.
- Mentioning a person you know that the employer knows can open many doors and give you an interview opportunity.
- Ask for a twenty-minute, or less, appointment. Make it clear that you are not necessarily seeking a job with them, but want to learn more about their business. Remember the purpose of this exercise is the gathering of information.

- Smile, be friendly, and be polite to everyone with whom you come in contact.

Informational Interview Questions

Following are examples of questions that can be asked during an informational interview.

- What kind of people do you look for when hiring?
- What experience is required?
- What are the educational requirements?

- What advice would you give someone who wanted to enter this field?
- Who else would you recommend I speak with about getting into this field?
- Describe the working environment.
- What is the organisational structure of the company?
- How are decisions made within the company?

It is vital that you write up the information you have received directly after the information interview. This information might become relevant if you are preparing for a job interview with the company at a future date.

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Now that you have a clearer picture of the career you want, you need to draw up an action plan on how to get it. If you are interested in more than one career area the action plan will help you to progress your

- Will you require accommodations in the workplace and how to get these? (*Further guidance on this is provided in Section 4 on Reasonable Accommodations in this guide*).
- Try and get work experience in the career area(s) that are of interest to you.

If you have identified any gaps in your job related skills it would be important to consider this a priority within your action plan.

job within this career. It is important to make the right choice of service provider to assist when necessary in the job seeking process. The first step is to identify what help you actually need in your job search. Once you have answered this question you should consider the following:

- WHO ARE THE SERVICE PROVIDERS?
There are a wide range of service providers involved in the support of people with disabilities. You should research who these are and what are

- WHAT LEVEL OF SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE
Service providers offer a range of supports. The level of support available may be dependent on your needs and the resources they have.
- HOW THEY SUPPORT YOU ON A JOB SEARCH AND/OR ACCESSING WORK RELATED TRAINING
Service providers vary in the type of service they offer. Some will be available to you throughout your job search from, Section 1 becoming job

Now that you have a clearer picture of the career you want, you need to draw up an action plan on how to get it.

decision on which area best suits your skills and experiences. This action plan should include information on:

- Are there gaps in your skills set and how can you address this?
- What are the educational requirements for the career and who provides these? Can I get financial assistance if I need further training?
- Identify possible employers in your area that are relevant to your chosen career.

You have now reached your first milestone, as you now know the career area you want to pursue and have identified the relevant skills you need to do the job.

1.3. Identify Relevant Support Services

Once you have identified your career path the next step is to identify what service providers can offer assistance in finding a

your local contacts. Remember you should also find out what services are available to job seekers in your area as these are also relevant in meeting your needs.

- WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE
It is important to develop a clear and specific picture of what is on offer from the service provider in relation to your job search and also ongoing support once you have accepted the job.

ready, right through to Section 5, accepting and keeping the job. Others may get involved at different times as relevant.

The Workway website www.workway.ie provides detailed information on most relevant support services and should be accessed to find out who are your local support contacts. State agencies which offer supports to job seekers with disabilities include Job Facilitators in the

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Department of Social and Family Affairs, Job Coaches in a Supported Employment Consortium and FAS employment offices. You will find contacts for these and others in the directory of support services in the useful contacts section of the website www.workway.ie. This can be downloaded or printed for your convenience. Other good sources of information on service providers would be your local citizens' information office.

Having the functional skills to do a specific job are only a part of the overall skills required within the workplace. Having the relevant interpersonal skills is also a vital element in getting and keeping a job. Interpersonal skills are the skills you use within the workplace that relate more to your personality skills/traits such as communicating with your fellow workers, being motivated, leadership, accepting responsibility etc. If you have previously undertaken an information interview with the company, revisit some of the areas that would be relevant to this topic.

people with disabilities? If yes, it might be a good idea to meet with these people as they will give you an insight into how they have integrated into the workforce. Remember this is just their personal experience, it does not necessarily mean you will have the same experience.

- DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE WORK HABITS
Knowing and understanding the work habits of employees in any prospective company is vital. Some of the things to

The Workway website www.workway.ie provides detailed information on most relevant support services and should be accessed to find out who are your local support contacts.

1.4. Interpersonal Skills for the Workplace

The first steps of job readiness is to equip yourself with the skills to do the job in your chosen career area and identify (where relevant) the service providers who can assist you in achieving the goal of getting and keeping the job. You then arrive at the stage of considering how you can match the job requirements of specific employers to your skills and abilities.

The following points outline the actions you can undertake to assess what the expected interpersonal skills are and if necessary some basic actions to improve your skills:

- EXPLORATION OF EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES/EXPECTATIONS
Find out if the company has a track record in employing people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Has the company previously employed

consider within this include:
Time keeping. If you are not used to getting up early it is a good idea to practice this prior to starting a job. It will give you an idea of how long it takes you to get ready in the morning. Also if you will have to rely on others for assistance or transport you can give them a clear picture of times they will be needed.
Work Conditions. Knowing and understanding your work conditions are

important. You might have a preference between working alone, in a team and a mixture of both.

Dress Codes. Dress appropriately. If you will be wearing a uniform find out where you get this and whether you are responsible for replacing it.

Taking breaks. Some companies, particularly the larger ones, have set times for taking breaks. You should find out what these are.

Hours at work. If you have not worked full time previously, try and organise

work environment is a different situation to communicating in a social or family setting. The casual and often easy-going approach to communicating outside of work is not acceptable in the work environment. It is a good idea to find out what the communication process is within the company you wish to work in. Most companies at induction stage will explain what this is but some pointers that you need to be aware of prior to starting are:

- Always show respect to fellow workers and management

- Interacting with your co-workers. The ideal work situation is where you have a cordial relationship with all your colleagues.

- DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE IN COMMUNICATING POSITIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY ABOUT YOUR DISABILITY
As you go through the process of developing your career path and achieving your end goal of getting and keeping the job, it is important that you develop skills to communicate

- GETTING RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE
Getting work experience is the best way of fulfilling two priorities for yourself. On one hand it gives you a chance to experience work in your chosen career area and on the other it gives you some valuable experience that will make you more attractive to prospective employers. So, how do you get work experience? The first step is to draw up a list of potential employers in your area. Talk to family, friends and relatives to see if they have any contacts within these

Having the functional skills to do a specific job are only a part of the overall skills required within the workplace. Having the relevant interpersonal skills is also a vital element in getting and keeping a job.

your day around the hours of work you will be doing as this will help you build the stamina necessary to sustain the required working hours.

Diet. If your disability requires you to eat at certain times or have certain foods find out how you will organise this when at work.

- DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE WORK-RELATED COMMUNICATION SKILLS
Communicating with colleagues in a

- Be prepared to take direction from supervisors and managers. Look for clarity if you are not sure what is being asked of you.
- Keeping others informed. Be prepared to explain what you are working on and why to your supervisor.
- Taking criticism. Sometimes it may be necessary for your supervisor to question your work performance. It is important you are able to take some criticism and develop ways to learn from this.

positively with regard to your disability. Try and turn awkward or negative situations into something more positive. If you meet an employer who is not aware of the correct words or actions to communicate with you, the best approach for you is to explain in a pleasant, non-confrontational manner, how they should communicate with you and why. Refer to Workway Employment Guidelines for further detail on disclosing a disability.

companies that you might approach. Often, referring to a familiar name can make the employer more open to your initial approach. Work experience should only be for a short period of time to give you the ability to assess your suitability to the job. Work experience within a company can even be undertaken in a voluntary capacity, that is, unpaid employment. Again this should be limited to a short time period. Any prolonged employment should be on a paid basis.

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This section offers some practical advice about preparing for some of the specifics you will encounter in the work environment. In order to be job ready, you must be prepared to deal with these. It is important that you take responsibility for developing these skills.

1.5. What Employers Expect from You

Understanding your potential employer's

applying for a job. It will also assist your research when you get to interview stage. Refer back to the information you collected on particular employers when choosing your career path, particularly in the information interviews.

You should now build on this information paying close attention to what you think the employer is looking for in prospective employees. The following list sets out some of the behaviours or characteristics an employer may expect from a new employee:

- *Dependability:* Your employer will expect you to be on the job every working day and on time. If you will be absent or late, you should call your supervisor. If you have an appointment with your doctor, dentist, etc. let your supervisor know in advance.
- *Enthusiasm:* The most successful employees are those who are enthusiastic about their work.
- *Acceptance of Criticism:* Criticism is the way a supervisor tells you how they want a job done. You are expected to

Understanding your potential employer's expectation within your career area will help you decide if this career is suited to you and also whether your ability matches the demands of the job in a commercial workplace.

⁹ The Career Centre, California State University, Northridge, Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A guide to Success, Students with Disabilities Internship Project

expectation within your career area will help you decide if this career is suited to you and also whether your ability matches the demands of the job in a commercial workplace. This research will also be relevant when you get to interview stage.

It is a good idea to draw up a list of information you want to collect in relation to each company. This ensures that you end up with enough information on each company when making your decision on

- *Initiative:* Employers will expect you to complete your own job and, even if you haven't been told what to do, look around to see what needs to be done and do it.
- *Willingness to Learn:* Your employer will expect you to learn the way things are done in the company.
- *Willingness to Follow Directions:* Always follow directions exactly as you are told.
- *Honesty:* Employers will expect you to be honest and to tell the truth.

improve because of it. Listen and learn from the constructive criticisms your supervisor will share with you.

- *Loyalty:* Show loyalty to your company.
- Ask for further instructions if the task is unclear. Request clarification if you are unsure how to complete an assignment.
- Be flexible and attempt assignments that may not fall under your specified job duties, because of time and/or staff constraints.

- Observe and respect organisational structure. Learn what position each of your co-workers hold in the office and how their position relates to yours.

Another source of information on what the employer is looking for in a particular job is contained in the job description/profile and the personal specification.

JOB DESCRIPTION/PROFILE

The job description or profile is the clear outline by the employer of the tasks the

actions you will be expected to fulfil. This varies from job to job. Revisit the FÁS career Directions website www.careerdirections.ie which provides an A to Z list of career opportunities and the related job descriptions

Terms of employment. Information should be provided on number of hours of work per week, salary amount, duration of employment (eg. permanent, fixed period contract, temporary etc) and annual leave.

identify your skills and experience in relation to these. Refer back to your actions in Section 1 on "Know Yourself".

Be honest in your assessment of your level of ability to meet the employer's expectations in undertaking the job. Ask yourself if and how your disability may have an impact on your performance. If you identify areas of difficulty, research what accommodations could be put in place to allow you fulfil the job requirements and assess would they be feasible in the

You have now completed Section 1. The next step is to go out and find the job that you want and develop the skills, abilities and experience to get this job.

It is a good idea to study the job description and personal specification for the job prior to application.

prospective employee will be expected to perform. It will outline the requirement for the position and the standard of work required. A job description usually includes a number of bullet points that will outline the skills required including:

Educational requirements e.g. Leaving Certification, Diploma, Degree etc

Key responsibilities/duties to be undertaken. Usually these are presented as a list of

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

The personal specification for the job will identify the personal traits that the employer will be looking for in the prospective employee for example, teamworker, work on own initiative, motivated, punctual etc.

It is a good idea to study the job description and personal specification for the job prior to application. Try and list out the key elements of the job and then

prospective work environment. *(For further information, please refer to Section 4 on Reasonable Accommodations in this guide.)*

Section 2.

Undertaking the job search

There are many steps involved in the process of finding a job. You will have to find the right balance of steps that is most effective for you in your job search. The purpose of this general section is to provide you with some basic guidance on the activities involved in getting the job, where to look for a job and how to present yourself through your CV or an application form.

NETWORKING SKILLS

Develop your networking skills. If you are to have any chance of success in applications and interviews for types of job that you have not done before, you will need a very clear idea of what the work is like. Networking is the best way of gaining this knowledge. Many job vacancies are not advertised publicly - employers often fill them instead with people who have approached them directly. Through networking you can narrow down your

paid/unpaid work experience or work shadowing (unpaid work observation).

HELPS YOU IN PREPARING TO LOOK FOR WORK -

Get your contacts to look through your CV, suggest improvements to the CV, advise you about other skills, experience or qualifications that might help or recommend other sources of information and advice, including their own contacts.



¹⁰ Kentucky Office of Employment and Training Virtual Workshop Centre.

2.1. Looking for a Job

Finding a job that's right for you requires you to be proactive. Use all the resources available to you - make phone contacts, in person contacts, undertake newspaper search, internet search, and mail correspondence to employers.

applications to those firms which are likely to have a vacancy.

NETWORKING:

ENABLES YOU TO SEE WHAT A JOB IS REALLY LIKE -

Questioning someone about the job they do should give you a better idea of what is involved and whether you would like this work. In addition, your contact may be able to organise a visit to their place of work,

INVOLVES RESEARCHING FIRMS YOU ARE APPLYING TO -

Contacts who work for organisations which interest you can be invaluable in your research, giving you insight into such things as company culture.

HELPS YOU TO FIND A JOB -

Your contacts may be able to help by telling you which newspapers, journals and recruitment agencies to use in looking for vacancies, giving you ideas of other

employers to apply to or letting you know about vacancies in their own company. When you first make contact, it is best to ask for information and advice.

SOME PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO USE CONTACTS

Typical comments are - *"I don't know anybody who could help me"; "I wouldn't want to bother them" "I know my uncle could help me get a job, but I want to achieve it on my own merits"; "It seems unfair to take advantage of who you know".*

NETWORKING RESOURCES

(75% of your time) Part of a good job search campaign includes mailing your CV to prospective employers. The secret to a good response rate is finding the job before it is advertised, and the best way to learn about job opportunities is by talking to people. Keep in mind that almost every-one you meet could be either a direct or indirect source of job leads. Not all jobs are advertised - there is what is known as the "Hidden Job Market". Sometimes merely

■ VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Become involved with your community. Widen your contacts and increase your knowledge by volunteering your services to interesting organisations. Even as little as an evening each week can lead to improved skills and a broader base of contacts.

■ JOB FAIRS

Visits to job and career fairs can enable you to become more familiar with employers and the labour market.

■ MEMBERSHIPS IN HEALTH AND/OR

SPECIAL INTEREST CLUBS

Increase your circle of acquaintances in your local area and beyond.

RELATED RESOURCES

(25% of your time) An exception to this rule would be graduating students, who should spend 50% or more of their time utilising university/college career office resources. Check out the following information resources.

Finding a job that's right for you requires you to be proactive. Use all the resources available to you - make phone contacts, in person contacts, undertake newspaper search, internet search, and mail correspondence to employers.

BUT -

It never hurts to contact someone (tactfully!) for help - they can always say no. In fact most people are actually flattered to be approached for advice and happy to help even friends or family of people they know. If you don't make use of contacts, you'll lose out to those who do!

As a suggestion, divide the time you have available into the following areas:

knowing someone who works in an organisation will be a crucial first step inside that organisation.

A good job campaign should be a combination of all sources of information and not just one or two. Refer back to page 8 in Section 1 Picking Out a Career Path for some sources of information and the list below will give you further sources of information.

See page 17 below on pointers when attending a job fair.

■ MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Attendance at meetings and conferences of professional associations can place you in touch with key people in their field and the community.

■ FÁS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES OFFICES

It is a good idea to check your local FÁS Employment Services office at least once each week. In each of these offices you will be able to access computerised listings of local, regional and national job openings. The services that you receive in these offices are free.

Section 2. Undertaking the job search

- **UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE PLACEMENT OFFICES**
Look into the services and vacancy materials they offer graduates and students. Find out who has hired previous graduates from the University.
- **SERVICE PROVIDERS**
Service providers such as local employment services (LES), supported employment offices, resource centres for the unemployed and jobs clubs are a valuable resource to job seekers. Please refer to Section 1 for more details.
- **DIRECTORIES**
Many directories list organisations by industry type and geographical location. Don't forget the telephone book is the most comprehensive and up-to-date listing of all employers in a geographical area. These are often available in many libraries.
- **NEWSPAPERS**
Many local and national newspapers are available in libraries. Answer classified advertisements for
- **SPECIALITY MAGAZINES**
Every organisation and industry has its own publications which will give information on recent developments in the field as well as job listings. Learn about these in your field of interest and stay informed.
- **LOCAL RADIO**
Local radio stations usually have a weekly slot when job vacancies are advertised.

Don't forget the telephone book is the most comprehensive and up-to-date listing of all employers in a geographical area. These are often available in many libraries.

^{11 - 16} Kentucky Office of Employment and Training
Virtual Workshop Centre

- **CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE**
A local Chamber of Commerce can provide information on local businesses and developing industries. A good source of inside information about a community.
- **CITIZEN INFORMATION CENTRES**
- **LIBRARY REFERENCE RESOURCES**
employment opportunities. The amount of information an employer can include in a job advertisement is often limited therefore don't base your decision to apply (or not) solely on the advertisement. Contact the company to get more detailed information on the job.
- **LOCAL SHOP WINDOW AND PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS**
It only takes a minute to read the notices on display but it may be worth your while as some jobs are advertised here!

POINTERS ON ATTENDING JOBS AND CAREER FAIRS

Visits to Job and Career Fairs enable you to be more familiar with employers but they can be intimidating. Doing some preparatory work beforehand will make you more confident and give a good impression to those you meet.

At a Job and Career Fair, company representatives are there to present information about their company and its job

know something about the companies before you get to the fair.

- **KNOW YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**
When asked what you are looking for in a job, be prepared to explain your goals and objectives. Avoid a "what does the job pay?, what are the fringe benefits?, how much time off do I get?" attitude. Companies are there to recruit employees who will be interested and committed to the types of jobs they have to offer. Hiring and

- **GO EARLY**
Usually the first hour or two is the slowest time and employers will be able to spend more time with you. Arriving half an hour before the career fair ends does not give you enough time to visit all the representatives. In addition, there is always the possibility that some company representatives may leave early.

- **BUSINESS CARDS**
Get a business card from the company representative, this allows you to address follow-up calls and letters to a specific person. Take the time to make a few notes on the back of the card about what you discussed. When you talk to the representative again, you will be able to refresh their memory of you by saying, "we were talking about systems analyst opportunities."

Every organisation and industry has its own publications which will give information on recent developments in the field as well as job listings.

opportunities. It is up to you to introduce yourself and make yourself known to them.

The tips below will assist you to get the most out of every job or career fair you attend.

- **DO YOUR HOMEWORK**
Get a list of participating employers before you attend a job and career fair. Do some research so that you will

training new employees is a big expense for companies; if you portray yourself as being strictly interested in the salary, it may cause the recruiter to reconsider whether you are a good choice for their job opening.

- **BRING ALONG A FOLDER WITH COPIES OF YOUR CV**
- **BE PROFESSIONAL IN DRESS AND ATTITUDE**

- **VISIT ALL COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES**
Make sure you pick up a list of the employers participating and visit all of them. Don't assume a company has no positions for you! A hospital may be looking for marketing staff, and a manufacturer may be hiring a clerical worker. Check with recruitment agencies attending to see what companies they represent – you may find the company you wish to work for is represented by one of them.

- **NETWORK WITH OTHER JOB SEEKERS**
Take time to talk to other job seekers while attending the fair. You will get and give ideas..

WORKING THROUGH AN AGENCY

Recruitment Agencies will have permanent and temporary jobs on offer. Even in times of low unemployment, employers use agencies for various reasons;

Section 2. Undertaking the job search

- *Take the hassle out of recruitment* - An advertisement may result in many hundreds of applications. By using an agency to whittle down the number of applicants in the early stages of selection, a firm will save a lot of time. However, the firm itself will make the decision as to who gets the job.
- *Fill "difficult to fill" vacancies* - Many of these will be jobs for which very specific skills are required.

how they relate to the type of jobs you are interested in. Sell yourself! Treat the interview with the agency as you would an interview with the company. They decide whether it is worth the company's time interviewing you.

One way of identifying useful agencies is to look in newspapers and journals for advertisements, placed by specialist agencies, for jobs that interest you. Even if the particular vacancy you saw is not available, you could approach the agency to see if

Recruitment agencies should be just one part of your job-hunting strategy - don't pin all your hopes of getting a job on the use of recruitment agencies.

INTERNET RESOURCES

The internet is fast becoming an essential resource for career planning information and job leads. There are dozens of excellent sites for gathering information. Internet job seekers can go directly to the web pages of corporations or

Employers are the main client for the agency and, as such, are their top priority. Their main concern is to find the right candidate for the company – not the right job for the candidate!

¹⁷ Kentucky Office of Employment and Training Virtual Workshop Centre

Employers are the main client for the agency and, as such, are their top priority. Their main concern is to find the right candidate for the company – not the right job for the candidate! The agency charge the employer for the service. You should not have to pay to register.

How you approach the agency is very important. You need to show them that it is in their interest to put you forward for a job. Make them aware of your skills and

they can help you to find similar jobs in the future. Agencies will vary greatly in their competence and usefulness - you will have to discover which are the best ones for you either by trial and error or through personal recommendation. Many agencies operate on the internet. Some sites enable you to put your details on line for employers to search. You should also check out the website of the National Recruitment Federation (Ireland), www.nrf.ie/ which has a searchable database of members.

organisations where they would like to work and search their job listings for positions. Most major firms now have a web site. Also check out www.fas.ie which has a specific section on its web site featuring job vacancies around the country.

RESEARCHING EMPLOYERS

Ideally, even before you complete an application form or submit a CV, you

should carry out thorough research on the organisation to which you are applying. The more you know about the employer the more chance you will have of making a good impression at interview and of knowing what questions to ask. Please refer to Section 1 Picking a Career Path on how to carry out such research.

WHERE TO GO AND WHO TO TALK TO

The listings in the Network Resources sections will be useful here. Also check out

2.2. Curriculum Vitae

As outlined in the previous section, you must do research on each employer and each job. Armed with this information, you then tailor your CV to fit what each company is looking for. This is the best way to catch a hiring manager's eye, and to have him/her say "this person is worth meeting!" Once you have done your research, you're ready to start building your CV.

Employers look at a CV to determine if you are the right person for the job. You need to give them enough information so they can see you meet the basic requirements for the position, and make them want to meet with you to discuss your qualifications further in a job interview.

WHAT SHOULD A CV INCLUDE?

■ CONTACT INFORMATION

This section is required. It is critical that employers can contact you. This section

directly to the job you are trying to get.

■ EXPERIENCE

Include work-related activities. Always write this section in reverse chronological order. Your most recent job should always be on top. Include company name, dates of employment, roles and responsibilities and major accomplishments (refer to Appendix 3 on action verbs when describing your roles and responsibilities). Highlight voluntary as well as paid work experience.

The CV is the primary tool of your job search. It is a concise piece of self-advertising that summarises your skills, experiences and accomplishments in order to capture a prospective employer's interest.

employers themselves. All companies will produce annual reports detailing their financial position. The majority of firms, of all sizes, produce publicity material advertising the range of products or services that they make or provide. Contact firms directly to see if they will send you copies of their annual report and/or publicity material. If the firm is local it may be worth calling in personally, as copies of publicity material are often kept in the general reception area.

DEVELOPING CVs

The CV is the primary tool of your job search. It is a concise piece of self-advertising that summarises your skills, experiences and accomplishments in order to capture a prospective employer's interest. Each CV you send out should be focused on a specific job. *The purpose of a CV is to secure an interview.*

should include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Make sure that your name is at the top of your CV, followed by your contact information.

■ EDUCATION

List your most current qualification first. Include the year of graduation, the institution attended. If your CV is light on experience, take advantage of your education by including key courses. Make sure that the courses you highlight relate

■ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Include completion date or plans on taking an exam in your field; i.e. ECDL, Civil Engineering, etc.

■ SPECIAL SKILLS

Include skills applicable to your career field; i.e. computer language, fluency in foreign languages, public speaking, performing arts, etc.

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- **ACTIVITIES/INTERESTS**
Include those activities that demonstrate leadership abilities or co-operation in working with others.

- **REFERENCES**
This section is at the bottom of your CV and should include a statement that says, "References are available upon request" or the names and contact details of your references.

expects you to be able to apply the skills you have learned in your work experience as well as in school or college to the work environment. Some examples of transferable skill areas include:

- Communication skills, such as speaking effectively, writing concisely, listening attentively, and expressing ideas.
- Research and planning skills, such as creating ideas, identifying and solving problems, and setting goals.
- Human relations skills, such as motivating, listening, and developing rapport.

- Most people now have access to computer word-processing packages. If you do not produce your CV in this way you may be at a disadvantage. You should also use the best quality printer you can get access to.
- If you produce your CV on a computer word-processing package it is easy to keep it on file and adjust/update it when necessary.
- Ideally a purpose-built CV should be sent for each application.

A good reference can make the difference between securing a job and receiving a letter of rejection.

- **DISCLOSING A DISABILITY**
Refer to the Workway Employment Guidelines - ,Getting a Job section at www.workway.ie for information on disclosing your disability.

WORK HISTORY

If you don't have a lot of career-related job experience, consider using transferable skills to better highlight your work experience. A prospective employer

- Organisation, management and leadership skills, such as managing groups, delegating, making decisions, coaching, and handling details.
- Refer back to the skills you identified when working through The *Getting to Know Yourself* in Section 1.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT CVs

- As people read CVs quickly you have about 30 seconds to make an impression.

(Refer to the Workway Employment Guidelines, Recruitment and Selection section for information on constructing and formatting your CV)

COMMON ERRORS ON CVs

- Overstating one's qualifications
- Using the word "CV" in heading. (It's a waste of space.)
- Making hand written corrections
- Using abbreviations (spell it out)

- Using "I", instead of beginning with action verbs (what does this mean?)
- Using the category of "work experience" can work against you if you have done mostly volunteer work. Use "Professional Experience" or "Related Experience"

REFERENCES

A good reference can make the difference between securing a job and receiving a letter of rejection

WHO SHOULD BE MY REFEREES?

You are the one who decides who will act as a reference for you. Choose wisely, since referees can have a very positive or a very negative effect on your chances of getting the job you want.

Using the list below, try to think of at least three people who would be good referees for you.

If you don't have business references, use teachers, club leaders or acquaintances who can relate what kind of person you would be in a professional environment. Call each person on the list and ask their permission to use them as a referee. *Never use a referee without getting prior permission!* Be sure to tell them what kind of position you are applying for, and how your relationship with them can assist you in getting the position. (For example: "This job requires budget management, so please be sure to tell them about how I did your bookkeeping").

COVER LETTER

It is usual to submit the CV with a cover letter. A cover letter is a means of introducing and selling yourself to an employer. It provides an opportunity to draw attention to your key selling points for this particular job. It should tell the employer why you are applying, convey enthusiasm and interest and tell what you can offer to the job. Write in plain English, using short sentences.

You are the one who decides who will act as a reference for you. Choose wisely, since referees can have a very positive or a very negative effect on your chances of getting the job you want.

There are three basic kinds of referees that you can aim for.

1. The character reference.
2. The work reference.
3. The skills and abilities reference.

(Refer to the Workway Employment Guidelines, Recruitment and Selection section for information on references)

- Past employers, supervisors and/or colleagues from work.
- Teachers/College Lecturers
- Colleagues and/or associates from professional associations.
- Friends from the community (i.e. from clubs, hobbies, etc.). Try to choose people in prominent positions. For example, someone in your club who is an executive.

Write their names on separate paper and fill in the following information:

Full Name: _____
 Title: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 E-mail address: _____
 Company: _____
 Address: _____

When you are responding to an advertised vacancy, begin by writing where you saw the vacancy advertised, then explain why you are interested in the job and the company. In order to convince the employer that you have the skills and abilities to fill the vacant position, ensure that you read the job advertisement carefully. Contact the company and ask for a job description and any company literature they could send out. If they have a web site - look at this as well. Read carefully through all

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available literature. The information you collect will help you to write a good letter and help to convince that you are a good job match. Close your letter with a positive statement and show that you expect a response by giving your contact details or stating when you intend on contacting them.

If you are writing a speculative letter, begin with who you are and how you heard of the company. Then explain your interest in working with the company,

- Laid out as a standard formal business letter
- Brief, not more than one page.
- Positive - with no "although"s, "just"s, or "only"s.
- Use simple, direct language, correct grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Produced on good quality A4 paper using a good printer.
- Personalised - address it to a specific person by name and title
- Signed and enclosed with CV
- Keep a copy of every cover letter

device, used by employers to weed out applicants who do not follow directions or pay attention to detail (especially regarding neatness), or who do not demonstrate the qualifications they are looking for. A well-done application may lead to an immediate interview. Information given on the application form provides a basis for the interview. Some applications may be kept on file for a specific period for future use if vacancies arise.

Filling out an application is the very first job an employer will give you and you seldom get a second chance to make a first impression.

¹⁸ The Career Centre, California State University Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A Guide to Success
¹⁹ Kentucky Office of Employment and Training Virtual Workshop Centre

highlighting what a good job match you are etc. Close the letter by saying that you will follow up with a telephone call in a few days to discuss your application further. Be sure to prepare what you are going to say before you phone.

REMEMBER

The good covering letter should be:

- Original and targeted at each specific employer

2.3. Application

Some employers prefer to use a tailor made application form in the recruitment process as opposed to a CV. This section is designed to help you make good written applications and is applicable to a wide range of jobs.

Employers use application forms to get appropriate information about job applicants. Applications are a screening

Filling out an application is the very first job an employer will give you and you seldom get a second chance to make a first impression. It gives you an opportunity to indicate interest and sincerity in employment, specify/highlight skills and other information relative to qualifications for a job and create a positive impression with potential employers and get an interview. If you show the employer that you have the skills and abilities they need, you will be invited in to discuss your qualifications in person.

FIRST STEP

Before you even look at the application form you need to match what you have to offer against what the job requires. Use whatever information you have on the company and the job (including the advert and job description) to compile a list of all the qualities, experiences, qualifications and skills that the job requires. Then think of what work experience, training or interests you have that demonstrate that particular skill or quality. For example, if

services officers, mediators with the LES service and job coaches with your local supported employment service can all help in this area, as can local Jobs Clubs, which deliver job-finding and interview skills training.

FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION FORM

Read through the form thoroughly to see what information should go where and exactly how much space is allocated for each section. Photocopy the form and fill

Think of your application as an example of the kind of work you will do for the employer. It should be:

- Neat
- Accurate
- Complete
- Submitted on time

Sometimes, application forms include a blank space in which to put answers to questions such as: "Explain what attracts you to this job?" or "What are your main

you have pursued, you have developed personal qualities, skills and perhaps knowledge that are relevant to the work.

Most forms include questions about why you are applying for the job. These are offering you an opportunity to summarise why this post is of interest to you. It is important that you demonstrate that you have really thought out why you want the job and what you have to offer the company.

Before you even look at the application form you need to match what you have to offer against what the job requires.

you think the job would require you to work as part of a team you might include: being part of a successful sports team; working on an academic project with others; being one of the organisers of an event etc. The pieces of evidence you produce are your selling points.

WHO CAN HELP?

Get experience in writing job applications and attending interviews. FÁS employment

out the answers to each section on the photocopy. This allows you to work through your answers in rough. *Never* start work on the actual form until you have filled in a practice copy first. The first time you complete a form it will take you a long time to gather all the relevant facts such as dates, addresses, qualification certificates etc. So once you have collected the information together make sure you can refer to it again quickly by keeping copies of old forms and creating an applications file.

activities and interests?" These questions offer you a real opportunity to sell yourself and show your suitability for the job.

Start by deciding what information each open-ended question is really asking for. For example the question about interests is not just asking you to list your hobbies. It is really asking you to demonstrate that you are an interesting person who has more to offer than just qualifications and that, through the interests and activities

Your aim in completing the form is to ensure that all your key selling points are included somewhere. Draft your answers to the questions. Make sure to present yourself in a positive light. Before you commit anything to paper try to be clear in your mind about:

- what you are going to say
- who you are saying it to
- how you are going to say it
- why you are saying it.

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BASIC RULES FOR COMPLETING APPLICATIONS

- Have all of the information you are going to need ready (including dates of each employment or training, contact details etc)
- Make a photocopy or two to practice on. Then fill out the original and return it to the employers. However, note that many employers will expect you to be prepared, requiring you to fill out the application on site.
- Print or type - use black or blue ink.
- Write neatly and legibly.
- Use ACTION VERBS to describe duties (see Appendix 3).
- Check your spelling and grammar.
- Bring a pen and ruler with you.
- If you are at the work site and have made several errors, ask for another application.
- Be specific about the position for which you are applying. Never write "anything" or "whatever is available."
- List a telephone number where you can be reached.
- Check for mistakes before you hand it in.
- Sign and date your application.
- Your signature on an employment application is a certification that the information you have provided is true.
- Have a good attitude, smile, and use good manners.
- Bring a professional copy of your CV.
- Take a photocopy of the completed application form so that you can refer to it again prior to the interview.

**This is your chance to demonstrate why you are the one for the job.
Take this section of the application seriously.**

20 - 23- The Career Centre, California State University
Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A Guide
to Success

- Read over all questions first before writing anything
- Note any guidelines provided by the employer on how to complete the form.
- Follow directions carefully.
- If you don't understand a questions ask for help.
- Answer all questions completely.
- Leave no blank spaces - if an answer is "none" or "not any", write that.
- Print N/A on questions that do not apply to you.
- Make sure you relate skills to position desired.
- In the salary-desired block, write "open," "negotiable."
- List work history starting with your most recent employer and working backwards.
- Refrain from negatives as reasons for leaving a job.
- If there is a space for comments or additional information, use it to help sell yourself, personality, hobbies, etc.

Note: When listing your job duties, be specific. Describe what you did, to what or whom, using what skills, tools, or equipment. Use action verbs (See Appendix 3). This is your chance to demonstrate why you are the one for the job. Take this section of the application seriously. Never write "See CV" as this can be viewed as being very unprofessional and lazy.

HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- Problem questions may be addressed by writing "May discuss at time of interview"
- Avoid negatives. Use phrases such as: "seasonal employment", "moved" or "laid off".

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING EXPERIENCES:

- Work on a school/college magazine.
- Intern work for a business.
- Serving on committees.
- Achieving recognition for an essay or project.
- Assisting a teacher.
- Baby-sitting.
- Helping with lawn care.
- Leadership in a club.

- **HELPING WITH LAWN CARE**
Requires skill in operating machinery and tools, handling of chemicals.
- **BABY-SITTING**
Requires skill in supervision, planning activities, teaching, conflict resolution.

EXPLAINING GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT

It is important that you try to account for your past ten years, if possible, when completing a job application.

SUMMARY

- Match yourself to the job.
- Make sure your form looks good.
- Ensure that the layout and presentation are clear and attractive.
- Use good English.
- Spelling and grammar must be perfect.
- Keep it simple.
- Present all your information positively.
- Sell yourself! - It is important that the employer can see everything you have to offer to the job.

Most forms include questions about why you are applying for the job. These are offering you an opportunity to summarise why this post is of interest to you.

IF YOU HAVE LITTLE WORK EXPERIENCE:

Activities that you have participated in can be related to the job you are applying for. Many tasks have led to the acquirement of marketable skills.

- Look at volunteer, hobby, chores, and other experiences.
- Use classroom and other educational and training experiences.

Think about the tasks listed above and how you might be able to state the task in a skill.

FOR EXAMPLE

- **WORK ON A SCHOOL/COLLEGE MAGAZINE**
Requires skill in researching, editing, writing, and possibly selling ads and using computers.

The list below may help to give you ideas for discussing gaps in employment on an application, or even in person during the interview:

- Returned to or began school.
- Worked part-time.
- Self employed.
- Raised children.
- Travelled.
- Received career counselling.

- Keep everything relevant.
- Avoid including unnecessary information - don't waffle!

COMMON MISTAKES

- Completing application in pencil.
- Writing in a sloppy and untidy manner.
- Writing "open" under position desired, or not being specific with position title.

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- Listing an unrealistic amount under "salary desired" instead of writing "open" or "negotiable".
- Not enough information on the former employment section.
- Failing to sign the application when completed.
- Making errors or omissions: Spelling mistakes; incomplete information; leaving items blank.
- Failing to relate skills to position desired.

TARGETING

Many people who try making speculative applications do so by sending their CV to hundreds of firms. You will greatly increase the return rate on the CVs you send out by targeting those potential employers who are likely to be looking for what you are offering. One extremely good way of discovering firms to write to is to ask around amongst your personal contacts (*see the Section on Networking*).

currently being advertised, they may not know about a specific department's future recruitment plans. If no-one at the firm can tell you whether or not there will be any vacancies then someone may at least be able to give you the name and job title of the manager you need to write to.

SENDING CVs AND LETTERS

The more you have been able to find out about a firm, the easier it will be for you to target your CV and covering letter

It is worth first phoning the firms you intend to mail to find out what jobs, if any, are likely to be arising in the near future.

²⁴ The Career Centre, California State University Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A Guide to Success

MAKING SPECULATIVE APPLICATIONS

Anyone who has so far been unsuccessful applying for advertised jobs or work may benefit from a more direct approach. As mentioned previously, many job vacancies are never advertised - you will only find these vacancies by adopting a speculative strategy. The purpose of this section is to focus specifically on how to make direct applications- a "proactive" job-hunting technique.

You should carry out some research before you send your letter and CV to an employer. (Refer to Section 1 on what an employer expects from you). It is worth first phoning the firms you intend to mail to find out what jobs, if any, are likely to be arising in the near future. By this method you can rule out companies that are not recruiting. Your enquiry should ideally be directed towards the manager of the section you wish to join. Personnel departments can only help if vacancies are

appropriately. If your letter starts "Dear Sir or Madam" and gives the impression that you don't know what work may be available, you will probably have less impact than if you are able to write saying, for example: "Dear Mr Jones, I am writing further to our telephone conversation on Thursday November the 17th. You mentioned the possibility of a temporary vacancy arising for an xxxxxx in your xxxxxx department". The first type of letter requires less effort but the second

approach has a higher chance of success and should be more cost effective in the long run.

FOLLOW UP

If you think that mass emailing your CV will be enough to get you hired, think again. Recruiters generally receive a lot of CVs and may not have time to pursue a candidate who doesn't follow up with a phone call. One week later is a reasonable time to follow-up and instead of

over the years in getting a job this way and the costs are of course minimal. Some employers might never respond to a direct approach whilst others may be impressed by the fact that you have gone to these lengths to find work. Initiative shown in approaching employers is highly regarded as an indicator of a motivated person who will make a good employee. An employer working in a sales orientated environment (e.g.: retailing, sales management, advertising, marketing etc) will notice someone who sells her/himself extremely well. If

researched could possibly have relevant vacancies. Prepare a good list of questions before making contact. It may also be best to take a networking approach when making face to face contact, e.g.: Ask for information and advice before you ask "Do you have any vacancies?"

THE TELE-SALES APPROACH

Another effective way of finding job leads is through direct telephone contacts with potential employers. The telephone should

might receive some very helpful advice and the offer of some work-shadowing.

2.4. Cold Calling Tips & Techniques

You can access contact information for local employers through the Yellow Pages Directory of your phone book. Begin by considering all the types of organisations which employ people with your skills. Under which Yellow Pages headings would

If you think that mass emailing your CV will be enough to get you hired, think again. Recruiters generally receive a lot of CVs and may not have time to pursue a candidate who doesn't follow up with a phone call.

demanding a response, remind the employer that you're still interested and briefly highlight one or two qualifications.

"KNOCKING ON DOORS"

The most direct method of job hunting is to go round in person from one work place to the next, asking about possible employment opportunities. To be able to do this effectively you will need to be resilient. However, many people have succeeded

you are going to try "knocking on doors", you must be able to make a good first impression and present your case concisely. Just because "knocking on doors" requires you to think on your feet, this does not mean you cannot have a proper strategy. You should still research employers and target them carefully. For example, you could get a list of all the firms on a particular trading estate, find out as much as you can about them, then work out which of the firms you have

only be used as part of a speculative job-hunting campaign, not as the sole approach. It is always best to be flexible when you telephone employers. It could happen that you might contact someone for information and advice and discover that you are being interviewed over the telephone, for a job that has just arisen. This might happen, for example, with a sales vacancy. Likewise, you could phone someone in the hope of getting a job and, although unsuccessful on that score, you

you look to find these organisations? Each listing contains potential employers.

Decide which type of potential employer you would most enjoy working for and begin calling businesses listed under that heading. Call each one and ask to come in for an interview. Again, it's important to prepare a statement of your qualifications and practice before making any calls. You can practice role-playing with your friends or family for the interview.

Section 2. Undertaking the job search

For example: "Good morning Mr. Ryan, my name is Susan Larkin. I'm interested in a position in Customer Service. I have just finished a two-year course at Anytown College where I learned to work well with others. As part of my college requirements, I secured a placement at Anywhere Hospital, where I got hands-on experience. I'm reliable and very good with customers. Could I come in and talk further with you?"

You will improve your chances of success by following the steps listed below when phoning potential employers.

- Explain why you are calling
- Highlight one or two of your qualifications and ask for an opportunity to meet and discuss career opportunities available now or in the future. If you get an appointment, take note of the time and place and thank him/her.
- If you are informed that there are no vacancies in that employment, follow the remaining steps:-
 - Listen to what is being said to you;
 - Ask for suggestions for other job leads in the area;

you may consider joining a Jobs Club. For more information on Jobs Clubs in your area call your local FÁS Employment Services Office.

2.5. Other Options

- **INTERNSHIPS/APPRENTICESHIPS**
Will allow you to expand your work experiences and may result in an extension of a job offer when the internship is completed. It also gives you a valuable source of referee.



²⁵ Kentucky Office of Employment and Training Virtual Workshop Centre

- Time your call - eg. not late on a Friday evening or early Monday morning
- Speak clearly
- Be pleasant and brief
- Greet and identify yourself by name to whoever answers the phone
- Ask for the name of the head of the unit where people with your skills work. Then ask to speak with that person.
- Greet and give your name to the department head and call him/her by name.

- Thank him/her for the information and ask if you may call back at a later date and;
- When/if you secure an appointment to meet, bring along an up-to-date CV and be prepared to be interviewed

It is important to present yourself and your qualifications in the most positive way possible and to keep a log to record all of your contacts and the outcome of each contact. If your approach is not working,

- **PART TIME EMPLOYMENT**
This will give you some income and still leave you time to look for other employment.
- **COMPROMISE**
Don't set your goals too high at first. Be willing to take a position that does not quite meet all your needs. If an organisation is growing, you could end up in an ideal position for advancement.

Section 3. Disclosure of Disability

Disclosure of a disability requires thought and preparation. Deciding on the appropriate time to inform an employer of a disability is a difficult decision for many. It is vital that each individual with a disability takes some time to think about the - who, what, how and when to disclose.

It is important, for example, to recognise that in many instances, the disability may be apparent to the employer and therefore the issue of disclosure is decided by the

Learning to deal constructively and positively with an issue such as disclosure of a disability is an essential part of pre-employment preparation and is discussed in detail in *Section 2 Getting a Job of the Workway Employment Guidelines* located at www.workway.ie

The information contained in these pages discusses:-

- Managing a disability in different environments;

It is vital that each individual with a disability takes some time to think about the - who, what, how and when to disclose.

²⁶ Kentucky Office of Employment and Training Virtual Workshop Centre

nature of the disability. In addition, some individuals will need to work with appropriate support personnel (e.g., job coach) to make an informed decision in relation to this. Be aware that there are some employers who don't know that personal choice is a major part of disclosure. They may see failure to disclose as dishonest, while having no difficulty with hiring the best person for the job without prejudice toward applicants with disabilities.

- Why should anyone disclose their disability to prospective/existing employers?
- Preparation for disclosure;
- When to disclose a disability and;
- Employers' concerns.

Section 4. Reasonable Accommodations

This section explains the concept of 'reasonable accommodations' and outlines the points you need to consider and the steps to take when assessing your need for an accommodation. See pages 25 - 31 of the Workway Employment Guidelines located at www.workway.ie which provides a comprehensive guide to reasonable accommodations, including topics such as:-

- Employment equality legislation;
- Definition of reasonable accommodation;

Section 5. Interviews

This section covers all aspects of preparing for and doing interviews. It looks at what to consider prior to the interview and how to evaluate your performance afterwards

5.1. Interview

WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

An interview is a two-way flow of communication between an employer and prospective employee. It is used by the



- Examples of reasonable accommodation;
- Steps to consider when deciding if you need a reasonable accommodation in the workplace;
- How and when to request a reasonable accommodation and;
- Workplace Equipment/ Adaptation Grant (WEAG).

employer to learn more about you as a potential employee and it seeks to clarify information provided through the application process (i.e. CV or Application form). The interview helps the employer to decide whether your skills, abilities and personal traits would be a "good fit" for the organisation. An interview provides you with the opportunity to sell yourself as the best candidate for the job. You can explain to the prospective employer your skills and ability to do the job on offer. It

also gives you the opportunity to find out more about the company and whether it matches your expectations from the work environment. It is vital to make a good impression at the interview.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW

Employers involved in recruitment can adopt different approaches to interviewing so you need to prepare yourself to be involved in different types of Interview such as:

The format of a panel interview will usually be where each interviewer will have a particular area of questioning they will take you through.

■ GROUP INTERVIEW

A group interview is where there are more than one candidate interviewed at the same time. Group interviews are often carried out at assessment centres and will require you to participate in a number of activities. This can be a group task likely relating to actual tasks of the

■ **BEHAVIOURAL /COMPETENCY INTERVIEW**
Behavioural or competency based interviews are based on the understanding that past performance is a good indicator of future behaviour. Therefore in this type of interview the interviewee is asked to give specific examples explaining when and how you undertook tasks and the outcome of these. The level of competency required will be set prior to the interview. Each individual is asked the same questions and their response is rated accordingly.

management and management control.

- *Analytical competencies* - the elements of decision making: Innovation, analytical skills, numerical problem solving, problem solving, practical learning and detail consciousness.
- *Interpersonal competencies* - dealing with other people: Communication, impact, persuasiveness, personal awareness, teamwork and openness.
- *Motivational competencies* - the things that drive you: Resilience, energy,

Employers involved in recruitment can adopt different approaches to interviewing so you need to prepare yourself to be involved in different types of Interview.

■ PANEL INTERVIEW

A panel interview is the standard approach in current recruitment practices in Ireland. It involves a panel of between 2 and 5 interviewers who will assess your ability and performance. A panel interview can be an equitable and objective approach as it involves more than one person in the decision making. Usually one of the panel will act as chairperson and introduce you to other interviewers.

job, which is observed. The employer will be looking to see how well you can undertake the task and what your skills are. They will also be assessing your behaviour, how you responded to working in a group environment, your level of participation. Group interviews can combine a number of formal and informal activities. You will be assessed on all aspects, so even in a social situation it is important to remember you are participating in an interview.

Every job can be described in terms of key competencies. Some examples of these are:

- *Individual competencies* - your personal attributes: Flexibility, decisiveness, tenacity, independence, risk taking and personal integrity.
- *Managerial competencies* - taking charge of other people: Leadership, empowerment, strategic planning, corporate sensitivity, project

motivation, achievement orientation, initiative and quality focus.

- *Psychometric Testing* - Psychometric testing is usually a series of tests that the candidate is required to participate in within a short timeframe. These tests will assess areas such as:
Ability/Aptitude - numerical, verbal or diagrammatic reasoning and;
Personality - looking at personality styles.

Section 5. Interviews

Each of these types of tests will involve you in answering a series of multiple choice questions within a specified time-frame. When participating in this type of test it is important to listen carefully to the instructions given at the beginning and to remember this is timed so try and pace yourself accordingly.

You should seek feedback from employers on your level of performance in these so that you can highlight areas that might need improvement. There are a large

who the company are, what their work environment is like and culture.

- Go back to the job description and personal specification. Be clear on what the position entails and how you meet the employer expectations.
- If possible try and participate in a Mock Interview preferably related to your chosen industry or career.
- If you intend to discuss your needs regarding reasonable accommodation at interview stage have a clear understanding of your ability to do the job

on answers to these. It is not necessarily a good idea to "learn off" answers but instead have a clear idea on how you would respond.

- Break down the job description into tasks and try and list your relevant skills and experiences. Refer back to your CV or application form. This will be particularly useful in preparing for a competency based interview.
- Practise disclosing your disability in a positive manner (*Refer to the Workway Employment Guidelines, section 2*

The dress code for the interview is very important, as it is part of the non-verbal first impression you create. Dress appropriately.

²⁶ Victoria University of Wellington, Job Hunting Preparation Career Development and Employment Student Services

number of books and websites available that will give you more detail on these. A starting point could be UCC and UL websites, career guidance sections. (*See Appendix 2 for website addresses*).

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEW

Before the interview there are a number of actions you should undertake:

- Refer back to your research about the employer. Make sure you understand

and accommodations needed to perform the essential functions. Know what the accommodations are, where to get them, and approximate cost. It is a good idea to rehearse how to make the request by using role-play, doing a video recording or practice in front of a mirror. Refer to section on reasonable accommodations in this guide for further information.

- Try and list the type of questions you might expect to be asked and decide

Getting a Job for further detail on disclosing your disability)

- Make sure you are on time, excuses such as heavy traffic or unreliable public transport are not acceptable. Leave extra time to ensure you arrive on time. It is a good idea to arrive at the interview location approximately 15 minutes before the appointed time. This gives you an opportunity to relax and gather your thoughts before you are called in.

The dress code for the interview is very important, as it is part of the non-verbal first impression you create. Dress appropriately.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Most interviews will follow a similar format. The opening will be the time used by the interviewer to ask you some open-ended questions allowing you to relax. At this stage the interviewer(s) will also be observing your appearance, manner,

The following are some Do's and Don'ts for during the interview

- DO use comfortable eye contact.
- DO greet the interviewer(s) in a friendly manner with a firm handshake.
- DO look pleased to be there. Be enthusiastic and upbeat but not overbearing.
- DO bring a copy of your CV or Application form.
- DO ask for clarification if unsure what was asked.

the interviewer but do this in a calm and reasoned manner.

- DON'T speak in a low monotone.
- DON'T talk too much or give long-winded answers. Keep your answers focused on the questions asked.
- DON'T knock other people or previous employers.
- DON'T lie or over-exaggerate your abilities and experiences.

- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why should you get this job?
- Describe the skills and abilities you have that are relevant to this job.
- Give examples of the tasks you have undertaken that are relevant to this job.
- How is your education/training relevant to this job?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What are your key achievements to date?

Make sure you are on time, excuses such as heavy traffic or unreliable public transport are not acceptable. Leave extra time to ensure you arrive on time.

attitude, body language and tone of voice. The second stage of the interview will concentrate on specific investigation of your skills and experience in relation to the job on offer. The closing stage of the interview is when you will be given the opportunity to ask questions in relation to the position or the company in general. The interviewer will usually give an indication as to what the next stage is in their recruitment process and the timeframe in which you can expect a response on your performance.

- DO focus on what the interviewer is saying, not on how you will respond.
- DO control your emotions.
- DO listen attentively to the interviewer.
- DO validate gaps in your CV or the Application form.
- DO highlight/prove your abilities.
- DON'T interrupt.
- DON'T lose concentration.
- DON'T become aggressive or argumentative with the interview panel. It is okay to disagree with a point made by

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are some suggestions on the type of questions that you might be asked at interview. They are not a definitive list and you should use them as a guide. You should also try and list questions that might arise in relation to the job description.

- What interests you about this job?
- Why did you apply for this job?

- How would you deal with difficult situations in the workplace? (You might be given an outline of a situation that might arise)

CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW

Once you are aware that the interview is being brought to a close you should try to highlight any other relevant skills and talents that have not been discussed so far in the interview.

Section 5. Interviews

Usually the employer will give you an opportunity to ask questions near the end of the interview. It is important that you identify some possible questions before the interview. A good rule of thumb is to ask questions in relation to company performance or training available. You can also ask about the next stage in the process, whether they are planning second interviews and when you can expect to get a response regarding the interview.

- performance (see point 12 for further details).
- You cannot change how this interview went so after evaluating your performance, it is important to forget about the interview and continue with your job search.
- If the interviewer has given you an indication of when they will make a decision allow this time period to pass before following up with any request for feedback.

remember this next time?

- Were you asked unexpected questions and how to prepare for these?

It might be a good idea to discuss your answers to these questions with a friend or career adviser to assist in improving your performance at the next interview.



²⁷ The Career Centre, California State University Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A Guide to Success

Finally make sure you leave on a positive note. Regardless of how you felt the interview went it is important to be polite to all members of the interview, thank them for the opportunity of the interview and smile as you leave the room. Final impressions can have a lasting impression.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Once the interview is over you should undertake a self evaluation of your

5.2. Interview Evaluation

Doing a self assessment on how an interview went is vital. Thinking back over the questions asked and how you answered these will help you to improve your performance at subsequent interviews. Try and answer the following questions:

- What went well?
- What went badly?
- What needs improvement?
- What did you omit to say and how to

5.3. Using a Sign Language Interpreter

As an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing it might be necessary for you to communicate through an interpreter at your interview. The following pointers relate to the use of a sign language interpreter at interview:

- Introduce your interpreter right after shaking hands with the interviewer.

- Explain that the interpreter is there to facilitate communication and not to provide input into the interview.
- Ask for the interpreter to be seated next to the interviewer.
- When possible use a trained interpreter as these are subject to a professional code of ethics that respect confidentiality and communicate accurately and impartially on behalf of the person who is deaf.
- Using untrained interpreters might be necessary but it is important that you

Remember that you may not get offered the first position you apply for. It is important that you continue your job search until you are successful. You cannot be the best candidate for every job!

Section 6. Accepting and keeping the job

You are now moving towards the final stage of the recruitment process and closer to starting your new job.

6.1. Job Offers

This is the vital stage in the recruitment process. At last the job offer has arrived and you are ready to start in your new career. It is important at this stage that you make the decision to accept the position based on all information available to you. Remember that you

As an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing it might be necessary for you to communicate through an interpreter at your interview.

- explain your needs clearly to them.
- Trained interpreters can be booked through Irish Signlink Interpreting Agency. FAS offer grant aid for a job interview interpreter. Further details are available from your local FAS employment office or on www.workway.ie

should not confirm acceptance of a job offer until you have received the offer in writing. Once you have the written offer the following pointers should help you make an informed decision:

You have been offered the job so now you must also decide if the terms and conditions being offered meet your expectations.

Section 6.

Accepting and keeping the job

- Study all the terms and conditions of the job. Some of the information included in the terms and conditions are:
 - Duties of the position.
 - Salary and other financial benefits (e.g. expenses, bonuses etc).
 - Duration of the employment e.g. permanent, temporary, fixed term contract.
 - Working hours per week.
 - Annual leave.
 - Disciplinary procedures.
- further details on disclosing a disability, refer to the Workway Employment Guidelines, Section Two - on Getting a Job)
- Discuss the agreed accommodations with the employer and ensure these will be in place as agreed.
- Some job offers are conditional to passing a medical assessment. A medical assessment is used by the employer as a statement that you are medically fit to undertake the work associated with this position. It is

6.2. Keeping the Job

Getting the job seems like hard work until you are faced with the "first day" nerves. However, once you get through this stage it is as important to work at keeping your job. Look back at what you identified as the employer expectations in relation to this company and this will refresh your memory on some of the steps you can take to integrate well into this company and also work at keeping your job. You should

**Some job offers are conditional to passing a medical assessment.
A medical assessment is used by the employer as a statement that you
are medically fit to undertake the work associated with this position.**

Refer back to Section One – "Know Yourself" and compare the job terms with your skills, values and interests. It is important these are compatible if you are to be happy in your new work setting

- Assess the basics such as salary, work times etc and make sure these are appropriate to your needs and abilities.
- This is the final opportunity to clarify any outstanding points in relation to your disability in the workplace. (For

important that you are aware of all information that will assist the medical practitioner in accurately assessing your fitness for this job. If there is a need for accommodations, you should highlight this to the medical practitioner and explain what you have agreed with the employers. (See Introduction Note above).

also remember that most employment will not meet all your needs and requirements and this is something you can work on over time. Some pointers to consider when keeping the job are:

- Have a positive attitude and be open to learning from your co-workers.
- Do your share of the work and, when necessary, be willing to help others.
- Co-operate with others, teamwork is often a big part of most jobs. Don't be

afraid to ask for assistance from your colleagues at busy times in your job.

- Be courteous and friendly to all colleagues, each person plays a role in making the company successful.
- Be dependable. Most companies demand good time management from employees.
- Be honest - don't be afraid to admit mistakes.
- Sometimes, it isn't until you actually start work that you discover that you require a specific reasonable

person and doing someone else's work on an ongoing basis.

- Be willing to take direction particularly from your manager/supervisor. Criticism of your work can be constructive if used to improve your performance. Different supervisors may have different styles of management and you should be able to adapt to this.
- Find ways to resolve conflict in a calm and reasonable manner.
- If you are experiencing discrimination or harassment you should bring it to

Remember that most employment will not meet all your needs and requirements and this is something you can work on over time.

accommodation to allow you to fulfil the job's requirements. Refer back to the section on reasonable accommodations in the Workway Employment Guidelines to refresh your memory on what points to consider when making a request.

- Be flexible, if you are rigid in the work duties you are willing to undertake this might lead to difficulties when you need assistance. However make sure you are not being exploited as the new

the attention of the appropriate person immediately.

- Be aware of the balance between your work and personal life. It is not a good idea to become too involved in a work colleagues personal life or involve them in yours.
- Remember you are the new person so you should be patient.

Finally congratulations on your new job and good luck!

Appendix 1.

Functional Skills Listing

DATA

- *Analyzing
- *Calculating
- *Classifying
- *Collating
- *Comparing
- *Compiling
- *Composing
- *Computing
- *Coordinating
- *Copying
- *Creating
- *Developing ideas
- *Evaluating
- *Examining
- *Filing
- *Gathering
- *Interpreting
- *Investigating
- *Managing money
- *Observing
- *Organizing
- *Presenting
- *Reading
- *Recording
- *Reporting
- *Researching
- *Sorting
- *Synthesizing
- *Transcribing
- *Writing

PEOPLE

- *Advising
- *Caring for
- *Confronting others
- *Consulting
- *Coordinating
- *Counseling
- *Directing
- *Empathizing
- *Entertaining
- *Guiding
- *Helping
- *Influencing others
- *Informing
- *Instructing
- *Interpreting procedures
- *Leading
- *Listening
- *Managing
- *Mentoring
- *Motivating
- *Negotiating
- *Persuading
- *Serving
- *Speaking
- *Supervising
- *Supporting
- *Taking instructions
- *Teaching
- *Training
- *Treating

THINGS

- *Adjusting
- *Assembling
- *Building
- *Calibrating
- *Carrying
- *Crafting
- *Cutting
- *Demonstrating
- *Designing
- *Disassembling
- *Driving/Operating
- *Emptying
- *Feeding/Offbearing
- *Finishing/Refining
- *Guiding
- *Handling
- *Loading
- *Manipulating
- *Monitoring
- *Moving
- *Operating/Controlling
- *Precision working
- *Preparing
- *Pushing
- *Regulating
- *Remodelling
- *Repairing
- *Setting up
- *Stacking
- *Tending

Appendix 2.

Useful weblinks

www.irishjobs.ie
www.manpower.ie
www.nrf.ie
www.fas.ie
www.careersworld.ie/
www.prospects.ac.uk/
www.rileyguide.com/careers.html
www.careerdirections.ie
www.manpower.ie
www.acinet.org
www.brunel.ac.uk/careers/new/students_jobhunting.shtml
www.kansasjoblink.com/ada/disability/
www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/careers/
www.jobhuntersbible.com
www.ucc.ie/careers/
www.csun.edu
www.oet.ky.gov/des/vws/virtual_workshop.asp
<http://spot.pcc.edu/~rjacobs/career/index.htm>
http://www.oet.ky.gov/des/vws/virtual_workshop.asp
<http://www.csun.edu/~sp20558/dis/shcontents.html>

Appendix 3.

Action Verbs

Verb phrases are the strongest way to describe previous job responsibilities. To write verb phrases, pretend you're telling someone about your job, beginning each sentence with "I" For example, "I supervise ten employees. I organise mass mailings. I arrange hotel reservations." On the CV you omit the "I" and use only the remaining verb phrases to describe the work you do: "Supervise ten employees. Organize mass mailings. Arrange hotel reservations." Begin your job descriptions with a power verb or phrase: enlisted the support..., formed a committee..., sold, budgeted, improved, increased. Use present tense verb phrases for jobs you currently hold and past tense for former jobs.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Administered, analysed, assigned, attained, chaired, consolidated, contracted, co-ordinated, delegated, developed, directed, evaluated, executed, improved, increased, organised, oversaw, planned, prioritised, produced, recommended, reviewed, scheduled, strengthened, supervised

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Addressed, arranged, authored, collaborated, corresponded, developed, directed, drafted, edited, enlisted, formulated, influenced, interpreted, mediated, negotiated, persuaded, promoted, publicised, spoke, translated

RESEARCH SKILLS

Clarified, collected, critiqued, diagnosed, evaluated, examined, extracted, identified, inspected, interpreted, interviewed, investigated, organised, reviewed, summarised, surveyed

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Assembled, built, calculated, computed, designed, devised, engineered, fabricated, maintained, operated, overhauled, programmed, remodelled, repaired, solved, upgraded

TEACHING SKILLS

Adapted, advised, clarified, coached, communicated, co-ordinated, developed, enabled, encouraged, evaluated, explained, facilitated, guided, informed, instructed, persuaded, set goals, stimulated, trained

FINANCIAL SKILLS

Administered, allocated, analysed, appraised, audited, balanced, budgeted, calculated, computed, developed, forecasted, managed, marketed, planned, projected, researched

CREATIVE SKILLS

Acted, created, designed, developed, directed, established, fashioned, founded, illustrated, initiated, introduced, invented, originated, performed, planned, revitalised, shaped

HELPING SKILL

Assessed, assisted, clarified, coached, counselled, demonstrated, diagnosed, educated, facilitated, familiarised, guided, motivated, referred, rehabilitated, represented

CLERICAL SKILLS

Arranged, catalogued, classified, collected, compiled, dispatched, executed, filed, generated, implemented, inspected, monitored, operated, organised, prepared, processed, purchased, recorded, retrieved, screened, specified, tabulated,

MORE VERBS FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Achieved, expanded, improved, pioneered, reduced (losses), resolved (problems), restored, spearheaded, transformed

Source: The Career Centre, California State University
Job Seeking Skills for People with Disabilities A Guide to Success