Virtual Job Search: Skills for Success

Canada

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Ontario

ALN | PEEL · HALTON · DUFFERIN ADULT LEARNING NETWORK

Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin

Project READ Literacy Network

Why we need this Project?

With concerns for safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses have been forced to adapt their hiring processes. Most plan to keep these new processes in the future for the safety of their employees. With the change from in-person to virtual hiring, recruitment has been one of the biggest challenges for both businesses and job seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and includes:

- Completing online forms
- Attaching digital resumes and documents
- Digital signatures
- Video interviews
- Online job fairs
- Using hiring software that evaluates candidates
- Recruiting in new regions for fully remote positions
- Electronic onboarding & training

This drastic change in the hiring process is requiring job seekers to adapt and learn new skills. There is a need to modernize the skills framework and provide a common understanding of the virtual job search skills in consistent and user-friendly language to both job seekers and training providers.

Overview

The *Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin* partnered *with Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington*, *Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network* for this project. HR & Recruitment personnel from different industries were invited to provide insight into the skills they are looking for job seekers to demonstrate at different stages of the recruitment process.

With the data collected, we created profiles defining the different job search tasks along with the skill level needed. These profiles aim to clearly identify skill gaps and training opportunities for job seekers, students and immigrants, so they can work on those skills and improve their success in their job search.

These profiles will also help the Job Developers, employment support workers, and organization to identify the skills required for a smooth and successful recruitment process in the changing labour market, providing them an opportunity to focus on problem points and enhancing employment support.
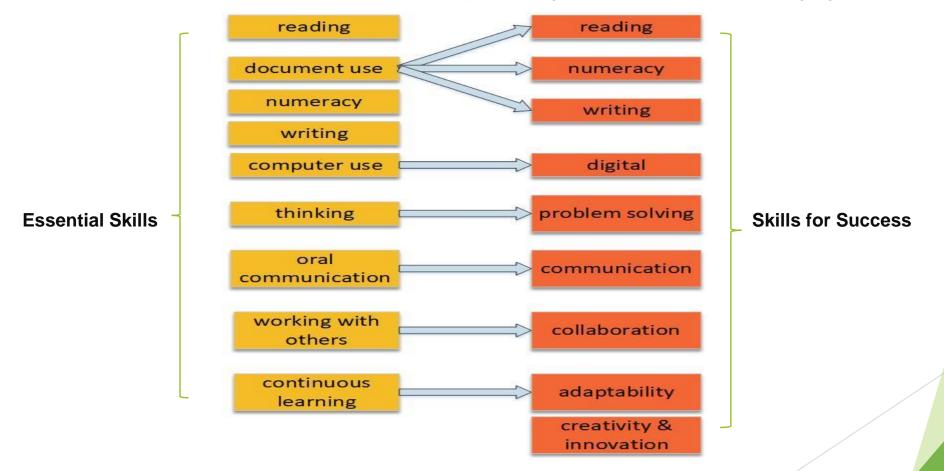
Skills for Success/ Essential Skills

Skills for Success, formerly Essential Skills was launched by the government of Canada on May14, 2021 to update the existing Essential Skills framework. The new skills model reflects the skills needed for the Canadian workplace, rapidly evolving labour market, and changing world.

Essential Skills

Essential Skills	Skills for Success
reading	reading
document use	numeracy
numeracy	writing
writing	
computer use	digital
thinking	problem solving
oral communication	communication
working with others	collaboration
continuous learning	adaptability
	creativity & innovation

Skills for Success

Here is what changed in the move from the Essential Skills framework to the new Skills for Success mode

Skills for Success: Definitions

"Skills for Success are the skills needed to participate and thrive in learning, work and life." – Skills for Success report from Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC)

- Foundation for building new skills and knowledge
- Important for effective social interaction
- Can be adapted to different contexts.
- Apply to everyone – employers, workers, training providers, governments, and communities.

Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Digital	Problem Solving	Communication
Collaboration	Adaptability	Creativity and Innovation

The colour coding in the above picture comes from the report by SRDC.

Skills for Success: Definitions

Reading

Find, understand, and use information presented through words, symbols, and images.

Writing

Share information using written words, symbols, and images.

Numeracy

Find, understand, use, and report mathematical information presented through words, numbers, symbols, and graphics.

Digital

Use digital technology and tools to find, manage, apply, create and share information and content.

Problem Solving

Identify, analyze, propose solutions, and make decisions. Problem solving helps you to address issues, monitor success, and learn from the experience.

Skills for Success: Definitions

Communication

Receive, understand, consider, and share information and ideas through speaking, listening, and interacting with others.

Collaboration

Contribute and support others to achieve a common goal.

Adaptability

Achieve or adjust goals and behaviours when expected or unexpected change occurs. Adaptability is shown by planning, staying focused, persisting, and overcoming setbacks.

Creativity and Innovation

Imagine, develop, express, encourage, and apply ideas in ways that are novel, unexpected, or challenge existing methods and norms.

The Icons are taken from Employment and Social Development Canada website with the link to the site for more information.

Proficiency Levels

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates or is required to demonstrate a particular skill.

- **Level - 1**

- **Level - 2**

- **Level – 3**

- We have not included **level 4 and level 5** in the document as they are advanced levels and deal in more complex and specialized knowledge.

- The most recently added Skills – Adaptability and Creativity and Innovation are two new skills added in Skills for Success ad hence may not have as much details as other skills.

- The following slides include what is considered Level 1, 2 and 3.
  These examples come from:
  https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/learning-steps.html

Essential Skills Level 1

- Dealing with/finding one piece of information.

- Math this means one type of computation e.g. 2 + 2 or 325 + 243 +576.

- Reading this means finding one piece of information e.g. Who is responsible for responding to the email.

Essential Skills Level 2

- Dealing with/finding multiple pieces of information or one piece of information with distractors.

- Math this means using more than one computation e.g. $1.25 + $3.60 + 13% tax = X.

- Reading this means finding more than one piece of information or finding one piece of information with distractors e.g. On which day does a cleaner sanitize the boiler? (with there being different days listed for different cleanings).

Essential Skills Level 3

- Dealing with/finding multiple pieces of information and using them in some way.

- Math this means making more than one computation to answer a problem e.g. adding together and invoice with tax and then making change for the customer.

- Reading this means finding multiple pieces of information to perhaps explain how something is done or to compare products.

Profiles Overview

Profiles describe the required skill levels in each step of a virtual job search.

There are profiles available for each of these components:

➢ Online Job Search and Job Boards

➢ Online Job Application

➢ Resume and Cover letter on Online Job Applications and Job Boards

➢ Virtual Job Fair

➢ Virtual Job Interview

The following slides gives a detailed description of the required skills for each components.

On-line Job Search & Job Boards

Job boards or employment websites are the first stop for a job seeker looking for a suitable job online. This requires them to have basic computer knowledge and how to use the internet.

Job boards may have search functions that allow a job seeker to narrow down the postings by geography, type of job and hours of work.

Some rely on the National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes which the federal government uses to organize jobs.

Skills for Success Profile –
Online Job Search and Job Board

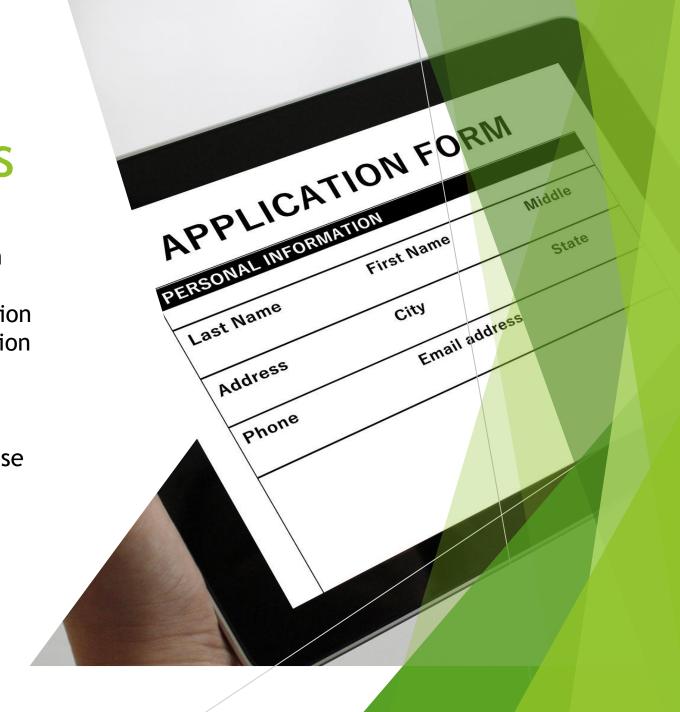| Task	Complexity
READING*	
• read how to use job board	2
• read requirements of job in job ads	2
• research job boards and listings	3
• read between the lines (what is the employer really asking?)	3
• read and compare skills required in job ads	3
NUMERACY	
• understand ratings of job boards (e.g. best job boards)	1
• calculate the distance of the job to home address	1
• calculate the years of experience or education	1
• calculate percent of skills obtained to job requirements	3
WRITING*	
• complete word searches	1
• create and complete an applicant page	2
DIGITAL*	
• complete simple internet searches	1
• log onto job board/websites	1
• create accounts on job boards	2
• set up job alerts	2
• complete internet searches using different criteria (e.g. using position and city)	3
• search/navigate job board sites	3

Online Job Search and Job Board

PROBLEM SOLVING	
• solve search, website and technology issues	3
• decide on best sites and job boards	3
• problem solve using FAQ pages	3
COMMUNICATION	
oral communication tasks are not used in this profile	
COLLABORATION (no complexity levels)	
• work with Employment Service workers for Job Search supports	no levels
ADAPTABILITY (no complexity levels)	
• identify comparable and transferable skills	no levels
• adapt to new online environments	
• ability to change formats with different job boards	
• adapting to an ever-changing job market	
CREATIVITY and INNOVATION (no complexity levels)	
• use creativity to match skill sets	no levels
• search for ways to also make direct contact with employer	

*Indicates most important skill(s) for profile

On-line Job Applications

While applying for a job on-line, candidates are required to fill in a standard application form. This application form itself is a minor test of the applicant's literacy, communication and other skills. It requires pulling information out of resume and transferring it into the preferred company format.

A poorly filled-in job application can decrease a jobseeker's chances to move to the next level of the hiring process.

Skills for Success Profile- Online Job Application

Task	Complexity
READING*	
• read questions on application forms	1
• read to understand instructions and submissions required	2
• read information on building an Automated Tracking System (ATS) resume	3
NUMERACY	
• calculate and enter numbers of years on application (e.g. years of work experience; years of education)	1
• calculate words/characters limits for answering questions	1
• calculate file attachment limits	1
• may be required to complete a math assessment from employer	1 – 3
WRITING*	
• write emails to correspond and follow up on application	1
• fill in online application	2
• write job-specific cover letter	2
• develop a resume (including ATS resume)	3
• write answers to open ended application questions	1-3
DIGITAL*	
• recognize file attachment limits	1
• may need to change format of documents (e.g. resume, cover letter)	2
• save and retrieve documents from cloud servers/USB/files	2
• complete digital applications	2
• complete digital assessments	2-3
• may be required to complete a video cover letter/introduction	3
• attach/upload documents (e.g. resume, cover letter, certifications, exam results, etc.)	3

Online Job Application

PROBLEM SOLVING	
• trouble shoot online issues (compatibility, connectivity, site problems, etc.)	3

COMMUNICATION	
• may be required to complete a video cover letter/introduction	3

COLLABORATION (no complexity levels)	
• work with Employment Services workers for application supports • may need to work with Literacy and Basic Skills instructors • may work with individuals and previous employers to obtain reference	no levels

ADAPTABILITY (no complexity levels)	
• may need to find information from one source/format and use it in a different application • may need to adapt skills to deal with more difficult applications and questions • may need to be prepared for behavioural based questions	no levels

CREATIVITY and INNOVATION (no complexity levels)	
• use creativity to help application stand out to employers • use creativity related to position (e.g. portrait for a Hallowe'en City job as compared to a Golf and Country Club job)	no levels

*Indicates most important skill(s) for profile

Resume & Cover Letter on On-line Applications & Job Boards

While applying for a job on a job board/website, job seekers are frequently asked to upload a cover letter along with their application as a way of introducing themselves to potential employers, explaining their suitability for the desired positions.

A responsive and error free cover letter does increase the chances of employment as it demonstrates the candidate's writing, organization and reading abilities.

Skills for Success Profile-
Resume /Cover Letter on On-line Applications
and Job Boards

Task	Complexity
READING*	
• read a paragraph for job requirements	2
• read directions for application process	2
• read job description for match to skills	3
• read information on company to use in cover letter	3
NUMERACY	
• calculate and enter numbers of years on resume/online applications (e.g.years of work experience; years of education)	1
• calculate gaps in work experience for explanation in cover letter	1
• enter telephone contact numbers on resume/online application	1
• enter availability timelines for employers on online application	1
• calculate years of soft skills experience from work experiences	1
• enter soft skills experience on resume/cover letter	1
• may calculate length of time at current address on online application	1
• may complete pre-screening tests for numeracy	1 – 3
WRITING*	
• may write answers to pre-screening questions	1
• completing employment application form	2
• write answers to job-related questions	2
• write cover letter	2
• may write short essay as to why individual wants job	2
• may write introductory email	2
• write to explain gaps in employment/education	3
• write to answer behavioural based questions	3
• create an online resume that works with Applicant Tracking Systems	3
• write to describe skills and experience	3
• edit resume and cover letter during application	3

Resume /Cover Letter

DIGITAL*	
• share professional profile links (e.g. LinkedIn) in resume/cover letter	1
• creating/resetting passwords	1
• use word processing software (e.g. Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc.)	1
• send and receive emails	2
• use review of spelling/grammar for editing resume and cover letter	2
• saving documents into other formats (e.g. Word to PDF, etc.)	2
• create an online account for posting resume/cover letter	2
• manage emails (organizing, checking junk mail, etc.)	2
• navigating/searching websites	2
• format resume and cover letter	3
• upload documents to website	3
• create a Linked In profile	3

PROBLEM SOLVING	
• resolve when application does not follow site instructions	3
• decide how to use unfamiliar platforms	3
• trouble shoot online issues (compatibility, connectivity, site problems, etc.)	3

COMMUNICATION	
• asking individuals and past employers to be references	1
• understanding casual voice and when to use professional voice	2
• sharing information with someone completing application for the individual	2
• may be asked to provide a video cover letter	3

COLLABORATION (no complexity levels)	
• may work with individuals and previous employers to obtain reference	no levels
• may need to share examples of working collaboratively with others in cover letters/online questions	
• work with Employment Service workers to develop cover letter, resume, practice job interviewing, receive job search tips (Job Developer, Employment Service Coach, etc.)	

Resume /Cover Letter

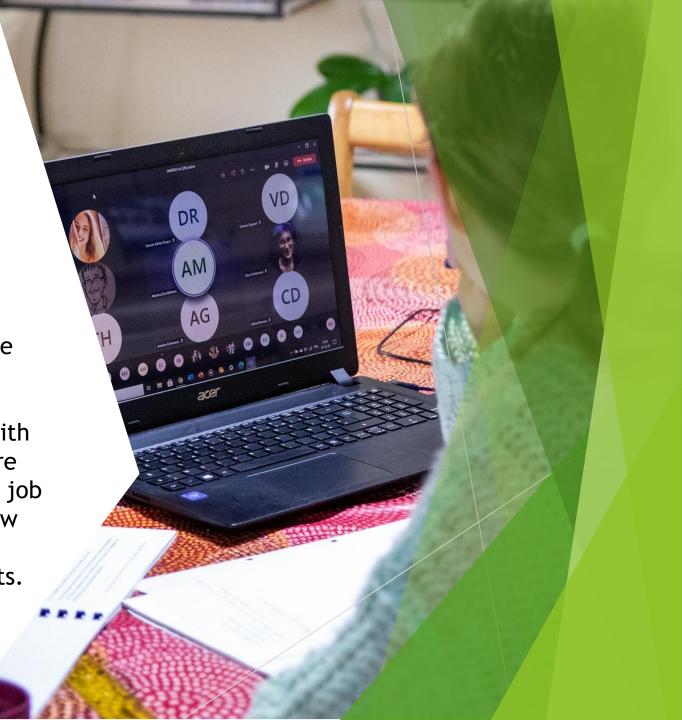| ADAPTABILITY (no complexity levels)	
• ability to change resume to reflect job description • being flexible with schedule and availability for employer • sharing examples of being a quick learner or a flexible employee • being flexible about job options/choices • ability to change expectations • be open to further training and education	no levels

CREATIVITY and INNOVATION (no complexity levels)	
• develop a portfolio of your work accomplishments • use creativity in developing resume to stand out to employers • use creativity in writing cover letter to stand out to employers • using links to social media (e.g. LinkedIn) to give employer more information • may create a video cover letter to introduce individual to employer • write more about accomplishments than responsibilities	no levels

*Indicates most important skill(s) for profile

Virtual Job Fair

An on-line job fair uses a virtual platform which allows employers to discuss job vacancies with potential candidates. This may include video, live chats and on-the-spot virtual interviews.

This stage often require additional experience with computers, videoconferencing and event software and technical skills. Experience with one type of job fair platform may need to be transferred to a new platform as employers and organizing groups use many different job fair platforms for these events.

Skills for Success Profile - Virtual Job Fair

Task	Complexity
READING*	
• read text conversations with employers	1
• read information pages on participating in job fair	2
• read available online materials for further information	2
• read instructions/directions on how to create an account or log-in to job fair	2
• review employer lists to decide who to meet or speak with	2
• read available postings	2
NUMERACY	
• understand timing on schedules	1
• determine wait time within queue	1
• calculate number of years for employment, education and job skills	1
• may be required to complete pre-screening numeracy assessments	1-3
WRITING*	
• take notes about the employer	1
• write thank you/follow-up emails to employer/recruiter	1
• write text conversations	1
• write on chat boards	1
• complete online job applications for each employer booth	2
• develop/complete a job seeker online profile before accessing virtual job fair	2
DIGITAL*	
• use different text and chat formats	2
• develop/use email for platform	2
• access and navigate job fair platforms	2
• upload resumes and cover letters	2
• download information from employer booths	2
• access break-out rooms	2

Virtual Job Fair

PROBLEM SOLVING	
• determine how to log into event and break-out rooms	2
• prepare for employers asking "out of the box" questions	3
• memorize examples of work experience to share with employer	3
• trouble shoot online issues (compatibility, connectivity, site problems, etc.)	3

COMMUNICATION	
• participate appropriately when there are multiple speakers	1
• clearly communicate skills that relate to job	2
• share examples of accomplishments	2
• participate in a virtual job interview	3

COLLABORATION (no complexity levels)	
• participate in group discussions, interviews and presentations • participate in group discussions, interviews and presentations • work with other attendees to share time with the employer	no levels

ADAPTABILITY (no complexity levels)	
• be adaptable in a new environment (e.g. virtual job fairs are different than in person fairs) • be prepared to deal with the unexpected (e.g. internet connections, interruptions from others, different questions, etc.) • be familiar with change management • be flexible as new people join the interview room • be prepared for sudden rescheduling of an interview	no levels

CREATIVITY and INNOVATION (no complexity levels)	
• use creativity in presentations to stand out (while remaining appropriate to the situation) • use creativity in show casing skills in a group environment	no levels

*Indicates most important skill(s) for profile

Virtual Job Interview

Virtual interviews takes place remotely, sometimes over the phone, but often using technology like video conferencing and other online communication platforms.

This process requires candidate to understand how to use the internet, computers and a basic understanding along with the skills to use the virtual platform.

It can be difficult to do a virtual interview as visual feedback may be delayed while the interviewer is taking notes. Applicants also need to think about their environment for these interviews.

Skills for Success Profile - Virtual Job Interview

Task	Complexity
READING*	
• read list of items to prepare for the interview	1
• reach and research the company	2
• read instructions on how to access the interview	2
• read instructions on using the virtual platform (e.g. logging in, layout, etc.)	2
• read the job description and requirements to prepare potential answers	3
• read about common and situation-based questions in interviews	3
• read employment agreements	3
• read questions for any online testing/assessment	1-3
• read workplace documents (e.g. code of conduct)	3
NUMERACY	
• complete availability schedules	1
• schedule interview time	1
• estimate time to answer questions	1
• adhere to time and word limits	1
• calculate the hourly wage or annual salary	1
• calculate years of experience/education/skills used	1
• may complete an assessment of skills	1-3
WRITING*	
• write text chats with employer	1
• write email of introduction/appointment confirmation/thank you and follow-up	1
• complete personal information forms	1
• complete simple pre-screening questions	2
• complete a resume that matches the job's skill sets	3
• may complete an assessment of skills	1-3

Virtual Job Interview

DIGITAL*	
• use web links	1
• create an account for digital platform	1
• use virtual interview platforms	2
• send and receive e-mails and documents	2
• may need to use e-sign for forms	2
• save a meeting link in a digital calendar	2
• understand meeting protocols (e.g. camera angle, turning off computer notifications etc.)	2
• understand the various applications within the digital platform (e.g. raising hand, screen-sharing, video, etc.)	3
PROBLEM SOLVING	
• trouble shoot online issues (compatibility, connectivity, site problems, etc.)	3
• incorporate examples of problem solving in interview	3
• find examples from experience to answer questions	3
• solve open-ended questions and problems	3
COMMUNICATION	
• express ideas in a clear manner	2
• listen and understand the interviewer	2
• ask questions of the interviewer	2
• understand and use good body language	3
• respond to questions with the right level of detail (reading the interviewer)	3
• explain and justify answers to questions	3
• prepare to answer common interview questions	3
• articulate/describe skills to employer	3
COLLABORATION (no complexity levels)	
• work with Employment Service workers to develop interview skills	no levels
• collaborate with individuals and previous employers to obtain reference	
• may need to share examples of working collaboratively with others	
• demonstrate a helpful attitude	

Virtual Job Interview

ADAPTABILITY (no complexity levels)	
• troubleshoot technical/connectivity issues • work through unfamiliar questions/scenarios • learn about interview methods and behavioural interviewing • show willingness to learn quickly • show flexibility in scheduling • ability to manage stress	no levels

CREATIVITY and INNOVATION (no complexity levels)	
• answer open ended questions creatively (e.g. where do you see yourself in 5 years; tell me about yourself; etc.) • prepare innovative answers to anticipated questions (e.g. weaknesses and how you overcame them; biggest accomplishment; etc.) • create an interesting cover letter • use the STAR response (Situation Task Action Result) • prepare and ask questions for the interviewer • develop a portfolio of skills and experience • be innovative in showing skills	no levels

*Indicates most important skill(s) for profile

Skills for Success profiles

The skills for success profiles explain the skill levels needed for a given occupation. The original Essential Skills framework is the foundation of the profiles.

➤ **Resource to explore an occupation with Essential Skills –** https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/essentialskillsresults/215

Who can use this document

➤ not-for-profit organisations
➤ educational, training and employment institutions, or
➤ any other organization that would train or support learners, job seekers or employees
➤ individuals to enhance their career opportunities

Next Steps

Do you have participants that struggle with their job search?

1. Ask your participant what parts of job searching they find most challenging

   ▪ Use the Skills for Success handouts to identify specific skills involved in each task, and how they relate to the Skills for Success.

2. Discuss the Skills for Success and the long-term benefits for their job search, long-term employment, and everyday life

3. Assess readiness. Are they able, and willing, to invest the time needed to improve their skills?

4. Connect to an organization in your area that specializes in Skills for Success

Resources and links

These organizations match participants with Skills for Success programs in their area:

▶ Project READ (Waterloo-Wellington area)

        Call: 519-570-3054

        Email: info@projectread.ca

        Website: https://projectread.ca/

▶ Adult Learning Network (Peel-Halton-Dufferin area)

        Call: 905-812-3533

        Email: info@phdaln.on.ca

        Website: http://www.phdaln.on.ca/