Canadian Standards and Guidelines
for Career Development Practitioners

Areas of Specialization
Information and Resource Management

2004

S4 Information and Resource Management

S4.1 Develop and Maintain an Information and Resource Base

S4.1.1 describe the role of information and resource management in career development

Why is this competency important?
- to be able to address clients' information needs
- to improve convenience for clients
- to support colleagues in the career development community

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
describe the role of information giving in career development:
a) to build and maintain a resource base that clients can access to obtain up-to-date information
b) to help clients, staff and community practitioners to find the most relevant resources
c) to help clients to develop skills in using the resources
d) to determine when to eliminate dated resources

S4 Information and Resource Management

S4.1 Develop and Maintain an Information and Resource Base

S4.1.2 describe classification systems

Why is this competency important?
- to effectively organize and access information

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
describe classification systems, which include but are not limited to:
a) alphabet system:
- an alphabetical arrangement of subject headings
b) colour system:
- all materials in the same subject area are identified by the same colour, using coloured dots or tape
c) dating system:
- organized by a time period, e.g., *month, year*
d) industry system:
- most suitable for clients looking for information about similar occupations in different industries
- needs a cross-reference index to accommodate occupations found in many industries
e) National Occupational Classification (NOC) system:
- a numerical system developed by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
- commonly used in career resource centres to organize occupational information
- organized into three hierarchical levels:
  - major groups
  - minor groups
  - unit groups
f) number system:
- materials are organized using three or more digits
- the digit on the far left usually indicates a category, e.g., *400 = Career Options*
g) subject system:
- subject headings are developed based on the community's needs, e.g.,
  - *job search techniques*
  - *occupations*
  - *employment opportunities*

Skill Competencies are in bold type, knowledge and attitude competencies are in plain, not bold, type

– *working overseas*
– *academic subject*

h) a combination of two or more of the above, e.g.,
colour, subject headings and NOC

Notes
- All of these systems can apply to electronic information and print.
- On the Internet, information can be organized by bookmarks.

S4   Information and Resource Management

S4.1   Develop and Maintain an Information and Resource Base

S4.1.3   determine the information needs of clients and the community

Why is this competency important?
- to help ensure that the information needs of clients and the community are met
- to help ensure that career development practitioners keep up-to-date with changing needs

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:

a) use a questionnaire to collect client and community career information needs:
  - questionnaire could include:
    – a statement about the purpose of the questionnaire
    – instructions about how to mark responses to demographic questions, *e.g., age, sex, education level*
    – questions to identify:
      ➢ career-related information needs, e.g., *"Would you like to be able to assess your skills and options?"*
      ➢ clients' medium and service preferences, e.g, *"Would you prefer to gather information by reading print materials, viewing audiovisual materials, using computers or by participating in workshops?"*
      ➢ clients' access barriers, e.g., *language*
      ➢ where clients have found career-related information in the past

b) track information requests:
  - document the type of information and the number of times information is requested
  - refer to the tracked information in future planning

c) conduct focus groups with, e.g.,
  - *clients*
  - *employers*
  - *community leaders*
  - *colleagues*

d) design additional means to gather information, when necessary, e.g., *suggestion box*

Skill Competencies are in bold type, knowledge and attitude competencies are in plain, not bold, type

Notes
- Career development practitioners could use any combination of the research methods described in this competency in addition to others not mentioned.
- Further information about evaluating service is available in competency C1.4.4.

S4 Information and Resource Management

S4.1 Develop and Maintain an Information and Resource Base

S4.1.4 establish and maintain an information and resource base

Why is this competency important?
- to help ensure clients have access to the broadest range of relevant resources and information possible

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
a) consider information and resource needs of the community
b) identify information available by reviewing, e.g.,
  - *professional journals and newsletters*
  - *catalogues from distributors of career development-related resources*
  - *government departments and agency publications*
  - *professional association publications*
  - *popular periodicals*
  - *bibliographies*
  - *telephone yellow pages*
  - *Internet sources*
  - *information from experienced colleagues*
c) collect information to meet identified needs, e.g., information about:
  - *occupations*
  - *education and training*
  - *job openings*
  - *the labour market, including local, regional, national and international markets*
  - *financial assistance*
  - *job search*
  - *employers*
  - *instruments for:*
    - *self-assessment*
    - *action planning*
    - *career guidance*
d) organize the information:
  - use a classification system (or a combination of systems) that is:
    - logical
    - easy to use

    – flexible enough to allow the collection to expand

e)   maintain the information:
- update information and resources on an ongoing basis

Notes
- Information and resources are available in electronic or paper format.

S4   Information and Resource Management

S4.2   Provide Clients with Access to Information

S4.2.1   provide clients with access to information

Why is this competency important?
- to address client and community needs in a timely manner

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:

a)   anticipate emerging needs of clients and the community

b)   assess individual client's needs

c)   prioritize needs

d)   address clients' needs, e.g.,
- *direct clients to appropriate resources*
- *answer questions*
- *take a broad perspective to expand the clients' range of options*
- *provide instruction, when appropriate, to ensure clients are able to:*
  - *locate and use resources*
  - *do research*
  - *describe and evaluate career and labour market information*
- *encourage clients to apply information to career decision making models and/or action plans*

SSC1 Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1 Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.1 guide clients to identify own skills, strengths, personal characteristics, values and interests

Why is this competency important?
- to help career development practitioners to:
  - market clients to employers
  - determine barriers and limitations
- to help clients gain:
  - confidence and improve self-esteem
  - a better understanding of themselves
  - a better understanding of what they have to offer

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) identify skills, including:
  - technical skills/ job skills:
    - usually obtained in school and on the job
  - transferable skills/ functional skills:
    - developed throughout life, e.g., *communication, working with others*
    - used in almost any work situation
  - self-management skills
b) identify work, leisure experiences and community accomplishments, including:
  - barriers that have been overcome
  - skills used
  - sources of motivation
  - satisfaction gained
c) identify strengths, interests and values
d) identify aptitudes, e.g*., technical orientation, mechanical inclination*
  - connected with ability to learn a particular skill or job quickly
  - can point to future career objectives
e) identify skills that they would like to develop, e.g., *language skills*:
  - set goals for development
f) identify personal characteristics, e.g., *attitudes*

SSC1 Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1 Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.2 guide clients to complete application forms

Why is this competency important?
- to increase clients' probability of success in work search
- to provide clients with step-by-step instructions on how to effectively complete job application forms
- to meet employers' expectations

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) obtain two copies of application forms:
  - suggest one be used for practice and clients' own files
  - suggest the good second copy be given to the prospective employer
b) follow instructions carefully:
  - ensure the form is:
    - filled out completely and accurately
    - signed and dated, if required
c) use correct grammar and spelling
d) use neat handwriting or printing
e) be honest
f) be specific, e.g., *include a specific position title*
g) refer to résumé, if applicable
h) fill in the additional comments section:
  - suggest clients use this as an opportunity to promote themselves
  - emphasize skills, abilities and accomplishments

Notes
- Inform clients that not all application forms are the same and that some require a résumé to be attached.
- An application form may become part of an employee's permanent record.
- On-line applications are becoming common. These require practice, as some do not easily allow editing once a box has been filled in.
- Explain vocabulary that is unfamiliar or ambiguous, e.g., *bondable*
- An application form might be the first contact with an employer, and is therefore very important.

Skill Competencies are in bold type, knowledge and attitude competencies are in plain, not bold, type

SSC1   Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1   Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.3 guide clients in writing cover letters

Why is this competency important?
- to help clients tailor an approach to an employer or an employment opportunity
- to enhance the application process
- to showcase clients' relevant strengths to the company

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) use cover letters to introduce résumés or application forms:
    - encourage the employer to read the résumé or application form:
        - appeal to the prospective employer's needs and interests
b) match information in a letter with the job description's list of duties and qualifications
c) highlight skills and accomplishments in cover letters
d) target cover letter to the industry, field or company
e) keep cover letter to one page
f) link themselves to employers, e.g., *refer to the job advertisement or person who referred them*
g) include sections that:
    - provide important facts about themselves and information about why the particular company or opportunity appeals to them
    - describe how the company would benefit by hiring the applicant
    - ask for an interview
h) sign their names

Notes
- Cover letters are used most often for advertised and professional positions. They are also used in impersonal forms of job search, i.e. not face-to-face, but e-mailed or faxed résumés.
- Clients who are seeking self-employment opportunities should be informed that proposal writing is an extension of the points in this competency.

SSC1   Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1   Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.4 guide clients in preparing résumés

Why is this competency important?
- to assist clients in using the most appropriate tool for their work searches
- to help clients use their marketable skills
- to meet requirements for interview selections

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) create fact sheets describing employment, volunteer and education histories
b) choose formats that are effective, considering:
    - chronological résumés:
        - list education and work experience
        - start with the most recent entry and work back
    - functional résumés:
        - list skills and achievements
    - combination résumés:
        - list education, work experience, achievements and skills
    - electronic résumés, e.g., *list key words in noun form to be read by electronic scanners*
c) target résumés to emphasize qualifications, skills and abilities relevant to fields of work sought
d) ensure résumés are concise and clear
e) use action words, e.g., *negotiate, demonstrated, improved*
f) avoid the pronoun "I"
g) enhance the readability of their résumés, e.g.,
    - *bold specific information to draw the eye to key sections*
    - *use bullets*
    - *indent material*
    - *put headings in larger fonts*
h) edit résumés to check for:
    - errors
    - effectiveness

Notes
- In some cases, it may be necessary for a career development practitioner to explain to a client what a résumé is and why it is important.

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- A career development practitioner should be able to create résumés in all formats.
- A résumé must represent the client who is involved in the work search.
- It is important that clients understand the significance of gaps in their work histories and develop strategies to effectively field questions regarding these gaps.

SSC1   Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1   Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.5 guide clients in using portfolios

Why is this competency important?
- to assist clients in self-management and self-promotion
- to identify marketable skills
- to help clients to prepare for interviews

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) provide evidence of skills, personal styles and accomplishments
b) assemble materials in an appropriate manner
c) collect items related to their careers, e.g.,
- *certificates*
- *awards*
- *photos*
- *evaluations*
- *samples of past work*
- *letters of commendation/reference letters*
- *relevant newspaper articles*
d) organize the items, e.g., *create categories*
e) select portfolio materials to target specific employment opportunities

Notes
- A career development practitioner should have experience in creating a portfolio prior to instructing a client on the creation of portfolios.
- A career development practitioner should explain to clients how and when to present portfolios during an interview.

SSC1   Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1   Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.6 guide clients to develop self-marketing plans

Why is this competency important?
- to assist clients in creating their own opportunities
- to assist clients in self-marketing

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) research needs of companies/fields/communities they are interested in
b) match marketable skills and relevant experiences (see SSC1.1.1) to identified needs
c) provide evidence of past relevant accomplishments (see SSC1.1.9)
d) develop presentation packages, including:
   - clear statements of tasks and associated budgets for each task

SSC1   Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1   Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.7 guide clients in conducting cold calls

Why is this competency important?
- to help clients expand search for prospective jobs
- to identify hidden job markets

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) plan strategies, e.g.,
   - *create introductions*
   - *achieve a set number of calls per day*
   - *spend the day visiting certain types of companies*
b) conduct telephone cold calls by:
   - introducing themselves
   - stating the purpose of their call
   - asking for a key person by name, if name is known:
     – pronounce the name correctly
     – ask to speak to the person responsible for hiring, if name is not known
   - handling refusals by:
     – asking for a name and time to call back
     – asking if you can drop off a résumé in person or fax/email a résumé to the appropriate person:
       ➢ call back to confirm receipt of résumé, if appropriate
     – asking for an appointment
c) conduct person-to-person cold calls by:
   - dressing appropriately
   - introducing self upon arrival:
     – state the purpose of the visit
     – ask to speak to the person responsible for hiring
   - handling refusals by:
     – asking for an appointment
     – asking for a business card of the person responsible for hiring
     – leaving a résumé

Notes
- It is important to note that some employers find cold calls intrusive. Networking and informational

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interviewing tend to be more effective ways of accessing the hidden job market.
- It can be beneficial for a career development practitioner to use phone script example dialogues and outlines with clients.

SSC1   Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1   Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.8 guide clients with their personal presentations

Why is this competency important?
- to increase clients' ability to self-market
- to increase clients' understanding/awareness of themselves and the impact this awareness has on work searches
- to identify cultural differences
- to increase clients' self-confidence

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) identify the factors of personal presentation, which are:
   - verbal communication, including:
     – tone of voice
     – speed
     – volume
     – language
   - non-verbal communication, e.g., *body language, facial expressions*
   - accessories, e.g., *jewelry*
   - attitudes/behaviours
   - clothing, e.g., *shoes*
   - grooming, e.g*, hair, perfume or cologne, makeup*
   - hygiene, e.g., *skin, teeth, fingernails*
b) ensure their presentation is appropriate to the field and adapted to the company in which work is being sought

SSC1 Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1 Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.9 guide clients in networking

Why is this competency important?
- to be aware of and access the hidden job market
- to assist clients in overcoming fears and challenges

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) list all networking resources, e.g.,
   - *professional associations*
   - *past co-workers/supervisors*
   - *government agencies*
   - *colleagues*
   - *family*
   - *friends*
   - *social contacts*
b) nurture relationships with networking resources
c) demonstrate how to:
   - use networking scripts and checklists to obtain job leads
   - network, e.g., *use phone*
d) offer examples of networking strategies from past clients

Notes
- It is important for a career development practitioner to emphasize to clients the value of networking.

SSC1 Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1 Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.10 guide clients in using references

Why is this competency important?
- to be able to verify information on applications and résumés
- to increase success in work search

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
guide clients to:
a) consider the criteria for good references:
   - not a family member
   - can be long distance if email or online phone address is given
   - references should speak English or French
   - someone who has worked with client in a job or educational setting
   - someone who has personal knowledge of client's character
b) ask selected references for permission to use their name
c) prepare the references:
   - describe the job that he/she is applying for
   - provide current résumé to references
   - indicate what experiences and qualifications he/she would like emphasized
   - confirm that references are accessible
d) obtain letters written to the potential employers from the references, if possible
e) review references periodically:
   - add or delete out-dated references
   - ensure contact information is current
f) take a list of references to an interview

Notes
- Inappropriate use of references can be damaging.
- Many organizations have an internal policy of not giving written reference letters and limiting verbal references to confirming date of employment. Clients may require coaching on how to get personal (versus company) references from colleagues under such circumstances.
- Whether listed or not, most employers are interested in speaking with an individual's most recent supervisor or manager. Omitting this person can act as a "red flag",

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suggesting there was a problem. An individual should be prepared to have the supervisor or manager contacted.

SSC1   Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1   Guide Client in Work Search Strategies

SSC1.1.11 guide clients in effective interview skills

Why is this competency important?
- to increase clients' competencies with interview strategies
- to increase clients' confidence in the interview process

To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners must:
identify client guidelines for interviews, including:
a) describe the purpose of different types of interviews:
  - information interviews:
    - for applicant to gather information
  - screening interviews:
    - to determine which applicants are qualified for the job
  - hiring interviews:
    - to determine the suitability of candidates
    - can be in various formats, including:
      - panel interviews
      - group interviews
      - phone interviews
  - combined screening and hiring interviews:
    - to explore both qualifications and suitability
b) describe different kinds of questions asked during interviews:
  - open-ended, e.g., *"Tell me about yourself."*
  - close-ended, e.g., *"Have you ever used a computer?"*
  - situational, e.g., *"If _____, then _____?"*
  - behavioural, e.g., *"Describe the things you do to try and improve the morale in your office?"*
c) prepare clients for interviews, e.g.,
  - *role play*
  - *videotape mock interviews*
  - *review portfolios or résumés*
  - *encourage clients to be conscious of their body language*
  - *have clients practice answering anticipated questions*

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- get clients to write questions that they would like to ask the prospective employer, e.g., *What kind of training is available?*

d) advise clients not to discuss salary at the first interview, unless asked:
   - clients should have an answer prepared, in case they are asked, e.g., *market rate*

e) discuss with clients how to develop rapport with an interviewer, e.g.,
   - *discover what is important to the interviewer, e.g.,:*
     – *"What skills, in your opinion, are important for success in the job?"*
     – *"What are the main challenges in this department?"*
   - *discover why the position is available, e.g., expansion, injury*
   - *provide information to the interviewer to address key concerns and motives*
   - *clarify how interviewee can fulfill the company's needs*
   - *restate interest in the job*
   - *ask when the decision will be made, if appropriate*
   - *recognize when the interview is over*

Notes
- Interviews provide useful learning opportunities.
- Explain to clients why employers ask particular questions. Encourage clients to develop effective answers to common questions.

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