A PRACTITIONER’S GUIDE TO COMPLETING APPLICATIONS
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** .......................................................................................................................................... 2  
**Guiding Frameworks** ............................................................................................................................ 2  
  - Blueprint for Life/Work Designs ........................................................................................................ 2  
  - Essential Skills .................................................................................................................................... 2  
  - Employability Skills 2000+ .............................................................................................................. 3  
  - Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners .................................... 3  
**Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session** ............................................................................. 4  
**PowerPoint Slides** .................................................................................................................................. 5  
**Additional Tips and Strategies** ............................................................................................................... 12  
**For More Information on Completing Applications** .............................................................................. 12  
**Spot the Problems: A Summary Activity** .............................................................................................. 13  
**Spot the Problems: Activity Answer Key** ............................................................................................. 16  

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**Acknowledgements**

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Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism
Introduction

The client resource, A Guide to Completing Applications, contains information and worksheets to support clients in completing paper and online applications. The detailed information found within the client resource is not repeated here. Instead, the focus of this guide will be to provide facilitators with additional information, tips and strategies for conducting a “Completing Applications” workshop or working with individual clients.

Information provided in this guide covers the core concepts related to completing applications. Practitioners are encouraged to adapt materials to their personal style and needs of their clients.

Guiding Frameworks

Many skills can be developed through completing applications. In the following sections, relevant skills/competencies are identified from three frameworks: Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, Essential Skills and Employability Skills 2000+.

Blueprint for Life/Work Designs

Completing applications will help develop the following Blueprint competencies:

• Completing applications falls within the following Blueprint competencies:
  • Competency 7 – secure/create and maintain work
    o Level 2 – develop abilities to seek and obtain/create work
  • Competency 8 – make life/work enhancing decisions
    o Level 3 – engage in life/work decision making

Essential Skills

Completing applications will enhance the following Essential Skills:

• reading text
• document use
• numeracy
• writing
• thinking skills
• computer use (if completing online applications or researching online)
• working with others (if in a workshop)
Employability Skills 2000+

Conducting an effective job search will focus on the following skills within the Employability Skills 2000+ system:

- **Fundamental Skills**
  - communicate
  - manage information
  - use numbers
- **Personal Management Skills**
  - demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
  - be responsible
  - be adaptable
- **Teamwork Skills** (if working with clients in groups)

Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners

Supporting individuals to complete applications is an important role for career development practitioners. To do this well, practitioners would need all of the core competencies outlined in the Standards and Guidelines: Professional/Ethical Behaviour, Interpersonal Competence, Career Development Knowledge and Needs Assessment and Referral Expertise.

In addition, supporting individuals to complete applications overlaps with several of the Areas of Specialization in the Standards and Guidelines, including:

- Facilitated and Individual Group Learning
- Career Counselling
- Information and Resource Management
- Work Development
Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session

You’ll need to review and gather the following items as you prepare to deliver the workshop or work individually with a client. Some practitioners like to use photocopied handouts of the charts and activities in the guide. This leaves the client guide fresh and clean for individual use after the session. Others prefer to have clients write directly on the guide, ensuring that all of the topical information stays in one place. Feel free to tailor your workshop to your personal style and participants’ needs. Your personal preference will impact the resources you need to gather as you prepare for your workshop or individual session.

Required:
- A Guide to Completing Applications (one copy per participant)
- pens, pencils
- for workshops:
  - computer, LCD projector and screen
  - flip chart paper and markers

Optional:
- PowerPoint slides, printed three or six slides per page; one set per client
- Handouts from the end of this facilitator’s guide (one of each per client)
  - Spot the Problems: A Summary Activity
  - Spot the Problems: Activity Answer Key
PowerPoint Slides

The following presentation contains 17 slides. Reviewing the slide content, engaging in discussions with participants, and completing the activities should result in a three hour workshop (times listed are estimates and may depend on factors including number of participants). Discussions and activities can be expanded or contracted depending on the time you have available to conduct the workshop. Where applicable, the facilitator notes will mention how to make adjustments for time constraints. Note: the content within the following slides may be challenging to read due to size; see the PowerPoint document to review the complete content.

Welcome participants to workshop
Introductions
• Have participants introduce themselves.
• An icebreaker activity can be incorporated; see Icebreakers/Energizers section for more information.

Time:
• Expect introductions to take three-to-five minutes per participant. Icebreakers may take longer. Workshop time will need to be adjusted accordingly.

Briefly review agenda to provide participants with an overview of the workshop.

Time:
• three-to-five minutes
It may be worthwhile exploring if there are any participants that have never completed an application form
- some jobs may not require them
- new immigrants may not have filled out Canadian forms
- first time job seekers

Time:
- 10 - 12 minutes

Remind participants that most, if not all, of the information collected on an application form will be in their resume. Application forms provide the standardized information employers need to quickly and efficiently compare applicants.

Time:
- 10 minutes

Remind participants that how an application is completed can be just as important as the information in the application – messy writing, spelling mistakes, and coffee stains don’t make a good impression.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes
Master Application Forms

- Identify and record standard information
  - Basic contact information
  - Education
  - Work history
  - Salary
  - References
- Allows you to easily complete any application form

The client guide has space to complete a master application form. Participants can complete each section of the application as it is covered in the workshop.

Time:
- five-to-seven minutes

Basic Contact Information

- If you don’t have a permanent address or phone number
  - Make arrangements with someone who will get messages to you quickly
- Ensure anyone answering your phone
  - Will be polite and professional
  - Can take a complete message
- Update answering machine / voice mail message
  - Avoid “family” or abrupt rude messages
- Create a professional email address
  - lastname@email.com

Remind participants that employers will likely contact them by phone, ensure:
- Anyone answering the phone can take a complete message.
- Your answering machine/voice mail message is appropriate.

Ask participants what kind of inappropriate phone messages they’ve heard, some examples are below:
- Young children’s cute greeting
- “I listen to ____” radio station contest entry
- Abrupt “At the tone, you know what to do!”

Email can be a similar problem. Many participants may have email address that wouldn’t be appropriate to give to an employer (ex: toughguy@email.com). With the availability of free email accounts, encourage participants to have a separate work-relate email and to check it often!

Refer participants to the Master Application Form in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the contact information section.

Time:
- 15 minutes
Have participants complete the table in the Education and Work History section of the client guide.

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the education section.

Be prepared to coach clients on how to handle incomplete education (ex.: “in progress” if this is true or “30 credits earned”).

Time:
• 15 minutes

Review the kinds of gaps in employment history and brainstorm ways to fill these gaps on an application form. An example is provided in the guide:
• Sarah Jones in the **Education and Work History** section of the client guide.

Have participants complete the table in the **Education and Work History** section of the client guide.

Refer participants to the **Master Application Form** in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the work history section.

Time:
• 15 minutes
Remind participants that application forms may ask for previous salary (history), per job and/or they may ask about expectations.

The low end of the salary range is what you think the employer wants to pay and the high end is what you’d like to be offered. Make sure the lower end you put on the application is realistic and you are able to live on this salary.

Refer participants to the Master Application Form in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the salary section.

Time:
• 15 minutes

Have a discussion about:
• What should you do if you are required to write down a past supervisor that you don’t think will give you a favourable reference?
• What are some ways to balance negative or neutral references?

Refer participants to the Master Application Form in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the references section.

Time:
• 15 - 20 minutes

Remind clients that some application forms won’t have a “skills” section. If possible, try to find a way to mention special skills, attributes, certifications that are relevant to the position.

Refer participants to the Master Application Form in Appendix A of the client guide. Have them complete the special skills section.

Time:
• 15 minutes
Discuss why an employer may want to know “optional” information (ex: Aboriginal status or gender may be important for equity targets) and the pros/cons to including or not including the information.

Caution participants regarding their SIN and passport numbers. This is highly sensitive information and shouldn’t be included on their application forms. There is some risk of not responding fully (a form not fully completed may get passed over) so coach clients for an alternative “will provide SIN after you’re hired”.

If possible, obtain application forms from local businesses and have participants practice.

Time:
• 10 minutes

Discuss the importance of being careful of scams. Remind and explain to participants why they should not provide information such as credit card numbers, banking information, or names of family members.

Copying info into online forms (from Word) can result in coding and extra symbols. Carefully typing in the information is best but must be done carefully to ensure no mistakes.

If possible, copy and paste all your information into a word document before submitting it. – this helps to ensure there are no obvious spelling or grammar mistakes (assuming these features are “turned on” in Word).

Time:
• 10 - 15 minutes
Complete the **Spot the Problems Activity**
- Participants are to review the application form and circle any errors or potential problems that you notice. When they finish, participants are to compare their responses to those provided in the answer key.

**Time:**
- 15 - 20 minutes

**Summary**
- Create master application form; carry it with you
- Read instructions fully
- Print neatly; use black or blue ink
- Provide complete and accurate contact information
- Put positive spin on gaps in work history
- Link your skills and qualifications to job requirements
- Respond to salary questions honestly; do your homework
- Identify references who will comment fairly and positively

Summarize the topics discussed. Try to weave in stories from the discussions that occurred.

**Time:**
- 10 minutes

Thank participants for their time. Advise them where they can go to get further assistance.

If desired, have participants complete a workshop evaluation form (see appendix A).

**Time:**
- two-to-three minutes; more if an evaluation is being completed
Additional Tips and Strategies

If an Internet connection is available, demonstrate how to research salary information:

- Go to Manitoba Job Futures Manitoba Job Futures
  http://mb.jobfutures.org/profiles/profile_alpha.cfm?lang=en&site=graphic
- Select an occupation (ex: Aircraft Mechanics and Aircraft Inspectors) and click on the number beside the job title (ex: 7315)
- From the categories on the left of the screen, click on "Earnings"

For More Information on Completing Applications

A Job Seeker’s Guide to Successfully Completing Job Applications
www.quintcareers.com/job_applications.html
A brief article with tips, links and a sample job application form.

Tips on Completing Employment Applications
www.provenresumes.com/fqa/comapp.html
Answers to frequently asked questions about completing employment applications.
Spot the Problems: A Summary Activity

Review the following application form and circle any errors or potential problems that you notice. When you’ve finished, compare your responses to those provided in the Answer Key.

Amy’s Boutique
Application Form

Applicant Information:
Last Name: Jones  First Name: Sarah
Email Address: sweetbabeforlife@hotmail.com

What position are you applying for (please check all that apply):

- District Manager
- Visual Director
- Store Manager
- Payroll Administrator
- Assistant Manager
- Customer Service Representative
- Other (please specify): Payroll Clerk

Contact Information:
Home Phone: (204) 123-4567  Cell Phone: (204) 234-4567
Preferred Call-back Time (please check all that apply):
- Morning (8am-11am)
- Afternoon (12pm-4pm)
- Evening (5pm-9pm)

Address:
Apartment Number: Don’t have one  Address: 1234 53rd Ave
City: Win.  Postal Code: R2W 3S4

Tell Us About Yourself:
Have you worked at an Amy’s Boutique location before?  Yes  No
If so, what location did you work at and when:

Why would you like to work for Amy’s Boutique?
Because I like clothes.

Are you bondable:  Yes  No

Additional Skills and Qualifications: Ex: Licences, Skills, Training, Awards, Special Abilities:
Class 5 driver’s licence, Volunteer at Sunnydale Elementary School for the last six years,
First Aid certified, current and clear criminal record check.
Availability:
Monday 12:00 noon-9:00 p.m.
Tuesday 1:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Wednesday 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Thursday Same
Friday Same
Saturday 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Sunday N/A

Education Background:
Name and City of School, Degree/Diploma, Graduation Date:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Degree/Diploma</th>
<th>Graduation Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Park High School</td>
<td>Completion of grades 1-7</td>
<td>June 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnipeg, Manitoba</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Park High School</td>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>June 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnipeg, Manitoba</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous Work Experience:
Present or Last Position: Volunteer
Employer: Sunnydale Elementary School
Address: 1098 Fraser Way Winnipeg, MB
Supervisor: Parvinder Bains
Phone: (204) 123-4567 From: September 20XX To: present
Responsibilities: Work with students one-on-one to support reading and math activities, assist with fundraising events, prepare for student-teacher interviews, attend field trips and monitor children, coach indoor co-ed soccer for primary grades
Salary: Volunteer work
Reason for Leaving: I continue to volunteer but the politics are making me crazy
May We Contact the Above Supervisor? Yes ✓ No __

Previous Position: Sales Representative
Employer: Manitoba Books
Address: 456 Reading Road, Brandon, MB
Supervisor: Andrea Scholtz
Phone: (204) 123-4567 From: January 1998 To: October 2000
Responsibilities: Served 50+ customers daily, helped customers locate specialty items in the store, operated cash register, responsible for $3,500 in cash per shift, co-ordinated customer satisfaction program with manager
Salary: $6.75 per hour
Reason for Leaving: Maternity
May We Contact the Above Supervisor? Yes ✓ No __
Previous Position: Customer Service Representative
Employer: ABC Pet Store
Address: 123 Mall Avenue Winnipeg, MB
Supervisor: Nelson Perez
Phone: (204) 123-4567 From: July 1997 To: March 1998
Responsibilities: Stocked shelves, provided customer service, operated cash register, responsible for $500 in cash per shift
Salary: $6.00 per hour
Reason for Leaving: Moved to Brandon
May We Contact the Above Supervisor?
Yes ☑ No ___

References:

Name, Relationship and Phone Number:

1. Andrea Scholtz, Former Manager (204) 123-4567
2. Parvinder Bains, Principal (204) 123-4567
3. Nelson Perez, Former Manager (204) 123-4567

I certify that information contained in this application is true and complete. I understand that false information may be grounds for not hiring me or for immediate termination of employment at any point in the future if I am hired. I authorize the verification of any or all information listed above.

Signature: Sarah Jones Date: March 16, 20XX
Spot the Problems Activity Answer Key

Amy's Boutique
Application Form

Applicant Information:
Last Name: Jones
First Name: Sarah
Email Address: sweetbabeforlife@hotmail.com

What position are you applying for (please check all that apply):
☐ District Manager
☐ Visual Director
☐ Store Manager
☐ Payroll Administrator
☒ Assistant Manager
☒ Customer Service Representative
☐ Other (please specify): Payroll Clerk

Contact Information:
Home Phone: (204) 123-4567
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Address:
Apartment Number: Don't have one
Address: 1234 53rd Ave
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Postal Code: R2W 3S4

Tell Us About Yourself:
Have you worked at an Amy's Boutique location before? ☻ Yes ☒ No
If so, what location and when:

Why would you like to work for Amy's Boutique?
Because I like clothes.

Are you bondable: ☒ Yes ☒ No

Additional Skills and Qualifications: Ex: Licenses, Skills, Training, Special Abilities:
Class 5 driver's licence, Volunteer at Sunnydale Elementary School for the last six years,
First Aid certified, current and clear criminal record check

Inappropriate email address.

This box is not selected.

Ensure that any position you include in the “Other” section is a position you are certain is available at their location; be sure to do your homework.

Avoid using abbreviations—writing out words entirely is more professional.

Not necessary; leave blank if it does not apply.

This is not a professional answer. Refer to sample application form for a more appropriate response.

The instructions specifically indicate to “check all that apply”, this is a simple way for employers to evaluate your attention to detail.
### Availability:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>12:00 noon-9:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- This is unclear as written; 12 noon would be clearer.
- Writing “same” in one form or another makes Sarah appear lazy. Write out the times repeatedly as needed; this also makes it clearer.

### Education Background:

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<td>High school diploma</td>
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- This information is unnecessary. If you are a recent high school graduate there is no need to include previous educational history just to fill space.

### Previous Work Experience:

- Present or Last Position: Volunteer
- Employer: Sunnydale Elementary School
- Address: 1098 Fraser Way Winnipeg, MB
- Supervisor: Parvinder Bains
- Phone: (204) 123-4567 From: September 20XX To: present
- Responsibilities: Work with students one-on-one to support reading and math activities, assist with fundraising events, prepare for student-teacher interviews, attend field trips and monitor children, coach indoor co-ed soccer for primary grades
- Salary: Volunteer work
- Reason for Leaving: I continue to volunteer but the politics are making me crazy
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- Salary: $6.75 per hour
- Reason for Leaving: Maternity
- May We Contact the Above Supervisor? Yes ✓ No ___

- This is not a professional answer. Refer to sample application form for a more appropriate response.
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Responsibilities: Stocked shelves, provided customer service, operated cash register, responsible for $500 in cash per shift  
Salary: $6.00 per hour  
Reason for Leaving: Moved to Brandon  
May We Contact the Above Supervisor?  
Yes ☑  No  

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I certify that information contained in this application is true. False information may be grounds for not hiring me or for immediate termination of employment at any point in the future if I am hired. I authorize the verification of any or all information listed above.

Signature: Sarah Jones  Date: March 16, 20XX