



Factsheet for Graduates - Assess your skills, Values and qualifications

Before embarking on an important step like searching for your first graduate job, you need to stop and get to know yourself. To understand what you have to offer an employer, you need to recognise the value of your abilities and experiences. Ask yourself - **what skills and talents do I have?**

Self-awareness means knowing what you are good at, what you have a passion for and & motivates you.

Begin by making a few lists. The following may help you identify areas where you have a natural talent, strengths that give you an advantage when applying for a job in your particular field, or weaknesses that may require a little attention and work in order to put you properly in the running with most employers. Being able to define your strengths and weaknesses in the areas of your qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge is essential to enable you to foresee any gaps between you and your potential first job.

SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

Teamwork

- How good are you at working in a team?

Interpersonal skills

- Are you able to relate to and supervise others?

Communication

- What are your written, oral and presentation skills like?

Creativity

- Can you develop solutions to a problem?
- Do you have some good ideas?
- Can you communicate these to others?

Accuracy

- Do you have an eye for detail?

Leadership

- Can you influence others to achieve a recognised objective?
- Can you resolve conflict?

Maturity

- Do you react calmly to difficult situations?
- Can you deal sensitively with people's feelings?
- Can you evaluate options?
- Can you exercise sound judgement under pressure?

Enthusiasm

- Are you a positive person?
- Can you keep others motivated?
- Do you look forward to life?
- Do you go the extra mile?

Initiative

- Do you like to take control?
- Can you develop new ideas and solutions?

Self-confidence

- Are you an assertive person?
- Can you make your ideas and thoughts known without becoming aggressive?
- Can you sell things and ideas?

Adaptability

- Do you welcome change?
- Have you had to adapt to new and difficult situations?
- Can you manage change?

Ambition

- Do you set goals and strive to achieve them?

Time management

- Can you organise your work and prioritise your tasks?

VALUES - Next, make a list of some of your values.

What are some of the things that motivate you? What will give you satisfaction in your first job?

What's important to you?

- wealth
- honesty
- happiness
- a social conscience
- security
- a family
- power
- success
- ambition

Do you like helping people? Do you want to make lots of money? Do you like solving problems? Are you compassionate?

These lists will help you focus your search and help you to expand your thinking. Do not underestimate your skills and talents, or undervalue your experiences.

QUALIFICATIONS

Finally, take a good look at your qualifications. What can you do? What are the specific skills, knowledge and attributes you will bring to the job – your competencies? Become familiar with all your qualifications in order to match them to the positions you are seeking. Think about your qualifications in a broader sense beyond education and training and incorporate all your work experience and the elements of your industrial training.

Remember that one of the more significant outcomes of obtaining a university degree is to develop in students the ability to think about and analyse problems in new ways and, from such a critical analysis, to derive new solutions. You may need to develop a flexible approach to career options. Many relevant and transferable skills are developed whilst pursuing a degree and these together with part-time jobs, social activities and other experiences can contribute towards employability.

Why wasn't I told?

10 things I wish someone had told me before leaving university ...

1. A degree doesn't guarantee me a job
2. I should have started job search at the beginning of final year
3. My first job may only be a step towards what I want
4. Keep trying – persistence counts
5. My education has only just started
6. Gather new skills with each job or new responsibility
7. Top money doesn't necessarily mean I will love my job (but it does pay off my Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) or Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) debt)
8. There is a difference between persistence and aggression
9. My university studies have given me more than just technical knowledge
10. **I control my own destiny – and I will get out of it what I contribute!**

Author – Karen Penrose, Career Industry Council of Australia Project Director (Content checked November 2011)