



CAREER STARTER GUIDE



KHUZAIMAH BINTI BAHARI
POLITEKNIK TAWAU SABAH

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Special thanks go to my students, particularly final-year students, who have been a constant source of inspiration. Through their questions, concerns, and aspirations about entering the workforce, I gained valuable understanding of the real challenges faced by graduates today. This e-book is developed with them in mind.

Lastly, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has directly or indirectly contributed to the completion of this e-book. Your support and encouragement are truly appreciated.

Thank you.

PREFACE

Entering the world of work is both an exciting and challenging transition, especially for final-year students who are preparing to take their first steps beyond academic life. **Career Starter Guide** is designed as a practical and supportive companion to help you navigate this important phase with confidence and clarity.

This e-book aims to equip students with essential knowledge, skills, and strategies needed to begin their professional journey. From understanding workplace expectations and building a strong personal brand to preparing for job applications and interviews, each section is thoughtfully developed to address the real concerns faced by fresh graduates today.

Recognizing that every student's path is unique, this guide encourages self-reflection, continuous learning, and proactive career planning. It not only provides step-by-step guidance but also empowers you to make informed decisions about your future.

Whether you are exploring career options, preparing your resume, or stepping into your first interview, this book serves as a foundation to help you transition smoothly from student life to the professional world.

It is our hope that Career Starter Guide will inspire you to take charge of your career journey and move forward with purpose, resilience, and confidence.

Wishing you every success in your future endeavors.



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CHAPTER 1

Getting Started with Job Hunting



Understanding Job Hunting Mechanics

Entering the job market requires more than simply submitting applications. Job hunting is a structured and strategic process that involves identifying opportunities, analysing job requirements, and presenting yourself as a suitable candidate. For final-year students, understanding how this process works is essential to avoid common mistakes such as applying blindly or failing to meet employer expectations.

Job hunting today combines both traditional and digital approaches. While online platforms dominate the recruitment landscape, offline methods such as networking, career fairs, and referrals remain highly relevant. A successful job seeker knows how to integrate these methods effectively.

In this chapter, you will learn how to locate job opportunities, interpret job advertisements, and gather essential information about potential employers. These skills form the foundation of a successful job search.





Exploring Job Opportunities



Locating Job Advertisements (Online & Offline)

- Job advertisements can be found through many different channels. Employers do not use only one platform to advertise vacancies, so if you depend on just one source, you may miss good opportunities. Some jobs are posted online, while others are shared through networks, events, or direct contacts.
- Using different methods in your job search helps you find more opportunities. Online platforms are fast and easy to access, while offline methods like career fairs or networking allow you to connect directly with employers. Each method offers different benefits.
- By searching through multiple channels, you become more active and flexible in your job search. This increases your chances of finding a suitable job and shows that you are serious about starting your career.

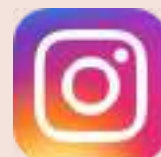


Online sources include:

- 1 Job portals (e.g., JobStreet, MyFutureJobs)
- 2 Company websites (Career pages)
- 3 Professional networking platforms (e.g., LinkedIn)
- 4 Social media (Facebook groups, Telegram channels)



Telegram



Search



Offline sources include:



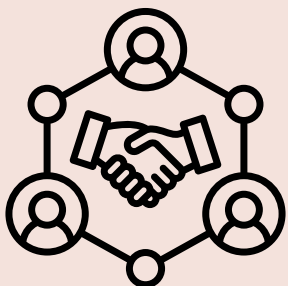
Newspaper advertisements



Career fairs and exhibitions



University or polytechnic career centres



Personal networks (lecturers, friends, alumni)



Identifying Key Information in Job Advertisements



Not all job advertisements are straightforward. You need to carefully analyse the content to understand what the employer is looking for.

Important elements to identify:

- Job title and responsibilities
- Required qualifications and skills
- Years of experience (if any)
- Location and working hours
- Salary range (if stated)
- Application deadline

Pay special attention to keywords such as **“required,”** **“preferred,”** **“must have,”** and **“advantage”**. These words indicate the level of importance of specific skills or qualifications.



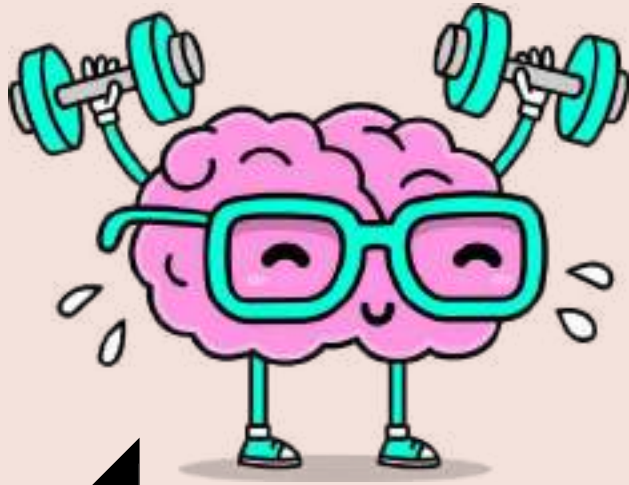
Researching Company Background and Job Requirements

Not all job advertisements are straightforward. You need to carefully analyse the content to understand what the employer is looking for.

Important elements to identify:

- Job title and responsibilities
- Required qualifications and skills
- Years of experience (if any)
- Location and working hours
- Salary range (if stated)
- Application deadline





ACTIVITY 1

Job Advertisement Analysis



Activity 1: Job Advertisement Analysis

Instructions

- Scan the QR code provided by your lecturer to access a job advertisement.
- Carefully read and examine the job advertisement.
- Complete the table on the next page based on your analysis.





Activity 1: Job Advertisement Analysis

Item	Details
Job Title	
Company Name	
Job Responsibilities	
Required Skills	
Qualifications Needed	
Key Keywords Identified	
Application Deadline	



CHAPTER 2

Making Effective Job Enquiries



Preparing for Job Enquiries



After identifying a suitable job vacancy, the next important step is to make a proper job inquiry. A job inquiry allows you to gather more information about the position, clarify job requirements, and express your interest professionally. It also creates a first impression, so it is important to communicate clearly, politely, and confidently.

Preparation is key before contacting any employer. You should understand the job advertisement, prepare relevant questions, and choose the appropriate method of communication—whether by phone, in person, or online. Being well-prepared will help you appear organised and professional.



Practising Professional Telephone Etiquette

1

Introduce yourself clearly (name and purpose of call)

2

Use polite and professional language

3

Speak clearly with an appropriate tone and pace

4

Avoid slang or informal expressions

5

Listen carefully and do not interrupt

6

Thank the employer before ending the call



Planning Relevant Questions for Employers

Before making a job inquiry, you should prepare a list of relevant questions. This shows that you are serious and interested in the position.

Examples of appropriate questions:

- ✓ **Could you provide more details about the job responsibilities?**
- ✓ **What qualifications or skills are most important for this role?**
- ✓ **What is the working schedule for this position?**
- ✓ **Is there any specific requirement I should be aware of before applying?**

Avoid asking questions that are already clearly stated in the job advertisement. Focus on gaining additional useful information.





Conducting Job Enquiries

Job enquiries can be made through different methods depending on the situation.



When conducting any job enquiry, always maintain professionalism, be concise, and stay focused on the purpose of your enquiry.



Scheduling Interview Appointments

If the employer invites you for an interview, it is important to respond professionally when scheduling the appointment.

Tips for scheduling:

- Confirm the date, time, and location clearly
- Be punctual and choose a suitable time
- Use polite language when accepting the invitation
- Take note of any instructions given by the employer

If the interview is conducted online, ensure you understand the platform to be used (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet).





Managing Changes to Interview Arrangements

Sometimes, you may need to request changes to the interview schedule due to unavoidable circumstances. In such cases, you must handle the situation professionally.

Guidelines:

- Inform the employer as early as possible
- Provide a valid reason for the change
- Apologise politely for any inconvenience caused
- Suggest alternative dates and times
- Remain respectful and professional at all times

Handling changes properly reflects your responsibility and professionalism, which are important qualities in the workplace.





ACTIVITY 2

Watching and Analysing a Job Enquiry Video



ACTIVITY 2:

Watching and Analysing a Job Enquiry Video

Instructions:

1. Scan the QR code provided to access the YouTube video.
2. Watch the video carefully. The video demonstrates how to make a job enquiry professionally.
3. Pay attention to:
 - How the applicant introduces themselves
 - The tone and language used
 - The types of questions asked
 - Overall professionalism
4. After watching, complete the task given.





ACTIVITY 2



Answer the following questions:

1. How did the applicant start the conversation?
2. What polite expressions were used in the conversation?
3. How did the applicant end the conversation?
4. Do you think the applicant was professional? Why?





CHAPTER 3

Building a High Impact Resume



A resume is one of the most important documents in your job application. It is a formal summary of your personal details, education, skills, and experiences. For fresh graduates and final-year students, a resume is often the first opportunity to introduce yourself to potential employers.



WHAT IS RESUME?

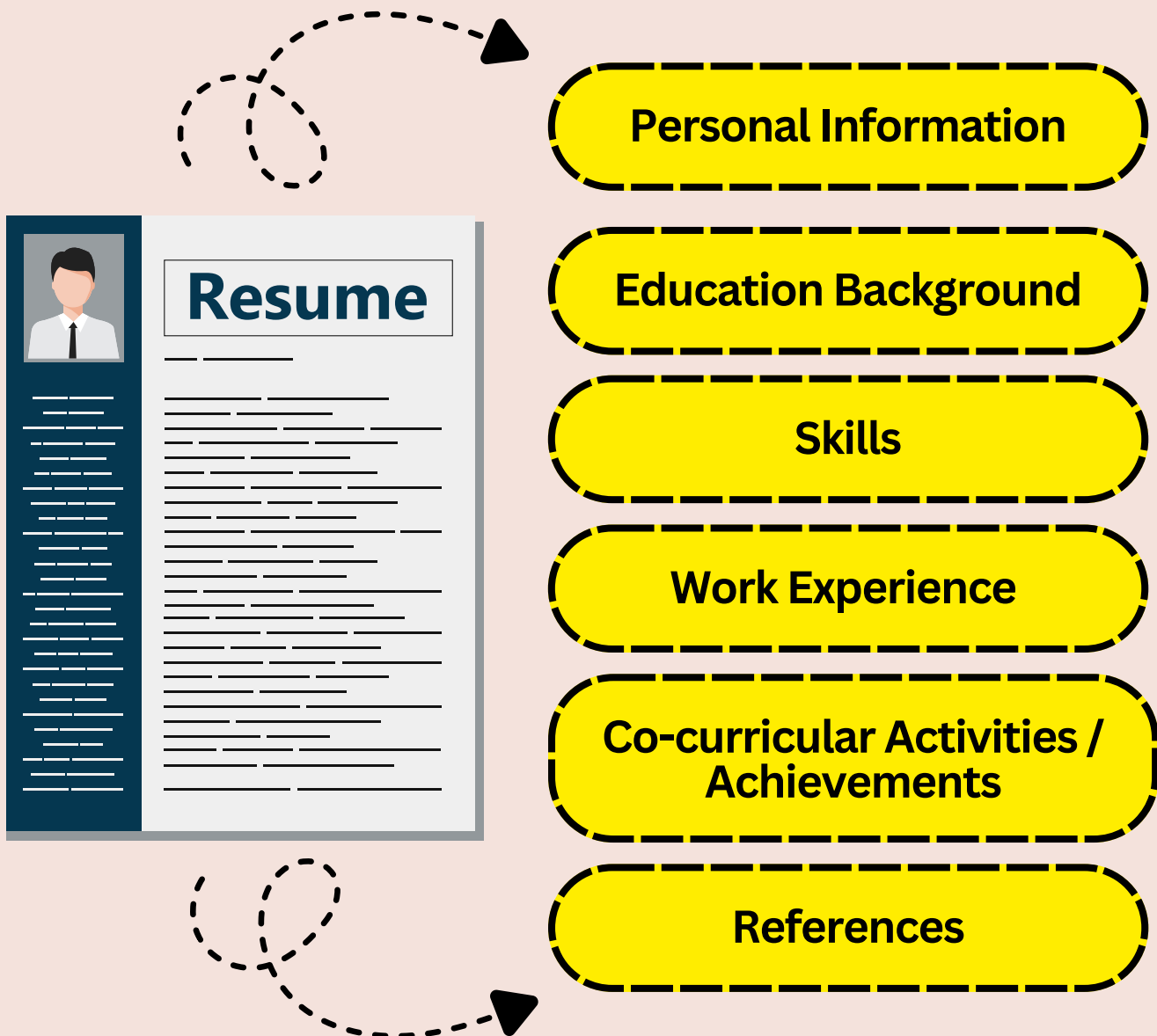
A resume is a **formal document** used to present your background, skills, and qualifications to potential employers when applying for a job.

It usually includes important information such as your personal details, education, skills, work experience (if any), and achievements. The main purpose of a resume is to show employers why you are a suitable candidate for a specific job.





COMMON SECTIONS IN A RESUME





KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

An effective resume has several important characteristics:



Clear and concise – Information is presented in a simple and easy-to-read manner



Relevant – Content matches the job applied for



Well-organised – Uses headings and proper structure



Accurate – Free from false or misleading information



Professional – Uses formal language and appropriate tone



A good resume focuses on your strengths and achievements rather than listing unnecessary details.



USING APPROPRIATE FORMAT AND LANGUAGE

The format and language of your resume play a key role in creating a good impression.

Formatting tips:

- Use a clean and simple layout
- Choose a professional font (e.g., Arial, Times New Roman)
- Use consistent font size and spacing
- Apply bullet points for easy reading



Language tips:

- Use formal and professional language
- Avoid slang or informal expressions
- Use action verbs (e.g., managed, organised, developed)
- Keep sentences short and clear

A well-formatted resume makes it easier for employers to read and understand your qualifications.



ACTIVITY 3

Wayground Quiz – Resume Essentials



ACTIVITY 3: WAYGROUND QUIZ – RESUME ESSENTIALS

Instructions:

1. Scan the QR code provided to access Wayground quiz.
2. Enter your name and attempt the quiz individually.
3. Answer all questions based on what you have learned in this chapter.
4. Submit your answers once completed.





CHAPTER 4

Preparing for a Job Interview



INTRODUCTION

Preparing for a job interview is not only about answering questions correctly. It is also about presenting yourself as a professional and suitable candidate. Employers evaluate your appearance, attitude, preparation, and behaviour during the interview. Therefore, developing professionalism is a key step in increasing your chances of success.





Appropriate Grooming and Appearance



Your appearance creates the first impression during an interview. Dressing appropriately and maintaining good grooming reflects your professionalism and respect for the employer.

Guidelines for appropriate grooming:

- Wear **formal** or **business attire** suitable for the job position
- Ensure your clothes are clean, neat, and well-fitted
- Maintain personal hygiene (clean hair, trimmed nails, minimal perfume)
- Avoid excessive accessories or strong makeup
- Choose simple and professional hairstyles

Looking presentable helps you feel more confident and creates a positive impression on the interviewer.



“

Looking presentable helps you feel more confident and creates a positive impression on the interviewer.

”





EXAMPLES OF INTERVIEW ATTIRE FOR MEN



For male candidates, the goal is to look neat, professional, and confident.



EXAMPLES OF INTERVIEW ATTIRE FOR WOMEN



For female candidates, the focus is on professional, modest, and comfortable attire.



Arranging Relevant Documents



Proper document organization reflects professionalism and preparedness.

DOCUMENTS TO PREPARE

Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Academic certificates

Co-curricular certificates

Supporting documents
(recommendation letters,
awards)





Preparing Common Interview Questions and Responses



Preparation is key to delivering confident and structured responses during an interview.

A strong introduction sets the tone for the entire interview.

Key elements to include:

- Personal background (name, education)
- Academic qualifications
- Skills and strengths
- Relevant experiences
- Achievements
- Career motivation





Example for Self Introduction

“Good morning, my name is [Name]. I am a fresh graduate with a Diploma in Tourism Management. During my studies, I developed strong communication and customer service skills through various projects and internships. I am a fast learner, highly motivated, and passionate about working in the hospitality industry. I believe my positive attitude and ability to adapt quickly make me a suitable candidate for this position.”





Common Interview Questions and Suggested Responses



Below are frequently asked interview questions with guidance on answering them effectively.

1. Tell me about yourself.

- Keep it professional and concise
- Focus on education, skills, and experience

2. Why do you want to work here?

- Show knowledge about the company
- Align your goals with the company's mission

3. What are your strengths?

- Mention relevant strengths
- Provide examples

4. What is your weakness?

- Be honest but strategic
- Show how you are improving





Common Interview Questions and Suggested Responses



6. Describe a challenge you faced.

- Use the STAR method:
 - Situation
 - Task
 - Action
 - Result

7. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

- Show ambition and alignment with career growth



Tip: Practice answering these questions aloud to improve confidence and fluency.



Developing Effective Communication Skills



Effective communication ensures that ideas are clearly understood.

Key elements:

- Speak clearly and confidently
- Maintain appropriate tone and pace
- Use simple and professional language
- Avoid filler words (e.g., “um,” “uh”)
- Listen carefully before responding

Non-verbal communication:

- Maintain eye contact
- Use positive body language
- Sit upright and appear attentive





Developing Interpersonal Skills



Interpersonal skills reflect how well candidates interact with others.



Politeness and respect



Active listening



Empathy and understanding



Confidence without arrogance



Ability to build rapport

**IMPORTANT
SKILLS**



Conclusion

Attending a job interview requires thorough preparation, professionalism, and effective communication. By focusing on grooming, research, organization, and interpersonal skills, candidates can significantly improve their chances of making a positive impression. Mastery of these elements not only helps in securing a job but also builds confidence for future career opportunities.





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An illustration of a man in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and red tie sitting at a dark brown desk. On the desk are a yellow bowl, three small colored cylinders (pink, yellow, blue), and a white document. A brown briefcase with a gold handle and latch sits on the floor next to a light blue office chair. A large dark blue rectangle with the text 'THANK YOU' in yellow is overlaid on the center of the image.

THANK YOU

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