

Using the Ontario Skills Passport in the Information Referral Service (IRS) and Employment Planning and Preparation (EPP) Components of Job Connect

Job Connect career counsellors can use the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) to:

- support learning of the Essential Skills;
- help individuals identify the skills they have and plan further skill development;
- help Job Connect participants build a skills-based résumé and prepare for interviews; and
- familiarize Job Development Placement Support (JDPS) participants with the kinds of tasks they could encounter in the workplace. This can serve as a kind of pre-placement “reality check” and help manage expectations prior to placement.

Step 1: Exploring Essential Skills and Work Habits

After a Job Connect participant has expressed an interest in an occupation, you can use the OSP to help them become familiar with the kinds of tasks they could encounter in the workplace. Some counsellors and job developers who use the OSP have described this step as the pre-placement reality check! It gives you an opportunity to further discuss with the Job Connect participant why they are interested in this type of work and it also helps to manage expectations prior to placement.

1. Go to the OSP website at <http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca>
2. Click on “**OSP Skills and Work Habits**” located in the black navigation bar at the very top of the web page. Set the context by explaining the following to your Job Connect participant:

*These skills are **transferable**. They are used in **nearly every occupation and throughout your daily life**. You take these skills with you from school to work and job to job. Knowing your transferable skills can really help you explain your skills to employers and even convince them that you have good skills for the job, even though you may not have done this type of work before.*

TIP: Print out the list of “OSP Skills and Work Habits” and give the Job Connect participant a copy. Ask the Job Connect participant to circle any skills they would like to develop at the workplace. This information can help inform the development of the Job Connect participant’s training plan if they go on to the JDPS component of Job Connect.

3. Click on any **skill title** to illustrate that each skill can be used at different **levels of complexity**. For example, click on “Reading” and you will see that a level 1 type of reading task is reading short notes or memos. If you look further down you will see that a level 3 type of reading task is reading manuals, such as when you read computer manuals. Every occupation has a range of tasks at different levels of complexity that workers perform on-the-job.
4. Click “**Back**” and return to the list of “OSP Skills and Work Habits”. Scroll down to find a list of **work habits** that are important for success in the workplace. Take this opportunity to discuss how the Job Connect participant has demonstrated good work habits and make note to include this information in the Job Connect participant’s résumé.
5. Now you can search for sample tasks for the occupation that the Job Connect participant is interested in. Click on “**List of Occupations in the OSP Database**” located in the black navigation bar at the very top of the web page.

6. Search for the occupation by **title or by NOC code**. You can let your cursor rest on any of the titles and a brief description will pop up along with a list of the “most important essential skills” for the occupation. This list of most important essential skills is a good place to start when assisting your Job Connect participant with a skills-based résumé.

NOTE: Essential Skills Research is dynamic. Currently there are 215 occupations in the OSP database. Approximately 170 of the occupations are at the C and D levels of the NOC. If you cannot find the exact occupation, try looking for another occupation that is in the same minor group (i.e. the same 3-digit NOC code). Often you can find many tasks that are related to your Job Connect participant’s occupation of choice. This can give you a good place to start a conversation about the participant’s skill development.

7. Write down the **NOC code(s)** for occupation(s) that are of interest to the participant.

Step 2: Create a Sample OSP Work Plan

1. Click on “**Create a Work Plan**”.
2. Choose “**Option B**” and click on the “**Next**” button at the bottom.
3. Choose “**Option A**” and type in the **4-digit NOC code** for the occupation.
4. Choose “**Show me the Standard Work Plan**” and click on the “**Next**” button.

TIP: If your Job Connect participant has expressed an interest in developing certain skills, choose “**Let me create a customized work plan**” so you can customize the sample work plan to include the Job Connect participant’s skill development goals.

5. Follow the directions on the website to create either the standard or the customized OSP Work Plan. Since this is a sample work plan, type in “Sample Work Plan” when you are prompted for a name.

TIP: Save the work plan in Word or WordPerfect so you can quickly access the information.

6. Discuss one or two tasks under each skill. Ask the Job Connect participant questions like:
 - *Are these the types of tasks you would like to do or expected to do in this type of work?*
 - *Which tasks really interest you?*
 - *Which tasks could challenge you?*

TIP: Click on “OSP Resources” which is located in the “Links section of the navigation bar. Print out the “**OSP Tips for Students and Job Seekers**” to further discuss the benefits of using the OSP Work Plan.

Step 3: Building a Skills-Based Résumé with the Support of the OSP

Job Connect career counselors can use the Ontario Skills Passport to support Job Connect participants in the development of a skills-based résumé and to prepare for an interview. Job Connect participants often indicate that they are unsure of the skills or work habits they possess from previous employment, co-op or volunteer experiences. The OSP can help by identifying the most important essential skills for the Job Connect participant's occupation of choice as well as sample tasks that are grouped by skill and skill level.

1. Start with a job ad that is of interest to the Job Connect participant. Identify any words that refer to Essential Skills or work habits. Here is an example that illustrates this step in the process:

RETAIL SALESPERSON WANTED:

Looking for an enthusiastic Retail Salesperson with excellent **communication** and **money math skills**. Good understanding of **customer service** and tasks relating to inventory and displays is needed. Must be a **team player** with strong **decision-making skills** as you will be required to work independently.

*If you don't have a job ad you can follow the steps outlined in the **previous section** and create a standard OSP Work Plan that will list sample tasks by skill and skill level. This will give you a good starting point to decide which skills to focus on in the participant's skills-based résumé.*

2. Go to the OSP website at <http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca>
3. Click on "**List of Occupations in the OSP Database**" located in the navigation bar at the top of the page. Search for the participant's occupation of interest by **title** or by **NOC code**. You can let your cursor rest on any of the titles and a brief description will pop up along with a list of the "most important essential skills" for the occupation.

NOTE: Essential Skills Research is dynamic. Currently there are 215 occupations in the OSP database. Approximately 170 of the occupations are at the C and D levels of the NOC. If you cannot find the exact occupation, try looking for another occupation that is in the same minor group (i.e. the same 3-digit NOC code). Often you can find many tasks that are related to your Job Connect participant's occupation of choice. This can give you a good place to start a conversation about the participant's skill development.

4. Write down the appropriate **NOC code(s)** for occupation(s).
5. Click on "**Search the OSP Database**". Scroll down the page and choose one of the skills mentioned in the job ad. Check off one or more skill levels as appropriate and then enter the NOC code or keyword for the occupation. This type of search will generate a list of sample tasks, grouped by skill and skill level. You can print out a list of sample tasks for each skill that is highlighted in the job ad. If the Job Connect participant has done this type of work before, they can identify tasks they have demonstrated in previous work, co-op or volunteer opportunities. This information can be used to enhance a skills-based résumé and to demonstrate knowledge of the occupation during an interview.

You can also use the “Search the OSP Database” application if the participant is having difficulty describing what they have done in previous jobs. Search the OSP database for tasks relating to the participant’s previous employment. The participant can choose the tasks that were applicable to their previous work situations and use this information to describe their experience in their résumé as well as in an interview.

TIP: You can also create a **customized OSP Work Plan** that includes all the essential skills highlighted in the job ad. Click on “Create an OSP Work Plan” and then follow the prompts on the website. Click on the “Let me create a customized OSP Work Plan” option so that you can choose the specific skills highlighted in the job ad. The OSP Work Plan will also automatically generate a list of work habits that are important for success in the workplace.

6. Now use the search results or the customized OSP Work Plan to help Job Connect participant generate examples of how they have demonstrated their Essential Skills at home, at school, in volunteer work or in other workplace experiences. For example, if the job ad mentions “good communication skills”, you can look through the types of oral communication tasks that workers typically do in the Job Connect participant’s occupation of interest. This can help facilitate a discussion about how the participant has demonstrated good oral communication skills. You are helping your Job Connect participant to build their own “Essential Skills story” so that they can better describe their skills in an interview.

Tip: You can add other skills, such as technical skills that are listed in a job ad, to the “**Other tasks**” section of the OSP Work Plan. This will help the Job Connect participant to identify the essential skills as well as other types of skills, such as technical skills, that the employer has highlighted in the job ad.

To view a sample job ad, résumé and cover letter, go to the OSP website at <http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca> and click on the “Links” section in the navigation bar at the top of the page.