

# CAREER TIPS

## Skills and Competencies

Throughout your life, in paid and unpaid work, in learning situations and leisure activities, you will have acquired a great number of skills.

You may find the terms “skills” and “competencies” used in job descriptions or advertisements. They may seem similar and may be used interchangeably, but it is helpful to know that there are differences.

Skill	Competency
<p>An ability to do something—learnt through experience or training.</p> <p><i>“What you can do.”</i></p> <p><i>Example—I am proficient at Excel</i></p>	<p>Includes a skill or group of skills, knowledge and attributes needed to do a task or activity well.</p> <p><i>“How and how well you can apply your skills.”</i></p> <p><i>Example—I use Excel to categorise previous budget reports into detailed pivot tables to develop improved company financial strategies”</i></p>

In your job application you will need to demonstrate how you meet each of the skills and competencies identified by the employer. You can demonstrate this by matching your relevant skills and competencies against those listed in the job description, person specifications, or job advertisement.

This worksheet can help you identify your key skills. The skills have been clustered to show how you might choose to present them under a few themes, or list them individually in your online profile, CV, Cover Letter, and application form. Remember to update your CV and Cover Letter for each new application.

### Activity:

1. Tick the skills most relevant to you—from paid and unpaid work, learning situations, and leisure activities. You may like to highlight or circle any relevant words in the description for each skill.
2. Select your top 10 skills for the types of jobs you are applying for or select those that are relevant to a specific job application.
3. Write an example of *how you have applied each skill* (i.e., your competency). For example:

*“Customer service: As Customer Service Representative at ABC Ltd, handled over 50 customer enquiries per day, consistently exceeding goals for customer satisfaction.”*

✓	Organisational Skills	Example of how you have applied your skill
	<b>Administration:</b> working with systems, data, procedures	
	<b>Financial management:</b> developing or managing a budget, keeping financial records, preparing reports, fundraising	

	<b>Information management:</b> searching, collecting, recording, classifying information	
	<b>Contract management:</b> preparing quotes and contracts; bargaining or negotiating with others to reach a desired agreement	
	<b>Planning:</b> scheduling, preparing, and coordinating tasks, events, projects	
	<b>Time management:</b> meeting deadlines, setting priorities, being on time	
✓	<b>Communication Skills</b>	<b>Example of how you have applied your skill</b>
	<b>Listening:</b> active listening for meaning; questioning, appreciating diverse views	
	<b>Interviewing:</b> interview for information, asking questions to elicit information	
	<b>Presenting:</b> public speaking, presenting information to large or small groups, giving a talk, instructing	
	<b>Writing:</b> writing business or technical documents, factual reports, correspondence, other communications	
	<b>Facilitating:</b> drawing out group discussion and insight	
	<b>Communicating complex information:</b> communicating complex information in an easily understandable form	
	<b>Social media:</b> using social media platforms to communicate	
	<b>Languages:</b> bi-lingual or multi-lingual; fluency or proficiency in speaking different languages	
✓	<b>People Skills</b>	<b>Example of how you have applied your skill</b>
	<b>Interpersonal:</b> building rapport and trust with others	
	<b>Relationship-building:</b> building strong relationships with customers, suppliers, stakeholders	
	<b>Customer service:</b> handling customer enquiries, complaints, and requests for information; resolving problems	
	<b>Influencing:</b> selling, persuading, encouraging, negotiating	
	<b>Training:</b> instructing, guiding, helping others to learn and develop new skills and knowledge	
	<b>Collaborating:</b> working in a team, achieving goals with others	
✓	<b>Thinking Skills</b>	<b>Example of how you have applied your skill</b>

	<b>Creative thinking:</b> visualising, conceiving, and developing original and innovative ideas, themes, and concepts	
	<b>Researching:</b> researching and gathering information and data, verifying facts and principles	
	<b>Analytical and critical thinking:</b> gathering and evaluating information, understanding abstract ideas, recognising patterns	
	<b>Problem-solving:</b> looking at problems from different points of view and exploring possible solutions	
	<b>Decision-making:</b> weighing up options, making a choice or decision	
✓	<b>Systems and Process Skills</b>	<b>Example of how you have applied your skill</b>
	<b>Computers:</b> using computer software and applications	
	<b>Office systems:</b> records management, financial and accounting systems	
	<b>Continuous improvement</b> to processes and systems	
	<b>Driving:</b> driving motor vehicles, operating heavy machinery	
✓	<b>Leadership Skills</b>	<b>Example of how you have applied your skill</b>
	<b>Team building:</b> building and motivating team in alignment with organisational goals	
	<b>Delegating:</b> prioritising, directing, delegating work to the team	
	<b>Managing performance:</b> overseeing the performance and development of individuals or teams	
	<b>Coaching, mentoring:</b> empowering and enabling people to gain skills, knowledge, insights	
	<b>Mediating:</b> negotiating, mediating between conflicting parties	

It is important to spend time reviewing and identifying your unique skill set. Your mix of skills and competencies is what will set you apart from others and is particularly important when applying for a change in role, a new role, or if you are looking at a complete change in direction.

For support to help you work out positive strategies for your future, contact The Career Development Company at [connect@thecdc.nz](mailto:connect@thecdc.nz)