

# Transition to Work

You got the job! Now what? There is lots to consider while navigating the transition to a new workplace, especially if it is your first job. Here are some tips for a successful transition to work.

## Understanding the Job Offer

Read the entire offer carefully and ask questions (ie. Human resources, direct supervisor) if unsure about terms or conditions. Be sure to consider the compensation package as opposed to salary only. Compensation includes salary, but can also include sick time, vacation days, professional development, expenses, benefits, etc. If you are concerned about the salary, consider what else is included within the offer as comprehensive benefit packages can be competitive and it could save you money (ie. Prescriptions, eyecare, dental care, etc.)

Some employers have a probationary period (typically 3-6 months) which is when an employer will assess how the new employee aligns with the requirements of the role and workplace expectations.

Once you have read the offer and agree to the terms, you can sign it and send it back to make it official!

If you are in a position to negotiate your salary, please be sure to check our [Salary Negotiation](#) tips!

If you are considering more than one offer, reflect on the factors that are important to you, such as:

- Opportunities for growth/learning, including transferable skills
- Networking opportunities with professionals in your field
- Location and cost of living
- Size of company and company culture
- Compensation package

Consider what your priorities are, and which opportunity will be the most satisfying for your growth and overall wellbeing. Company culture is an important consideration, as it is optimal to enjoy where you work and the people you work with, in addition to enjoying the work that you do.

## Workplace Etiquette

During your first few days and weeks, observe interactions among colleagues and ask questions to learn about company culture and professional expectations. Good things to note are:

- What will the training consist of and what are the expectations of when to complete it?



- Are there specific times for breaks and lunches? Is there a place to eat?
- Who do you report to and how will you communicate with your supervisor, do they have a preference for email? Teams? Scheduled meetings? Informal? Formal?
- Clarify the policy for sick days, how to communicate sick days, vacation requests, flex time, remote work, etc. Some organizations may have limits until you have passed the probation period or if it is a contract role
- How will your performance be evaluated and when? Is there opportunity for check in meetings?
- What are the first projects/tasks you will work on and what are the timelines for completion?

## Rights and Responsibilities in the Workplace

It is a good idea to get to know your rights and employment standards as you transition to the workplace. Here are some helpful links to reference as needed

[Your Rights and Responsibilities in the Workplace](#) – Guide to occupational health and safety

[Employment Standards Act](#) – Laws and policies such as vacation time, stat holidays, minimum wage, leaves, and termination

[Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) – Protected social areas from discrimination

## Settling In to Your New Role

New jobs can be exciting yet challenging. If you start to feel overwhelmed, you are not alone. Many people experience this and sometimes even doubt their abilities.

Remember to practice self-compassion. Visualize things going according to plan vs. worrying about it going wrong. Find a mentor / friend to talk it out. Try LinkedIn to find out if there are any connections with the employer to continue building your momentum with that organization.

Practice reframing your thoughts. For example:

- I don't have the relevant skills for this role. **Try:** I was hired for this role so someone believe I can do this job. This is an opportunity to improve my skills and gain experience which will help me feel more confident in the future
- I don't know if I know enough to do this job. **Try:** I will ask what the training includes, and ask if it is possible to schedule check ins so I can ask questions while I'm learning the job.
- I don't have enough experience. **Try:** I was successful in the hiring process. All experience will help toward my career journey



**Give yourself time to adjust.** Keep notes of what you learn so that you can refer back to them, just like you did in class. Schedule time after you get home to review new information. There is a learning curve with any new job, it will improve with time and effort.

**Keep a question page.** Make a list of questions and categorize them as 'urgent' and 'not urgent'. Then, sort them by who can answer them, for example: you (can look it up or refer to training notes), mentor or colleague, supervisor. That way, you reserve your questions for the most appropriate contacts.

Not everyone approaches their work the same way. Understanding your preferences for how you work best and understanding others can help you feel more comfortable at work and help you avoid potential conflict. Consider meeting with a career counsellor to take a personality assessment or discuss self-reflection activities to boost your self-awareness.

## Career Management and Goal Setting

Whether or not it is part of your performance evaluations, it is a good idea to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) goals for success. Learn how to do your job well, then plan for your professional development. Consider:

- What would you like to learn next? Check [career-ready skills](#) these [videos](#) for ideas
- What will bring value to the company or your own development?
- How do you plan to stay relevant in your industry, and keep up to date (new courses/technology)
- Write your goals down to keep yourself accountable and be ready to share with your employer if you are asked to set goals as part of your evaluation

Once you have established yourself in the role and are ready for a new challenge, consider opportunities for growth within an organization. Talk with your supervisor about taking on additional projects or responsibilities. Companies prefer to hire from within, once they know their employees' work ethic and productivity. Many people think they have to look outside of their current employer for growth which is not always the case.

The [SSC offers professional services](#) on resume writing, skill development, interviewing, LinkedIn, job search coaching, accommodation and disclosure in the workplace coaching, and more.

Are you unsure about your options or suitability for career paths? We have [career counsellors](#) that can help you navigate the career planning process.

Check [OSCARplus](#) for events, company recruitment sessions, workshops and job and volunteer postings to support your professional development.

