Recognising your skills & abilities...you have many and they are unique to you!

One of the most important things you must do before seeking work or looking at your work alternatives is to consider what skills and abilities you can bring to the workforce. These are your most valuable assets and should not be overlooked.
Three kinds of skills you need in the world of work – technical, transferable and personal skills

**Technical skills** are the specialised skills and knowledge required to perform specific duties and are often easily recognisable. They are sometimes referred to as ‘work skills’. For example:

- Driving a forklift
- Arranging flowers
- Word Processing
- Information technology
- Window cleaning
- Gardening
- Bookkeeping/MYOB
- Machine operator
- Nursing
- Accounting
- Mechanic
- Specific software skills

Each one of these broader skills is made up of many specific skills a person must be able to do in order to complete those technical tasks. These will often form the basis for the position advertisement.

**Transferable skills** are the basic skills required to perform a variety of tasks. They are your greatest asset as they can be ‘transferred’ from one area of work to another and employers value their portability. For example:

- Working under pressure
- Work unsupervised
- Being trustworthy
- Self-motivated
- Honesty and reliability
- Fast learner
- Adapts to change
- Professional
- Show initiative
- Ethical
- Planning/Organisational
- Loyal

Transferable skills will often be related to how you fit into ‘the team’ or the ‘culture of the workplace’.

**Personal skills** are the individual attributes you have such as attitudes, personality, work habits and style of operation. They often describe what you are like and how you would naturally go about doing things. For example:

- Working under pressure
- Work unsupervised
- Being trustworthy
- Self-motivated
- Honesty and reliability
- Fast learner
- Adapts to change
- Professional
- Show initiative
- Ethical
- Planning/Organisational
- Loyal

Personal skills will often be related to how you fit into ‘the team’ or the ‘culture of the workplace’.

Too often, we think only about our technical skills as they are easiest to identify. Though these are important, employers want a person for more than just their ability to do a specific task. How you approach the task and interact with others is also particularly significant.

In the changing world of work (see page 7), your transferable and personal skills are increasingly important. If you have a clear understanding of your skills, it helps you to be more confident when you approach employers.

It also helps you to consider other patterns and forms of employment and should enable you to explore realistic work options.

“It is WORTH taking the time to identify your skills.”
How to identify your skills...we take them for granted!

“The first critical step in the job search process is to determine your skills and qualifications and to become familiar with the best possible way to present them to employers.”

Identifying, listing and describing your skills requires a little time and patience. However, as it is critical to job search success you should plan to invest the time needed. Listed below are some examples within a table which you can use for skills identification.

Think about all the skills and abilities that you have acquired through your lifetime, from a range of sources including your hobbies, sporting activities, school and other training, work, and interests. You may find it useful to get a friend to add to your list.

| Job title:  
(Or hobby/voluntary work/sport/other) | Description:  
What you did and all skills required | Skill type: |
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Transferable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Example One Mother</td>
<td>Food preparation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>Cleaning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Driving a car</td>
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<td>Child care skills</td>
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<td>Budgeting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organising</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Money handling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meeting deadlines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Coordination/Multi-tasking</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritise tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work unsupervised</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
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</table>
### Job title: (or hobby/voluntary work/sport/other)

#### Example Two

**Truck driver**

- Drive cars and trucks C + HR class licences
- Word processing: MYOB, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, internet, email
- Keyboard skills
- Operate a cash register
- Excellent verbal communication skills
- Good at problem solving
- Money handling skills
- Good organiser
- Work for long hours
- Hard working
- Reliable and honest
- Able to work under pressure
- Outgoing and friendly
- Able to work autonomously
- **OTHER SKILLS:**
  - Play piano and guitar
  - OHS training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill type:</th>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>Transferable</th>
<th>Personal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Drive cars and trucks</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Word processing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keyboard skills</td>
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**TIP:** If you are confident using a computer why not try the career exploration tools available on the Career Centre website or the “My Guide” section of the myfuture.edu.au website? It’s free, easy and there just to help you!

**Identify your personal and transferable skills using Checklists 1 and 2 - Personal and Transferable skills (page 84 and 85).** Use these terms in your written applications, job interviews and anytime you are discussing your skills with a potential employer.

Be open to new possibilities

Remember, this is your journey and you DO have control over the entire job search process. By remaining open and flexible, you will invite opportunities that you may not have considered in the past – but may be just what you were searching for all along!

Before starting to look for work, consider what kind of work suits you and what kind of working pattern will agree with your lifestyle.

You may decide you need to improve your current skills and abilities to take a whole new career direction or you may want to stay in the area you have always worked.

Having a good idea of both your “skills” and your “needs” will make it much easier to focus on your unique job search plan and also to decide which areas you will be prepared to compromise if necessary.
Brad’s story:

At age 50, Brad was an expert *Manual typewriter repairer*, however, there was no longer work in this field and he was retrenched. It was time to explore other work options. Brad had a multitude of transferable skills (problem solving, using fine tools, ordering parts, understanding simple mechanics, being organised, relating to customers) and realised these could all be used in other fields.

As word processing on computers has replaced the typewriter, Brad decided to familiarise himself with home computers. He completed a short course in small computer systems at a TAFE Institute and was then suitably qualified to enter the huge market for *Computer repair technicians*. His new skills, added to his previous skills, made him a very employable person.

He liked the idea of having his own business working from home and saw a growing demand for people who wanted their computers fixed and/or upgraded without the inconvenience of taking them to a shop. So he set up a mobile repair service from the back of his car with the tools, advertised his trade, and used his networks.

*With the home computer industry growing like it is, Brad now has more work than he can handle.*
“The world of work is changing – not just the kinds of work people do but also how they do that work. There is no point hoping for full-time jobs that do not exist anymore – you need to stay open to new possibilities.”

Tara’s story:

Tara has always loved animals, especially dogs. However, when she left school, Tara really didn’t know what she wanted to do.

Not having any previous experience, she went fruit picking in the orchards down south. She was able to get a job by using her networks – a friend of her cousin in Donnybrook needed pickers and the cousin was able to put in a good word for Tara.

This work helped her to decide one thing – she liked being in the city! On moving back to the city, Tara asked at the local fruit and vegetable shop about work possibilities and on the strength of her experience picking fruit, she scored a part-time job. It was 20 hours a week and not enough to live on.

Thinking about her other options, Tara decided to put a sign in the fruit and vegie shop window offering a dog walking service. She was overwhelmed by the amount of people prepared to pay her to exercise their dogs. Now she also spends another 10 to 15 hours a week doing what she loves most of all – being with dogs.

By targeting a high density housing suburb in a neighbouring area, Tara’s dog walking service is growing.