



Standards Instructional Guidance: HS.HECPS.D - Workforce Readiness

High School Higher Education and Career Path Skills (HS.HECPS) – Adopted 2024

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OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
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Standard: HS.HECPS.D.1

Standards Statement

Prepare to apply for an entry-level job related to future career goals.

Key Concepts

- Students can prepare to apply for an entry-level job in relation to future academic and career goals, which could include, but not limited to:
 - Identifying career goals
 - Identifying credible sources for finding open positions
 - Navigating technology and job search platforms to find relevant opportunities
 - Examining cultural differences in communication and workplace behaviors
 - Comparing and contrasting different workplace communication expectations
 - Developing professional communication skills and email, phone, and text etiquette
 - Understanding how to read a job description and identify and respond to relevant application vocabulary and language
 - Building a list of references and understanding the difference between personal and professional references
 - Learning to navigate an online application portal and complete a job application online and on paper

Essential Questions

By the end of the unit, students should be able to answer:

How can preparing effectively for a job application and interview increase my chances of securing employment?

What strategies can I use to navigate job searching and application processes while considering my personal and cultural background?



Considerations

Socio-Economic:

- Students' access to reliable technology, internet, and a phone number can impact their ability to communicate with potential employers and complete job applications.
- Economic barriers can make it challenging for some students to purchase appropriate interview clothing or afford transportation to job interviews.
- Free or low-cost resume-building resources, career centers, and community-based support can help bridge these gaps and build confidence.
- Volunteer work, internships, and apprenticeships can provide alternative pathways for students without prior job experience to gain skills and build resumes.
- Recognizing these barriers and providing practical supports helps ensure that all students can feel ready to pursue entry-level work.

Culturally Responsive:

- Workplace norms and expectations around self-promotion, dress codes, and communication may differ from students' cultural values and experiences.
- Some students may feel uncomfortable highlighting their accomplishments—framing this as sharing strengths rather than boasting can help bridge this gap.
- Language barriers can impact students' comfort and ability to complete applications or prepare for interviews in English—asset-based approaches and translation support can help.
- Cultural differences in body language, like eye contact and personal space, can influence how students present themselves in interviews.
- Teaching students how to navigate potential bias or discrimination in the hiring process, including understanding their rights and seeking supportive workplaces, can build resilience and confidence.

Strength-Based:

- Helping students identify and articulate their unique strengths and transferable skills can build self-awareness and confidence in the job application process.
- Using tools like Holland Codes or interest assessments can support students in connecting their strengths and interests to future job goals.
- Encouraging students to build portfolios or document their experiences and achievements can help them see how their skills translate to different roles.
- Mock interviews, resume workshops, and feedback sessions create safe spaces to practice, learn, and grow.
- Approaching this process as an opportunity for exploration and self-discovery helps students feel empowered and supported as they take the first steps in their career journey.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Employability Skills	Interpersonal and communication skills that influence how effectively an individual interacts with others in the workplace (e.g., teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving).
Professionalism	The conduct, behavior, and attitude expected in a work environment, including reliability, respectfulness, and accountability.
Networking	Building and maintaining professional relationships to gain industry insights, job opportunities, and mentorship.
Applicant Tracking System (ATS)	Software used by employers to screen and filter job applications based on keywords and criteria.

Sample Student Activities

Examples of preparing to apply for an entry-level job in relation to future academic and career goals:

- Identify Resources to Find a Job:
 - Research job search websites, professional networking platforms, and industry-specific resources where entry-level job opportunities are posted.
 - Utilize reputable sources such as company websites, industry associations, and government job boards to identify job openings in their desired field.
- Navigate Technology and Job Search Platforms to Find Relevant Opportunities:
 - Familiarize themselves with popular job search platforms and tools, such as LinkedIn, Indeed, Glassdoor, and career websites of specific companies or organizations.
 - Use search filters and advanced features to narrow down job listings based on location, industry, job title, and other preferences.
- Examine Cultural Differences in Communication and Workplace Behaviors:
 - Research cultural norms and expectations related to communication styles, workplace etiquette, and professional behavior in different industries and regions.
 - Seek guidance from mentors, career advisors, or cultural competency training resources to understand how cultural differences may impact workplace interactions.
- Develop Professional Communication Skills in Email, Phone, and Text Etiquette:
 - Practice writing professional emails with clear and concise language, appropriate tone, and proper grammar and punctuation.
 - Develop phone etiquette skills, including active listening, speaking clearly, and conveying professionalism and courtesy during phone conversations.
 - Understand the appropriate use of text messaging in professional settings and adhere to standard conventions for texting with colleagues or employers.

- Read a Job Description:
 - Analyze job descriptions thoroughly to understand the requirements, responsibilities, qualifications, and expectations for the position.
 - Highlight key keywords, skills, and qualifications mentioned in the job description to tailor their resume and cover letter accordingly.
 - See if there's a point of contact for application questions, and don't be afraid to reach out if you have questions.
- Build a List of References (Differentiation of References as Personal, Professional, and Who References Can Speak To):
 - Compile a list of references that includes a mix of personal and professional contacts who can speak to different aspects of their character, work ethic, and skills.
 - Choose references who can provide relevant and credible information about their qualifications, achievements, and suitability for the job.
 - Obtain permission from each reference before including their contact information and inform them about the specific positions they are applying for.
- Fill Out a Job Application:
 - Practice filling out traditional job applications accurately and completely, paying attention to details such as contact information, employment history, education, and references.
 - Include key keywords, skills, and qualifications mentioned in the job description.
 - Prepare responses to common questions found on job applications, such as salary expectations, availability, and reasons for leaving previous positions.

Pre-interview - Preparing for an interview:

- Carefully Examine the Job Description:
 - Use the job description as a guide. Understand the qualifications and qualities the employer is seeking. Align yourself with these details to demonstrate your suitability.
- Consider Why You Are Interviewing and Your Qualifications:
 - Understand why you want the job and why you're qualified. Be prepared to explain your interest and why you're the best fit.
- Perform Research on the Company and Role:
 - Learn about the company's products, services, culture, vision, mission, values, and recent developments.
 - Understand the role you're applying for and how it fits into the organization.
 - Prepare thoughtful questions for your interviewers.
- Learn About the Product or Service:
 - Even if the role isn't directly related, understand what the company produces or promotes. Familiarize yourself with the customer's perspective.
- Request a Sample of the Product (if applicable):
 - Knowing about the product from both a company and customer standpoint will enhance your interview performance.

- Practice Answering Common Interview Questions (in-person and on video/timed):
 - Anticipate questions related to your background, strengths, weaknesses, and problem-solving abilities.
 - Prepare concise and relevant answers.
 - Prepare questions to ask at the interviewer specific to the role and organization.
- Make a Great First Impression:
 - Dress appropriately that aligns with the company's culture and the interview type (e.g., formal, casual).
 - Arrive early.
 - Greet everyone politely.
- Share Your Strengths and Qualifications Related to the Position:
 - Be ready to explain why you're the best person for the role. Highlight your skills and experiences.
- Bring Necessary Documents:
 - Carry extra copies of your resume, cover letter, and any other relevant documents.
- Prepare for Tests or Evaluations (if applicable):
 - Some interviews may include performance tasks or skills tests. Practice common interview tasks such as, drafting an email, editing a memo, customer service scenarios, etc.
- Stay Calm and Confident:
 - Remember that preparation is key. The more you know, the more confident you'll feel during the interview.

Supplemental Resources

External Links

[Open Education Resources/Oregon Open Learning Group: Oregon Higher Education & Career Path Skills](#)

The resources in this group have been curated by ODE content specialists and Oregon educators to supplement materials for courses that include Higher Education and Career Path Skills standards.

[CareerOneStop](#)

A comprehensive career exploration and job search resource. Students can access tools for writing resumes and cover letters, exploring careers, preparing for interviews, and locating job openings. It also includes videos, skills assessments, and state-specific employment resources.

[GetMyFuture](#)

This site is designed specifically for youth and young adults, offering step-by-step guidance on job searching, filling out applications, preparing for interviews, and exploring training opportunities. It includes videos and interactive tools for career planning.

External Links[O*NET Online](#)

A detailed database of occupational information, useful for researching different career paths and understanding job descriptions. Students can explore required skills, education levels, and salary expectations. It's especially helpful for aligning interests with potential career goals.

[Youth@Work: Job Search Toolkit](#)

This resource helps students understand their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. It offers guidance on avoiding discrimination, navigating bias, and preparing for fair and equitable job searches—supporting culturally responsive and strength-based career preparation.

[BigFuture by College Board: Career Search](#)

This site offers an interactive platform where students can explore careers based on interests and strengths. Each career profile includes day-to-day responsibilities, salary ranges, and pathways to entry, making it a great resource to help students connect goals with real-world opportunities.

[SkillUp](#)

This site provides a platform to browse hundreds of training programs, career tools and helps job seekers find careers without requiring a college degree. SkillUp focuses on in-demand career paths that offer growth opportunities, living wages, and benefits. Their training programs are designed to be short-term and affordable, with many being free or even paying participants to train. SkillUp also offers resources and support to help job seekers create resumes, connect with employers, and access other essential resources like childcare and housing assistance. SkillUp's platform is free to use.



Standard: HS.HECPS.D.2

Standards Statement

Prepare a resume and cover letter and determine what to include in a professional employment portfolio.

Key Concepts

- Students can prepare a resume and cover letter, which could include, but not limited to:
 - Distinguishing between various types of resumes
 - Determining relevant experiences to include on a resume
 - Tailoring resumes and cover letters to specific job descriptions
 - Quantifying achievements and utilizing action verbs
 - Identifying relevant personal strengths, skills, and experiences
 - Seeking feedback
 - Proofreading and editing
- Students can determine what to include in a professional employment portfolio, which could include, but not limited to:
 - Identifying when to use a cover letter
 - Translating personal skills to match a job description
 - Understanding when to use a photograph of yourself
 - Determining the potential impact of your digital footprint
 - Selecting high-quality work samples
 - Including certifications and awards
 - Showcasing multimedia content (e.g., image, video, etc.)
 - Preparing digital employment portfolios (e.g., LinkedIn)
 - Demonstrating growth and development
 - Researching the potential employer and addressing their needs and values
 - Organizing and presenting materials professionally
 - Seeking feedback



Essential Questions

By the end of the unit, students should be able to answer:

How can I present my experiences, skills, and strengths in a way that aligns with my career goals and provides the most competitive advantage?

How do digital presence and professional branding impact job opportunities?

Considerations

Socio-Economic:

- Access to technology, internet, and professional tools—like resume-building software or printers—can vary widely among students. Providing alternative resources (school computers, printed templates, AI tools) can help bridge these gaps.
- Financial barriers can limit access to professional attire or transportation for networking events and interviews; sharing local resources, thrift options, or remote alternatives can be valuable.
- Paid internships and stipends can reduce barriers and create more equitable access to career-building experiences.
- Not all students have the means to create professional digital portfolios—introducing free tools like Google Sites or LinkedIn Learning can help ensure all students can showcase their strengths.

Culturally Responsive:

- Students' cultural backgrounds and family expectations may shape how they approach professionalism, networking, and job applications. Encouraging open dialogue about balancing personal and cultural values can help students feel seen and supported.
- Bias in hiring and networking can be a barrier; discussing name pronunciation, cultural humility, and bias-reducing strategies can build confidence.
- Highlighting bilingualism, multicultural experiences, and community leadership as assets in resumes and portfolios validates and affirms students' cultural identities.
- Discussing how direct vs. indirect communication styles and cultural norms shape workplace interactions can build cultural competence for all learners.

Strength-Based:

- Encouraging students to see the value of volunteer work, caregiving, and school leadership in resumes helps them recognize their transferable skills.
- Using storytelling techniques in cover letters can help students express their unique strengths, passions, and values.
- Peer review, mock interviews, and professional mentorship can boost students' confidence and readiness.
- Reinforcing that career development is an ongoing journey can help students see early experiences as stepping stones toward long-term goals.
- Viewing multilingual skills and cultural perspectives as strengths, not barriers, helps students feel proud of their identities and see themselves as valuable contributors to any workplace.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Chronological Resume Format	Lists work experience in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent job. Best for individuals with a consistent work history.
Functional Resume Format	Focuses on skills and experience rather than chronological work history. Ideal for those with gaps in employment or changing careers.
Combination Resume	Blends chronological and functional formats, highlighting both skills and work experience. Suitable for individuals with diverse employment backgrounds.
Professional Branding	The process of creating a unique, consistent image and reputation in a professional field, including resumes, online presence, and networking efforts.
Applicant Tracking System (ATS)	A software application used by employers to scan and filter resumes based on keywords, formatting, and relevance to job descriptions.
Networking	Building professional relationships through in-person or online interactions to gain career opportunities, mentorship, and industry insights.
Digital Portfolio	A collection of digital materials showcasing an individual's skills, work, achievements, and experience. May include resumes, projects, certifications, videos, and personal branding elements like LinkedIn profiles.
Transferable Skills	Skills that are applicable across various jobs and industries, such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership.
Professional Etiquette	The expected behaviors and standards in a workplace, including communication, dress code, punctuality, and workplace ethics.
Employability Skills	Personal attributes and interpersonal abilities, such as communication, adaptability, and teamwork.
Technical Skills	Technical, measurable abilities acquired through education or training, such as coding, data analysis, or proficiency in a foreign language.
Gig Economy	A labor market characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work rather than permanent jobs.
Remote Work	Jobs that allow employees to work from home or outside a traditional office setting, often supported by digital collaboration tools.
Hybrid Work Model	A combination of in-office and remote work to provide flexibility for employees.
AI & Automation in Hiring	The use of artificial intelligence in job recruitment, such as resume screening, automated interviews, and skill-matching software.

Sample Student Activities

- Have students review and critique sample resumes (strong vs. weak resumes) to identify best practices.
- Assign students a job posting and have them draft a tailored cover letter. Swap letters for peer feedback.
- Students practice introducing themselves professionally in mock networking situations.
- Have students Google themselves and reflect on how their online presence could impact their job search.
- Create an elevator pitch about their skills and aspirations.
- Students analyze real professional portfolios (online and print) and discuss what makes them effective.

Additional Examples

Examples of preparing a resume:

- Create a resume
 - Gather Necessary Information: Collect information about education, work experience, skills, achievements, and relevant personal details.
 - Choose a Format: Decide on a resume format that best suits their experience and career goals, such as chronological, functional, or combination.
 - Organize Content: Structure the resume with clear headings and sections, including contact information, summary or objective statement, education, work experience, skills, and additional sections as needed.
 - Tailor Content: Customize the resume for each job application by highlighting relevant skills, experiences, and achievements that match the job requirements.
 - Proofread and Edit: Review the resume carefully for errors in grammar, spelling, formatting, and consistency. Make necessary revisions to ensure clarity and professionalism.
- Distinguish between two types of resumes
 - Research Different Resume Types: Learn about the two main types of resumes – chronological and functional – and understand their differences.
 - Consider Career Goals: Determine which resume type is most suitable based on career goals, level of experience, and the specific requirements of the job or industry.
 - Choose the Right Format: Select the resume format that best showcases their skills, experiences, and qualifications in relation to the job they are applying for.
 - Understand When to Use Each Type: Identify situations where a chronological resume or a functional resume would be more effective in presenting their candidacy to potential employers.
 - Know that resumes are living documents and should be updated regularly to make each position.

- Explore relevant experiences to include on a resume
 - Reflect on Past Experiences: Think about past academic, work, volunteer, extracurricular, and personal experiences that are relevant to the desired job or industry.
 - Identify Transferable Skills: Identify skills and achievements gained from past experiences that are transferable to the target position.
 - Prioritize Experiences: Determine which experiences are most relevant and impactful for inclusion on the resume, focusing on those that align with the job requirements and demonstrate key qualifications.
 - Gather Supporting Evidence: Collect supporting evidence, such as work samples, awards, certifications, or testimonials, to showcase the quality and impact of their experiences.
- Identify relevant personal strengths and experiences
 - Conduct a Self-Assessment: Reflect on personal strengths, skills, values, interests, and achievements that are relevant to the desired career path.
 - Consider Feedback: Seek feedback from teachers, mentors, peers, or previous employers to gain insight into personal strengths and areas for improvement.
 - Match Strengths to Job Requirements: Match personal strengths and experiences to the requirements and qualifications listed in job postings or career goals.
 - Provide Examples: Provide specific examples or anecdotes that illustrate how personal strengths have been demonstrated in past experiences, highlighting achievements and accomplishments.
- Seek feedback on resume from teachers, mentors, counselors, college and career advisors, or others. Constructive feedback can help identify areas for improvement and make necessary revisions. Understand that this work takes time and often requires many revisions. Seek input after each revision.
- Quantify achievements whenever possible. Instead of just listing responsibilities, highlight specific accomplishments, such as improving grades by a certain percentage, completing a project ahead of schedule, or receiving awards or recognition.
- Customize resumes for each job or internship application. Research the company and job requirements and tailor the resume to highlight relevant skills, experiences, and achievements that align with the position.
- Identify and include both hard and soft skills that are relevant to the positions applying for. Hard skills are specific technical abilities, while soft skills are interpersonal skills and traits that demonstrate suitability for the role.
- Include relevant extracurricular activities, clubs, or volunteer work on their resumes. These experiences can demonstrate leadership, teamwork, communication skills, and a commitment to personal growth and community involvement.
- Identify transferable skills they have gained from past experiences, such as part-time jobs, volunteer work, or school projects. These skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and time management, are valuable in any job or academic setting.

- Practice professional formatting and layout for resumes, using clear headings, bullet points, and consistent formatting to make resumes easy to read and visually appealing.
- Highlight relevant projects, coursework, or academic achievements that demonstrate knowledge and skills in a particular field. This is especially important for students with limited work experience.
- Use strong action verbs to describe experiences and achievements. Action verbs such as "developed," "led," "organized," and "implemented" can make the resume more dynamic and impactful.
- Proofread and edit to ensure the resume is free of errors and typos. Attention to detail is essential, as even small mistakes can leave a negative impression on potential employers.

Examples of determining what to include in a professional portfolio:

- Explore different types of portfolios (such as LinkedIn, etc.)
- Identify when to use a cover letter:
 - Job Application Requirements: If the job application specifically requests a cover letter, it's essential to include one.
 - When applying for competitive positions where candidates are likely to submit cover letters, including one can help stand out.
 - If there are gaps in the resume, career changes, or other special circumstances that need further explanation, a cover letter provides an opportunity to address these.
 - If interested in working for a specific company or organization, a tailored cover letter can demonstrate genuine interest and alignment with the company's values and culture.
- Translate personal skills to match a job description:
 - Carefully read and analyze the job description to identify the key skills, qualifications, and experiences required for the position that employers are looking for, which they can then highlight in their portfolio.
 - Identify personal skills and experiences that align with the requirements of the job description. These may include technical skills, soft skills, and industry-specific knowledge.
 - Provide specific examples from past experiences, such as academic projects, internships, part-time jobs, volunteer work, or extracurricular activities, that demonstrate the relevant skills and qualifications.
 - Use keywords and phrases from the job description in the cover letter and resume to demonstrate alignment with the job requirements and to ensure applicant tracking systems (ATS) recognize the match.
 - Highlight achievements and accomplishments that showcase the student's ability to contribute to the role and add value to the organization.
 - Tailor the content of the cover letter and resume to address the specific needs and priorities of the employer and to emphasize how the student's skills and experiences make them a strong fit for the position.

- Identify career goals and aspirations. Understanding the desired career path can help determine what types of materials to include in the portfolio.
- Reflect on past experiences, including academic projects, internships, part-time jobs, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, and leadership roles. Identify experiences that are relevant to career goals and demonstrate skills and strengths.
- Select high-quality work samples that demonstrate skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and accomplishments. These could include writing samples, design projects, presentations, research papers, coding projects, or any other relevant work.
- Include any certifications, awards, or honors related to the field of interest, in the portfolio. These achievements can help validate skills and expertise to potential employers or academic institutions.
- Include multimedia content in their portfolio, such as videos, audio recordings, graphics, or interactive projects, skill badges as needed or necessary. These can help provide a more comprehensive overview of skills and accomplishments.
- Include examples of growth and development over time. This could include reflections on challenges overcome, feedback received, or skills acquired through experience.
- Consider who will be viewing the portfolio and tailor the content accordingly. For example, if applying for a design position, maybe emphasize creative work samples, whereas if applying for a research position, maybe highlight analytical skills and academic achievements.
- Organize the portfolio in a professional and visually appealing manner. Include a table of contents, brief descriptions or explanations for each item, and ensure that all materials are well-organized and easy to navigate.
- Seek feedback from mentors, teachers, or professionals in the field. Getting input from others can help identify strengths and weaknesses in the portfolio and make necessary improvements.
- Have students audit their social media and professional online presence (e.g., LinkedIn, digital portfolios).
- Conduct mock interviews and portfolio presentations where students can practice presenting their portfolios in a simulated job interview.
- Provide examples tailored to different industries (e.g., artists showcasing work, engineers presenting projects, business students including case studies).
- Students create a short professional introduction video as part of their digital portfolio.

Supplemental Resources

External Links

[Open Education Resources/Oregon Open Learning Group: Oregon Higher Education & Career Path Skills](#)

The resources in this group have been curated by ODE content specialists and Oregon educators to supplement materials for courses that include Higher Education and Career Path Skills standards.

[Zety - Resume & Cover Letter Templates](#)

An all-in-one career platform that offers tools and resources to help job seekers create resumes and cover letters, find jobs, and navigate the job search process. It provides an online resume and cover letter builder, along with career advice and guides.

[LinkedIn - Learning Career Prep Modules](#)

These learning modules are a part of the educational platform and is often referred to as "Learning Paths". There are curated collections of video courses designed to help individuals develop and enhance skills needed for career advancement and job seeking. Provide a structured approach to career development, allowing users to explore different career paths, learn new skills, and prepare for career transitions.

[USA Jobs Pathways Program - Job Search Website & Internship Database](#)

This website offers structured internships and employment opportunities within the federal government for students and recent graduates, with the potential for permanent positions upon successful program completion.

[Big Interview - Mock Interview Platform](#)

This is an online platform that focuses on improving interview skills and building confidence through a combination of training and practice. Provides a variety of tools such as common interview questions, STAR tool to craft responses to behavioral questions, and virtual mock interviews with instant AI feedback.



Standard: HS.HECPS.D.3

Standards Statement

Practice interview skills in virtual and in-person settings.

Key Concepts

- Students can practice interview skills for both virtual and in person interviews, which could include, but not limited to:
 - Recognizing the impact of non-verbal communication and cultural differences
 - Developing appropriate answers to a variety of interview questions
 - Practicing approaches for different types of interview situations (e.g., single interviewer, multiple interviewers, self-guided, round-robin, group, remote, etc.)
 - Engaging in simulation activities that prepare students for real-world experiences
 - Practicing active listening and engagement
 - Dressing appropriately for an interview depending on the specific role
 - Asking appropriate questions at the end of the interview
- Students can develop post-interview skills for variety of types of interviews, which could include, but not limited to:
 - Asking for next steps and contact Information
 - Reflecting on interview performance
 - Writing down important details covered in the interview
 - Sending a thank you email or note
 - Asking for feedback
 - Staying positive and avoiding overthinking
 - Keeping the job search active



Essential Questions

By the end of the unit, students should be able to answer:

How can students effectively prepare for and adapt to different interview formats?

What strategies can help students overcome nervousness and communicate confidently during an interview?

How does understanding workplace culture and values impact interview success?

What role does feedback play in improving interview skills over time?

Considerations

Socio-Economic:

- Access to professional clothing for interviews can be a challenge—connecting students with local resources like clothing banks, school-based programs, or community organizations can help.
- For virtual interviews, students may face challenges finding quiet spaces or reliable internet; sharing information about public libraries, school career centers, or other safe, quiet spaces can make a difference.
- Transportation challenges can be a barrier to in-person interviews—helping students explore public transit, carpooling, or remote interview options can increase access.
- Students who rely on paid work may prioritize jobs that offer stipends or financial assistance; helping them evaluate these opportunities can reduce financial stress and build agency.

Culturally Responsive:

- Cultural norms shape how students approach interviews, including differences in eye contact, body language, and assertiveness—discussing these nuances can help build understanding and comfort.
- English language learners may experience bias or feel self-conscious about language skills; encouraging clear communication, self-advocacy, and building confidence are essential supports.
- Different industries have varying expectations around dress and communication—encouraging students to research expectations for their specific field can help them feel more prepared and authentic.
- Educating students about their rights—related to discrimination, accessibility, and fair treatment—empowers them to navigate the interview process with confidence.

Strength-Based:

- Normalizing interview nerves and reframing interviews as growth opportunities helps students see them as skill-building experiences, not final judgments.
- Practicing with trusted adults, peers, or through mock interviews can build fluency, comfort, and readiness.
- Helping students identify their unique strengths—whether from school, volunteer work, caregiving, or personal experiences—can help them feel more confident in sharing their stories.
- Framing these conversations as opportunities for students to explore, learn, and advocate for themselves supports their long-term growth and career development.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Behavioral Interview	A type of interview focused on past experiences to predict future performance.
Elevator Pitch	A brief, persuasive introduction of oneself, often used in networking or interviews.
Employability Skills	Personal attributes like teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving that are valuable in any job.
Panel Interview	An interview where multiple interviewers ask questions.
Implicit Bias	Unconscious attitudes that may affect hiring decisions.

Sample Student Activities

- Students participate in simulated interviews with teachers, peers, or local professionals.
- Students develop and present a 30-second introduction about themselves.
- Students watch or read different interview scenarios and critique responses.
- Students explore how interview expectations vary across cultures.
- Students list what makes a good and bad interview experience.

Additional Examples

During-interview - Interview Strategies:

- Understand the Impact of Non-Verbal Communication:
 - Understand the importance of non-verbal communication, such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice, in making a positive impression during interviews.
 - Provide examples of non-verbal communication techniques to convey confidence and professionalism.

- Share findings from organizational research that highlight the significance of non-verbal cues in forming first impressions and influencing hiring decisions.
 - Pay attention to the interviewer's body language and adjust their own non-verbal cues accordingly to establish rapport and connection.
- Using the STAR Method for Responding to Interview Questions:
 - Understand the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) as one structured approach for answering behavioral interview questions.
 - Situation: Describe the context or background of the experience.
 - Task: Explain the specific task or challenge they faced.
 - Action: Detail the actions they took to address the situation.
 - Result: Summarize the outcomes or results of their actions, emphasizing achievements and lessons learned.
 - Identify relevant experiences and frame responses using the STAR format, emphasizing the importance of providing specific examples and measurable outcomes.
 - Practice exercises to apply the STAR method to common interview questions, such as "Tell me about a time when you faced a challenge" or "Give me an example of a time when you worked in a team."
 - Listen carefully to each question and take a moment to gather thoughts before responding.
 - Provide specific examples and quantify results whenever possible to make responses more compelling and impactful.
- Engage in Simulation Activities Preparing Students for Real-World Experiences:
 - Participate in mock interview sessions to practice interviewing skills in a simulated environment.
 - Practice participating in scenarios that replicate real-world interview situations, including different interview formats (e.g., one-on-one, panel interviews), common questions, and challenging scenarios.
 - Provide constructive feedback to peers after the simulation activities, focusing on areas for improvement and strategies for enhancing performance.
 - Role-play by taking turns playing the role of the interviewer and the interviewee, allowing for insights from both perspectives.
 - Draw on experience from mock interview sessions or role-playing exercises to feel more confident and prepared during the actual interview.
 - Practice active listening and communication skills by responding thoughtfully to questions, asking for clarification if needed, and demonstrating genuine interest in the conversation.
 - Approach the interview with a positive attitude and mindset, treating it as an opportunity to showcase skills and qualifications.

- Research on the Organization Culture and Values:
 - Research the organizations they are interviewing with to understand their workplace culture, values, and mission.
 - Reference their knowledge of the organization's workplace culture, values, and mission during the interview to demonstrate alignment and genuine interest in the opportunity.
 - Discuss the importance of aligning personal values and goals with those of the organization, as fit is often a key consideration in hiring decisions.
 - Ask thoughtful questions about the company culture, team dynamics, and future opportunities to further demonstrate their interest and engagement.
- Practice Active Listening and Engagement:
 - Demonstrate active listening during interviews, to fully engage with the interviewer and demonstrate genuine interest in the conversation.
 - Practice actively listening, such as nodding and asking clarifying questions to ensure understanding.
 - Participate in role-playing exercises to practice active listening skills by responding thoughtfully to questions, asking follow-up questions, and engaging in meaningful dialogue with the interviewer.
 - Ask insightful questions and seek clarification when necessary to ensure a clear understanding of the interviewer's expectations and requirements.
- Practicing Video Interview Etiquette: Test camera angles, lighting, and sound quality before the interview.
- Utilizing Online Mock Interview Platforms: Websites like Big Interview or LinkedIn Learning offer practice tools.
- Preparing a Portfolio: For creative or technical fields, students can bring a portfolio showcasing their work.
- Researching Salary Expectations: Understanding pay scales can help students answer questions about salary expectations.
- Networking with Industry Professionals: Connecting with mentors or professionals in the field can offer insights.

Post-interview - Follow-up and reflection:

- Ask for Next Steps and Contact Information:
 - Before leaving the interview, request the contact information of the hiring manager. Also, inquire about the next steps in the process. For example, ask how long they need to make a decision or if there will be a second interview.
- Assess Interview Performance:
 - Reflect on the questions you answered and how you responded. Consider what you wish you had said differently. Use this self-assessment to improve for future interviews.
- Write Down Important Details:
 - Jot down any key points from the interview, including questions you answered well and areas for improvement. This will help you remember important details during follow-up.
 - List names and roles of people on the interview panel.

- Send a Thank-You Email or Note:
 - Within 24 hours, send a thank-you email expressing your gratitude for the opportunity. Reiterate your interest in the position and briefly mention something specific from the interview. This shows professionalism and enthusiasm.
- Stay Positive and Avoid Overthinking:
 - While waiting for a response, focus on positive activities. Spend time with friends or engage in activities that boost your self-confidence.
 - Avoid excessive worrying or second-guessing your performance.
- Keep Your Job Search Active:
 - Continue exploring other job opportunities. Don't put all your hopes on one interview. Keep networking, applying, and attending interviews.

Supplemental Resources

External Links

[Open Education Resources/Oregon Open Learning Group: Oregon Higher Education & Career Path Skills](#)

The resources in this group have been curated by ODE content specialists and Oregon educators to supplement materials for courses that include Higher Education and Career Path Skills standards.

[O*NET Online – Career Research & Interview Preparation](#)

This site is a comprehensive online resource from the U.S. Department of Labor that provides detailed information about various occupations in the US economy. Provides occupational descriptions, career exploration tools, and preparation for job searches and interviews.

[CareerOneStop – Interview Tips & Practice](#)

This site offers resources and guidance to help individuals improve their interview skills and prepare for job interviews.

[Big Interview – Free Mock Interview Practice](#)

This resource provides interview practice and preparation resources for job seekers. Provides a combination of expert training and practice tools to help improve interview skills and build confidence for traditional and virtual interviews.

[Dress for Success Oregon \(Clothing Resources\)](#)

This site provides services to assist clients with career clothing for job interviews and new employment, as well as job readiness training and ongoing career support programs.



Standard: HS.HECPS.D.4

Standards Statement

Understand the hiring process and human resource procedures by analyzing common employment situations.

Key Concepts

- Students can compare terms of employment and determine if it is a favorable offer, which could include, but not limited to:
 - Preparing to complete job acceptance
 - Filling out a W-4
 - Identifying appropriate forms of identification for the I-9
 - Identifying parts of an employee handbook and important employment policies
 - Practicing negotiating terms of employment and recognize when negotiation is appropriate
 - Employment benefits
- Students can understand common human resource procedures and recognize common employment situations, which could include, but not limited to:
 - Requesting time off
 - Ethical use of paid time off
 - Difference between union and non-union employment
 - How to address conflict with colleagues and an employer
 - Recognizing and reporting sexual harassment and workplace bullying
 - Navigating bias and discrimination
 - Knowing your rights as an employee



Essential Questions

By the end of the unit, students should be able to answer:

How can employees advocate for themselves in the hiring process and workplace?

What are key rights and responsibilities that employees should understand to navigate workplace challenges successfully?

What are successful approaches to managing conflict with workplace team members?

Considerations

Socio-Economic:

- Some students may need to enter the workforce earlier due to financial responsibilities at home; acknowledging this reality and discussing ways to balance work and school can support their success.
- Access to employer-provided benefits (like health insurance or retirement plans) can differ based on job type and economic background—understanding these variations helps students make informed decisions.
- Financial literacy around wages, pay structures (hourly, salary, contract-based), and benefits can help students advocate for fair compensation and understand long-term impacts.
- For students lacking key documents (like Social Security cards or state IDs), connecting them to trusted resources for obtaining necessary paperwork can reduce stress and barriers to employment.

Culturally Responsive:

- Cultural norms shape workplace expectations, including how students communicate, perceive hierarchy, and approach negotiation.
- Attitudes toward work-life balance, time off, and professional networking can differ across cultures—discussing these differences validates students' lived experiences and fosters inclusive understanding.
- Recognizing that discrimination and bias may exist in hiring and workplace interactions can help students feel prepared to navigate challenges and seek supportive environments.
- Using culturally responsive examples and diverse scenarios can help students see themselves represented in discussions about workplace dynamics.

Strength-Based:

- Encouraging students to recognize their existing strengths—like problem-solving, adaptability, and communication—builds confidence as they navigate new workplace situations.
- Teaching students how to advocate for themselves—whether by asking for accommodations, seeking mentorship, or expressing career goals—empowers them as they enter the workforce.
- Framing negotiation as a valuable skill to develop, rather than something that requires perfection, helps students see themselves as deserving of fair treatment and respect.
- Sharing real-world stories of individuals who have navigated workplace challenges and thrived can inspire students and show them what’s possible.
- Supporting students to see every employment experience as a step in their long-term growth reinforces a sense of agency and resilience.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
W-4 Form	A tax document employees complete to determine tax withholding.
I-9 Form	A verification form for employment eligibility in the U.S.
Paid Time Off (PTO)	Employer-provided leave for vacation, sick days, or personal time.
Employment Benefits	Non-wage compensation such as health insurance, retirement plans, and tuition assistance.
Workplace Harassment	Unwanted and inappropriate conduct that creates a hostile work environment.
Bias and Discrimination	Prejudice or unfair treatment based on race, gender, age, disability, or other factors.
Union vs. Non-Union Employment	Differences in worker representation, collective bargaining, and workplace protections.

Sample Student Activities

- Mock Job Offer Analysis: Students receive different job offers and evaluate salary, benefits, and workplace policies to determine the most favorable option.
- W-4 and I-9 Completion Exercise: Using sample forms, students practice filling out employment documentation.
- Employment Rights Role-Playing: Students act out scenarios involving requesting time off, reporting harassment, or negotiating employment terms.
- Employee Handbook Exploration: Students review real-world employee handbooks to identify key policies and discuss their significance.
- Case Study on Workplace Conflict: Students analyze a workplace conflict scenario and propose solutions using effective communication strategies.

Additional Examples

- A student negotiates their hourly wage and PTO policy after receiving a job offer at a retail store.
- A student identifies discriminatory language in a mock interview and discusses strategies to address it.
- A student role-plays an employee requesting reasonable accommodations for a disability.
- A student researches and presents on employment laws affecting youth workers in their state.

Supplemental Resources

External Links

[Open Education Resources/Oregon Open Learning Group: Oregon Higher Education & Career Path Skills](#)

The resources in this group have been curated by ODE content specialists and Oregon educators to supplement materials for courses that include Higher Education and Career Path Skills standards.

[U.S. Department of Labor – Employee Rights](#)

This resource provides a wealth of information and resources regarding employee rights.

[Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)

The EEOC serves as a central hub for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against job applicants or employees. This includes discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, transgender status, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, or genetic information. The site provides resources for both employees and employers. Individuals can find information on their rights and how to file a charge of discrimination. Employers can access guidance on complying with equal employment opportunity laws and preventing discrimination in the workplace.

[CareerOneStop – Job Search and Employment Rights](#)

This is a career, training, and job search website for the U.S. Department of Labor. It provides a wide range of free online tools, information, and resources designed to help job seekers, students, businesses, and career professionals.

[Federal Student Aid – Work-Study Guide](#)

The FSA Work-Study Guide provides information about the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program. This program helps undergraduate and graduate students with financial need earn money to help pay for their education expenses through part-time jobs.

[Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries](#)

The workers section provides information and resources to help employees understand their rights and protections under Oregon law.