



# WORKBOOK 1 – GETTING IN (PART ONE)

This workbook is designed to be use alongside the **Getting In (part one)** webinar recording. It is the first in a series of webinars and workbooks designed to help you 'get in' to a job at the start of your career.

## **The Getting In (part one) webinar covers:**

- Employability – definitions
- What employers are looking for in candidates
- How they select
- Why candidates fail
- Your 'transferable skills'
- CVs and application forms

## **This Getting In (part one) workbook covers:**

- Top seven transferable skills
- Skill definitions
- Sample job advert
- Bad CV – an example
- Good CV – an example
- Action verbs / vocabulary
- Confusing words, apostrophes
- Describing your success on your CV or in interview
- What three things will you do differently

The Getting In (part two) webinar and workbook cover what to expect at interview and some of the individual and/or group tests you may be asked to do during your interview or assessment day. The workbook contains plenty of examples and practical exercises.



# WORKBOOK 1 – GETTING IN (PART ONE)

This workbook is designed to be used alongside the **Getting In (part one)** webinar recording.

## **Employability: transferable skills**

We've all seen the news headlines about the competitive nature of the jobs market at the moment. But let's face it – we have always had to go head to head with other candidates to get a job. But lately it seems that employers have been lamenting more and more about the lack of transferable (or employability) skills in new recruits. In fact, employability seems to have become something of a hot topic, but what exactly does it mean?

### **Definition**

*The set of skills (written and spoken), knowledge and personal attributes that make you more likely to secure and be successful in your chosen career.*

Employability skills are an important because they can help you get the job you want, do well in that job, be respected in your work and can help you as you progress through every step of your career. They are not something to be learnt once and then forgotten.

Ultimately, employers are so keen on employability/transferable skills because they want to know that they have employed someone who:

- can you do the job (do you have the skills and ability to do the job);
- will you do the job (will you add value to that job and the company itself); and
- will you fit in with the team/company.

This is why demonstration of your employability/transferable skills – especially at job application and interview stage is so important. Each employer may call them something different: you could find them called 'competencies', 'soft skills', 'key behaviours' or 'transferable skills' to name a few.

## What do you need to demonstrate?

The skills you need to demonstrate will differ depending on what type of job or promotion you apply for, but you won't go far wrong if you concentrate on the following seven sought-after skills:

This table shows you some key skills that employers will want you to demonstrate and their definitions. Look at the examples we've shown and then write down three examples from your own experience that demonstrate you have these transferable skills, and where you used them.

Transferable skill	What does this mean	Some examples	Your three examples
<b>Teamwork</b>	Be able to work confidently in a group. Make sure you play an active part in meetings, group projects and team interaction.	Working as part of a team in a shop to ensure customers get served on time.  Working with others to deliver a project on time.	1.  2.  3.
<b>Written communication skills</b>	Be able to express yourself clearly in <b>writing</b> . This is about being able to communicate your thoughts in a clear, concise and logical way. Use good grammar, correct punctuation, good sentence construction and clear formatting so your writing is accurate, easy to read and easy to understand.	Presenting facts and figures to others in a Powerpoint presentation.  Preparing a report that explains and summarises some market research you conducted.  Writing an article for the school or company website / magazine or newsletter.	1.  2.  3.
<b>Verbal communication</b>	Be able to express yourself clearly in <b>speech</b> . This is not about regional accents, but it is about being clear in your thoughts and logical in the way you express these to others. You may need to use	Explaining complex financial information to another person in a non- jargon, non-financial way that is clear and easy to understand.  Giving clear instruction to a fellow student or work colleague.  Resolving customer complaints	1.  2.

	different styles of verbal communication depending on the seniority of the person you are talking to, so understanding how to speak to others is vitally important.	– keeping calm, ensuring the best result for customer and company, listening.	3.
<b>Initiative / Self-reliance</b>	Be able to work on your own and act on your own initiative, identify opportunities and be proactive in putting forward ideas and solutions. You'll need to demonstrate you have the willingness to learn and develop yourself without being told what you need to do.	The company you work for doesn't use social media. You think this is a missed opportunity, so you decide to research what other companies do, look at some statistics and draw up a proposal and plan of activity to convince your boss of the value of using social media.	1. 2. 3.
<b>Motivation and drive</b>	Closely linked to initiative and self-reliance, you should be prepared to show that you are determined to get things done, that you make things happen and are constantly looking for better ways of doing things.	Identifying a process that you think can be made more effective. Coming up with recommendations to make that process better, faster, easier to understand or more cost-effective. Presenting these suggestions to your manager, then taking responsibility for implementing them.	1. 2. 3.
<b>Problem-solving skills</b>	Be able to gather information logically and methodically to establish the facts and principles. You should be able to analyse, investigate and interpret what you've discovered to find the best solution or recommendations to help solve the problem.	Identifying a problem (or possible issue, threat, obstacle) and developing a clear plan of action or communication to deal with that particular issue.	1. 2. 3.
<b>Planning and</b>	Be able to plan and	Organising a trip for the	1.

<b>organisation</b>	organise activities and carry them out logically, effectively and in good time.	members of your sports team to compete in a competition.	2.  3.
---------------------	---	--	--------------

Although these are among the most common transferable or employability skills that employers look for, they are unlikely to be the only ones. So make sure you consider some examples to demonstrate the capabilities you have in some of the following:

- **Creativity** – generates and applies new ideas and solutions.
- **Negotiating and persuasion** – able to influence and convince others, to discuss and reach agreement.
- **Analysing and investigating** – gather information systematically to establish facts and principles.
- **Flexibility** – adapt successfully to changing circumstances, situations and environments.
- **Personal impact/confidence** – presents a strong, professional, positive image to others which inspires confidence and commands respect.
- **Action planning** – able to decide what steps are needed to achieve particular goals and then implement these.
- **Decision-making** – determines the best course of action. Evaluates options based on logic and fact and presents solutions.
- **Numeracy skills** – multiply and divide accurately, calculate percentages, use statistics and a calculator, interpret graphs and tables.

Another key skill that deserves special mention is **commercial awareness**. It's a vague concept, but put simply, this is thinking with a business brain and it really impresses a potential employer. Commercial awareness is also important when you apply for a job. Do your homework. Ask some key questions: what sector is the employer in; who are their competitors; who are their customers; have they featured in the news recently? News and information are at our fingertips, with social media, blogs, news websites and podcasts, so keep up to date with the headlines.



# SAMPLE JOB ADVERT

## About us

Our company, XYZ, is a large international organisation with offices in 22 countries. We provide the highest standard of financial guidance and strategic business advice to a wide range of clients – ranging from family run businesses to established high street brands. Although there are many companies that offer the same service as ours, we feel our exceptional client service, discretion and business savvy staff help set us apart from the rest.

We have an annual turnover of £30million, employ over 4,000 staff and are now looking for 11 talented and ambitious individuals with A-levels (or equivalent) to join our team.

## About you

You should have a solid academic background with a minimum of 2 A levels (or equivalent) as well as O levels/GCSE's in English and Maths. Of course, you will need to have a flair for communication and the right qualities to become a valued member of this very well-respected team. In a few short words, you'll need to show us you are sharp, energetic, resourceful and focused on delivering client value.

## The package

In return, we will pay you a good salary, fund your training towards a professional accountancy qualification and provide you with a variety of work experience alongside leading industry professionals, working on real business projects.

If you think this sounds like you, please send in your CV and a covering letter to XYZ by ABC date.

\*\*\*\*\*

Use this space below to write down a list of transferable skills and personal competencies this employer is seeking:

# Elizabeth Dingle

3 Somerset Avenue, North Pelmersley, Lincolnshire LD5 4QQ

Tel: 0111 4440444

Mobile: 07777 44440444

Email: [ed4321111@ymail.co.uk](mailto:ed4321111@ymail.co.uk)

## Personal Statement

Very motivated and organized graduate. Has been working for a large farming business for the past 1.5 years learning how a business is run. My work includes analyzing, organizing and forecasting and has given me experience in how a business is run.

## Objective

Looking forward to joining a company with long career prospects.

## Educatoion

**ICAEW student** Jan 2010 – present

Studying towards ICAEW CFAB qualification.

Modules: Assurance (Passed), Law (Passed), Management Information (passed), Principles of Taxation, Accounting, Business and Finance

**Lincolnshire University** 2005 – 2009

B.A. (Hons) Geography and Business Studies 2:2

**Streamley College, Hartlepool, South Yorkshire** 2002 – 2004

A Levels

Geography

Business Studies

Home Economics

**Stemford School, Hartlepool, South Yorkshire** 1997 – 2002

10 GCSE's

## Career History

**Big Farm Company Ltd – Lincolnshire** Dec 2009 - Present

**Office Administrator**

Working in the the office of a large farm who employ over 30 members of staff. Assisting the Farm Manager in the development of systems and procedures to improve the quality and efficiency of management decisions

### Duties

- Office organization
- Management of staff.
- Invoices.
- Purchasing
- Dealing with customers and retailers
- Budgeting and budget analysis.
- Marketing and promotion
- Sales forecasts.
- Stock control
- Meeting deadlines

## Various Summer Jobs 2005-2008

- Working at local shops as shop assistant, office admin etc

## Morrison's Supermarket, Caudley, South Yorkshire May 2004 – Dec 2004

Working night shifts replenishing shelves. Worked 11 hour shifts to strict deadlines.

### Skills learnt

- Time-management, how long to spend on each job to improve efficiency.
- Working long hours and making sacrifices

### Key skills

- Good IT Skills
- Good communication Skills
- Flexible and adaptable able to work individually and as part of a team
- Able to communicate with people.
- Good organisational skills
- Good attention to detail.
- Enjoy problem solving
- Trustworthy

### Personal Skills

- Running and raising money for charity
- Marathon running
- Football – play regularly
- Films & Reading.

\*\*\*\*\*

This CV has been structured to a typical UK format. It is important to recognise that in some countries, the preferred format may be very different to this one, so if you are applying for jobs outside the UK, then please do your research into the preferred format that is required.

This CV example (above) has some good points, but it has many areas that need improvement including:

### Style

- Spelling mistakes and repeated words
- Inconsistent use of punctuation, spacing, hyphens and capitalisation of letters
- Use of American words rather than British words eg,
  - Organization (American) vs organisation (British)
  - Analyzing (American) vs Analysing (British)
- Inconsistent use of colour in headings
- Inconsistent spacing between headings/text
- Format can be made more reader-friendly

### Content

- Re-order: Work experience move to first page, Key skills section should be earlier and academic/school information should be on second page
- Personal statement – could be in third person (sounds like a third person is endorsing you)
- No detail/not enough to show employer full scope of skills/achievements
- No sense of achievement or scope of capabilities evident in this CV
- Need to include a sentence about 'references available on request'
- Ideally CV should be dated, so employer knows it is up to date



# Elizabeth Dingle

3 Somerset Avenue, North Pelmersley, Lincolnshire LD5 4QQ

Tel: 0111 444 0444

Mobile: 07777 444 4044

Email: [ed4321111@ymail.co.uk](mailto:ed4321111@ymail.co.uk) Nationality: British

## Personal statement

Elizabeth is a friendly, motivated and organised individual with a strong work ethos. She has a reputation for problem solving and is confident dealing with people at all levels of seniority. Elizabeth has proven business and finance experience gained within large and family-run organisations across farming, retail and DIY sectors.

## Objective

Elizabeth is currently self-studying for the internationally recognised Certificate in Finance, Accounting and Business from ICAEW, with a view to gaining a trainee role in an accountancy practice and further study towards a professional accountancy qualification.

## Key skills

- Excellent command of written and spoken English.
- Proven ability to communicate effectively at all levels.
- Flexible and adaptable, able to work individually and a pro-active team player.
- Excellent organisational ability and reputation for problem solving.
- Trustworthy and reliable with an ability to handle confidential information.
- Ability to work under pressure and to strict time and/or financial deadlines.
- Proficient IT skills including Microsoft Office – Word, Excel, PowerPoint.
- Full, clean UK driving licence.

## Work experience

**Dec 2009-present – Big Farm Company Ltd, Daley, Lincolnshire (award-winning dairy farm)**

### Office Administrator

- I am responsible for the day-to-day operations of the farm office and shop including: daily customer contact, liaising and negotiating with suppliers and retailers, budget analysis and forecasting, stock control and reconciliation, invoicing, completing monthly internal audits and purchasing authority up to £15,000.
- I played a key role in developing new IT procedures and quality systems to improve the integrity and efficiency of management decision-making. My efforts resulted in a £25,000 cost saving in year 1 and a more user-friendly system.
- Responsibility for a team of 3 including recruitment, training, setting targets, motivation, appraisals and regular performance management.
- I volunteered to look after the marketing of the farm and shop. After conducting customer research and evaluating existing materials, I revamped all the marketing materials/website. The website saw 137% increase in traffic in 3 months.
- I helped organise a new farmers market involving promotional activity, logistics planning, co-ordination with local farmers, local council liaison, on-site attendance and follow-up. The event was attended by 1,000 people, the local press and generated £15,000 of income for local farmers.
- I developed template PowerPoint presentations for use by managers at conferences.

### Jan-Dec 2008

Part of my Business Studies degree course involved a year-long project to launch a new product/company. Working in a team of 6, our team developed a new fruit juice drink. I played a key role in developing the product, conducting market research and competitor analysis. I was

responsible for pricing strategy, financial planning, cost control and sales forecasting. The company made £4,000 gross profit during the year.

### Easter, Jun-Sept, Dec 2008 – Morrison's Supermarket, Caudley, South Yorkshire

#### Shop Assistant / Night Worker

- Helped shoppers find items and worked 11 hour night shifts replenishing shelves. I worked to strict time/financial deadlines and grew adept at managing my own time and performance. I was nominated twice for 'Employee of the Month'.

### Dec 2006, Easter and Dec 2007 – Dillons Bakery, Caudley, South Yorkshire

#### Shop Assistant

- Responsible for serving customers efficiently, replenishing stock, cash handling, till reconciliation and working to target to promote particular food items.

## Education

### June 2010-present – ICAEW student

- Certificate in Finance, Accounting and Business (CFAB) qualification from ICAEW.
  - Assurance (passed 82%)
  - Business and Finance (passed 79%)
  - Law (passed 91%)
  - Management Information
  - Principles of Taxation
  - Accounting

### 2005-2009 – Lincolnshire University

- BA (Hons) Geography and Business Studies 2:2
- Subject modules included:
  - Managing Financial Resources and Decisions
  - Business Strategy
  - Business Ethics
  - Organisations and Behaviours
  - Business Decision-Making
  - Marketing Principles

### 2002-2004 – Streamley College, Hartlepool, South Yorkshire

- 3 A levels: Business Studies (A), Geography (B), History (B)

### 1997-2002 – Stemford School, Hartlepool, South Yorkshire

- 10 GCSEs: Business Studies (A), Geography (A), Maths (B), English Language (B), Science (B), English Literature (C), Biology (C), History (C), Home Economics (C), Cultural Studies (C).

## Hobbies and Interests

- I am an enthusiastic runner and have competed in 4 marathons and helped raise £11,000 for charity.
- I belong to a local netball team, compete regularly in regional competitions and assist with coaching duties.
- I enjoy films including comedy, sci-fi and arts.

References available on request.  
October 2012.

**ACTION WORDS** – think about using some of these in your CV.

When describing your achievements and work experience, remember to use action words as these give employers more detail about what you have done and how well you have done it.

Accelerated	Motivated
Accomplished	
Adapted	Operated
Administered	Originated
Analysed	Organised
Approved	
	Prepared
Co-ordinated	Presented
Conceived	Participated
Conducted	Performed
Completed	Planned
Created	Pinpointed
	Proposed
Developed	Proved
Delegated	Provided
Demonstrated	Proficient in
Designed	
Directed	Recommended
	Reduced
Effected	Reinforced
Eliminated	Redesigned
Enhanced	Reorganised
Established	Rewrote
Evaluated	Revamped
Expanded	Revised
	Reviewed
Facilitated	My responsibilities involved...
Found	My efforts resulted in ...
Generated	Scheduled
	Simplified
Increased	Set up
Implemented	Structured
Initiated	Streamlined
Interpreted	Supported
Improved	
	Taught
Launched	Trained
Led	Translated
Maintained	Utilised
Managed	
Mastered	Won
Mentored	

See how you could use these in sentences on the next page.

Describing your success and achievement in a way that shows employers three things:

- Can you do the job (do you have the skills and competencies)
- Will you do the job (can you add value to the job, are you motivated)
- Will you fit in (does your personality fit in with the company / team)

Remember to use action verbs (and good grammar) and state your achievements, how well you accomplished a task and/or the results of your actions. Take a look at some of the examples below, then think about what you've done and how you can describe this on your CV or in an interview to a potential employer.

- At the end of each shift, I **counted** the daily takings, **reconciled** this against the till receipts and **prepared** the tills for the following day.
- As tennis team captain, I **helped to motivate** players to increase their training and work on their weaknesses. The team grew in confidence and success, finishing third in the league – our highest place for 10 years.
- My role **focused** on the smooth running of the office, daily stock control, dealing with customer enquiries and complaints.
- **Identifying** a potential gap in the market, I **proposed** our company attend XYZ event/do XYZ activity to raise our company profile. I **created** an exhibition stand, **designed** and **produced** the promotional literature, **liaised** with suppliers and **handled** all event logistics before, during and after the event. **We spoke to 1,000 people, sold £3,000 of stock and increased our weekly profit by 11%.**
- I **delivered** weekly **written** reports to a wide range of customers.
- My duties involved **building and maintaining relationships** with key customers and management teams.
- Reporting directly to the owner, I was responsible for **monitoring** stock levels, **reordering** goods, **dealing** with new deliveries and **replenishing** displays.
- I **assisted** with the **recruitment, training and mentoring** of three new staff members.
- Thanks to my friendliness, efficiency and knowledge, I **won a 'good customer service' award** twice in one year.
- The group **voted my presentation the best** of the day, for which I received a prize.
- As part of a project team, I **conducted** telephone research, **interviewed** customers face-to-face, **compiled and presented** the findings to the management team. **As a result of this research, the company introduced new customer guidelines.**
- I **revamped** the staff training manual and **trained** colleagues to ensure a consistent level of understanding across the team.
- I **negotiated** with suppliers and my efforts **achieved a 10% saving in costs.**
- I was **solely responsible for the creation, implementation, delivery** and subsequent **day-to-day management** of XYZ project/process/activity.

## CONFUSING WORDS

Poor grammar and bad use of English can really harm your chances of getting a job. Many employers will simply not consider inviting candidates for interview if their CV is badly written and shows poor understanding of grammar.

Good grammar is a vital skill – it will help you get into a job and help you at every step of your career. The good news is that there are

You must make sure that you use appropriate spelling and good grammar in any application form, CV or indeed anything you write (presentation slides, report, letter etc) should all be written with good grammar. Many employers will not consider inviting you for an interview if your CV is not concise, Struggling with grammar? Don't know how to use apostrophes, or maybe you're scratching your head to understand the difference between 'effect' and 'affect'. This skills development section will help you through some of the trickiest grammar conundrums.

### Apostrophes

You use an apostrophe when a letter (or letters) are missing. By putting in the missing letters and thinking about the meaning of the words you should find them less confusing.

Word	Meaning	Example
it's	Is short for it is or it has	<b>It's</b> been a long, hard day at work.
Its	Means belonging to	The dog hurt <b>its</b> paw.
Who's	Is short for who is or who has	<b>Who's</b> got the study book?
Whose	Means who does it belong to	<b>Whose</b> is this red coat?
You're	Is short for you are	<b>You're</b> early for class today.
Your	Means belonging to	Is this <b>your</b> hat?
They're	Is short for they are	<b>They're</b> waiting for us downstairs.
Their	Means belonging to them	<b>Their</b> dog barks all the time.
There	Means that place or is used in phrases such as there is or there are	Our exam hall is over <b>there</b> .
We're	Is short for we are	<b>We're</b> all part of the football team.
Were	Is part of the past tense of the verb to be	We <b>were</b> all students in 1997.

### WORDS THAT SOUND SIMILAR

With words that sound similar it is important to know their meanings or how they are used in sentences. This will help you to work out which word and spelling you should use.

Word	Hint
of	stress 'ov' when you write 'of' eg, <i>I'll have some <b>of</b> that chicken pie.</i>
off	stress 'ff' when you write 'off' - use in phrases such as - to get <b>off</b> / to fall <b>off</b> eg, <i>Can you turn the light switch <b>off</b>?</i>

quiet	means to be silent, make very little noise <i>eg, Please be <b>quiet</b> in the classroom.</i>
quite	means fairly, almost <i>eg, He won <b>quite</b> a large prize at the ceremony.</i>
chose	past tense of 'to choose' - stress 'o' sound <i>eg, I <b>chose</b> a chicken sandwich for my lunch yesterday.</i>
choose	present tense of the verb 'to choose' - stress 'oo' <i>eg, Which meal will you <b>choose</b> today?</i>
lose	think of 'lost' <i>eg, Be careful not to <b>lose</b> your train ticket.</i>
loose	means not tight - stress 'oo' <i>eg, The lid on the jar was <b>loose</b>.</i>
affect	means have an influence on - affect is only used as a verb <i>eg, Smoking can <b>affect</b> your health.</i>
effect	means a result or to bring something about - effect can be used as a noun (thing) or a verb (doing word) <i>eg, The aspirin had an immediate <b>effect</b> on her headache.</i>
accept	means to receive <i>eg, I can't <b>accept</b> this gift because it's too expensive.</i>
except	means not including <i>eg, Everyone was invited to the party <b>except</b> for me.</i>
past	this is used mainly for time gone by - past is an adjective or describing word <i>eg, Some people believe in <b>past</b> lives.</i>
passed	means moved by - passed is a verb or action word <i>eg, The car that <b>passed</b> us was going very fast.</i>
stationary	means standing still or not moving <i>eg, The tractor was <b>stationary</b> in the field.</i>
stationery	means notepaper, exercise books, envelopes etc - you can remember this one by the 'e' in exercise books and envelopes. <i>eg, Please order some more office <b>stationery</b>.</i>
personal	individual or private - a letter that is only to be opened by the person it is addressed to may be marked 'personal' <i>eg, She left the meeting to take a <b>personal</b> phone call.</i>
personnel	means employees or staff <i>eg, The <b>personnel</b> department look after 100 employees.</i>
compliment	indicates the offering of praise or flattery to another person, as does the adjective <i>complimentary</i> . Compliment can be used as a verb or noun <i>eg, He gave me a <b>compliment</b> about my dress.</i>
complement	refers to something that completes or goes well with something. It can be used as a noun (thing) or verb (doing word) <i>eg, The sauce is a nice <b>complement</b> to the vegetables.</i>
practice	this is the noun 'the practice' (as in 'piano practice' or 'accountancy practice') <i>eg, I work at an accountancy <b>practice</b> in London.</i> <i>eg, You need to do more question <b>practice</b> to help you in your exams.</i>
practise	This is the verb 'to practise' and also the adjective from that verb <i>eg, I need to <b>practise</b> questions every day.</i> <i>eg, The doctor has been <b>practising</b> medicine for more than 10 years.</i>

principle	refers to a fundamental assumption, law, doctrine, belief, rule or way of doing something. You can also say that someone is a man of principle, meaning a man who has strong ideals. It is a noun only eg, the <b>principle</b> of physics dictates that you cannot travel faster than the speed of light.
principal	means primary or chief or highest in rank or importance eg, He is the <b>principal</b> at our school. eg, My <b>principal</b> complaint is a persistent headache.

## FURTHER GUIDANCE AND EXAMPLES

More information, examples and guidance is available on these excellent websites:

<http://www.elearnenglishlanguage.com/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/>

You'll find lots more examples and exercises online including the difference between:

- Farther vs Further
- Fewer vs Less
- Hers vs Her's
- Everyday vs Every day
- Assure vs Ensure vs Insure
- Addition vs Edition
- Me vs Myself
- I vs Me
- Who vs Whom
- To vs Too vs Two

What three things are you going to do differently now as a result of what you have learnt from the webinar and this workbook?

1. ....  
.....  
.....  
.....
2. ....  
.....  
.....  
.....
3. ....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....