



MASON ALEXANDER

JOB SEEKERS TOOLKIT

2022



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INTRODUCTION

The goal of the **Mason Alexander and Open Doors Jobseeker's Toolkit** is to help prepare you with the steps, advice, and tips to conduct a successful job search. The aim of this is to help you develop and hone your job-seeking skills.

This **Jobseekers Toolkit** begins with the initial steps of looking for a job such as creating your CV, then goes on to provide advice on the best ways to search and apply for roles, while also including some vital LinkedIn tips and onto interview tips. We then go into some deeper interview tips and how to showcase your skills in an interview – finishing off

the document with advice on disclosure and reasonable accommodations. We also provide a sample **CV template** at the end of this document.

We hope this Jobseeker's Toolkit can provide you with all the information and practical guidance you need for a successful job search.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out at hello@masonalexander.ie.

Thank you and best of luck with your job hunt!

STEP 1 CREATING YOUR CV

Your CV summarises your experience and qualifications for a hiring manager or recruiter. Here are 7 tips for how to create a CV that will stand out from the crowd and land you that all-important interview.

1. Keep it Simple

Ensure your CV is clean, easy to read and in a simple layout. Use clear section headings and make them stand out with bold type, capital letters, and/or a different colour. Make sure there's enough white space – an overstuffed CV is difficult to read.

Keep it punchy and to the point. Only add in something that sells your skills and experience to a potential employer. The reason for this is hiring managers might only have a glance at your CV, which leaves only a limited timeframe to get your message across and get them interested. So, you need to make each second count. Be concise and don't be afraid to delete experience if it's not relevant to that role.

2. Include a Personal Statement

Your CV should preferably start with a personal statement. Think of this as your opening pitch and an opportunity to convince an employer to keep reading your CV.

Your personal statement should explain why you are the best person for the job and what value you can bring to them. To help with this, think of your unique selling point, any recent accomplishments that they would be interested in hearing about, and avoid clichés such as a team player and strong interpersonal skills.

3. Tailor your CV

If you want your job search to be effective and successful, preparing your CV shouldn't be a one-time experience.

You'll receive more responses from interested companies if you take the time to change your CV and customise it for each new role you apply for. Use the job description to work out exactly what skills you should point out to them.

Tailoring your CV connects the dots for hiring managers and recruiters who are inundated by a flood of generic applicants. Instead of proving that you're a skilled professional in general, it shows them that you're a perfect fit for this specific job description.

4. Core Skills

Make sure your skills list supports your personal statement and also matches the requirements for the job you're applying for.

Read the job description carefully to see which skills, programs, and keywords are mentioned. If there's a requirement or responsibility listed in the job description which you have performed in a current or previous role, ensure it's on your CV.



STEP 1 CREATING YOUR CV

5. Check and Check Again

To avoid errors, use a spellchecker, Grammarly or ask someone else to double-check what you have written and ask for their feedback.

This includes looking for and correcting any spelling mistakes, typos, dates which conflict with one another and incorrect email address and phone number.

With a lot of employers facing large volumes of applicants, giving them the excuse to dismiss your application because of avoidable errors is not going to help you secure an interview. So always double check and ask for help if you need it.

6. Break it Down and Quantify

For each job on your CV, list out your key responsibilities and accomplishments in easy to skim bullet points. Try not to use paragraphs as it makes it harder to read.

Where possible, try to add results, numbers, or percentages to your bullet points to show the impact you had in that role. For example, "sales increased by XX% during my time with XXX". However, you can do this even if you are not in a numbers or sales figure related role. You can state how big your team was, how many clients you dealt with, how many events you managed, how frequently you performed a certain task, and so on.

7. Education and Qualifications

If you are moving to Ireland, some qualifications will transfer over internationally. However, this is dependent on the industry as each industry and location varies. It is best to do some research in advance into your own qualifications to see whether they transfer across.

Here is a useful resource:

[Citizens Information](#)

There is no automatic EU-wide recognition of academic diplomas. Therefore, you may need to go through a national procedure to get your academic degree or diploma recognised in another EU country.

In most cases, you can obtain a "statement of comparability" of your university degree, stating how it compares to the diplomas delivered in the EU country you are moving to. To do so, you can contact the ENIC/NARIC centre here.

CV Template

There is a sample CV layout at the back of this document. For further assistance, you should contact your recruiter.



STEP 2

SEARCHING AND APPLYING FOR ROLES



When you're looking for a job, the majority of your applications will be done online – either via the company website directly, via a job board or through a recruitment agency.

Job Boards

Search for jobs on reliable and useful job boards, such as – Jobs.ie, Glassdoor, Monster, Indeed and LinkedIn. On most job boards you can search for jobs by:

- Company
- Job Title
- Skills
- Location
- Sector

Sign up for these job boards and create job alerts for the sort of roles you are looking for.

Working with a Recruitment Agency

There are plenty of benefits of working with a recruiter while looking for a job –

- Recruitment agencies are free of charge for candidates
- Recruiters have excellent knowledge of the labour market
- They have a large network and can therefore often quickly get you in contact with interesting clients
- They have access to jobs that job seekers cannot see
- Recruiters will receive feedback on your interview and will do the salary negotiation on your behalf



STEP 3 LINKEDIN



LinkedIn helps you create career opportunities, allows you to share your experience, skills, and qualifications with future employers, while also allowing you to build and interact with your network and grow your online brand as a professional.

Your LinkedIn profile is your chance to be noticed by recruiters and hiring managers. So don't miss the opportunity to show your expertise, skills and experience.

Some essential tips for creating your LinkedIn account –

1. Your Headline

Your headline can be your current job title or the specialist area you work in. Or it can even just say who you are and where you want to go professionally.

2. Your Photo

Ensure you have a professional profile picture for LinkedIn. If you don't have a professional one, take a photo against a plain background, preferably white, while you're wearing business attire.

3. Summary

Make sure you include your summary. Here you should include a few paragraphs outlining your professional background, your skills, key areas of expertise and what you can offer potential employers.

You should also mention here what you are passionate about and what motivates you. It also gives you the opportunity to say you are open to work and to explain gaps in work history and how you've kept your skills up to date.

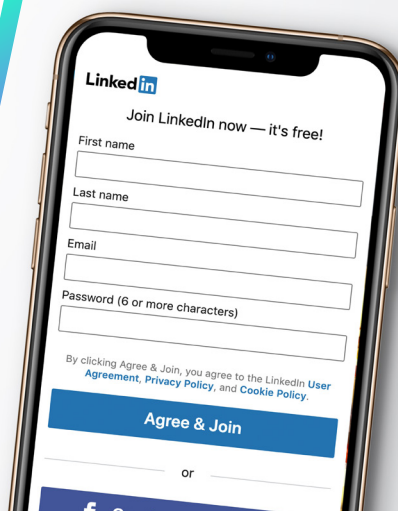
4. Experience

Add your previous work experience, along with what you've accomplished within these companies.

- List your tasks and responsibilities within each role – using bullets points as it's easier to read
- Include any accomplishments within your roles – such as any results from projects you've been involved in. Try to use numbers and stats if you can, as these will stand out more.
- Check your grammar and spelling
- Add the company logo if possible (the can be done if the company has a LinkedIn page). Adding a logo makes your profile look more visually appealing.

5. Education

Begin with your highest achievement and work down. You don't need to mention all classes you've taken – just list the ones that you think are most valuable and impressive by employers in your industry.



STEP 3 LINKEDIN

6. Certifications, Projects, Volunteer Experiences, Accomplishments, or Languages

Under your work experience and education are additional spaces where you can show off any additional background and qualifications. If you are fluent in another language, add it in here – this is really appealing for a lot of companies. Or if you've done any volunteer work add it in here too. Adding this information to your profile is a great way to showcase what makes you unique. But remember that if these skills and experiences are important to landing your next job, you should also try to work them into an earlier section.

Once you have your profile complete start actively using LinkedIn.



LinkedIn is a social network that focuses on professional networking and career development. It's not like your typical social media such as Facebook and Instagram. It's used to find the right job or internship, connect and strengthen professional relationships, and learn the skills you need to succeed in your career. So posts, comments and articles should always be kept professional.

It's also important to note not to harass employers or recruiters on LinkedIn.

Start Requesting Connections

You can begin building your professional network online by connecting with people you already know, but you can also request connections from people you don't know who might be able to help you grow in your career.

You can request to connect with people who work at companies or in jobs you're interested in. You can even look for people by searching keywords within the search bar like "marketing manager" or "engineer" and so on.

Make sure when you are requesting to connect with someone that you also include a personalised message to that person.

Start Posting

All LinkedIn users can write posts or even articles on the platform. Posts will help you build up your reputation as an expert. You can post your viewpoint about what's going on in your industry or comment about any recent industry development, and possibly show off your writing skills at the same time.

You can share relevant articles you've come across elsewhere online. Even if you're a new professional or new in your industry, everyone has something to contribute and other users will notice this effort.

If you don't feel ready to write your own posts just yet, you can start by commenting on other people's posts. Select relevant interests on your profile and follow experts, thought leaders, and others in your industry who have careers you'd like to learn something from. Then, you can engage with their posts on your news feed. This way you will learn, gain some connections, build your network and also get some food for thought for your own posts in the future.

Join LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn Groups are a fantastic way to find like-minded professionals in your industry. You can discuss relevant topics in a more focused setting and become more engaged within your industry. Plus, the other group members are a large pool of possible connections.



STEP 4

INTERVIEW TIPS

The outcome of success in a job interview is down to three fundamental elements: planning, preparation and performance. If you have been brought forward for the interview it inevitably means you have passed the checklist required to get the role, but the hard work really starts at the first interview.

Here are a few simple tips to ensure your job interview is a success and that you give as good an account of yourself as possible – whether it's taking place in-person, over a video call or a phone call.

1. The Basics

First of all, make sure you are on time for your interview – this is so important. Better to be too early than too late. Best to arrive about 10 minutes prior to your interview.

If your interview is online – make sure your internet connection is strong and working well. And go online a few minutes before it starts to ensure it's all working ok.

Also, make sure to remember the names of your interviewers. This is a simple thing to remember but also very important, as this will be a formal interview.

2. Interviews in Ireland

In Ireland, it's usual to try build up a bit of rapport with your interviewer.

Your interviewer will probably make polite general 'chit-chat' with you before you get into the formal interview. Engage in this friendly conversation with them.

Remember that body language and tone of voice have a greater impact than the actual words spoken. Communication is made up of 7% words, 38% tone of voice, 55% body language.



Non-Verbal Signals

- A firm but not crushing handshake is the one to go for.

Physical Posture

- Don't slouch in your chair, slouching says "I don't care". Walk and sit up straight.

Eye Contact

- Always look your interviewer in the eye.

Body Language

- Don't fidget and don't play around with your hair, nails, pen, chair, tap your leg or anything else. This will distract your interviewer.

Speak Clearly

- Speak nice and clearly and not too fast. You'll probably be a bit nervous, which is normal, so you will naturally speak more quickly than usual. But if you concentrate on pronouncing your words individually, you'll actually be speaking at a normal speed.

STEP 4

INTERVIEW TIPS

3. Do your Research



Preparing and doing your research is vital for interview success. There are four main areas you will need to research and talk to your recruiter about to ensure you are interview ready.

The Company

- Know the company values, mission, who their customers are (their target audiences), and their main competitors. Look through their website, social media accounts, any recent news stories, their marketing, recent events etc. Familiarise yourself with the company as much as you can. You don't need to know every single detail, but it's very impressive if you can talk about company information easily throughout the interview.

The Industry

- Ensure you do your research on the industry – know about any trends or recent changes. Take a look at the latest developments in the industry so you can converse with confidence during the interview.

The Hiring Manager

- Know who is interviewing you. Look them up on LinkedIn to see their role, expertise, how long they've been in the company etc. If you are using a recruiter, they will be able to give you some insight on this too.

The Role

- Know as much as possible about the role. Ensure you know the job description well and look for any recent projects or product launches they have done. You can look for this information on their website or ask your recruiter.

4. Prepare Answers for Common Questions

The majority of interviews begin with the most common question: "Tell me about yourself". This is your personal elevator pitch. The idea is to quickly communicate who you are and what value you will bring to the company and the role. So it's vital to prepare for this well.

Then throughout your interview you will most likely be asked a series of questions exploring your skills, qualifications and experience. This is when knowing your CV inside out is so important. The types of questions likely to be asked fall under 4 main categories:

Training and Qualifications – In this category, you should expect questions exploring your experience, college degree etc.

Previous Experience – The interviewer will ask questions based on your experience that is shown on your CV. They may ask for examples from a previous position where you displayed a particular skill.

Core Competencies – This relates to key skills required for the role, such as good time management, ability to manage a team, effective communication and the application of your knowledge.

Personality and Motivation – Your reasons for applying for the role or for choosing your area of specialisation. Interviewers may ask your reasoning for leaving your current employer – it is wise to give honest reasons but never say bad or negative things about your employer.

STEP 4

INTERVIEW TIPS

5. Score a success in the first five minutes

A lot of studies suggest that interviewers make up their minds about candidates in the first five minutes of the interview – and then spend the rest of the interview looking for things to reinforce that decision.

So make those first few vital minutes count. Start off your interview with plenty of **enthusiasm**, **express your appreciation** for their time and really try to **build up some rapport** with your interviewer.

Ensure you smile, make eye contact, remember your interviewers name, have good posture, and speak clearly. This will give a positive and confident appearance.

Try to begin your answers with a positive affirmation or agreement. This is a good way to humanise the interaction between you and the interviewer.

6. Plan your questions for the interviewer



It's important you have questions prepared. It's an opportunity for you to decide if this really is the perfect job, company and team for you. Plus it also shows your genuine interest in the role and the company.

Some examples of questions you could ask –

The Role

- Why has the position become available? Is it a new role?
- What does a typical day look like?
- How does the company measure the success of the candidate in the role?
- Is there scope for career progression?

The Team

- Can you tell me more about the team structure?
- Where will the job fit into the team structure?

Learning and Development

- What can I expect from you in terms of development and support?
- What aspirations do you have for me at the company?

The Company

- How would you describe the culture of the company?
- What are the main challenges and opportunities the business faces?

Next Steps

- What are the next steps in your hiring process?
- What are your intended timelines for your hiring process?



STEP 4

INTERVIEW TIPS

7. Dress to Impress

Decide on what you're going to wear well in advance of the interview – you don't want to be stressed about this the morning of an interview. And remember, this is still important even if the interview is taking place remotely – they can still see you. So dress to impress and wear business attire.

8. After the Interview



Relax, breath and well done – your interview is now over! So what's next? Here's some do's and don'ts.

The Do's

- If you are working with a recruiter, contact them straight after the interview to let them know how it went, while it's still all fresh in your head.
- If you feel the interview went well ensure you reiterate your interest for the role to your recruiter and how much you enjoyed meeting with the interviewer. Your recruiter will communicate this information to the company.
- If you're not working with a recruiter, send a thank you email to the interviewer / hiring manager, thanking them for taking the time to meet with you and letting them know how much you enjoyed it.

The Don't

- Don't keep ringing or emailing the recruiter or hiring manager. It may take them some time to go through their interview process and they might have a few more people to interview before getting back to you. So the best thing is to be patient and wait to hear from them.



STEP 5

SHOWCASE YOUR SKILLS DURING THE INTERVIEW

A job interview is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your skills and expertise to a hiring manager, and prove to them why you're the best fit for the role.

During an interview, you will be asked a series of questions and given the chance to describe your skills. Use this time wisely by focusing on ways to make your skills the focus of the discussion and to show how your skills and expertise distinguish you from other candidates.

So how can you highlight your skills during an interview in a way that stands out? Follow these simple tips when showcasing what vital skills you can bring to the company.

1. Talk About How Your Skills Will Benefit The Company

It's important throughout your interview that you not only talk about your skills but also showcase how your skills and attributes will benefit the company. Help the interviewer understand exactly how you'll be a great asset to the company and the team.

Ensure while you're describing your skills that you also talk about their impact. Show how you used specific skills in your current or past jobs to get results or to drive change. Describe how you used a particular skill to collaborate with a colleague or how you used your skills to motivate your team. Or if you know any particular issues or problems the company is currently facing that you think your skills can help them with, showcase this. For example, if you're naturally good at budgeting, you might discuss how you could reduce costs across your department and save the company a considerable amount of money.

2. Showcase Your Soft Skills Too

Employers ask about soft skills during an interview because they want to hire a candidate who can adapt to numerous situations. Showing your interviewer that you have a diverse set of skills will help you establish yourself as a flexible and hardworking candidate. Interview questions on soft skills will allow you to explain your personality traits that you can showcase in the workplace.

Soft skills, such as critical thinking, leadership, communication, and problem-solving, are some of the most important skills you can have. Soft skills are extremely valuable to a company as they are harder to teach than technical skills. By showing your interviewer that you can utilise your soft skills, you will position yourself as an asset to the company.

Providing examples of soft skills can be done when you're answering many common interview questions. And because soft skills are complementary to technical skills, describing the two together can help show your expertise.



STEP 5

SHOWCASE YOUR SKILLS DURING THE INTERVIEW

3. Competency Based Interview Questions

Competencies are the skills, behaviours and knowledge you'll bring into the role. Employers will use open questions to discover real-life scenarios where you can demonstrate you used your competencies to the best effect.

These questions are designed to let you talk; they are open and they invite a response that tells the employer about a real-life challenge that you've faced.

Competency questions typically lead you towards describing a situation and task. For example, an employer may start the question by saying:

- **Tell me about a time when ...**
- **Give an example of when ...**
- **Describe a time when ...**
- **Have you ever been in a situation where ...**

A lot of companies opt to use competency based questions without any introduction. But do not be put off by this style, as it is becoming more and more common with virtual interviews nowadays.

While there are many different approaches you can take to competency questions, the **STAR** interview technique is one most employers recommend.

For **STAR-based** questions you split your answer into four sections. STAR stands for:

- **Situation:** Describe the background or context.
- **Task:** Describe the task or challenge you were faced with.
- **Action:** Explain the action you took, and how and why you did it.
- **Result:** Describe how it ended, what you accomplished and what you learned from the situation. Relate the skill or ability you're illustrating back to the vacancy you're applying for and explain why it's useful.

The STAR method is a useful way to help you develop clear and concise responses to interview questions using real-life examples and your key skillset. It shows the interviewer you can perform well under pressure, while also demonstrating that you grow from your experiences.

The **STAR method** is straightforward, easy-to-use, and will guarantee a well-structured answer.

4. Ask Questions

Make sure at the end of an interview you ask questions. It shows the interviewer that you have a genuine interest in the role and the company.

Try to ask questions that relate to your skills or that show your knowledge of the industry, and of the company you're applying to. For example, you might ask questions about their procedures, technology, or systems the company uses. Or about the company culture.

Show that you're knowledgeable and experienced in this area, while also showing that you're interested and curious about the company. This will help your chances of getting hired.



DISCLOSURE AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

What is 'Reasonable Accommodation'?



'Reasonable accommodation' is where an employer makes a change to the tasks and structure of a job, or makes changes to the workplace environment to enable an employee to:

- **have equal opportunities when applying for work;**
- **be treated the same as co-workers;**
- **have equal opportunities for promotion;**
- **undertake training.**

Employers must also make accommodations to enable people with disabilities to return to work having acquired a disability, as well as to participate in the job application process and enjoy benefits and privileges accorded to other employees.

Asking for Accommodations During Your Job Search

1. Ask Questions about the Hiring Process

Sometimes it's tough to know before an interview if you will need accommodations or not. This is why it's always best to ask questions and get all the information needed first. So contact the hiring manager or your recruiter to find out as much as you can about what's expected during the hiring process, so you know what you can ask for.

Such questions could include: will there be an initial phone screening? Will there be a testing portion? How many people will you be meeting with during your interview?

2. Be Specific About What Your Needs Are

Disclosing your disability is the first step, but the process doesn't end there. You need to also be clear about what your needs are in terms of accommodations. You need to be explicit about what you require to be your best self throughout the hiring process, as well as if you end up being hired.

3. Know How Much You're Comfortable Sharing

Exactly how much information you share is another aspect of disability disclosure that's personal. If you're wary of this conversation and it makes you feel uneasy don't feel pressured to discuss more details of your disability than you are comfortable with.

The best option is to only share what's relevant for success during the interview stage and on the job. For example, you might eventually need to disclose that you're a wheelchair user, but that doesn't mean you need to share why you require the wheelchair.

What you're comfortable with might also change as you move through your career.

For further information on Reasonable Accommodations, check out the [Employers for Change Website](#).

CV TEMPLATE

Insert First Name and Last Name

Insert your contact details – address, email, phone number and LinkedIn

Personal Statement

Insert your short personal statement to explain why you are the best person for the job and what value you can bring to them. 3-4 short bullet points should suffice.

- XXXXXX
- XXXXXX
- XXXXXX

Core Skills

Make sure your skills list supports your personal statement and also matches the requirements for the job you're applying for.

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill |
| • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill |
| • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill |
| • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill | • Insert Skill |

Education

Insert Year – Insert College Name

Insert Degree / Qualification –/ Name of Course – Insert Results obtained (e.g. First Class Honours/Distinction)

Career History

Insert Start Date and End Date / Present

Insert Name of Company

Insert Job Title

Responsibilities:

- Insert main responsibilities in bullet points

Achievements

- Insert any key achievements from this job

Additional Information

- If there's anything extra to add into your CV you can add it in here. For example hobbies, volunteer work etc

References

- Add in your references here or out in "Available on request"

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