

Heads Up

Secretarial Studies

LEARNING GUIDE

960-746

IN COMPLIANCE
WITH THE NEW
*Program of
Study*

ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

25

SOFAD





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This learning guide was published by the SOFAD (Société de formation à distance des commissions scolaires du Québec).

Original French Edition

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The role of secretary-receptionist is traditionally one that is filled by a woman. For this reason, feminine forms (she, her) have been used in the guide where appropriate. This choice was made in the interest of readability and is not intended to reflect any prejudice.

Legal deposit – 2019

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

Library and Archives Canada

ISBN: 978-2-89798-154-9 (print guide)

ISBN: 978-2-89798-155-6 (PDF)

MARCH 2022

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INTRODUCTION

The competency *Entering the Workforce* is part of the program of study for a DVS (diploma of vocational studies) in Secretarial Studies. The program is divided into 25 competencies representing a total of 1485 hours of training.

Code	Number	Competency	Length (h)	Credits
960-501	01	The Occupation and the Training Process	15	1
960-515	02	Proofreading	75	5
960-526	03	Word Processing	90	6
960-534	04	Quality of Written English	60	4
960-544	05	Customer Service	60	4
960-554	06	Document Management	60	4
960-562	07	Producing Spreadsheets	30	2
960-572	08	Designing Presentations	30	2
960-584	09	Business Texts in English	60	4
960-596	10	Accounting Operations	90	6
960-605	11	Business Correspondence	75	5
960-613	12	Creating Databases	45	3
960-623	13	Handling Cash	45	3
960-635	14	Translation	75	5
960-644	15	Producing Tables and Charts	60	4
960-656	16	Visual Design of Documents	90	6
960-666	17	Business Texts in French	90	6
960-672	18	Digital Media	30	2
960-833	19	Interacting in French	45	3
960-695	20	Following Up on Business Correspondence	75	5
960-704	21	Meetings and Events	60	4
960-714	22	Producing Reports	60	4
960-722	23	Technical Support	30	2
960-733	24	Coordinating Multiple Tasks	45	3
960-746	25	Entering the Workforce	90	6

One credit corresponds to 15 hours of training.

PRESENTATION OF THE LEARNING GUIDE

The competency *Entering the Workforce* is one of the 25 competencies covered in the Secretarial Studies vocational program. The educational aims of the program are to maintain and promote the quality of English, improve the quality of customer service, develop learners' desire to improve their knowledge of technological tools, and develop their sense of autonomy and initiative.

This learning guide is designed to help you through each step on the way to entering the workforce, providing you with a procedure to follow and tips to ensure you find the practicum position that is right for you. As a result, you will be better prepared to take on your responsibilities and meet the requirements of the workplace. Throughout your practicum, this guide provides you with tools and techniques to record information and then to share your experience by writing a report.

THE COMPETENCY

In this course, the competency you are expected to acquire is *Entering the Workforce*.¹

To be successful, you must:

- look for a practicum position
- prepare for spending time in the workplace
- communicate with the work team
- observe and perform activities in the workplace

In accordance with the Ministry's program, this competency is divided into three distinct phases.

PHASE 1: INFORMATION PHASE

- Learning about the terms and conditions of the practicum
- Setting expectations and needs with respect to the practicum
- Identifying organizations that can answer these expectations and needs
- Writing a résumé and a letter of introduction
- Taking steps to obtain a practicum position

PHASE 2: PARTICIPATION PHASE

- Performing or helping with work tasks related to the practicum
- Communicating with co-workers and practicum supervisors
- Complying with instructions pertaining to the practicum and with the rules and policies of the workplace
- Writing a journal recording observations about the work environment and the tasks performed

PHASE 3: SYNTHESIS PHASE

- Stating your perception of:
 - aspects of the occupation that correspond to the training process and those that do not
 - the influence of the practicum experience on your choice of future employment in terms of aptitudes and areas of interest

1. Gouvernement du Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. *Secretarial Studies Program* (DVS 5857), 2016, p. 87.

PREREQUISITES

You must have completed all the competencies in the Secretarial Studies program before beginning the competency *Entering the Workforce*. Check the list on page V.

WORK SITUATIONS

This guide consists of three situations that will not only lead you to acquire new knowledge but teach you to apply it with ease and use it skillfully. Each situation follows the same structure. First, you read about the work context and the assignment you must carry out.

Next, you embark on a series of engaging and motivating tasks. You will be guided step by step through each task. The ideas, techniques, rules and concepts will be explained in detail and supported with multiple exercises to ensure that you acquire this new learning. All the answers to the exercises are in the answer key, at the end of the guide.

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

At the end of this competency, you will not be required to take a supervised examination. Instead, you will be evaluated based on your participation in the different phases of your practicum. Throughout this competency, you will be required to submit scored activities to your assigned teacher or tutor, which will be used to evaluate your learning.

Therefore, learners who have actively participated in the activities and carried out the practicum and various activities according to the prescribed criteria will receive a *Pass* grade on their transcript.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The materials for this course include the following:

- the learning guide and answer key
- the appendices to the learning guide (documents related to the practicum application), available on portailsofad.com
- the practicum journal, also available on portailsofad.com
- the workplace supervisor's guide
- two scored activities

Assigned teachers can also download their guides from portailsofad.com.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

We recommend that you do all the exercises in the learning guide as well as the scored activities provided. Carefully compare your answers with the answer key and, if necessary, review content to make sure you fully understand it before going on to the next task.

If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask your teacher or tutor for explanations.

The course is estimated to take approximately 90 hours to complete, including the practicum itself.

OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING GUIDE

Opening Pages

The title page presents the number and title of the work situation.

The situation begins with a description of the context in which you will complete different tasks to acquire the target competency.

The Your Assignment section summarizes and lists the tasks you will perform during the work situation.



The total length of all the situation tasks includes the scored activity, if applicable.

Situation Highlights

The task number is clearly indicated.

10 To help with writing your letter and, especially, to ensure you do not forget to mention any important points, use a drafting strategy.

a) Fill in the framework of the communication situation.

Reference (subject)	
Sender	
Message (goal)	
Recipient	

b) Create an outline for your letter, setting out the main points you want to make.

OUTLINE	
Introduction	
Main body of text	
Conclusion	
Complimentary closing	

c) Type your letter in Word.

>> Compare your answers with the ANSWER KEY.

TASK 1.1

Learning About the Terms and Conditions of the Practicum

A practicum represents a transition between your training environment and having a permanent position in the workplace. In this context, thorough preparation and close cooperation with the workplace are essential. There must be a clear and precise agreement between the various stakeholders (student, assigned teacher and workplace supervisor) so that everyone can perform their role and exercise their responsibilities appropriately. Ensuring that each party has clearly defined objectives is key to a successful practicum.

A practicum provides a complement to training in a real-world work context. If you confirm your professional choice, the practicum must be aligned with what you have learned in your training.

Definition of a Practicum

A practicum is a component of training that mainly takes place in a professional environment. In our training centres, the aim of a practicum is to prepare students for the workforce.



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This pictogram tells you that you must use the Internet or a computer to complete the task.

This pictogram tells you that you must download documents from portailsofad.com.

Responsibilities and Meet the Requirements of the Workplace

Once your application for a practicum has been accepted, you should have a number of documents in your possession which you can refer to at any time. They may remind you of the responsibilities of each party in case of a problem or answer questions about your program of study, how to open a file with the Human Resources department, etc.

Documents Related to Your Practicum

The documents listed below may come in very useful as you begin your practicum.

- Go to portailsofad.com to download these documents or templates, as needed.
- The participation criteria** that you must meet in order to pass your practicum. You will be evaluated based on these criteria. This will give you a clear idea of what you need to accomplish in order to be successful. Meanwhile, the employer may define the tasks you will be expected to carry out during your practicum in greater detail.

A regularly repeated instruction points out the best time to compare your answers with the Answer Key (at the end of the guide).

Responsibilities of Each Stakeholder

Before embarking on your practicum, it is important to be aware of what is expected of you. Your satisfaction and success depend on how prepared you are to take on these new responsibilities.

PHASE ONE

INFORMATION PHASE Preparation for the Practicum

- Learn about the terms and conditions of the practicum.
- Carry out a self-assessment and define your needs and expectations.
- Update your résumé.
- Take steps to find a practicum position.
- Gather information about the workplace and the tasks to be performed during the practicum.
- Prepare to assume your responsibilities and meet the requirements of the workplace.

PHASE TWO

PARTICIPATION PHASE Workplace Practicum

- Keep in mind that you are representing a training centre.
- Have a good attitude.
- Be enthusiastic about the tasks you are asked to do.
- Respect the organization's rules and listen to feedback from co-workers and superiors.
- In case of a specific problem, contact your assigned teacher before making a decision.
- Keep a daily journal (see page 77), describing your activities.

Content is often presented in tables to make it easier to understand.

The Reminder feature refers to concepts which you have already studied.

Professional ethics ensure a work climate that is healthy, respectful and rooted in integrity. This climate is supported by certain attitudes, such as team spirit, politeness, courtesy, respect for co-workers and superiors, discretion and good communication at all levels of the organization.

Reminder CUSTOMER SERVICE: QUALITY OF RECEPTION SERVICES AND LISTENING

In any organization, interpersonal relations are very important. The same ethical rules apply when receiving visitors, interacting with co-workers and speaking to superiors.

- Look the person in the eye and smile.
- Give the person your full attention and avoid doing anything else at the same time as they are speaking to you.
- Listen to what the person is saying.
- If you are not sure that you have understood what the person is requesting, politely ask them questions.
- If it is an unusual request, to make sure you understand correctly, repeat it back to the person and wait for them to confirm.
- In French, always address visitors as "vous" instead of "tu" out of politeness—even if they appear to be about your age or younger.
- Speak calmly—not too fast or too slow.
- Speak clearly so that the visitor does not have to ask you to repeat yourself and use appropriate vocabulary.
- Adopt a moderate tone that ensures privacy without requiring the visitor to strain to hear what you are saying.
- Never correct someone if they mispronounce something or use an expression incorrectly.

4 For each of the situations in the box below, indicate the best course of action to take by writing the corresponding number in the space next to it.

1. Submit a report to the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST).
2. Ask the supervisor for more information.
3. Ask a co-worker for more information.
4. Contact the training centre immediately.
5. Change host organizations for the practicum.
6. Remind the employer of the objectives of the practicum and the terms of the memorandum of understanding.
7. Call the workplace supervisor and the assigned teacher.

- a) During the practicum, the student has to make an emergency dentist appointment.
- b) The workplace supervisor is informed that the student has had a workplace accident.
- c) The student feels that the instructions they have been given for the tasks to be carried out over the next two days are not clear enough.
- d) The assigned teacher learns that the student's work will be mainly limited to one repetitive task for the duration of the practicum.
- e) The assigned teacher is informed that the student has had a workplace accident.
- f) Preparing to use a new piece of equipment, the student is uncertain about how to operate it.
- g) The assigned teacher realizes that the student is carrying out too many tasks that are not related to their training.

>> Compare your answers with the ANSWER KEY.

Scored Activity 1

You must now complete Scored Activity 1.

Go to the SOFAD website at portailsofad.com and download the document entitled Scored Activity 1.
Complete the activity and hand it in to your teacher, or send it to your tutor according to the terms provided when you registered.

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Development

The development is the body of the report. It comprises two main parts: information about how your practicum went and your self-assessment.

Practicum

To help you organize your writing, here are a few points that can be included in this part of the development:

- description of the orientation process
- information about the organization's rules
- observations regarding the work climate
- list of tasks performed, software (versions) and equipment used
- your strengths and areas for improvement
- steps to take to make improvements in these areas

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At the end of Situations 2 and 3, this pictogram tells you to complete a scored activity.

The NB feature draws your attention to an important observation.

ENTERING THE WORKFORCE

A LEARNING GUIDE FROM
THE COLLECTION

With the HeadsUp learning guides, students acquire competency through authentic work situations so that they are ready to deal with the demands and needs of the labour market.

The learning guide ***Entering the Workforce*** is fully compliant with the vocational program in secretarial studies (DVS 5857) in the training sector of administration, commerce and computer technology.

As students perform the assigned tasks, they acquire elements of the competency *Entering the Workforce*:

- searching for a practicum
- preparing themselves for spending time in the workplace
- communicating with the work team
- observing and performing activities in the workplace

The learning guide ***Entering the Workforce*** consists of three work situations:

- 1 Finding a Practicum Position
- 2 Preparing for Your Practicum
- 3 Making Your Practicum a Success

Discover our new HeadsUp series: stimulating learning resources for contextualized training that promotes success both at school and in the workplace.

The learning guide and the answer key (PDF), as well as complementary digital resources, are available online at portailsofad.com.

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