GRADUATE WORK READINESS PROGRAMME

MODULE 1

THE TRANSITION FROM

GRADUATE TO PROFESSIONAL

Training Manual & Participant Workbook

MODULE PURPOSE

To help graduates understand the transition from education into the workplace and build the habits, attitudes and behaviours needed to become dependable, professional and effective employees.

Participant	_____
Organisation / Programme	_____
Date	_____
Qualification / Field	_____

Module Overview

THE BIG IDEA

Your qualification shows what you studied. Your workplace behaviour shows how you apply what you know. The goal of this module is not to make you know everything. It is to help you become ready to learn, contribute and take responsibility.

- 1. What changes when you enter the workplace?
- 2. What employers expect from new professionals
- 3. Learning and asking questions at work
- 4. Ownership and accountability
- 5. Professional habits that build your reputation
- 6. Your first 30 days
- 7. Personal reflection and commitments
- 8. Participant notes pages
- 9. Module knowledge check

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the difference between being a student and being a workplace professional.
- Identify the behaviours employers expect from a new graduate.
- Ask clear questions when you do not understand a task.
- Demonstrate ownership and accountability.
- Identify professional habits that strengthen workplace credibility.
- Create a practical first-30-days plan.

1. What Changes When You Enter the Workplace?

At school, college or university, your main responsibility is learning. At work, you must apply what you know to real tasks, deadlines, customers, colleagues and business needs.

Student vs Professional

Area	Student Focus	Professional Focus
Time	Manage study commitments	Manage work priorities and deadlines
Learning	Learn for assessments	Learn to perform the job
Communication	Ask lecturers/peers	Communicate with managers, colleagues and customers
Responsibility	Own academic work	Own tasks, decisions and outcomes
Feedback	Improve academic work	Improve workplace performance
Teamwork	Group assignments	Shared business outcomes

Activity 1: My Transition - Complete the below statements honestly.

One thing I am excited about when entering the workplace:

_____

_____

_____

One thing I am uncertain or nervous about:

_____

_____

_____

One habit I need to change from student life:

_____

_____

_____

One professional habit I want to build:

_____

_____

_____

2. What Employers Expect

YOU DO NOT NEED TO KNOW EVERYTHING ON DAY ONE

Employers expect new graduates to learn. What matters is how you respond when you do not know something.

Expectation	What It Looks Like
Reliability	Do what you said you would do. Arrive prepared. Meet agreed deadlines.
Professionalism	Treat people respectfully and behave appropriately for the workplace.
Ownership	Take responsibility for your work instead of waiting for someone else to solve every problem.
Communication	Ask when you are unsure. Give updates. Raise problems early.
Learning	Be willing to learn systems, processes and new ways of working.
Teamwork	Understand that your work affects other people.
Adaptability	Be prepared for changing priorities and new situations.

Activity 2: Which Behaviours Build Trust?

Put a ✓ next to behaviours you believe build trust and a ✗ next to behaviours that can damage trust.

- Arriving prepared
- Being honest about a mistake
- Waiting until the deadline to mention a problem
- Asking a clear question
- Blaming someone else immediately
- Keeping a commitment
- Checking your work before submitting it
- Sharing confidential information
- Giving an early update when work is delayed
- Being willing to learn

Which two behaviours are most important to you? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Learning & Asking Questions at Work

ASKING QUESTIONS IS PART OF LEARNING

A good question shows that you have tried to understand the task and know exactly where you need clarification.

Use the 6-step approach

1. Read or review the available information.
2. Try to understand the task yourself.
3. Identify the exact gap in your understanding.
4. Ask a focused question.
5. Confirm what you heard.
6. Apply the learning.

WEAK QUESTION

"I don't know what to do."

STRONGER QUESTION

"I have reviewed the process and understand steps 1 and 2. I am unsure how step 3 should be completed. Could you please clarify the expected approach?"

Activity 3: Turn It Into a Professional Question

Weak: "What am I supposed to do?"
My professional version:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Weak: "I don't understand this."
My professional version:

_____

_____

_____

_____

A question I would like to ask in my first month at work:

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Ownership & Accountability

OWNERSHIP MEANS

Knowing what you are responsible for, doing what you can, asking for help when needed and communicating early when something may go wrong.

Ownership sounds like:

- "I will check and come back to you by 14:00."
- "I made an error. Here is what happened and what I have done to correct it."
- "I am waiting for information. If I receive it by Wednesday, I can still meet Friday's deadline."
- "I am not sure, so I would like to confirm before proceeding."

Ownership does NOT mean:

- Doing everything alone.
- Pretending you understand when you do not.
- Hiding mistakes.
- Blaming others before checking the facts.

Activity 4: What Would You Do?

SCENARIO

You are given a task due Friday. By Wednesday, you realise you are missing information from another department. You have not received a response to your email.

What should you do next?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What should you communicate to your manager?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What should you avoid doing?

_____

5. Professional Habits That Build Your Reputation

SMALL HABITS CREATE BIG IMPRESSIONS

People often form an opinion about reliability from repeated everyday behaviours. You do not need to impress people once; you need to become consistently dependable.

Habit	What It Looks Like
Arrive prepared	Know what you need to do before the day starts.
Keep commitments	Record promises, deadlines and follow-ups.
Take notes	Capture instructions and important information.
Ask early	Do not wait until the deadline to say you are stuck.
Check your work	Review accuracy before submitting.
Respect confidentiality	Protect information that should not be shared.
Be respectful	Treat colleagues, customers and support staff professionally.
Use feedback	Turn feedback into an improvement action.

Activity 5: My Professional Habits Check

- Arrive prepared
- Keep commitments
- Take notes
- Ask early
- Check your work
- Respect confidentiality
- Be respectful
- Use feedback

The habit I already demonstrate well:

_____

_____

_____

_____

The habit I most need to strengthen:

_____

_____

_____

_____

How I will strengthen it:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. My First 30 Days

YOUR GOAL

Your first month is about learning the role, understanding expectations, building relationships and becoming dependable. You are not expected to know everything immediately.

Period	What I Need to Learn	People to Connect With	Evidence of Progress
Week 1	_____	_____	_____
Week 2	_____	_____	_____
Week 3	_____	_____	_____
Week 4	_____	_____	_____

Questions I Want to Ask My Manager

- What are my most important priorities?
- How will my performance be measured?
- What should I learn first?
- Who should I work closely with?
- What common mistakes should I avoid?

Other questions:

_____

_____

My First 30-Day Success Measures

By the end of 30 days, I want to be able to:

_____

_____

_____

My manager should be able to see that I:

_____

_____

_____

One piece of evidence I will build is:

_____

_____

_____

Participant Notes



ethos
SOLUTIONS
people • purpose • results

Participant Notes



ethos
SOLUTIONS
people • purpose • results

Participant Notes



ethos
SOLUTIONS
people • purpose • results

Participant Notes