

Tables of Professional Skills and Behaviours

Employers have consistently identified ten professional skills as most desirable in new graduates.



The Top 10 Professional Skills

STAR Story Structure Examples Tables

The following Tables provide examples of STAR stories for each of the ten professional skills and one corresponding behaviour. Please note that the interactive [CamSTAR STAR Story Tool](#) guides you through this process online and a downloadable [Story File Template](#) is available to organize your stories. You may also use the third column in this table to write your own STAR stories by saving this document and inserting your own words.

S – Situation

*Describe a coursework or workplace situation in which you demonstrated one of the ten professional skills listed in column one. This **should point to a specific time and place**, e.g., ‘during my diploma program’ or ‘while on a work term’ or ‘in my creative writing course’.*

Note: It’s best to describe a situation that was challenging to you in some way and that enabled you to learn or grow.

T – Task

*Briefly explain the task that required you to demonstrate the skill. **Name the one professional skill** that was used so resolve the situation. Be sure to focus on your actions - use “I” and not “we”, and if you are describing a group task, focus on your role.*

A – Action

This is the most substantial part of your STAR story (from 50-70%) and it is important to describe:

- **What you did** and the professional skill you used from Column 1.
- **How you did it** and the professional behaviour you used from Column 2.
- Give **specific details that describe how and why** you went about taking one set of actions (see examples below).

R – Result

This is where you get to be the hero of the story. It’s important to end by explaining the impact of your actions, as well as what you learned. This will not only solidify your own learning, but will also ensure the employer or course provider knows your actions made a difference and that you met the course learning outcomes. The following questions will help guide your response:

- *What happened as a result of the actions you took?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *What, if anything, would you do differently next time?*

Personal skills and behaviours – Initiative

It is important to demonstrate personal skills such as the ability to take initiative and to be responsible.



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Initiative	<p>You exercised personal initiative when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> took action that went beyond requirements in order to achieve objectives demonstrated a readiness to try new things implemented new ideas or potential solutions without prompting introduced improvements to the way things are done used feedback to improve your performance looked for opportunities to improve your work practices anticipated potential problems and took action took immediate action when confronted with a problem <p>You also demonstrated initiative with others when you exercised leadership skills.</p>	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. During my internship work placement...</p> <p>T – Tasks</p> <p>E.g. During my internship work placement, I took the initiative to discuss how I might contribute to improving business practices in the company with my supervisor.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. Following that discussion, I took on a project to make improvements to the way things are done. This is something I'm passionate about and I was glad to have the opportunity to put theory into practice. First, I interviewed internal employees at different levels to find out what was working and what was not working for their departments. Next, I researched what our competitors were doing, looking for good ideas. The learning I'd done at Camosun helped me as I knew how to conduct interviews and do online research, and I was up on the best business practices through all the research assignments I'd completed.</p> <p>I compiled the internal and external information and wrote a best practices report. My supervisor was very impressed with how I conducted myself during the project – and a bonus was that I got to know everyone much faster.</p> <p>R – Result</p> <p>E.g. In the end, thanks to all that I learned in the program, along with my willingness to show initiative, I have valuable skills to offer. My efforts resulted in a document on leading business practices that is still in use today, and I learned first hand the value of networking. I'm pleased to say that upon graduation I was offered, and accepted, a position at that company.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised initiative skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report (2015), of systemic racism, and of ableism.</p>		

Personal skills and behaviours – Responsibility

Leadership, teamwork, and conflict management are examples of interpersonal skills, i.e. the ability to get along with others



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Responsibility	<p>You exercised responsibility independently when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> planned ahead and managed your time/resources to achieve goals accepted responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions followed through on deadlines and commitments remained self-motivated even when things went wrong <p>You exercised responsibility with another person or in a team when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> showed accountability to the team and followed through on your commitments agreed to workload division took advice and acted on it came to team meetings prepared and on time completed your share of the work in a timely manner did a fair share of the work 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. During term two of my diploma program...</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. During term two of my diploma program I had two final exams and a term paper due on the same day.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. I demonstrated personal responsibility skills when I booked an appointment with the Camosun Student Success Centre to learn some strategies so I could plan ahead and manage my time/resources. I learned how to budget my time and made school my number one priority with the help of the Success Centre’s time management guide. That meant that before I scheduled work shifts or social activities, I planned ahead and managed my time/resources to make sure I allowed enough time for studying and research, as well as time to prepare for exams and complete the paper on time. I set a “fake” deadline for my paper, got help at the Writing Centre, and handed it in two weeks early, which gave me plenty of time to study for both exams. This decreased my stress level significantly, which made me feel successful, happier and better able to juggle everything I had to do in a day.</p> <p>R – Result</p> <p>E.g. As a result of my actions I aced my final exams and got my paper in early. I learned a lot about time management and study skills, and gained some solid research and writing strategies. It was time well spent that benefitted me for the rest of my program and I anticipate the strategies I learned will help me perform well in future school and work situations.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised responsibility skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the <u>Calls to Action</u> in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s <u>Final Report</u> (2015), of <u>systemic racism</u>, and of ableism.</p>		

Interpersonal skills and behaviours – Leadership

Leadership, teamwork, and conflict management are examples of interpersonal skills, i.e. the ability to get along with others



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
<p>Leadership</p>	<p>You exercised leadership when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> took responsibility for the direction and actions of a team <p>introduced improvements to the way things were done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided constructive feedback to others on the team motivated others on the team to do their best made sure that everyone on the team understood important information and what they were to do made sure that everyone was helping with the project helped the team to plan and organize its work delegated tasks and responsibilities that leveraged others' strengths 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. As part of my Career Development (CDEV) course in the co-op program...</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. As part of my Career Development (CDEV) course in the co-op program I set a professional skills development goal to demonstrate leadership skills on a teamproject.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. During my co-op work term an opportunity arose for a student to take the lead on a project. I quickly volunteered so I could meet my goal. One of the key elements in leading any project is clear communication, assigning responsibilityfor tasks to each team member, and tracking task completion. I used my leadership skills when I helped the team to plan and organize its work by settingthe project up in Trello. Trello is an online tool that is free, fun and easy to set up and use. Once the project was set up in Trello I invited the project team to a workshop in MS Teams to demonstrate how to use the tool and answer any questions.</p> <p>R– Result</p> <p>E.g. As a result of my efforts I met a professional goal and led the project to successful completion. The project team enjoyed using Trello and all of themplan to continue using it in the future. Both my work term and Camosun supervisors were impressed with my leadership skills.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised leadership skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report (2015), of systemic racism, and of ableism.</p>		

Interpersonal skills and behaviours – Teamwork

Leadership, teamwork, and conflict management are examples of interpersonal skills, i.e. the ability to get along with others



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Teamwork	<p>You exercised personal initiative when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shifted between a leading and supporting role to help team dynamics and goals • responded constructively and respectfully to the opinions/ideas/differences of others • worked effectively with different personalities in a team • collaboratively adjusted to changing requirements/goals/deadlines • collaborated by sharing information virtually/in person that supported the success of the team • helped improve communication among team members and facilitate the exchange of ideas 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. During a first-year anthropology course...</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. During a first-year anthropology course I participated as part of a team tasked with organizing a display for a community event.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. I demonstrated teamwork when I coordinated my group’s communication plan. This involved working with the Royal BC Museum, chefs at the Songhees Wellness Centre, and students in the Culinary Arts program at Camosun, and required us to adapt and adjust our plan to be in line with ongoing changes, requirements, goals, and deadlines. My group was responsible for researching and creating a display on one element of traditional Coast Salish food sovereignty. I organized and chaired several meetings and communicated through Trello, email and text messages to ensure everything was ready to go. Stress levels were high as there were a few last-minute changes from one of the community partners. I quickly organized a video conference with the team and we came up with an idea to replace the objects that were no longer available from an outside source. I sent out a list of resources and suggested we work together to pool the necessary resources which everyone was willing to do. I found a workspace and we met and made what we needed as a group just in time for the day of the event.</p> <p>R– Result</p> <p>E.g. The instructor was aware of the challenges we faced and was impressed by our creativity, resourcefulness and especially our ability to work as a team to get the work done. I learned that clear communication channels are critical when dealing with unexpected changes, as well as organizational skills and dedication. I believe I was instrumental in helping my team organize an event for the museum that was very well received and that allowed us to achieve top marks.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised teamwork skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Final Report (2015), of systemic racism, and of ableism.</p>		

Interpersonal skills and behaviours – Conflict Management

Leadership, teamwork, and conflict management are examples of interpersonal skills, i.e. the ability to get along with others



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Conflict Management	<p>You began to develop the skills necessary to manage conflict when you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managed stress while remaining alert and calm • controlled your emotions and behaviour • paid attention to feelings being expressed by others • were aware of and respectful of differences <p>You managed team conflicts when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listened carefully to the arguments of both parties and assessed the logic of their reasoning • negotiated differences of opinion so all parties felt respected and heard • listed all the issues important to both sides and identified the key concerns • distinguished between points that could and could not be compromised • understood any outside forces that were affecting the problem • used tact and diplomacy to defuse tensions 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. During my undergraduate studies...</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. During my undergraduate studies I demonstrated conflict management skills when I chaired student society meetings.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. During monthly Student Society meetings over the 2018/2019 school year I used my conflict management skills when I negotiated differences of opinion so all parties felt respected and heard. I honed my knowledge and application of Robert’s Rules of Order, and beyond that I worked hard to establish relationships with the diverse and passionate members of the society. I introduced the use of a talking stone that was passed around the table so we could ensure whomever was talking had our respectful attention. We started each meeting with a roundtable and each member answered a question designed to help us get to know one another beyond our official roles and the politics they entailed.</p> <p>R – Result</p> <p>E.g. By building relationships and encouraging respect through the ritual of passing the stone and truly listening to one another compassion, trust and empathy were created within the group. This made conflict less volatile when it arose. The meetings ran smoothly and I learned a good way to manage conflict is to build trusting relationships. These are ways I learned from my Indigenous family and community. I was happy to learn they worked at the college and the Student Society acknowledged my leadership style formally at the end of the year.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised conflict management skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the <u>Calls to Action</u> in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s <u>Final Report</u> (2015), of <u>systemic racism</u>, and of ableism.</p>		

Communication skills and behaviours - Oral Communication

Communication skills are critical to interacting with others. These include written and oral forms of communication.



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Oral Communication	<p>You communicated through speaking when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly expressed your thoughts orally to persuade and hold the attention of an audience varied your tone, pace and volume to enhance communication and encourage questions listened actively and asked questions to understand other people's viewpoints reflected back what the speaker said in other words to clarify understanding encouraged the speaker to elaborate and to define their problems 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. During my first-year nursing practicum...</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. During my first-year nursing practicum, I was required to present two patientcare plans to an inter-professional team.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. Conducting patient assessments and creating care plans as part of a team required that I further develop my oral communication skills. I learned to listen actively and I asked questions to make sure I had understood what I heard, as well as to understand other people's viewpoints. This was critical to ensuring the care plan presentations were inclusive and that the plan itself pulled together thebest possible actions for the patient. I also demonstrated my listening skills and my ability to work respectfully with other professionals on site at the hospital. Despite the high pressure setting, I was able to communicate in a respectful manner when working with the patients in the care plans. I also delivered two oral presentations to the team using PowerPoint.</p> <p>R– Result</p> <p>E.g. I received very positive feedback from the entire team on my professional communication skills, and the floor supervisor recommended me as the interdisciplinary teams' student representative. The nursing instructor commended my clear, calm communication style and invited me to present to the rest of the class. He also asked if I would be willing to be a peer mentor for first year students.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised conflict management skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the <u>Calls to Action</u> in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's <u>Final Report</u> (2015), of <u>systemic racism</u>, and of ableism.</p>		

Communication skills and behaviours - Written Communication

Communication skills are critical to interacting with others. These include written and oral forms of communication.



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
<p>Written Communication</p>	<p>You communicated in writing when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> planned what you were going to write (clarify your thoughts and the purpose of your communication) communicated ideas clearly and concisely wrote persuasively to build an argument or defend a thesis statement wrote and edited documents using appropriate grammar, punctuation, and structure decided on a logical order for what you had to say wrote in a style appropriate to the audience 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. While on my co-op work term...</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. While on my co-op work term at a local bookstore I answered customer enquiries on the Ask Away! live chat message board.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. I produced written documentation on a daily basis. Several of the requests were book orders with meant accurately filling out the order forms and filing the relevant information clearly and concisely so other staff could find and use it as necessary. Using clear written communication ensured the correct books were ordered and delivered to the correct customer which was critical to maintaining good relationship with suppliers. Customers appreciated the efficiency of this system.</p> <p>R– Result</p> <p>E.g. As a result of my work, my supervisor acknowledged my written communication skills as a strength and I received the highest rating possible on my work-term performance appraisal.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised written communication skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the <u>Calls to Action</u> in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s <u>Final Report</u> (2015), of <u>systemic racism</u>, and of ableism.</p>		

Thinking skills and behaviours - Decision Making

These skills are a type of higher order thinking, i.e. “thinking about thinking”, which include decision-making, problem solving, and critical thinking.



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Decision Making	<p>You demonstrated decision making skills when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarified the nature of the problem before deciding a course of action collected and summarized the information you needed to make a decision systematically produced a list of all the courses of action you could think of formulated clear decision criteria differentiated between practical and impractical solutions evaluated each of your options, considering its advantages and disadvantages evaluated options by considering implications and consequences 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. During a 4th year marketing course...</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. During a 4th year capstone project I helped organize a fundraising activity that benefitted a local non-profit organization.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. There were many decisions to make throughout the process and I was in charge of finding a venue for our event. I connected with professional event organizers to gather as much information as possible to aid in my decision. Due to a two-week time constraint I collected and summarized the information needed to make a decision, and made a shortlist of the top five venues I had seen that included amenities, cost, square footage and availability. I presented the options to my group using photos, video clips and a spreadsheet with all the options laid out side by side. We considered all the information and made a collaborative decision.</p> <p>R – Result</p> <p>E.g. The fundraiser was a success and many of the attendees remarked on how beautiful the venue was and how pleased they were with the low cost of the ticket. Keeping the cost low to participants was part of our decision-making strategy. They happily donated cash during the event and were generous in their bids in our silent auction.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised decision making skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the <u>Calls to Action</u> in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s <u>Final Report</u> (2015), of <u>systemic racism</u>, and of ableism.</p>		

Thinking skills and behaviours – Problem Solving

These skills are a type of higher order thinking, i.e. “thinking about thinking”, which include decision-making, problem solving, and critical thinking.



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Problem Solving	<p>You demonstrated problem solving skills when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarified the nature of the problem before deciding examined a problem from a variety of perspectives clarified the nature of a problem defined the desired objective of solving a problem broke down a problem into smaller, more manageable, parts decided on further information to be gathered before taking action evaluated solutions to a problem through feedback/reflection in order to make improvements adapted decisions and created contingencies to adjust to changing requirements 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. I was faced with several problems during a clinical placement.</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. During clinical placement last term, I was challenged with problem-solving opportunities every day while on client intake.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. During my placement at a local massage clinic I was responsible for the intake process. This involved talking with the client, clarifying the nature of the problem they were having, and deciding on a course of action, or treatment. Ensuring that each client received a personalized treatment plan required the application of theory to practice which was a great challenge that I enjoyed very much. Each question I asked was designed to get an answer that informed the treatment plan. I adapted my communication style to suit each client which enabled me to ask questions in a way they understood and felt comfortable responding to. I was then able to make informed decisions and provide top notch service to the clients.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised problem solving skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the <u>Calls to Action</u> in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s <u>Final Report</u> (2015), of <u>systemic racism</u>, and of ableism.</p>		<p>R – Result</p> <p>E.g. My adaptability and problem-solving skills resulted in a 95% return rate of my clients. The feedback I received from my clients indicated that they were comfortable with my approach and pleased with the results of the treatment which decreased pain, and stress while increasing mobility. The clinic I was at extended an invitation for me to complete my next clinical placement with them.</p>

Thinking skills and behaviours – Critical Thinking

These skills are a type of higher order thinking, i.e. “thinking about thinking”, which include decision-making, problem solving, and critical thinking.



SKILL	EXAMPLE BEHAVIOURS	SAMPLE PROCESS FOR WRITING A STAR STORY
Critical Thinking	<p>You demonstrated critical thinking skills when you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synthesized and organized information from a variety of sources, perspectives and/or frameworks • identified key concepts/ideas/assumptions and provided evidence to support or refute them • compared and contrasted information or ideas to make connections between new and existing information/ideas • considered the context of sources when analyzing and evaluating information • evaluated and applied new information/ideas to different situations/context • sought out and considered alternative explanations • distinguished between weak and strong evidence • distinguished fact from opinion • assessed your assumptions/those of others to determine whether those assumptions were based in sound reasoning and evidence 	<p>S – Situation</p> <p>E.g. As part of my coursework in Digital Communications I used critical thinking skills.</p> <p>T – Task</p> <p>E.g. Last term I evaluated website resources for a blog.</p> <p>A – Action</p> <p>E.g. In my Digital Journalism class, I used my critical thinking skills when I surveyed a set of web resources and considered the context of sources when analyzing and evaluating information for possible inclusion in a blog series on media literacy. I created a summary of each of the sites and highlighted the pros and cons and ensured there was a diverse array of opinions for the bloggers to consider. I presented the information I had collected to the class and fielded questions on the websites and my rationale for including them.</p> <p>R – Result</p> <p>E.g. I am happy to say that all my hard work paid off and the class chose my list of web resources citing the rigorous research, strong rationale for each entry, and the depth of diversity represented.</p>
<p>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>In addition to the above, we strongly suggest that you create a STAR story that demonstrates how you exercised critical thinking skills regarding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Employers now require job candidates to demonstrate an ability to work across cultural differences with respect, in addition to an openness to learning about forms of systemic oppression. For example, an awareness of the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Final Report (2015), of systemic racism, and of ableism.</p>		