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Tips for Students with Disabilities Seeking Employment

Note to the Professional: You may revise this document to make it more attractive, post it on your school web site or Facebook page, include it in a PowerPoint, turn it into a pamphlet or enlarge it into a poster. In all cases, please include the publication and copyright information. Keep in mind that this Word version was specifically formatted to be accessible to students with disabilities who may be using adaptive technologies.

The tips below are based on conversations with experts, interviews with students and graduates as well as their answers to our questionnaires. Although our project focused on postsecondary students and recently-employed graduates with disabilities, we feel that many of these tips could also be helpful to all students. We are grateful to the Entente Canada-Quebec for funding this work.

1. Keep in mind that whether you are an introvert, an extrovert or somewhere in between, networking helps to find jobs.
2. Both experts and recent post-secondary graduates who found work see volunteering and acquiring work experience as important.
3. In addition to specific job skills, bilingualism and interview skills are very helpful.
4. Consider using employment centres that offer services to specific populations such as youth. In Quebec, SEMOs are dedicated to finding jobs for individuals with disabilities (<https://roseph.ca/nos-membres/repertoire-des-membres/>)
5. Do research before the interview about the company and the job. This will help you answer interview questions as well as ask some relevant questions of your own.

6. There is no easy answer about whether or not to disclose a disability or a special need during an interview. It all depends on you and your specific situation but you need to consider this matter ahead of time. Here is a set of criteria to consider: (<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Disclosure-and-Accommodations.pdf>)
7. Be proactive in the interview. One way is to anticipate any potential concerns you think the interviewer may have and bring them up yourself at an appropriate point in the interview.
8. People said that if they asked for accommodations they usually received them. Keep this in mind when deciding whether or not to ask for accommodations, if needed.
9. Not all job opportunities offer full-time employment. Before you ignore this option, explore whether or not part-time work might be advantageous for you.
10. A study in 2018 shows that two-page curriculum vitae, as opposed to one page, are preferred by employers.

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