



CAREER SKILLS

Dear LCA Coordinator,

CareersPortal.ie in conjunction with the Transition Year, Leaving Cert Applied and Leaving Cert Vocational and Established Programmes have launched a nationwide competition aimed at promoting the awareness and development of 'transferable skills' with students.

The Career Skills competition offers students the opportunity to present both information gathered and insight's gained from a work placement or work experience. Work experience is generally regarded as having a strong influence on a person's choice of career, and offers an excellent opportunity to experience first hand the realities of a work environment, the various different job roles that operate within it, and the responsibilities and challenges faced by workers on a daily basis.

The Career Skills competition requires a student to complete a Career Investigation. The Career Investigation is a record of a persons experience on such a placement. Students are encouraged to investigate one particular job role that they have had the opportunity to observe closely during a placement, and to submit this information as their entry to the competition.

In addition to helping a student understand the core work and responsibilities of a particular job role, this Career Investigation encourages students to notice the importance and frequency with which common non-academic skills are used in the workplace.

A finished Career Investigation would show a good understanding of a particular job role, the tasks and responsibilities that characterise it, the specialist knowledge needed, and an awareness of the non-academic (transferable) skills required to fulfil the role competently.

The focus of the competition is on the ***ability of a student to observe, identify and demonstrate the development of transferable skills through engaging in a work placement.***

This competition is being run on National basis for 2010. Students from the three programmes, TY, LCA and LC/LCVP are eligible to apply, and compete for generous prizes within each category (effectively three separate competitions). The competition runs under the supervision of the coordinators of the three programs within the school, or the Guidance Counsellor who alone can submit the competition entries.

The competition also acknowledges the participation and cooperation of your school programme. The school of the winning student in each category will receive a cash sum of €1,000 for the relevant programme, and hold the Career Skills **Perpetual Trophy** for the year. A media event will be hosted to announce the winners and runners up, and press coverage will promote the students, the three programmes, and the participating schools.

Copies of a large sized (A2) promotional poster have been sent to the principal all post primary schools in Ireland. This can be used to encourage students to participate in the competition.

About the competition:

The competition requires that students produce a Career Investigation of someone (or of some role) they observed during a work placement. This investigation focuses on the transferable skills (we refer to as 'Career Skills') that are observed during the placement, and, hopefully some that may have been developed during this time.

Resources used:

A number of worksheet resources are used to assist in running the competition. They include:

Career Skills

This can be used to introduce the whole concept of transferable skills in the classroom, as it provides an overview of what they are, how important they can be, and brief definitions of a broad range of skills. It is also interactive – students can do a self-assessment of their skills so far, and set goals for the future. The self assessment is solely for their own information; it is not otherwise part of the competition.

Career Investigation Workbook

This is the answerbook – it is what students submit for the competition.

Work Placement – Career Skills Evaluation

This form is for use by the students' supervisor (or equivalent) during the work placement. It is intended to accompany and supplement the schools' normal evaluation form for the placement. A copy of this may also to be included in the competition submission, though this is optional.

Note: Copies of these for use in the competition can be downloaded from www.careersportal.ie/careerskills.

Running the competition

In simple terms, students who take part in a work placement fill in a career investigation answerbook based on one career they have had the opportunity to explore, along with an evaluation form from their supervisor, and submit this to the competition.

To get the most out of the competition, we recommend that students are first introduced to Career Skills in advance of a work placement. This can be done using the Career Skills worksheet, or in any other way you please.

Once introduced to what the skills are, students should be given copies of the Career Investigation Workbook (the answerbook). The elements of the answerbook should be discussed and the competition explained. In this way, students going on a work placement know what to look out for, and can ask for information they might not otherwise think of. Encourage students to discuss the competition with those they are working alongside, and get help if necessary.

There is a version of answerbook (3 page) specifically for LCA students which is tailored to the programme. Elements of this answerbook will need to be explained to students to ensure they understand what is being required.

As part of the competition, we encourage you to request that the company/organisation provide additional feedback on the students' experiences during the placement. Please forward a copy of the Work Placement – Career Skills Evaluation form to the placement supervisor and request that this be filled in alongside the standard school evaluation form. *(This may not be appropriate or possible in some cases. If so, ask the student to fill in the form themselves, they are likely to have a good idea as to what skills they had the opportunity to show.)*

Once the placement has been completed, encourage students to fill out the answerbook, and hand it back to you. If preferred, students can fill in the answerbook online - details are on the last page of this document.

Submission of entries Online: (www.careersportal.ie)

There are four stages involved.

1. Each student must **become a member** by completing the SignUp form (top of all pages, 3rd link from the left). If they are already members (having used the site before, for example) they sign in using the details they previously entered.
2. Once logged in, each student arrives on their own Career File home page. They then need to click on the 'Career Investigation' button, and **create a Career Investigation** as indicated on the page.

Once they have entered a Career title and brief description, they save these details and are returned to the main Career Investigation page. Their new investigation is now visible in the list of investigations. Clicking on this will bring the student to a page which will list the different sections of the investigation to be completed (this menu is clearly visible on the left). They are required to fill in the various sections used for the competition (some sections are not required, and these are indicated) by clicking on the section titles in the investigation menu. These sections are identical to those on the paper version of the form, with the exception of the Knowledge Requirements, which are better tailored to LCA on the paper version (note: Online entrants will not be marked down as a result of this).

Students can complete different sections at different times, and edit as often as they please. On the closing date of the competition (31st of March 2010) we will take a copy of all the investigations and process them for the competition. Nothing will be removed from the site - so students can continue to use their career investigations for normal career development activities.

3. Each student must **register to their school** using the School Registration button from their Career File home page. Here they simply identify their school, the year they intend to graduate in and the class name (if multiple classes for the same year).
4. Students must **register for the competition** - again from their Career File home page, they click on the large Career Skills image indicating 'Register here'. This allows them to enter a valid, working email address, the programme they are entering the competition under (LCA), the LCA co-ordinators name and the name of the career investigation they wish to submit (in the case of there being multiple investigations).

Once this is submitted, they have completed the entry. Edits can still be made to the submitted investigation up until 5:00pm on the 31st March - there is no need to re-submit. They can preview and print the entry from a link provided.

Check List:

Each student:

- Signs Up to become a member
- Create and completes an investigation online
- Register to their school
- Register their investigation to the competition

The closing date for the competition is 31st March 2010. Winners will be announced in May 2010.

Adjudicators for the competition are:

Michael O'Leary, National Coordinator, TY
Sheila O'Driscoll, National Coordinator, LCA
Caroline McHale, National Coordinator, LCVP
Eilis Coakley, President, IGC
Brian Mooney, Guidance Counsellor, Irish Times Correspondent
Michele Ryan, HR Director, Mc Donald's Ireland

Further information and updates

Further details and updates on the Career Skills competition and other developments on CareersPortal will be issued in our monthly newsletter. You can register for this newsletter at www.careersportal.ie/guidance
Contact CareersPortal at info@careersportal.ie or (01) 4402314