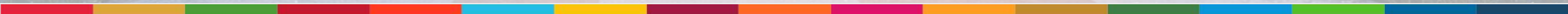




Breaking Down Job Descriptions

Inter-Agency Career Week 2026: Day 3/Session 4 (OPCW)



Today's Presenters



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House Keeping Rules

You are muted by default. The chat function is disabled.

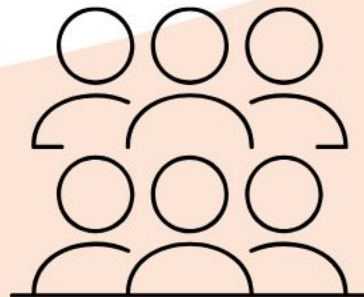
If you have any questions, please submit them through **Zoom Q&A button**.

The session will be **recorded**. The recording and presentation will be available on: [Inter-Agency Career Week 2026 webpage](#)



Due to the large number of participants in this session, we might not be able to respond to all of your questions.

Thank you for your understanding.



Your Experience With Job Descriptions





How much time do you spend on average **reviewing or revising your CV** when applying for a job?

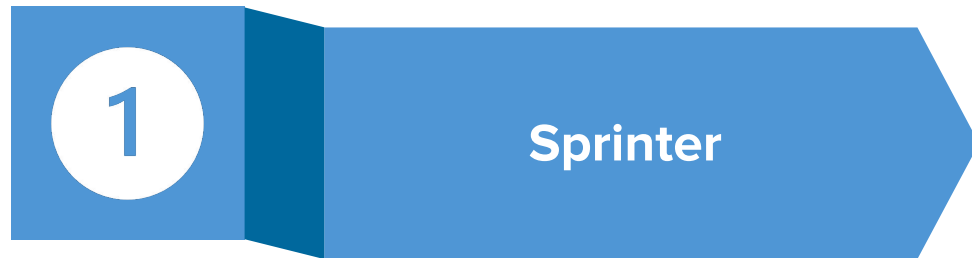
- 1) 1 to 10 minutes
- 2) 10 minutes to 1 hour
- 3) Longer than an hour



How much time do you spend on average **reviewing or working with a job description** when applying for a job?

- 1) 1 to 10 minutes
- 2) 10 minutes to 1 hour
- 3) Longer than an hour

3 Categories Of Job Applicants:



- Skims through the JD
- Decides
- **Applies with a one-size-fits-all resume**



- Reads the JD
- Decides
- **Adjusts the resume based on their idea of the job**



- Reads the JD
- Decides
- **Breaks down the JD**
- **Tailors the resume based on the job description**

What is a Job Description?



A job description (JD) is a formal document that outlines:

- The purpose of a role;
- The required qualifications and competencies;

“

- Its key responsibilities and duties.

Beyond determining the appropriate pay range, a job description is a core management tool that supports multiple aspects of human resources management. It plays a key role in recruitment, performance management, learning and development, staff relations, and workforce planning.

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The Theory of Job Descriptions



Why Do Organisations Use Job Descriptions?

- Foundation of how work is defined
- Create organisational clarity and help define organisational structures
- Recruitment and selection
- Setting performance expectations, objectives and goals
- Identification of development areas
- Determination of salary levels
- Ensuring legal compliance



Job Analysis



Job Description



Person Specification



Recruitment



Induction



Appointment



Selection

Job Analysis

Aim:

- Gather information on the required job outputs
- Define the work needed to achieve the job
- Situating the role within the organisation
- Identify the skills, resources and autonomy that will enable it

Methods:

- Observation,
- Interviews with individuals or groups,
- Job analysis questionnaires

*"Job analysis is the **most fundamental** of all human resource management activities because all other human resource functions, especially staffing, depend to a large extent on the successful execution of this one activity" (Caruth et al, 2009:96-9)*

Job Analysis

"A basic HR activity which involves examination of job content, job requirements and the context in which the job is performed...It involves a systematic process of identifying the tasks which make up jobs, the responsibilities involved, and the knowledge, skills and abilities required to adequately perform the tasks and duties" (Petzall, 2013: a 65)

JDs answer the following:

- The critical duties/tasks
- Level of supervision/independence of work
- Level of work complexity
- Level of judgement/discretion exercised
- Changes in the environment (internal/external factors)

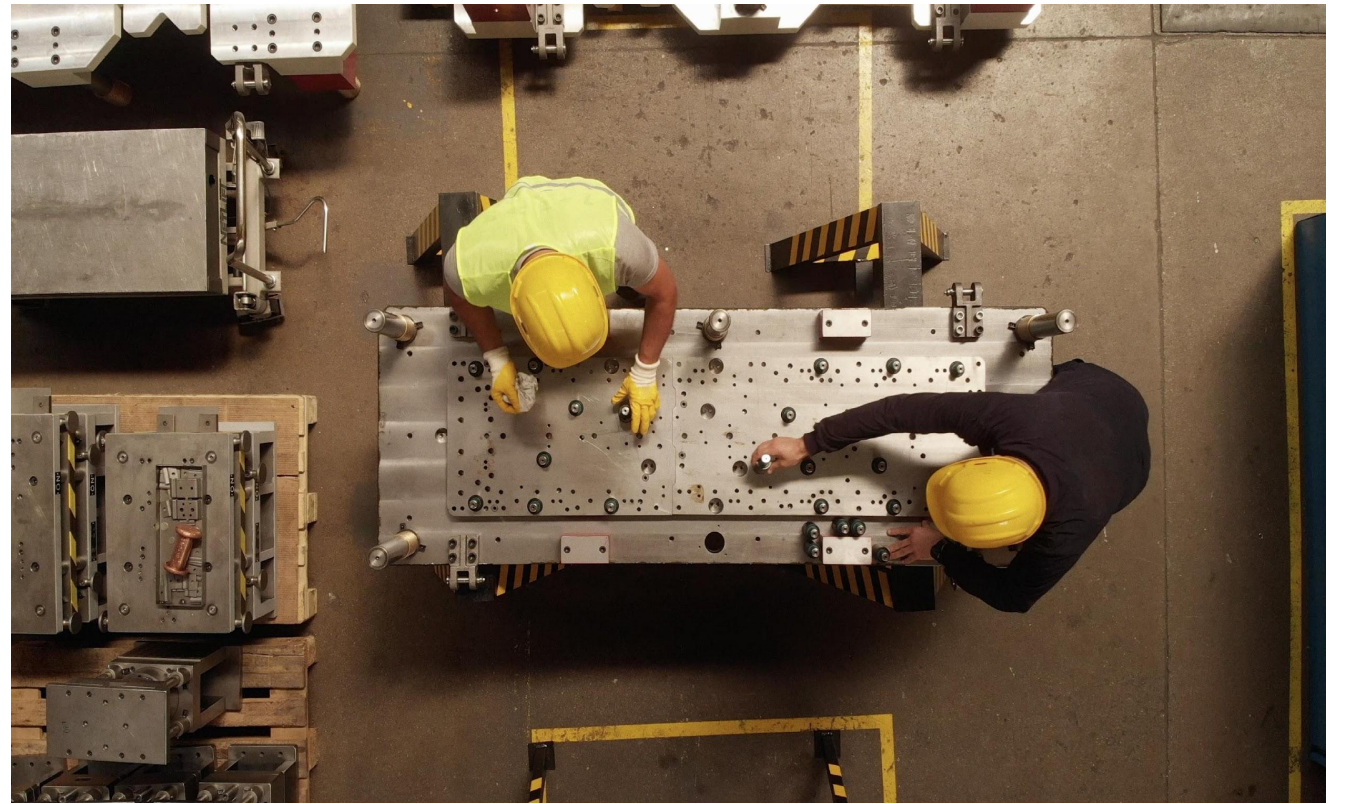
JDs also answer the following for individuals:

- Minimum requirements
 - Knowledge/education
 - Experience
 - Skills
- Type of work
- Interactions
- Competencies

Job Descriptions as a result of Job Analysis

Key components of a JD:

- Job Title
- Organisational setting
- Main purpose
- Duties and responsibilities
- Reporting structure
- Working conditions
- Person Specification Details



Understanding Job Descriptions



Benefits of Understanding a Job Description

As a Job Applicant	As a Hiring Manager
Do more focused and mindful job applications	Define realistic expectations for duties and responsibilities
Save time	Support better selection decisions and reduce mismatches
Tailor your CV and Motivation Letter	Manage performance more effectively
Identify gaps in your profile and address them strategically	Reduce role confusion
High performance and job satisfaction	

Job Search Quality vs Job Search Quantity

Research suggest that a job search occurs in sequential phases:

- **A preparatory phase** in which individuals screen for potential jobs;
- **An active phase** in which individuals communicate their availability.

(Blau 1994)

Understanding the JD, and the ability to break it down is **crucial in both phases.**

The **quality** of job applications is **as important as** the **number** of applications submitted.

Preparatory Phase: **Scan**



Title; Organisation; Grade; First 2-3 responsibilities.



Mandatory requirements:
- Am I able to do this job?
- Do I have the necessary qualifications?



Location, and related factors; life quality, relocation, children, etc.

Active Phase: **Decode**



- Which is the team I will be working on?
- To which position I will report to?
- Are there managerial responsibilities?



- What will be the main responsibilities?
- Would I like doing this job?
- Would this job contribute to my professional growth?
- Does it mix with my personal life?



- What are the key outcomes of the job?
- How does the role contribute to organisation?
- What does success look like?
- How will a day look like performing the job?

Individuals engage in different job search strategies, including:

- **focused** (i.e., targeting one's job search around specific goals),
- **exploratory** (i.e., conducting a broader job search; being open to several possibilities), and
- **haphazard** (i.e., not having a clear plan; applying to a variety of positions) (Crossley & Highhouse 2005).

According to a study looking at the use of various strategies, **people who reported conducting a focused job search were happier with the positions they found**, while others who utilized exploratory ways got more offers. Haphazard searching has a negative correlation with both the quantity of offers and job search satisfaction. (Crossley & Highhouse 2005).

Taking the Mindful Approach

Decoding Job Descriptions

Keep in mind when decoding job descriptions:

- Responsibilities are typically arranged in order of importance.
- Not all tasks of a JD require equal attention and mastery.
- Think about whether you can show evidence from your past work that proves you've delivered on the core responsibilities of the job.
- A well written job summary offers a quick snapshot of the role, its place in the organization, and its contribution to the unit's goals.



Always save a copy of the job description and break it down in a separate document; it will also help when tailoring your application.

Breaking Down a JD





JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION INFORMATION	
Position No: 000234	Organisational Unit: International Cooperation and Assistance Division
Functional Title: Senior Programme Officer	Date: March 2026
Post Level: P-4	
Reports To: Head, Assistance and Protection	
Contract Modality: Fixed-Term Professional	

1. Organisational setting:

The International Cooperation and Assistance Division (ICA) works with and support States Parties to build their capacity to respond effectively to incidents involving toxic chemicals and plays a crucial role in enhancing States Parties' capacity to fully and effectively implement the Convention.

2. Main purpose of the post:

Working under supervision of the Head, Assistance and Protection Branch, the Senior Programme Officer is responsible for **planning, coordinating, and overseeing the implementation of programme activities** in support of the Organisation's strategic objectives. In addition, the position **provides technical and operational guidance, coordinates with States Parties, and ensures effective delivery** as well as **monitoring and reporting**.

3. Responsibilities:

1) Programme Management

- Develop, plan, coordinate, manage and report on assigned programmes for capacity-building, including training in chemical emergency response and national/regional exercises under Article X, paragraph 5, regarding the provision of expert advice on development or improvement of national protection programmes.
- Assess and interpret the political, social and economic environment of assigned regions and provide inputs to Branch programming.
- Design programmes and/or projects integrating best practice and innovative policies and strategies and applying quality management standards and a results-based approach, in collaboration with State Party institutions, divisions and other partners.
- Coordinate and ensure successful project implementation, establishing collaborative relationships with State Party institutions and recommending innovative approaches to project execution and capacity building.
- Receive, collate and regularly analyze submissions by States Parties on national protection programmes under paragraph 4 and assistance offers under paragraph 7 of Article X. Liaise with delegations, National Authorities and other stakeholders to promote full implementation of Article X and to encourage broad support for Secretariat efforts in this regard.

2) Strategic Programme Support

- Monitor programme and project budgets, ensure effective employment of resources, certify and approve project disbursements to ensure delivery in line with the Branch programme.
- Ensure all programmatic responsibilities undertake procurement, budgetary, and other logistical and administration requirements in line with administrative directions set by the Technical Secretariat; work closely with administrative associates in APB, and other units as needed on this.
- Develop draft policies for the OPCW activities in providing assistance in the event of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons (Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention).
- Coordinate activities to ensure internal readiness within the Technical Secretariat to mobilize assistance under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), upon request for assistance from a State Party.
- Contribute regular reports and inputs for the sessions of the Executive Council and the Conference of States Parties, as well as participate actively in Art X Informal Consultations, side events related to Article X, and annual and regional meetings of national authorities.
- Represent the Branch in inter-divisional task force groups and international meetings and conferences, as requested.

3) Stakeholder Coordination

- Develop and maintain networks and partnerships with national institutions, regional bodies and other stakeholders in order to contribute to increasing awareness of Assistance and Protection.
- Contribute to resource mobilization activities, proposing projects requiring additional funding and identifying funding options. Develop proposals and provide detailed information for donors, in close collaboration with the Head, APB.

4) Perform other duties as required.

Tips for Aligning with a JD



Study the Person Specification: Education & Experience

Look for **ESSENTIAL** requirements in:

- Education
- Experience
- Mandatory certification
- Languages

Look for **DESIRABLE** requirements

4. Minimum Qualifications Required:

Education:

- **Essential:** An advanced university degree in management, social sciences, science and technology, international relations, or a related discipline. A first level university degree in combination with additional qualifying experience (minimum 9 years) may be accepted in lieu of an advanced university degree.

Experience:

- **Essential:** A minimum of 7 years of progressively responsible experience in the field of public administration or international cooperation, preferably in capacity building related to emergency response.
- A minimum of 5 years of in the conduct of needs assessments, planning, conduct, monitoring and evaluation of capacity building programmes, preferably in a field related to the CWC.
- Experience in formal programme management approaches, stakeholder engagement, results-based monitoring and evaluation.
- Knowledge of multilateral disarmament issues and experience in dealing with Member States, or national and international authorities in this field.
- **Desirable:** Knowledge or experience working with the CWC and member states. Work experience in the UN Common System is also desirable.
- Experience in analysing issues, developing courses of action and implementing them in an international context.
- Experience in the assessment of needs and coordination of assistance delivery in emergency situations.

Language requirements:

- Fluency in English is essential and a good working knowledge of one of the other OPCW official languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish) is desirable.

Study the Person Specification: Skills

Look for **SKILLS** required deemed necessary for the successful performance of the job

Think about the skills that you possess and can provide **EVIDENCE** of their application

Think of **EXAMPLES** from your work experience where you can highlight using these skills in your Application Form

Think about the **TRANSFERABLE SKILLS** that you have and that are related to the job

Competencies (required knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviours):

- Demonstrated project and portfolio management skills including ability to think strategically and achieve results.
- Excellent and proven planning, organizational, coordination, negotiation and problem-solving skills
- Excellent communication skills (verbal and written) including ability to prepare reports and conduct presentations.
- Demonstrated ability to be proactive in developing strategies to accomplish organization's objectives.
- Demonstrated experience developing capacity-building and other training programs, and in mobilizing resources from donor states for such development programs.
- Flexibility and ability to work under pressure.
- Excellent interpersonal skills - ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with clients.
- Tact, discretion, and the ability to work harmoniously in a multi-cultural environment.
- Solid information technology skills including proficiency in Microsoft desktop packages.

Compare your education/experience/skills to the job requirements

Job requirements	My profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced University degree in Management, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, International Relations etc. 	<p>Do I meet the listed educational requirements? In case my formal education is not listed, is it relevant for the job under recruitment and how?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 7 years of progressively responsible experience in public administration or international cooperation 	<p>Do I have the minimum listed years of necessary relevant experience? In case I do not meet the formal work experience requirements, is my experience relevant for the job under recruitment and how?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project and portfolio management skills Communication skills (verbal and written) Developing Capacity-Building Fluency in English 	<p>Do I have the skills listed as mandatory for the successful performance in this job? In case I do not have these skills/cannot provide evidence in my application form, do I have any transferable skills that would be relevant for the job and how?</p>

Study the Job Description: main tasks and duties

Identify most important **TASKS** and
REQUIRED ACTIONS

Identify **WORK RELATIONSHIPS** (Internal
and External)

Identify **SCOPE** (Internal/External)

Identify **AUTONOMY**

3. Responsibilities:
<p>1) Programme Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop, plan, coordinate, manage and report on assigned programmes for capacity-building, including training in chemical emergency response and national/regional exercises under Article X, paragraph 5, regarding the provision of expert advice on development or improvement of national protection programmes.Assess and interpret the political, social and economic environment of assigned regions and provide inputs to Branch programming.Design programmes and/or projects integrating best practice and innovative policies and strategies and applying quality management standards and a results-based approach, in collaboration with State Party institutions, divisions and other partners.Coordinate and ensure successful project implementation, establishing collaborative relationships with State Party institutions and recommending innovative approaches to project execution and capacity building.Receive, collate and regularly analyze submissions by States Parties on national protection programmes under paragraph 4 and assistance offers under paragraph 7 of Article X. Liaise with delegations, National Authorities and other stakeholders to promote full implementation of Article X and to encourage broad support for Secretariat efforts in this regard.
<p>2) Strategic Programme Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitor programme and project budgets, ensure effective employment of resources, certify and approve project disbursements to ensure delivery in line with the Branch programme.Ensure all programmatic responsibilities undertake procurement, budgetary, and other logistical and administration requirements in line with administrative directions set by the Technical Secretariat; work closely with administrative associates in APB, and other units as needed on this.Develop draft policies for the OPCW activities in providing assistance in the event of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons (Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention).Coordinate activities to ensure internal readiness within the Technical Secretariat to mobilize assistance under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), upon request for assistance from a State Party.Contribute regular reports and inputs for the sessions of the Executive Council and the Conference of States Parties, as well as participate actively in Art X Informal Consultations, side events related to Article X, and annual and regional meetings of national authorities.Represent the Branch in inter-divisional task force groups and international meetings and conferences, as requested.

Compare the duties of the JD to your experience

Job duties/relationships	My profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, Plan, Coordinate programmes for Capacity-Building • Design programmes/projects • Develop draft policies • Coordinate activities on a given topic • Monitor programme and project budgets 	<p>Do I have experience in performing the duties of the advertised job?</p> <p>In case I do not/did not perform these tasks in the past, how is my experience relevant for the job under recruitment?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships with State Party Institutions • Liaison with Delegations/National Authorities • Representing the Branch in International Meetings and Conferences 	<p>Do I have experience in bilateral/multilateral cooperation?</p> <p>In case I do not have such experience, how is my experience and transferable skills relevant for the job?</p>

Summary



- Read the **Job Description** and the **Person Specification** carefully!
- Think about your own experience and how it is relevant to the job (focus on evidence) - write down examples and use them in your application form
- Create a comparison – write it down to help you build your case
- Think about any transferable skills that you might have that are relevant to the job – write them down and mention them in your CV



How much time will you spend **reviewing or working with a job description** next time you apply for a role?

- 1) 1 to 10 minutes
- 2) 10 minutes to 1 hour
- 3) Longer than an hour



THANK YOU!

The presentation, recording and other resources will be shared on our dedicated [Inter-Agency Career Week Page](#).

Please fill out the [Evaluation Survey](#). Your feedback matters to us!



If you have any questions, please reach out to damla.taskin@opcw.org or milan.jelenkovic@opcw.org

Inter- Agency Career Week 2026 Agenda

04 - 08 May

	Monday, 04 May	Tuesday, 05 May	Wednesday, 06 May	Thursday, 07 May	Friday, 08 May
03:00-04:00 (New York) 09:00-10:00 (Europe) 10:00-11:00 (Nairobi) 14:00-15:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - From the UN to the Private Sector: Skills that enable Career Transition	Pres (E) - Thriving in Uncertainty	Pres (E) - Beyond the algorithm: Preparing your career for Life 3.0	Pres (E) - Habits under Pressure: working more intentionally	Pres (E) Behavioural Science for Career Development: Evidence-Based Steps for Action
04:30-05:30 (New York) 10:30-11:30 (Europe) 11:30-12:30 (Nairobi) 15:30-16:30 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Inside the Recruiter's Mind: How Hiring Really Works in the UN and Beyond	PD (E) - Private Sector Unlocked: How to Enter, Adapt, and Succeed	Pres (E) - Upskilling for the Future: How to Stay Marketable Inside and Beyond the UN	Pres (E) - Becoming a UN Volunteer; What is in it for you? The Hidden Benefits of Volunteering.	PD (E) - Beyond the UN Blue: Navigating Your Career Transition to Other IGOs
06:00-07:00 (New York) 12:00-13:00 (Europe) 13:00-14:00 (Nairobi) 17:00-18:00 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Talent on the Move: Growing your career through mobility	Clinic (F) - Recherche d'emploi optimisée par l'IA : éthique, sécurisée et tournée vers l'avenir	Clinic (E) - AI for Your Career: Practical Tools and Prompts for Career Management	Pres (E) - Leading from Within: Self-Awareness, Authenticity, and Inner Resilience	Pres (F) - Maîtriser les entretiens d'embauche: Transformer son expérience en levier de réussite
07:30-08:30 (New York) 13:30-14:30 (Europe) 14:30-15:30 (Nairobi) 18:30-19:30 (Bangkok)	Clinic (E) - Mapping Your Motivators for Career Choices	Pres (E) - Mapping Professional Achievements to Job Application and Interview	Pres (E) - Breaking Down Job Descriptions	Pres (E) - What remains when everything changes: Insights from Third Culture and Global Nomad Research	Clinic (E) - The skills shift: What skills-based hiring and AI agents might mean for a UN career
09:00-10:00 (New York) 15:00-16:00 (Europe) 16:00-17:00 (Nairobi) 20:00-21:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Your Career, Your Conversation	Pres (E) - Strengthening Your Adaptability Muscles - AQ: The Adaptability Quotient	Pres (E) - Managing Your Saboteurs: Removing Barriers to Your Career Growth	Pres (E) - Use Your Strengths to Boost Your Career	Pres (E) - Activating Inner Resources in Uncertain Times
10:30-11:30 (New York) 16:30-17:30 (Europe) 17:30-18:30 (Nairobi) 21:30-22:30 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - A Mind-Blowing Tour of AI Tools to Accelerate Your Career	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (S) - Construye tu Asistente de Carrera con IA	Pres (E) - Building a winning profile from application to interview	Pres (E) - Mentoring 2.0: From Top-Down to All-Around
13:00-14:00 (New York) 19:00-20:00 (Europe) 20:00-21:00 (Nairobi) 00:00-01:00 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (F) - Opportunités de carrière aux Nations Unies pour les jeunes professionnels et conseils pour réussir sa candidature	PD (E) - Thriving Globally - The human side of relocation	Pres (E) - Career Development: How you can turn a Psychosocial Hazard into a Thriving Strategy	Pres (E) - Youth Engagement: Put in Practice! (Young Talents in the UN System)	Pres (E) - Working for Justice
14:30-15:30 (New York) 20:30-21:30 (Europe) 21:30-22:30 (Nairobi) 01:30 ⁻¹ -02:30 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Mastering Job Interviews: Turning Your Experience into Impact	Pres (S) - Cómo dominar las entrevistas de trabajo: refleja tu experiencia con impacto	Clinic (S) - Desarrollo de habilidades y redes profesionales a través de la mentoría	Pres (E) - Make career moves with confidence using the 5i Framework	Pres (E) - Own your Future, Make your Role Matter