

**BMG**

*Boyer Management Group*

2015-2016

6<sup>th</sup> Edition

# Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment<sup>SM</sup>

## Development Guide



**Explains  
more than  
2,500 job  
search  
best  
practices!**

# The Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment<sup>SM</sup> (GEPA) 2015-2016 Sixth Edition Development Guide

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# Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment<sup>SM</sup> (GEPA) Development Guide



## The Background of this Assessment

The *Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment*<sup>SM</sup> (GEPA) Development Guide is ideal as a follow-up to the *Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment*<sup>SM</sup>. The GEPA measures your knowledge and awareness of best practices to prepare for and conduct a successful job search.

Building on the authors' fifty-plus years experience in hiring people from successful work, college, university, and military backgrounds, the *Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment*<sup>SM</sup> and its related training materials were developed by Boyer Management Group. Our team of subject matter experts conducted in excess of 25,000 job interviews. This assessment was developed in response to a need for a bold, fresh approach in equipping job seekers with a best practices approach to successfully launching their careers. In addition, the authors have been guiding the hiring practices of companies and organizations since the late 1970s across the manufacturing, telecommunications, electronics, service, healthcare, consumer products and services, pharmaceutical, non-profit, financial services, education, and technology sectors.

Your own experience, the education you've received about conducting an effective job search, and what you intuitively know about securing the right job will all play a part in shaping your attitudes and understanding regarding the competencies and sub-competencies measured in this assessment.

## How GEPA Was Developed

In creating this assessment, five specific competencies, forty-four sub-competencies, and more than three hundred best practice behaviors were identified.

- a. A *competency* is defined as the set of work-related skills and behaviors needed to effectively perform a role.
- b. A *sub-competency* is a specific aspect of a skill or behavior which supports the overall execution of the competency.
- c. A *best practice* is defined as a methodology or procedure that is known through experience and research to produce near optimum results.

Once the competencies and sub-competencies were defined, a series of questions were developed to assess the participant's knowledge and awareness of the best practices associated with each competency and sub-competency.

## The Evolution of GEPA Best Practices

The *Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment*<sup>SM</sup> by BMG includes the use of the latest technologies in researching and conducting a successful career search. For example, consider the role the internet has played in accelerating research about industries, companies, and careers. Prior to its widespread use during the second half of the 1990s, career research was primarily a manual process conducted in the college or university library aided by the school guidance counselor. Today, social networking, online professional branding, in-depth organizational research, and instantaneous communications have vastly altered the speed and effectiveness of a successful career search. With each new technological advance comes a whole new set of best practices related to the specific skill set of research. Regardless of these changes there are core elements of a job search that transcend technology. As a result, GEPA considers both the technological advances as well as the core concepts in the creation of its questions.

## GEPA Best Practices and the Development Guide

The Development Guide is NOT intended to provide the answer key to the assessment questions. Instead, it is designed to offer you a high level of understanding about the current and emerging best practices associated with each of the identified competencies and sub-competencies. This information will prove invaluable for helping you to better understand your score in each of the assessed areas. It will guide you in taking specific actions to raise your knowledge and awareness of prevailing best practices associated with conducting an effective career search. *Caveat: not all best practices may apply to you in your specific situation.* If you utilize this information properly, you will be better prepared to find and make the right career choices.

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## A Note to Participants

This Development Guide must not be given or loaned to anyone who has not yet taken the *Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment*<sup>SM</sup> (GEPA<sup>SM</sup>). Individuals who read this guide prior to initial GEPA<sup>SM</sup> testing will defeat the assessment's purpose of determining their knowledge of the identified competencies as well as their own potential training needs.

Navigation Tips: This document is fully hyperlinked (where words are underlined and in blue). The table of contents is fully hyperlinked as is much of the Development Guide. Simply click on a desired hyperlink and you'll be taken to that place in the document (or to a website). When navigating in-document, return to your previous location by simultaneously pressing the **ALT** and **F5** keys. Use the slider control to return to the Table of Contents to make it easy to move to different topics. You could also use the slider control on the right to return to a specific page number.

Purpose: The purpose of this self-study GEPA<sup>SM</sup> Development Guide is to assist you in accelerating your career search, and to describe a more granular direction for conducting your career search. [Template 6.0B – GEPA<sup>SM</sup> Score Report and Question Detail](#) indicates how well you performed in each area assessed, and contains question level detail (green for correct, red for incorrect) keyed to each Sub-Competency measured. [Template 6.0A](#) explains how the GEPA<sup>SM</sup> Assessment and Development Guide are used together as a diagnostic-prescriptive tool in classroom and self-study applications.

It is typical for participants taking the assessment to score well in some areas and less well in other areas. Our ongoing university studies indicate that career search is not well understood by the majority of job seekers.

Scores are banded as:

- a. Strength – you achieved the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher in the areas assessed;
- b. Adequate – you achieved between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 74.9<sup>th</sup> percentile in the areas assessed, and
- c. Need – you achieved less than the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in the areas assessed.

### What to Do With Your Results – The Score Sheet and Development Guide

- a. Carefully examine your GEPA Score sheet and select the areas in which you achieved a score of less than the 50th percentile. For these areas, read the appropriate sections in this Development Guide to gain a better understanding and awareness of the best practices associated with the competency and sub-competency.
- b. Utilize this Development Guide to direct your career and job search activities. It serves as a guide to the specific activities to be undertaken during each phase of a successful employment search. Additionally, checklists have been developed for each competency to guide your specific plan and associated actions, which are located at the end of this guide. Use the checklists for each career or employment opportunity you wish to pursue.

Associated with this Development Guide is a template for building your *Personal Action Planer*. We recommend you take this action plan seriously. Ensure you take time to build a realistic action plan to improve your knowledge of the competencies as well as creating the specific plans to transform what you've learned into practical application.

### Knowledge versus Performance

Regardless of your score, the *Graduate Employment Preparedness Assessment*<sup>SM</sup> was created to assess your level of knowledge and awareness of the best practices associated with conducting a successful career search. It is one thing to have an understanding of a best practice, and another thing to put that knowledge to use as a consistent practice. Successful job seekers understand this concept and compare their knowledge set with what they are actually performing to identify gaps in their performance. The next step in the process is to build a specific action plan detailing how to improve the identified need areas.

For example, suppose you scored in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile or above in a specific competency. Yet your *actual performance* may be less than excellent in that area. The question we ask you to reflect upon is: What specifically are you doing about closing this gap? This is where we recommend several courses of action:

- a. First, utilize the entire Development Guide and its associated *Action Planner* template located at the end of this Guide. If you are a student, seek input from school advisors, department chairpersons, and professionals associated with your school's career center about your performance and develop a specific plan of action. If you are an experienced worker, seek assistance from career coaches, your alma mater's alumni department, and the wisdom of experienced people you trust.
- b. Second, track your successes and make a note of information you found especially helpful in securing employment. Statistically speaking, Millennials graduating after 2010 are expected to hold more than a dozen jobs during their career. Utilization of the GEPA<sup>SM</sup> skills in addition to your own successful experiences will aid you in future employment transitions throughout your career.
- c. Third, career search technologies and strategies are evolving RAPIDLY. This means you will need to keep up with the latest advances and approaches in order to maintain an advantage over those individuals with whom you will be competing for positions of choice. Accordingly, the authors of the GEPA Development Guide<sup>SM</sup> have made a commitment to update it once a year to capture the current and emerging best practices of successful career search.
- d. Finally, consider using this instrument in conjunction with a career search education class or when working with a qualified career search professional. Our experience shows that both approaches significantly improve your chances of shortening your search.