

This guide is aimed to help applicants with little-to-no job experience, when applying for the position of Officer Cadet. It provides information such as, 'What is a Job Poster?' and 'Interview Tips'. Everything within the guide is suggested and for your benefit, however, it is not required.

Preparation Guide

Applying to the Canadian
Coast Guard College (CCGC)

Reynolds, Candace

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Applying to CCGC vs. Other Institutions..... | 2 |
| What is a Job Poster?..... | 3 |
| Key Areas of the Job Poster..... | 3 |
| Before Applying..... | 3 |
| Expected Behaviours During the Selection Process..... | 5 |
| What will be Assessed?..... | 6 |
| What are Competencies?..... | 6 |
| Competency Definitions..... | 7 |
| Preparation Tips..... | 10 |
| Behavioural Based Interview Questions..... | 13 |
| Situational Based Interview Questions..... | 14 |

Perks of the Canadian Coast Guard College (CCGC)

The CCG Officer Training Program provides the following benefits:

- ✓ Classroom & practical training (at the college and on vessels)
- ✓ Textbooks & uniforms
- ✓ Monthly allowance
- ✓ Medical & dental plan coverage

Graduates will receive:

- ✓ Bachelor of Technology Degree in Nautical Sciences (partnered with Cape Breton University)
- ✓ CCGC Diploma
- ✓ Commercial Certification
- ✓ Continued employment with CCG

Applying to CCGC vs. Other Institutions

Applying to the Canadian Coast Guard Officer Training Program is a different process compared to other programs of study (i.e., Dalhousie, York, Calgary etc.). There are more requirements when applying to Canadian Coast Guard College (CCGC) compared to other post-secondary institutions because you are applying for a job with the federal government. Therefore, this guide details the steps involved in the hiring process at the CCGC.

The CCGC recruits and develops candidates to become Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) Officers. You will be initially recruited as Officer Cadets at the SO-MAO-00 level and progress to SO-MAO-02 level upon graduating from the 4 year training program. The selection process is **multi-tier** in that there are many stages throughout the process that you must surpass prior to entering the program.

The CCG Officer Training Program is an exciting opportunity to serve your country while making a real difference on Canada's waters. The ultimate goal of the program is to train individuals to become highly motivated and competent Ship's Officers who will serve at sea in the Canadian Coast Guard fleet.



Outlined in the Job Advertisement

- ✓ General information about the program (benefits, certificates etc.)
- ✓ Pay rate (training allowance, pay upon graduation)
- ✓ Who can apply
- ✓ How to apply
- ✓ Essential qualifications (education requirements, skills/abilities etc.)
- ✓ Asset qualifications (experience, knowledge of CCG etc.)
- ✓ Conditions of employment (security clearance, valid Canadian passport etc.)
- ✓ Operational requirements
- ✓ Additional information about the selection process

What is a Job Advertisement?

The job advertisement is a job notice that contains information that pertains directly to the program (and your employment). It provides you with general information about the program as well as, essential qualifications required for the position of 'Officer Cadet'. The job advertisement will also tell you how to apply for the position, application deadlines and any other requirements for the job.

Key Areas of the Job Advertisement

Reading a job advertisement can be overwhelming as there is a lot of information that you may feel is not relevant. However, the information is listed because there are qualities that you must possess in order to be considered for entry in the program.

The main area that you should focus on is the '**Qualifications**' section of the job poster. This is where you will know if you are eligible to apply for the program. This section will explain the [*educational requirements*](#) and what **essential** and **asset** (non-essential) qualifications are required of the position 'Officer Cadet'. Although some essential qualifications are assessed at a later date, it is important that you make sure you have them when you apply.

Failure to meet the essential qualifications and educational requirements will result in your application being removed from the selection process.

Another area you should focus your attention to is '**Conditions of Employment**'. This section is important before applying because it lists the conditions that will be required of you upon appointment and throughout the 4 year training program (i.e., having a valid Canadian passport upon appointment, wearing a breathing apparatus etc.).

Before Applying

What does it mean to be 'conditionally accepted'?

If you are considered conditionally it means that you can continue in the selection process.

Put simply, 'conditionally accepted' means you have been accepted, provided you meet certain conditions.

However, if you are successful in the selection process but fail to meet the required conditions by the deadline, you will not continue in the process.

- ✓ Ensure you meet all **essential qualifications** and **educational requirements** as listed in the job poster.
- ✓ Have a completed résumé to submit with your application.
- ✓ You will need a copy of your High School transcripts.
- If you have not yet finished the required courses simply send a mid-year transcript and you can still be '*accepted conditionally*', should you meet all other requirements of the selection process.

For example: You can be accepted conditionally if you have the required courses *in progress* on your transcript. However, if you do not receive the required mark by the specific deadline you will be removed from the process.

- If you did not take the required courses in high school but took an equivalent course elsewhere, send us the course description so we can verify that it is acceptable.
- ✓ Ensure you have an email that will be checked on a regular basis (this is how we will be corresponding with you throughout the process).
- ✓ Visit our website to find information about the CCGC and the programs we offer:
 - For knowledge on marine programs visit:
 - <https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/college/officer-training-formation-officier/index-eng.html>
 - For knowledge of the CCGC visit:
 - <https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/college/about-a-propos-eng.html>
- ✓ If you have questions about the application process please contact our Admissions Team: DFO.CCGCSelection-CGCCSelection.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
- ✓ If you would like to book a tour of the college you can contact our Recruitment Team: xglfccgcregistrar@dfo-mpo.gc.ca /1-888-582-9090

You can also follow us on social media to stay up to date on College news and upcoming events!



FOLLOW US

@CCGCollege



LIKE US

@CanadianCoastGuardCollege

Expected Behaviours During the Selection Process

The Selection Process is a difficult one in which not everyone succeeds but it does not mean that you are not a great candidate. We highly encourage applicants who are unsuccessful to *re-apply* in the following year.

This page provides behaviours that are expected of candidates throughout the entirety of the selection process. These behaviours can help **separate you** from other candidates in the hiring process.

Attention to detail

- Although this is not an essential qualification of the job, it is 'best practice' to exhibit this behaviour throughout the process.
- Please ensure that you read all instructions that are provided carefully and **strictly adhere to any deadlines** that may be presented throughout the process.

Meet the essential qualifications required (can be found on the Job Poster)

- Educational requirements, skills, abilities etc.
- You must possess **ALL** essential qualifications to progress to the next stage of the selection process.
- Although **asset qualifications cannot screen you out** of the selection process, they can be the **deciding factor** when choosing applicants.

Check/monitor emails regularly

- Communication for the selection process occurs via email, therefore it is crucial that you are receiving messages that are being sent.
- Be aware that messages could appear in your 'Junk/SPAM' mail.
- Please make sure you **read the full email** as it will ensure you don't miss important information or deadlines.

Respond to requests in a timely manner

- By responding to requests/deadlines in a timely manner it shows that you are truly interested in becoming an Officer Cadet for the CCGC.
- It can also increase the chance of your application being processed faster.

Failure to meet deadlines without valid reason **will** result in your removal from the selection process.

Competencies, Skills & Abilities

- ✓ Adaptability
- ✓ Decision-making skills
- ✓ Dependability
- ✓ Effective written and oral communication
- ✓ Judgement
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Problem-solving skills
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Working under pressure

See competency definitions on next page.

What will be Assessed?

Throughout the selection processes there are a number of stages that occur such as, application, written exam, interview etc. Listed in the side bar are some essential and non-essential (asset) qualifications that **may** be assessed throughout the process.

The job poster will tell you which of the competencies, skills/abilities will be assessed each year. It will also identify which of those skills are considered essential or non-essential (asset) qualifications.

Remember that you cannot be screened out of the selection process if you do not have an asset qualification. However, they can be used as a deciding factor.

What are Competencies?

Competencies are defined as the characteristics an individual must possess to effectively perform a job. It would be beneficial for you to research competencies listed in the side bar online. When looking online try looking for things like *'examples of teamwork assessment criteria'* or *'interview questions on adaptability'* etc. This can be helpful when preparing for the selection process.



Competency Definitions

You should familiarize yourself with the following definitions to have the knowledge you need to best answer questions relating to each competency. Make sure you are able to **identify HOW** you meet the competency in question and *WHERE* and *WHEN* you achieved it.

Adaptability

- Adjust easily to change and new ways of doing things
- Reacts positively to uncertainty, new situations or ways of doing things
- Thinks of appropriate solutions to deal with uncomfortable situations
- Develops adaptive coping strategies
- Flexible
- Compromise
- Adjusts to different methods, individuals or groups
- Seeks assistance
- Co-operative
- Resiliency
- Other acceptable answers

Decision-making skills

- Evaluates relevant information
- Recognizes alternative courses of action
- Reaches conclusions based on the fact

Dependability

- Achieves consistent, satisfactory results within established time frames
- Performs work consistently and competently
- Adapts easily to change
- Performs duties with minimal supervision
- Performs duties within the required deadlines
- Can manage a heavy workload and asks for help when necessary
- Works effectively under pressure
- Is punctual and reliable
- Makes well-thought-out and ethical decisions
- Conducts him/herself honestly and appropriately at all times
- Has an eye for details

Effective written communication

- Candidate has no difficulty communicating in writing, communication is very clear and understandable
- Vocabulary use is appropriate
- Information was researched and information is accurate
- Information is informative and complete
- Sentences are clear and concise and easily understood
- Ideas are developed logically and presented in a reasonable sequence

Effective oral communication

- Candidate has no difficulty communicating orally, communication is very clear and understandable
- Vocabulary use is appropriate
- Information was researched and prepared
- Sentences are clear and concise and easily understood
- Ideas are developed logically and presented in a reasonable sequence
- Used appropriate volume, speed, and fluency
- Grammatically correct, or very little error

Judgement

- Recognizes relevant information and considers all factors
- Ability to assess situations
- Identifies and evaluates options
- Identifies the pros and cons of various options
- Forms an appropriate and relevant decision
- Foresees the impact of one's decision of others or organizations
- Seeks advise when appropriate
- Makes decisions and pursues courses of action
- Applies policies, principles, processes to given situations.
- Demonstrates foresight in preventing future problems
- Demonstrates a concern for efficiency, effectiveness and concreteness
- Bases decisions on objective information and logical argument (non-bias)
- Other acceptable answers

Leadership

- Influences the opinions, attitudes and/or behaviours of others in order to direct everyone toward a common goal
- Evaluates situations, gives and receives appropriate comments, and follows up
- Encourages others to excel
- Promotes and facilitates the achievement of objectives
- Creates a sense of trust and respect
- Has consideration of others' needs
- Delegates tasks and authority to complete
- Takes responsibility for the results of the team
- Other acceptable answers

Problem-solving skills

- Deals effectively with a situation through reasoning, discussion and action
- Analyzes and synthesizes information, identifies options and exercises judgment in order to determine the best solution; adapts to the situation
- Provides a solution to challenges or finds ways of working around them
- Makes recommendations
- Anticipates problems and takes preventive measures

Respect

- Respects the spirit of the law in applying Acts, regulations, procedures and policies
- Demonstrates equity, courtesy and consideration for others in relationships with them
- Takes into account different values and cultural backgrounds by demonstrating openness to the ideas of others
- Recognizes the abilities of others by asking their opinion, regardless of their level and status, to facilitate the achievement of the end result
- Recognizes the needs of others, particularly the need to balance personal and professional life
- Recognizes and accepts rules and guidelines, as well as departmental standards and limits
- Performs work in compliance with the spirit of the law
- Respects both official languages
- Considers the use of time by others and takes into account the pressures on them and their commitments
- Demonstrates a positive and constructive attitude toward the organization
- Allows differences of opinion

Teamwork

- Works with others toward a common goal
- Encourages positivity
- Builds team spirit
- Establishes trust and co-operation
- Keeps other team members informed of planned and ongoing activities
- Encourages innovation and new ideas
- Gives priority to the interests of the team
- Listens and takes into account other people's points of view and opinions
- Participates in group decision-making
- Other acceptable answers

Working under pressure

- Remains calm and maintains performance level in stressful situations
- Works quickly and effectively
- Remains calm, cool and collected
- Keeps his or her concentration
- Is able to listen, even in stressful situations
- Remains respectful and polite in difficult communication situations
- Analyzes the situation calmly even when under stress
- Does not make hasty decisions
- Keeps the objectives and priorities in mind, even under pressure
- Plans his or her activities according to time constraints and unexpected situations
- Remains effective despite constraints
- Is able to structure his or her arguments and explanations in stressful situations or in the face of opposition

Preparation Tips

Get a Respectable/Business Email

As previously stated, all communication during the selection process occurs via email. Therefore, it is recommended that you have a respectable email address (preferably one that includes First and/or Last name). We recommend creating a separate email address that you can use when applying to schools or for other jobs in the future.

This is suggested because:

- ✓ It helps avoid important e-mails getting lost in your inbox
 - If you subscribe to a lot of online shopping, gaming or other perks via email, there is a chance of important emails being lost.
 - Missing an email during the selection process would be devastating as you could miss out on opportunities, deadlines or other information (which could potentially result in your application being removed from the process).
- ✓ Having a professional/respectable email address provides a good impression to the employer.
 - You should avoid having emails that include your nickname, pet's name etc.
- ✓ A separate email address for business/educational purposes allows you to keep important information in one place.
- ✓ It can make the selection process move smoother
- ✓ CCGC receives a high volume of applications and emails throughout the process. Therefore, it can make it difficult and time consuming to answer questions when we cannot easily identify the candidate.

If you do not wish to have a business/separate email, at a minimum you should always include your First and/or Last name in the emails that you send. This will help the admissions team when responding to inquiries via email because they will be able to easily locate your profile to better understand the situation.

Print & Highlight Emails

- ✓ We recommend you print and highlight emails and any other important information you may receive throughout the selection process (i.e., security and medical information, Payroll forms, admissions deadlines etc.) and create an application folder.
 - This helps keep everything organized when it comes to submitting information to the college.
 - It can also help you stay 'on top' of deadlines, appointments/assessments etc.

Written Exam Tips

- ✓ Carefully read **all** instructions that are provided for the exam.
- ✓ **Do not** ignore asset qualification questions.
- ✓ Please note that the exam is pre-scheduled and sent via Email. Further instruction and information will be provided at a later date.
- ✓ Do the exam **on your own**.
- ✓ Make sure you can answer any question with a concrete example for each competency (refer to 'competency definitions').
- ✓ Practice and review sample questions

The officer training program is an intense 4 years and we want to make sure we are preparing you for success instead of setting you up for failure.

The following sample questions below have been provided to help you prepare for both the written exam and potentially your interview. However, it would be in your best interest to go online and look for additional sample questions that pertain to the relevant competencies (as listed on the Job Poster).

Sample Questions:

Leadership:

- What are two characteristics you believe every leader should possess? Why do you consider them to be important?
- Give an example of a time you played a leadership role in an event, activity, department or work unit, or a project. Describe the actions you took to lead.

Adaptability:

- What aspects of your current lifestyle will you need to change in order to adapt to the new lifestyle of 'Officer Cadet'?
 - What skills or behaviours will you use to help make this adjustment?

Judgement:

- What actions would you take to manage and resolve a conflict issue with another cadet?
 - What factors would you consider before taking these actions?

Interview Tips

- ✓ Speak clearly, at a good speed, use proper grammar and do not be afraid to take a few seconds to think before or during the responses.
- ✓ You will be provided with the questions in advance, use this time wisely and try to create examples that best represent the essential **and** non-essential qualifications.
- ✓ It is helpful to break down the question to think about the information that you want to include.
- ✓ Always remember the job for which you are applying.
- ✓ Drawing on personal experiences to use as examples is highly recommended – remember to relate them to the competency in question. (For example, if providing an example for teamwork using a sports team experience, you want to make sure that it displays how your teamwork capabilities will relate to the Officer Training Program).
- ✓ Take your time, this is your opportunity to sell yourself to the organization and show them that you have the essential qualifications.
- ✓ Use this time to explain why you believe you are the perfect candidate for the program.
- ✓ During the preparation time that will be provided, you may make notes for reference during the interview. It is important that you don't read from them directly because it will prompt you to speak fast. This could cause the committee to miss important information which could result poorly for you.
- ✓ Be prepared to answer both **behavioural** and **situational** based interview questions (*these are explained on the following pages*)

If you are participating in a face to face interview, you should consider the following tips in addition to those mentioned above:

- ✓ Bring a copy of your resume/CV to the interview for panel members
- ✓ Greet panel members - introduce yourself
- ✓ Make good eye contact
- ✓ Have confidence
- ✓ Dress appropriately
- ✓ Be prepared and **on time**
 - This helps to create a good first impression

Remember! Asset qualifications that are included cannot 'fail you' but they may be used as a deciding factor when choosing applicants.

Behavioural Based Interview Questions

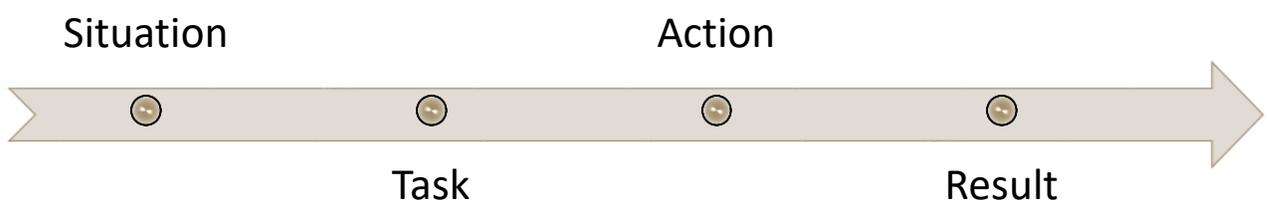
- ✓ Behavioural based questions focus on the person’s past behaviours and are used by the evaluation committee to check your behavioral skills.
- ✓ Typical statements would include “**Tell me about a time when you.....**” or “**Give me an example of when you.....**”.
- ✓ To prepare for this type of question, think of examples when you displayed the behavior the employer is looking for.
- ✓ Behavioural questions are all about the specific actions you took in a particular situation or event.
- ✓ Use **I** statements and not **we** statements because the evaluation committee is primarily concerned with **your** personal experience.
- ✓ Your answers should include **how** you behaved, **what** you specifically did, **why** you did it, **your reasoning** and the **outcome**. Remember to be as specific as possible.

It is a good idea to look up examples of these types of questions for practice, prior to your interview.



The **STAR** acronym can be used to assist you with **behavioural** types of questions. Below is a diagram to help you form answers when handling behavioural questions.

| | | |
|----------|------------------|--|
| S | Situation | Describe the situation. |
| T | Task | Describe the task, challenges and expectations of the situation. |
| A | Action | Elaborate on the action taken to complete the task. What did you do & how? |
| R | Result | Provide the result of your actions and any impact it had on the situation. |



Situational Based Interview Questions

The following tips can be used as a guide for answering situational based interview questions:

- ✓ Situational based questions focus on hypothetical situations and are used by the evaluation committee to check your ability to problem solve, handle difficult situations and deal with other people.
- ✓ Typical statements include “**How would you respond to...?**” or “**What would you do...?**” or “**How would you react to...?**”
- ✓ When answering these types of questions you should emphasize **how** you would do it and **why** you would do it..
- ✓ Make sure you understand the question being asked. If you need clarification or the question repeated , don't be afraid to ASK!
- ✓ Don't just tell them what you *think* they want to hear
- ✓ Avoid elaborating on points that are irrelevant to the question.
- ✓ Be as clear and specific as possible.

Again, It is a good idea to look up examples for practice, prior to your interview.

The best way to prepare is to think of concrete examples of how you handled similar situations.



Questions? Look
Here!

<https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/college/index-eng.html>