



Self-Advocacy Toolkit

CAREER RESOURCES
FOR LEARNERS WITH
DISABILITIES
Humber Advising &
Career Services

HOW TO WRITE A WORKPLACE PREFERENCE STATEMENT

This tool helps you communicate the conditions that help you **do your best work**. Use the formula, example, and template to organize your ideas and clarify your needs.

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Step 1. Follow this FORMULA.

Each part helps you explain what you prefer and why it matters:

- **I work best when** [specific condition or support]
Name the condition, tool, or setup that helps you.
- **because it helps me** [reason or outcome].
Explain how it improves focus, comfort, accuracy, or productivity.

Tip: For quick recognition and practice, highlight these stems every time:

I work best when / because it helps me

Step 2. Review this EXAMPLE of the Formula.

- **I work best when** I have a quiet workspace
- **because it helps me** focus and complete tasks efficiently.

Step 3. Use this TEMPLATE to create your workplace preference statement.

- I work best when _____
- because it helps me _____.

Step 4. Review the examples provided for ideas.

Four examples have been provided in each of the following categories:

- Summer Jobs
- WIL Placements
- First Jobs

These examples include a **wide variety of occupations and skills**, so you can choose wording that fits your experiences and goals.

Step 5. Write your workplace preference statement.

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EXAMPLES – Workplace Preference Statements

Each example follows the same pattern:
I work best when → because it helps me

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Summer Jobs

Physical Environment • Quiet Workspace

I work best when my workspace is quiet
because it helps me concentrate and avoid sensory overload.

Work Structure • Clear Task Explanations

I work best when tasks are explained clearly
because it helps me understand expectations and perform confidently.

Scheduling • Consistent Schedule

I work best when my schedule is consistent
because it helps me manage my energy and avoid stress.

Communication • Written Instructions

I work best when I have written instructions
because it helps me stay organized and complete tasks accurately.

WIL Placements

Physical Environment • Adjustable Lighting

I work best when the lighting in my workspace can be adjusted
because it helps me reduce eye strain and stay focused during long tasks.

Work Structure • Clear Deadlines

I work best when project deadlines are clearly communicated in advance
because it helps me plan my workload and avoid last-minute stress.

Scheduling • Remote Work Options

I work best when I can work remotely part of the week
because it helps me manage fatigue and maintain productivity.

Communication • Visual Aids in Meetings

I work best when meetings include visual aids like slides or diagrams
because it helps me process information more effectively.

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First Jobs

Physical Environment • Ergonomic Seating

I work best when my workspace includes an ergonomic chair because it helps me maintain good posture and avoid discomfort.

Work Structure • Task Prioritization

I work best when tasks are prioritized clearly because it helps me focus on what's most important and manage time well.

Scheduling • Predictable Break Times

I work best when break times are consistent and predictable because it helps me recharge and keep steady productivity.

Communication • Open-Door Policy

I work best when supervisors are approachable for quick questions because it helps me clarify doubts early and avoid mistakes.

Optional Quick Checklist: 10 Workplace Categories

(Use this to brainstorm additional preferences you may want to name.)

Physical Environment, Work Structure, Scheduling, Communication, Supervision & Feedback, Collaboration, Culture & Values, Transportation, Technology & Tools, Learning & Growth

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HOW TO WRITE A WORKPLACE CONSTRAINT STATEMENT

This tool helps you explain a **barrier**, its **impact**, and the **solution** or preference that enables your success.

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Step 1. Follow this FORMULA.

Each part keeps your message clear and action-oriented:

- **Constraint:** Describe the barrier or limitation.
- **Impact:** Explain how it affects your work.
- **Preference / Solution:** State what would help you succeed.

Tip: Highlight the stems to keep the structure visible:

Constraint: / **Impact:** / **Preference (or Solution):**

Step 2. Review this EXAMPLE of the Formula.

- **Constraint:** Unclear instructions leave me unsure about expectations
- **Impact:** which increases mistakes and delays
- **Preference / Solution:** so, I work best when tasks include clear, written guidelines.

Step 3. Use this TEMPLATE to create your workplace constraint statement.

- **Constraint:** _____
- **Impact:** _____
- **Preference / Solution:** _____.

Step 4. Review the examples provided for ideas.

Four examples have been provided in each of the following categories:

- Summer Jobs
- WIL Placements
- First Jobs

These examples cover **diverse roles and skills** so you can adapt them to your context.

Step 5. Write your workplace constraint statement.

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EXAMPLES – Workplace Constraint Statements

Each example follows the same pattern:

Constraint → Impact → Preference / Solution

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Summer Jobs

Physical Environment

Constraint: Bright overhead lighting causes eye strain

Impact: which makes it hard to stay focused during long tasks

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when the lighting in my workspace can be adjusted.

Work Structure

Constraint: Unclear deadlines make it hard to plan my workload

Impact: which increases stress and last-minute errors

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when project deadlines are clearly communicated in advance.

Scheduling

Constraint: A rigid on site schedule increases fatigue

Impact: which reduces my productivity and energy

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when I can work remotely part of the week.

Communication

Constraint: Verbal only instructions are hard for me to process

Impact: which leads to missed details and mistakes

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when meetings include visual aids or written follow ups.

WIL Placements

Physical Environment

Constraint: Open office noise makes it hard to concentrate on learning tasks

Impact: which reduces my ability to absorb new information

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when I can use a quiet space or noise-reducing options.

Work Structure

Constraint: Constantly shifting priorities make it hard to stay organized

Impact: which leads to confusion and missed deadlines

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when tasks are clearly prioritized and documented.

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Scheduling

Constraint: Back-to-back meetings leave little time for assignments

Impact: which delays my progress and increases stress

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when my schedule includes protected work blocks.

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Communication

Constraint: Fast paced verbal discussions make it easy to miss key details

Impact: which results in mistakes and rework

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when summaries or action-items are provided in writing.

First Jobs

Physical Environment

Constraint: Frequent temperature fluctuations cause discomfort

Impact: which distracts me and reduces sustained focus

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when the workspace has stable temperature or access to a controllable area.

Work Structure

Constraint: Multiple concurrent projects without clear ownership create confusion

Impact: which leads to duplicated effort and missed handoffs

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when project owners and responsibilities are documented.

Scheduling

Constraint: Unpredictable meeting times disrupt deep work sessions

Impact: which makes it hard to complete complex tasks on time

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when meetings are batched and deep work blocks are protected.

Communication

Constraint: Reliance on verbal updates during stand-ups makes details hard to retain

Impact: which increases the risk of misalignment and rework

Preference / Solution: so, I work best when action-items are captured in writing after each meeting.

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Optional Quick Checklist: 10 Workplace Categories

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