

Career Readiness Competencies

Career Readiness Competencies (as identified by the National Association of Colleges & Employers) are the 7 primary skills/abilities that employers expect to find in new college graduates. Look for ways to develop these competencies in the classroom and through volunteer work, internships, part-time jobs, and extra-curricular activities. Then be sure to provide evidence of them on your resume and in your job interviews.

Communication – This is perhaps the most critical competency, as most employers list it as the number 1 skill they seek in job candidates. Communication skills include, but are not limited to: public speaking, writing, interpersonal communication, good grammar/word choice, customer service, meeting facilitation, and active listening. More advanced skills include conflict management and the ability to speak another language.

Professionalism – This is also a highly desired competency, and is the ability to act appropriately and effectively in a workplace. Professionalism is a multi-faceted concept that includes many behaviors. Some of the more common ones include: remaining calm in stressful situations, following up on the status of projects/problems, being prepared for and attentive at meetings, avoiding gossip and inuendo, being polite to everyone at all times, and taking responsibility for and correcting one's mistakes. Professionalism often increases with experience and by working in a variety of environments.

Critical Thinking – This skill is strongly related to problem-solving and can include abilities such as: prioritization, evaluating sources of information, identifying or recognizing biases, anticipating potential problems, predicting consequences and outcomes, and interpreting and analyzing data.

Teamwork – Being on a team doesn't guarantee that you are a good team player. However, you might have a good sense of teamwork if you are able to: encourage others, hold others accountable without being overly critical, look for solutions rather than who to blame, focus on the group's goals before your personal goals, think about how your actions impact others, and identify positive traits in your co-workers (especially those you don't like).

Technology – There is so much technology that no one is expected to know it all. Begin by becoming comfortable with all Microsoft Office applications and then move on from there. Look for online tutorials and teach yourself technology skills a little bit at a time. Working with any computer system (even Blackboard and Google Classroom) makes it easier to learn the next one. The willingness to learn new technology is essential to career success.

Career & Self Development – Employers look for people who are not satisfied with their personal status quo. If you improve yourself, then your employer will have a better, more versatile employee. People who are serious about their career tend to volunteer for extra projects, seek out training opportunities, and willingly take on new duties. These actions will help you improve performance and prepare for advancement.

Leadership – While you might not be required to take on a leadership role early in your career, employers still look for leadership *potential*. If you have directly supervised others in a work or volunteer setting, you probably possess this competency at some level. The leadership skill set often includes: motivating and persuading others, problem-solving, planning and delegating work, guiding conversations toward positive or productive discussion, training or mentoring others, offering thoughtful feedback/criticism, and serving as a role model.

YSU: Fugett, February 2025

