

Network to Work Meeting

April 2023

RESOURCE DOCUMENT – *EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS*

What are Employability Skills?

When making hiring decisions, employers look at more than an applicant’s job specific qualifications, education and experience. To be successful in a workplace role and to fit into any work environment – in other words, to be employable - candidates need to offer an employer a variety of skills. This often means that the specialized, technical skills ('hard skills') associated with different jobs may be less important than the 'soft skills' – known as employability skills - that one can transfer between different jobs and different employment fields. They are the core skills or traits needed in almost every job.

As you consider the jobs and career fields that interest you, look closely at the employability skills listed in job descriptions and postings. For example, they may say “Works well with others”, “reliable”, “strong interpersonal skills”, or “Excellent verbal and written communication”. These are all examples of employability skills.

No one excels in all employability skills. Where do you excel? Write that down. Think about the employability skills you want to develop. Most importantly, think about and write down examples of ways you have used your best employability skills to make a positive difference in your work.

As you will see in the next section and in the handout (Employability Skills Graphic), employability skills are great in number and can be categorized in many ways. Here is a list of some of the most obvious and common employability skills:

- good communication
- leadership
- following instructions
- patience
- emotional control
- problem solving
- motivation and initiative
- reliability/dependability
- team work
- adaptability
- resilience
- planning and organizing

Examples of Employability Skills

Here are some of the employability skills that employers look for.

1. The ability to **use good communication skills**, such as:
 - Communicating effectively verbally and in writing
 - Listening actively
 - Understanding written material
 - Observing carefully

2. The ability to **have effective relationships because of good interpersonal skills**, such as:
 - Demonstrating teamwork
 - Working well with others
 - Responsiveness to customer needs
 - Showing leadership
 - Resolving conflict
 - Respecting individual differences

3. The ability to **have effective relationships because of well-developed personal qualities**, such as:
 - Showing responsibility and self-discipline
 - Adapting and being flexible
 - Working independently
 - Willing to learn
 - Showing integrity
 - Showing professionalism
 - Taking initiative
 - Displaying positive attitude and sense of self-worth
 - Taking responsibility for professional growth

4. The ability to **apply critical thinking skills**, such as:
 - Thinking critically or creatively
 - Making sound decisions
 - Solving problems
 - Reasoning
 - Planning and organizing

Reliability

A crucial employability skill that employers look for is reliability. When you are reliable, it means your employer can trust you and count on you to meet expectations.

A reliable employee consistently shows up on time, AND completes tasks on time. They get the job done. Their work is of good quality with few mistakes. They respond to messages and emails promptly, and they only make promises they can keep. They also seek clarification on tasks, projects, company policies, etc. so that they are able to meet expectations.

There are a number of behaviors you can practice to build up a reliability skill set:

1. Regularly meet or exceed expectations for your job performance.
2. Create a schedule for your daily tasks and stick to the schedule
3. Acknowledge when you make a mistake
4. Consciously try to avoid future mistakes
5. Get clarification on company policies. For example, what does being “on time” mean? Where can one take personal calls?
6. Be proactive if you are going to be late or absent:
 - Give as much advance notice as possible
 - Be honest about what is happening
 - Know who to contact about your absence (host agency supervisor AND CMPA)
 - Have their phone numbers handy in your phone or on paper
 - Discuss with your supervisor how you will make up lost work.
7. Understand what is expected, and don't make a commitment you can't keep.
 - What's the timeline?
 - Who to involve?
 - What should the finished project look like?
 - What is the timeline / due date?

Sources:

“Job Jumpstart”, Australian Government; <https://www.jobjumpstart.gov.au/article/what-are-employability-skills>

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