

What Qualifications Do Employers Seek?

According to a survey conducted by Michigan State's Collegiate Employment Research Institute, employers seek the following qualifications in recent college graduates:

- **Career-related work experiences** in their field of study such as cooperative education assignments, part-time jobs, summer employment, practicums, and internships. College students must learn by doing and being involved in hands-on, practical experiences. Other examples included case studies, simulations, and “real-world” work orientations.
- **Abundant computer work** in applications for basic computer literacy. Automation and increased utilization of computer technologies are required for almost every job within business, education, and government agencies today.
- **More problem-solving and less memorization of coursework.** For achieving results in future management and leadership environments, college students must be challenged and tested with “real life” situations that require clear critical thinking.
- **More emphasis on the people aspects** of the work situation. Examples included team-based assignments, group projects, and associated team evaluations. Employers wanted colleges and universities to create more project and team environments so students could learn project management skills and strengthen their team-player competencies.
- **An increased stress on communication skills** so college students would graduate with better writing, research, public speaking, conversation, listening, presentation, conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills.
- **Well-developed logic and reasoning skills.** Other related competencies included good judgement and decision-making skills; technical expertise; exposure to high-tech, state-of-the-art equipment; independent goal setting; and accomplishing tasks on time.
- **Classes outside their academic field of study** to broaden their perspective, nourish their quest for enlightenment, and broaden their knowledge base. Also, employers advised a second language and becoming conversational in it.
- **Leadership experiences**, membership in extra-curricular activities, and development of social skills.
- **Training on resume preparation, interviewing skills, career planning,** job search skills, and other job campaigning topics. A compulsory course in preparation for life after college was prudent, according to employers. Course work in character-building, professionalism, ethics, community service, and professional protocol/etiquette was also encouraged.

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