

Skills for Success

Completing the basic, minimal requirements for a college degree will not automatically guarantee you a job in today's market. In survey after survey, employers mention other factors as being important to the hiring process: knowledge in your field, involvement in campus and community activities, and practical work experience. In addition, you should have a basic set of skills that you can market to prospective employers.

Webster's dictionary defines *skill* as a "learned power of doing something competently" or "a developed aptitude or ability." Many college graduates vying for the same positions will also have these basic skills. Your job is to make sure that you can give strong evidence of your skills and can discuss them convincingly during an interview.

The skills listed below are "transferrable" meaning they are portable from one job to the next. They will serve you well no matter what position or career field you seek. Review the list of skills; then read the definition and examples provided for each skill. Use the "Personal Skills Assessment" form that follows to make an assessment of your skills.

Skill	Definition	Examples
Career Management	Understanding values, interests, skills, personality characteristics, and motivations and how they relate to career options and choices; creating an action plan to reach career goals; developing job search skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed an interest inventory in Counseling Services Attended a resume writing workshop offered by Career Services
Computer	Knowing and being able to use the programs essential for your occupation or career field; using technology to locate and communicate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed an Access database for a campus office Used the Internet to obtain information for a class project Developed a chart using Microsoft Excel
Conflict Resolution/Mediation	Ability to understand other points of view, discuss difficult issues openly, and negotiate an acceptable agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromised with a roommate and developed a weekly study schedule
Consensus Building	Ability to facilitate group decision-making through open communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led a committee (within a student organization) whose charge was to determine a site for a field visit
Critical Thinking	Examining views, issues, or information; recognizing biases, personal values, and attitudes, facts vs. opinions, and illogical thinking; being able to support a view with evidence; and deciding which view is most reasonable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Served as a student member of the University Conduct Board Participated in local and regional debates as a member of the Debate Team

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Delegation	Ability to plan tasks, assign responsibilities, and follow up to ensure completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served as the chair of a committee organizing a special event
Financial Management	Ability to keep accurate and complete financial records and estimate income and expenses to develop and manage a budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served as treasurer for a student organization • Developed a personal budget
Global Perspectives	Being aware of and respecting cultural differences; developing a global perspective; learning about and appreciating different cultures; maintaining an openness to new ideas and working cooperatively with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in a residence hall discussion about holiday traditions of different cultures and religions • Attended an International Programs event • Participated in a Building Bridges discussion in class
Goal Setting	Ability to develop a goal and create an action plan to reach it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a plan with my advisor to improve my QPA next semester
Group Interaction	Ability to work cooperatively with people to reach a common goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in a Super Saturday event sponsored by the Community Service Learning office • Participated in a Greek organization's fund raising event to raise money for a local charity
Interpersonal/Social Interaction	Ability to get along with others, listen intently and objectively, express feelings appropriately, and understand the feelings of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended a social program in the residence hall • Participated in a residence hall or class discussion • Served as an Orientation Leader
Leadership	Understanding your own leadership style as well as the styles of others; identifying the achievements, motivations, and abilities of individuals and groups; guiding a group toward a common goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the Leadership Development Series • Served as a captain of an athletic team • Served as an officer in a student organization
Networking	Making contact or connecting with many different individuals through friends, family, alumni, classmates, neighbors, employers, professors, and professional organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted an informational interview with an individual whose career interested me • Served as the public relations chair for a student organization • Attend a meeting of a regional professional organization

Skill	Definition	Examples
Oral Communication/ Presentation	Ability to present an idea or a topic to an individual or a group; speaking effectively to inform or persuade; explaining concepts accurately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed SCT 214, Business and Professional Speaking • Served as an emcee for a residence hall program • Presented a workshop for a regional student conference • Served as a campus tour guide
Organization/Planning	Ability to plan and prioritize tasks associated with a project, to develop a timeline or schedule for completed the tasks, and to meet a deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized a meeting or program • Developed a personal work and study schedule
Parliamentary Procedure/ Meeting Management	Understanding the rules or order and how groups conduct business; using parliamentary procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended a workshop on meeting management • Served as a member of Student Senate • Served as president of a student organization
Problem Solving/Decision-Making	Ability to identify and formulate a problem/decision, gather information, propose and evaluate potential solutions, decide on the best solution through reasoning, and rationally defend a conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a marketing plan for a student organization whose membership had decreased
Research	Gathering information from a variety of sources (e.g., print, multi-media, Internet, and people) to investigate an issue or topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed an Internet search to obtain information for a class project • Used resources in the Carlson Library reference room for a class paper
Stress Management	Managing stress in healthy ways through recreation, exercise, relaxation, and time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended a stress management program • Developed an exercise plan to reduce stress
Teamwork	Being accountable as a member of a team; ability to organize and enact changes required to enhance group effectiveness and promote development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the intramurals program • Participated on an athletic team • Participated in a group project for class

Skill	Definition	Examples
Time Management	Judging how much time it takes to complete a task and managing time effectively and productively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in a time management workshop • Scheduled a personal time management plan • Developed a student assistant work schedule for the Recreation Center
Written Communication	Ability to create grammatically correct, concise, and clear written materials, and to critique, edit, and proofread these materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed ENG 307, Business Writing • Served as secretary for a student organization • Wrote an application letter to an employer and reviewed it with a Career Services staff member • Developed a training manual