

What is Employability?

Employability refers to your ability to **gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment** if required.

In simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work.

*“Employability is having a **set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes** that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful. Dacre Pool & Sewell 2007*

Your employability depends on:

- Your **Knowledge** (what you know)
- Your **Skills** (what you do with what you know)
- Your **Attitudes** (how you approach things)

The way you use your knowledge and skills and present them to employers, and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and work sector **within which you seek work**).

Important things to know about employability for your career

Career ownership - only you are responsible for your career development and management (no one else can do it for you)

Continuous (life-long) learning and development of skills are expected by employers and clients

Security lies in employability (that is, your ability to obtain and maintain employment) rather than in employment (that is, a specific job)

Source: Schreuder & Theron. 1997. *Careers: An organisational Perspective*.

Employers want graduates with relevant subject skills, knowledge and understanding, but in addition to this are looking for well-rounded individuals who have a set of personal and

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general life skills that equip them to adapt well, learn new and specific skills of the job and participate and contribute in a valuable way in their organisation.

You are constantly developing useful and marketable skills through managing college **work**, assignments and projects, part time jobs, involvement in sports, Interests and extracurricular activities.

Top 12 Skills that make you Employable

Personal Development – “Getting the most from yourself and others”

All employers will want to know that you’re committed to your own self-development. There are many ways to demonstrate this. It might be that you’ve overcome a difficult obstacle or you could have gone out of your way to learn a new skill. What is important is that you have pushed yourself.

Communication – “Listening actively as well making yourself heard”

Employers look for people who know how to get their point across clearly, articulately and professionally. Just as importantly, you should be a good listener – you’ll take other people’s opinions on board and actively seek out feedback. You’ll also be comfortable in talking to groups.

Creativity and Innovation – “Seeing newer and better ways forward”

Successful organisations are fueled by good ideas. Employers will want to know that you can come up with interesting suggestions and that you’re always looking for better ways of doing things. Good ideas come in all sorts of shapes and sizes – and the best ideas aren’t necessarily the biggest

Teamwork – “Supporting other people to achieve success”

The ability to get along with others and to lead a team to success is vital to any organisation. This means that you need to be able to demonstrate that you’re a natural team player and that you can adapt your style to accommodate others if you need to.

Professionalism – “Taking pride in everything you do”

Employers will expect you to be committed to delivering the best standards, adopting the right procedures and maintaining the highest levels of confidentiality. This means staying

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motivated and for all talks and upholding complete professionalism, even in conflicts or difficult conversations.

Organisational skills – “Juggling priorities and preparing for the unexpected”

In most jobs, you’ll be expected to take responsibility for your own workload. Employers will want to know how you manage your course work and used your initiative to deal with the unexpected.

Flexibility – “Being adaptable”

As an employee, it is vital that you keep pace with a constantly evolving workplace. You’ll need to show that you respond to change positively and can adapt quickly while still working productively to a high standard.

Commercial awareness – “Knowing how to add value”

Whatever sector you want to work in, it’s important that you understand how it operates and the different issues that affect it. Look also at the skills sought by employers in your sector and think about how you will show that you can apply them to add value to their organisation.

Problem solving/analysing – “Looking at issues from a different angle”

In the world of work, things don’t always go according to plan. That is why employers need to know that you can analyse information, identify any potential issues and come up with effective solutions.

Initiative – “Thinking ahead and on your feet”

In any job, you’ll need to be able to take the initiative. Although it’s important that you follow the right rules and regulations, you should also be confident when it comes to suggesting new or different ways of doing things, or anticipating problems or issues before they arise.

Ability to use new technologies

Technology is involved in almost every job. It is the 21st century way of doing and working: whether this involves keeping records of information, communicating with others, maintaining accounts or understanding a manufacturing system. Almost every job involves using technology some sort. It is vital to be comfortable with it.

Commercial Awareness

Commercial awareness is the ability to understand what makes a business or organisation successful, through either buying or selling products or supplying services to a market.

Does the organisation produce, sell, or buy products? Or is it in the services or ideas business?

Who are its customers? Are they other businesses, or 'ordinary people'?

What's going on in the market sector? Are there legal or regulatory changes on the way, or does the economic situation have a larger-than-usual impact?

Having commercial awareness is also as important for the Public Sector.

Why not assess the Employability Skills you currently have, you may be pleasantly surprised to find out what you have to offer employers.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/skillstest.html>

Find out more:

<http://myfuture.edu.au/getting-started/what-is-a-career/what-are-employability-skills>

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/>