Technical & Essential Employability Competencies Introduction

The Technical and Employability Competencies serve as quality indicators of an individual's readiness to enter an industry or to pursue further education. Competency statements apply to current industry needs, contain both employability skills and technical skills, and leave opportunity for specialized training and career advancement.

While competencies are defined differently depending on the desired outcome and setting, the U.S. Department of Labor (U.S. DOL) defines a competency as "a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and abilities that affects a major part of one's job that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards and can be improved through training development and experience." This description ensures that competency statements are defined as a combination of learned content and the application of skills and abilities that can be demonstrated and evaluated.

For each CCPE sector area, competencies are organized into two broad categories: essential employability competencies, including entrepreneurial competencies, and technical competencies. Essential employability competencies, often connected to employability skills or "soft" skills, are workplace dispositions and attitudes connected to often-performed work tasks and behaviors. Applicable across many industries, employability competencies include the ability to connect industry knowledge to one's personal efficacy in the workplace. The ten employability competencies included in this report apply across all sectors. A core element of essential employability competencies also include entrepreneurial skill sets focused on growth mindset and the ability to innovate in the workplace for both personal and professional pursuits. Technical competencies relate to specific industry knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply that learning in a workplace environment. Taken together, the universal employability competencies and sector-specific technical competencies will inform how schools design pathways courses and professional learning experiences.

College and Career Pathway Endorsements Indicate:

- Completion of individualized learning plan

- Career-focused instructional sequence: two years of coursework or equivalent competencies

- Professional learning including career exploration activities, 60 hours of career development experiences, such as internships, two team-based challenges

- Demonstration of readiness in reading and math for postsecondary education pathways courses

How the competencies were developed

All industry areas drafted competency statements through the following phased process:

Phase 1: Analysis of Historical and Real-Time Labor Market Information

Phase 1 provided an analysis of historical and real-time labor-market information to identify or verify high-growth, high-demand, high-wage industries in the region. Based on this analysis, Jobs From the Future conducted and synthesized research, including the following:

- Review and analysis of existing national resources, e.g.; Department of Labor, O*Net, and national credentialing agencies

- Industry-specific implications regarding the future of work

Phase 2: Analysis of National Resources and Local Talent Pipeline Demands

To ensure competencies are aligned with the demand of the local labor market, Phase 2 of the competency mapping process involved the following:

- Interviews with local Human Resources and Talent Acquisition professionals in the industry

- Review and analysis of state and/or regional entry level job descriptions along with trends and implications

Phase 3: Establish Sector-Specific Steering Committee for Iterative Review

In Phase 3, sector-specific steering committees reviewed the national and local research and coalesced on a list of top ten essential employability and sector-wide technical competencies. These committees convened and developed competency statements in a series of in-person and virtual meetings. Committees included local industry experts with the following perspectives: Human Resources and Talent Acquisitions, Workforce Development and Training, Higher Education, Secondary Education and Career and Technical Education.

Phase 4: Public Comment Period

Prior to finalization and dissemination, broad-based industry feedback was collected and incorporated to encourage wider adoption for use in educational and industry-based settings. Public comment occurred through a digital survey. The survey results were then collected, analyzed and incorporated.

Timeline

In consultation with state agencies and key industry experts including hiring professionals, education and training professionals, and industry associations, industry-based steering committees were formed to identify and propose technical and professional competencies in six sectors. The first iteration of this document included four industry areas selected due to their alignment with state economic development priorities:

- Health Sciences and Technology (HST)

- Information Technology (IT)

- Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades (METT)

- Finance and Business Services (FBS)

Competency mapping was completed for an additional two industry areas from June 2018 to March 2019. These areas are:

- Arts and Communication (A&C)

- Human and Public Services (HPS) (specifically, the Education Pathways within HPS)

In 2021, technical competencies for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) were developed as part of the Perkins Model Programs of Study development process.

([Source](#))