

Career Competencies

As a UTRGV student, you have developed skills through curricular and co-curricular experiences to be successful in the job market. You are career-ready! However, you may be wondering: how do I express my skills and experience to an employer? Career readiness is a foundation for demonstrating the required Career Competencies that broadly prepare the college-educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.

What Are Career Competencies?

Critical Thinking

Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

Sample Behaviors

- Make decisions and solve problems using sound, inclusive reasoning and judgment
- Gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem
- Proactively anticipate needs and prioritize action steps
- Accurately summarize and interpret data with an awareness of personal biases that may impact outcomes
- Effectively communicate actions and rationale, recognizing the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of stakeholders
- Multi-task well in a fast-paced environment

Communication

Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with people inside and outside of your organization.

Sample Behaviors

- Understand the importance of and demonstrate verbal, written, and non-verbal/body language, abilities
- Employ active listening, persuasion, and influencing skills
- Communicate in a clear and organized manner so that others can effectively understand
- Frame communication with respect to diversity of learning styles, varied individual communication abilities, and cultural differences
- Ask appropriate questions for specific information from supervisors, specialists, and others
- Promptly inform relevant others when needing guidance with assigned tasks

Teamwork

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

Sample Behaviors

- Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand and ask appropriate questions without interrupting
- Effectively manage conflict, interact with and respect diverse personalities, and meet ambiguity with resilience
- Be accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables
- Employ personal strengths, knowledge, and talents to complement those of others
- Exercise the ability to compromise and be agile
- Collaborate with others to achieve common goals
- Build strong, positive working relationships with supervisor and team members/coworkers

Technology

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Sample Behaviors

- Navigate change and be open to learning new technologies
- Use technology to improve efficiency and productivity of their work
- Identify appropriate technology for completing specific tasks
- Manage technology to integrate information to support relevant, effective, and timely decision-making
- Quickly adapt to new or unfamiliar technologies
- Manipulate information, construct ideas, and use technology to achieve strategic goals

Leadership

Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.

Sample Behaviors

- Inspire, persuade, and motivate self and others under a shared vision.
- Seek out and leverage diverse resources and feedback from others to inform direction.
- Use innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods.
- Serve as a role model to others by approaching tasks with confidence and a positive attitude.
- Motivate and inspire others by encouraging them and by building mutual trust.
- Plan, initiate, manage, complete, and evaluate projects.

Professionalism

Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.

Sample Behaviors

- Act equitably with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization
- Maintain a positive personal brand in alignment with organization and personal career values
- Be present and prepared
- Demonstrate dependability (e.g., report consistently for work or meetings)
- Prioritize and complete tasks to accomplish organizational goals
- Consistently meet or exceed goals and expectations
- Have an attention to detail, resulting in few if any errors in their work
- Show a high level of dedication toward doing a good job

Career & Self-Development

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships.

Sample Behaviors

- Show an awareness of own strengths and areas for development
- Identify areas for continual growth while pursuing and applying feedback
- Develop plans and goals for one's future career
- Professionally advocate for oneself and others
- Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn
- Assume duties or positions that will help one progress professionally
- Establish, maintain, and/or leverage relationships with people who can help one professionally
- Seek and embrace development opportunities
- Voluntarily participate in further education, training, or other events to support one's career

Cultural Awareness & Global Fluency

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills necessary to engage effectively with individuals from various local and global cultures. Take actions against racism, actively challenging the systems, structures, and policies that perpetuate discriminatory practices.

Sample Behaviors

- Seek and incorporate feedback from a variety of cultural perspectives to make informed decisions that consider fairness.
- Proactively contribute to practices that foster openness and fair treatment, impacting both individual and systemic levels.
- Advocate for justice, fairness, and empowerment for historically marginalized communities.
- Pursue global interactions and experiences across cultures to broaden understanding and foster personal development.
- Remain open-minded to diverse ideas and innovative approaches.
- Identify and remove obstacles stemming from individual and systemic biases and injustices.
- Demonstrate adaptability by adjusting to varied environments.
- Address systems of advantage that restrict opportunities for members of historically marginalized communities.

Show You Are Career Ready

Being career-ready means that you have the skills and tools needed to launch or continue your career after graduation. The National Association of Colleges and Employers, an organization of employers and professionals from college and university career centers, developed a common list of high-demand skills and languages to help students demonstrate their career readiness to employers. Understanding these career competencies gives you the power to:

- **Have confidence in your strengths** by identifying the competencies you have and those you want to gain.
- **Enhance your interview skills** by providing a descriptive competency-based story of your experiences, background, and abilities.
- **Promote yourself** to professional contacts and recruiters by introducing yourself in a way that highlights the attributes, background, and strengths that make you stand out.
- **Know what to say and why you want to say it**
 - When applying for jobs and internships, it can be easy to lose focus and overlook valuable stories, experiences or projects. It is important to clearly articulate your strengths and uniqueness. Explore the eight competencies framework to learn how to promote your experiences in and out of the classroom.
 - If you know why you want to highlight a particular skill or project, it will help you know when to mention particular experiences. Tailor your strengths and areas for growth to each position or opportunity. It is also important to know that your process may be different than another person's. Lean into the many abilities you have honed and developed as a UTRGV student.
- **When talking about your competencies:**
 - Use "I" statements
 - Always circle back to you and your specific actions
 - Include the who, where, what, and why
 - Add specifics whenever possible; instead of "class", specify "English class"
 - Imagine someone asking "Tell me about a time when..."
 - Try the STAR (situation, task, action, result) method to structure your stories