



# Becoming Career Ready

A SNAPSHOT OF ESSENTIAL CAREER READINESS  
COMPETENCIES

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## EXPLORING CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)<sup>1</sup> has developed a list of 8 key career readiness competencies that individuals can use as guidelines to prepare for success in the world of work. A competency is the ability to do something successfully or efficiently. Being career ready means that you have these skills or core competencies and can apply them in real world work scenarios as you manage your career over time. Read below for a snapshot of each of these competencies and ways in which you can enhance and advance your development of each.



### Career & Self- Development

**Definition:** 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 within and without one's organization.

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Learn more about your interests, strengths, and areas for improvement with self-assessments.
- Ask current or former supervisors, coworkers, teachers, or peers for feedback on your strengths and areas for improvement.
- Learn about the knowledge or training relevant to your career goals.
- Sign up for online or in-person courses, seminars, or workshops to address specific skill gaps.
- Look for opportunities to practice new skills – such as choosing a different role during group work or taking on a stretch assignment.



### Communication

**Definition:** Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Practice active empathetic listening.
- Develop an understanding of nonverbal communication and the role these cues can help prevent miscommunication.
- Manage your emotions and express them appropriately.
- Consult with your team or manager and ask for feedback on your communication skills.
- Look for opportunities to practice new skills – such as doing research, writing a report, presenting, or even drafting meeting minutes.
- Develop a filter and be concise. Understand what is appropriate to share and how to share it.



### Critical Thinking

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

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of Colleges and Employers. What is Career Readiness? Retrieved from <https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Develop an action plan with specific steps to solve a problem.
- Brainstorm solutions to a problem before bringing it to a supervisor/professor.
- Activate your mind – read, do puzzles, write, etc.



### Equity & Inclusion

**Definition:** Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Become aware of your own identity and feel empowered to be authentic.
- Celebrate differences and be open to learning about cultures different from your own.
- Embrace difficult conversations and use them as teachable moments or learning opportunities.
- Attend an event that encourages you to step outside of your comfort zone.
- Engage in a conversation with people who have different perspectives than your own.
- Participate in an experience that broadens your horizons (i.e., study abroad, volunteering, community event, etc.).



### Leadership

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

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Take on a leadership role in a group or organization.
- Demonstrate initiative at your job/internship by taking on additional responsibilities.
- Motivate team members with a positive attitude and leverage their strengths when delegating work.



### Professionalism

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

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Use a planner or calendar to prioritize work/assignments and meet deadlines.
- Reflect on a recent challenge and identify areas of growth and improvement for the future.
- Review your social media through the eyes of a future employer and determine appropriateness.
- Take personal accountability for your work, words, and actions.
- Show integrity and advocate for ethical behavior.



### Teamwork

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

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Collaborate with others on a class project where responsibility is shared and not divided.
- Handle difficult conversations with respect.
- Consider others' perspectives before making a decision.



### Technology

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

#### ACTION STEPS TO ADVANCE & ENHANCE

- Use technology to complete a class project.
- Become familiar with Microsoft applications like Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Outlook.
- Use technology to help solve a problem.
- Stay current and dedicate time to reading about advances in technologies and new innovations; apply them to your work.

*For more information and to access additional resources to support your growth and development in the aforementioned competencies, refer to the **Becoming Career Ready** course and accompanying workbook.*

