Career readiness of college graduates is of critical importance in higher education, in the labor market, and in the public arena. Based on feedback from employers and extensive national research by professional groups such as the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE), seven areas of essential skills and competencies have been identified. Below each skill area are opportunities to explore and develop that particular skill or competency. These career readiness skills and competencies will increase your marketability for internships, jobs and graduate school.

**Critical Thinking/Problem Solving**

- Think analytically
- Be creative/inventive
- Organize & pay attention to details
- Plan strategically
- Obtain, interpret, & apply appropriate knowledge & data

- Participate in undergraduate research with a faculty member.
- Work as a lab assistant with computers, science or language.
- Organize a campus event, including volunteer staff, budget, publicity, etc.
- Take a topic you are passionate about and research the opposing view.
- Read an article in an academic area different from your own and develop implications for your area.
- Develop a decision tree for an upcoming purchase, researching all relevant information (brand, model, size, cost, etc.).
- Develop a three-year strategic plan for a student organization.
- Identify and gain an understanding of your interests, skills, values, motivators, personality, and how these relate and influence your career decision-making.
- Identify internship, job or grad school possibilities through research, experimental activities and networking.
- Analyze the marketable skills gained from your academic program and your co-curricular involvement.
- Activate your mind through reading, puzzles, gaming, writing, etc.

**Oral/Written Communications**

- Articulate thoughts & ideas
- Attend to grammar/spelling/syntax/editing
- Write clearly & effectively
- Listen to others & ask clarifying questions
- Speak to groups to inform or persuade

- Write stories, advertisements, press releases or newsletters for Student Media or a campus or community organization.
- Enroll in an academic class that is writing intensive, or includes presentations or speeches.
- Work in a campus office; i.e. at an information desk, or in an operations or program assistant position.
- Improve the way you listen to others; use empathy and self-control when diffusing disagreements.
- Refine your job search materials (resume, cover letter, interview preparation) with the Career Center staff.
- Act with a theater group, film or broadcast production.
- Do fundraising for charities or nonprofit events; volunteer to work on a political campaign.
- Help in a literacy or conversational English program.
- Proofread your writing by reading aloud or reading backwards- line by line- to help find errors.

**Teamwork/Collaboration**

- Work well with others
- Show tact & empathy
- Demonstrate flexibility/adaptability
- Enlist others for common goals
- Engage with diverse colleagues & others

- Lead a project team or committee in class, a student organization or job.
- Use an internship, study group, class or research project to help turn a group of people into a team with common goals.
- Help a new team develop through the stages of forming, storming, norming and performing.
- Join a musical group or act in a play.
- Participate on intramural team or sports club, coach sports team, become a summer camp counselor or recreational leader.
- Contribute as a valuable member of a team focusing on team goals more than personal goals.
- Collaborate with others on a project where responsibilities are shared and not divided.
### Leadership

**Develop & communicate shared vision**
- Organize, prioritize & delegate
- Take action/initiative

**Be self-confident & authentic**
- Influence, motivate & develop others

- Gain leadership education and experience through the Office of Student Leadership & Engagement, the Cameron School of Business or a Leadership Studies minor.
- Run a campaign for student government or campus issue, or get involved in local or state politics.
- Be an active officer or committee chair of a campus organization.
- Identify a campus or community need and proactively find and implement solutions.
- Facilitate group discussions in class or in a campus organization.
- Organize and manage an intramural sports team, camp or recreation group.
- Lead children's programs, tutor kids in a local school, or coach a children's sports team.
- Get an internship in an area of career interest; consult with the Career Center and your department’s internship coordinator.
- Train new campus organization members or employees at your job.

### Global/Intercultural Fluency

**Incorporate diverse perspectives in planning & decisions**
- Understand & appreciate multicultural diversity

**Be open, inclusive & respectful of individual differences**
- Value & learn from diverse people

- Seek more opportunities to engage outside of your normal circle of influence. Diversifying your network can be a valuable asset.
- Explore what interests you in familiar cultures & less familiar cultures. Allow that interest to guide you to dig deeper to find connections. This creates familiarity with the unknown and can possibly fuel a new desire to research and compare cultures.
- Use observation & active listening to make effective connections with others in new multicultural situations.
- Discover complex influences that make up your own cultural identity, and the cultural identity of others.
- Develop a broader scope through which you see multiculturalism, inclusive of your own. Explore how culture influences decision making and opportunities.
- Prior to participating in a study-abroad program, learn how best to truly immerse yourself in the culture of the host country.
- Volunteer as an International Student Mentor or Conversation Partner through the International Programs office.

### Technology & Analysis

**Critically evaluate information & data for decision making**
- Adapt to emerging technologies

**Understand or predict behavior or events using statistics & research**

**Leverage technologies to complete tasks or solve problems**

- Work as a student tech, computer lab or TAC consultant with Campus Life, Residence Life or ITS.
- Design or maintain web or social media sites for a student or community organization, campus office or yourself.
- Assist community agencies with databases, statistical analyses, financial or service reports.
- Keep budgets or financial records for campus or community organizations, or work in a billing office.
- Seek opportunities to evaluate data to support decision making.
- Effectively use Excel or similar spreadsheet application to track data and generate tables and graphs.
- Sell computer hardware or software, or start a web-based business.
- Work in the studio or control room of a radio or TV station.
- Learn computer and technical skills in classes and workshops that focus on software programs and applied technology.

### Professionalism/Work Ethic

**Be personally accountable**
- Pursue professional & personal growth
- Practice effective work habits

**Exhibit integrity & ethical behavior**
- Intelligently manage own emotions & emotions of others

**Sustain professional work image**
- Take responsibility for & learn from mistakes

- Actively utilize LinkedIn to build an intentional network of professional contacts in field(s) of interest.
- Get feedback from faculty, staff, colleagues, and peers about your performance, skills, reputation and image.
- Become a life-long learner; develop expertise by keeping up with new information relevant to your field.
- Find mentors who can guide you within your profession or more broadly as a young professional.
- Assess your professional skills and set development goals and plans to address the gaps.
- Take on projects or other tasks outside your responsibilities to gain or strengthen skills.
- Review your social media through the eyes of a future employer and determine appropriateness.
- Use a planner or calendar to prioritize work/assignments and meet deadlines.
- Identify and articulate skills, strengths, knowledge, and experience relevant to the jobs or graduate programs desired and career goals.

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1 Sources include the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE), Michigan State University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Hart Research Associates, CareerBuilder, US News & World Report, World Future Society, American Society for Training & Development and the U.S. Department of Labor.

2 Campus leadership and peer educator positions include Resident Assistant, Orientation Leader, Ambassador, Seahawk Link, ACE, Fraternity & Sorority Life, SGA/GSA, Office of Student Leadership & Engagement, CARE, Crossroads, Health Promotion and the University Learning Center.

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