

ESSENTIAL WORKFORCE SKILLS

Real-World Examples

Essential workforce skills are the set of skills needed to succeed in any career and empower individuals to achieve lifelong career success. They include skills such as time-management, active listening and teamwork. Research indicates these skills are rising in demand, rewarded in the labor market, and contribute most to career success.



Despite the fact that these skills are applied in any type of work, they're often hidden and undervalued. Real-world examples of essential workforce skills applied in work-relevant context can help students identify them and recognize their value to career success. Below are examples of essential workforce skills applied in real-world scenarios for every skill in ACCSC's Essential Workforce Skills Taxonomy.



SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS



DEVELOP SELF-AWARENESS

- ▶ Identify your core personality traits
- ▶ Define your core personal values



Real-World Example

A **dental assistant** is aware of her dominant personality traits, how others perceive her, and what she values, which improves her happiness at work and helps her have productive relationships with customers, co-workers, and managers.



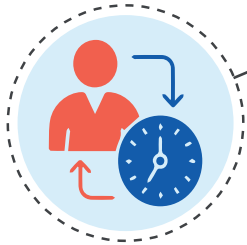
ACHIEVE PERSONAL GOALS

- ▶ Develop effective goals
- ▶ Prioritize goals
- ▶ Distinguish between short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals
- ▶ Manage a plan to complete your goals
- ▶ Monitor progress toward goal completion
- ▶ Adjust strategies to ensure goal completion



Real-World Example

An employer announced a policy change to require all **ultrasound technicians** to be certified within a year. A non-certified technician set and achieved a personal goal of obtaining certification in six months.



MANAGE TIME

- ▶ Prioritize tasks
- ▶ Estimate time required to complete tasks
- ▶ Create a time management plan
- ▶ Complete planned tasks
- ▶ Control time-wasters



Real-World Example

A **truck driver** optimizes her time to deliver loads by planning optimal driver routes, avoiding city streets and traffic, and adhering to a tight schedule.



MANAGE STRESS

- ▶ Differentiate positive and negative stress
- ▶ Distinguish causes of stress
- ▶ Detect signs of stress
- ▶ Prevent stress
- ▶ Reduce stress



Real-World Example

A **production welder** has several high-dollar projects to complete in a short time and manages stress to keep focused, prevent burnout, and avoid mistakes which could cause potential delays exacerbating the stress.



MANAGE SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

- ▶ Diagnose your learning needs
- ▶ Create a learning plan
- ▶ Access learning resources
- ▶ Monitor your learning plan to completion



Real-World Example

A **web developer** closely monitors trends in web development, subscribes to educational blogs, and consistently accesses online tutorials to keep skills current with ever-changing web trends.



MODEL PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- ▶ Present yourself in a manner that meets workplace expectations
- ▶ Adhere to workplace behavior expectations
- ▶ Treat people with respect



Real-World Example

A **hair stylist** who dressed casually in her previous job gets a new job at a large hair salon franchise where business casual attire is expected so she adapts her work wardrobe to meet the new workplace standards of professionalism.



MANAGE PERSONAL BUDGET

- ▶ Calculate your monthly take-home income
- ▶ Calculate your monthly expenses
- ▶ Create a personal budget
- ▶ Track your monthly expenses
- ▶ Compare your monthly expenses to budget allocations
- ▶ Adjust your budget to achieve ongoing financial goals



Real-World Example

A **freelance videographer** has lots of seasonal work and must plan for downtime, so he manages his budget closely to pay for living expenses and equipment maintenance costs while consistently saving for emergencies.



MANAGE CREDIT

- ▶ Monitor your personal credit history
- ▶ Analyze your credit report
- ▶ Fix mistakes in your credit report
- ▶ Distinguish behaviors that lead to good credit, bad credit, and no credit
- ▶ Compare the effects of having good credit, bad credit, and no credit
- ▶ Create a plan to build good credit



Real-World Example

An **accounting college student** wants an entry-level accountant job upon graduating and knows employers are likely to do a credit background check, so she monitors her credit history and practices good credit-management behaviors to manage her credit score.



MANAGE PERSONAL DEBT

- ▶ Calculate your total debt
- ▶ Prioritize your debt repayments
- ▶ Compare debt repayment strategies
- ▶ Create a plan to repay your ongoing debt obligations
- ▶ Manage a plan to repay your ongoing debt obligations



Real-World Example

A **barber** wants to open his own neighborhood barber shop and knows he'll need a loan to get started so he closely manages his debt and is able to get a small business loan while also continuing to pay down his auto and student loans.



PROTECT IDENTITY

- ▶ Protect personal information from theft
- ▶ Monitor personal information for discrepancies
- ▶ Distinguish signs of potential identification theft



Real-World Example

A **respiratory therapist** at a local hospital receives a suspicious email at work requesting sensitive information and notifies her IT department, thereby preventing a security threat that could have allowed scammers to gain access to sensitive and protected patient health records.

PEOPLE SKILLS



GREET OTHERS PROFESSIONALLY

- ▶ Introduce yourself to others following culturally specific business norms
- ▶ Make introductions following culturally specific business norms



Real-World Example

A **front office medical assistant** effectively greets diverse patients, vendors, managers, and external stakeholders in order to represent the business professionally, establish positive first-impressions, and provide quality customer service.



WORK PRODUCTIVELY IN A TEAM

- ▶ Establish productive relationships with team members
- ▶ Develop awareness of factors that affect team goals
- ▶ Coordinate work activities with team members
- ▶ Cope with team conflict



Real-World Example

A **surgical technologist** develops good rapport with managers and co-workers, maintains situational awareness while working in the operating room, and coordinates tasks with colleagues, ensuring an optimal surgical environment and patient safety.



MANAGE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR BOSS

- ▶ Establish a productive working relationship with your boss
- ▶ Work independently with minimal supervision
- ▶ Communicate constructively with your boss
- ▶ Support your boss in accomplishing work goals



Real-World Example

By establishing a productive working relationship with her boss, a **paralegal** improves her communication and builds trust to work with minimal supervision, resulting in being happier at work.



PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

- ▶ Determine if feedback should be given
- ▶ Determine the appropriate timing for your feedback
- ▶ Construct your feedback to achieve positive performance results
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of your feedback



Real-World Example

A **plumber** has a chaotic service route created by a scheduler based on when calls are received and instead of complaining about driving all around town, he provides constructive feedback that grouping appointments by proximity to one another can reduce fuel costs and maximize productivity for the company, resulting in a company-wide change to service scheduling.



RECEIVE FEEDBACK CONSTRUCTIVELY

- ▶ Recognize factors that may influence your perception of feedback
- ▶ Manage emotional reactions to feedback
- ▶ Listen actively to feedback
- ▶ Reflect on feedback you receive
- ▶ Respond positively to feedback



Real-World Example

A **graphic designer** works hard on marketing collateral for a high-dollar client who is not happy with the designs and gives harsh feedback on required changes; but instead of showing frustration, the designer manages her emotional response, actively listens, and responds positively to the feedback.



MANAGE INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

- ▶ Manage emotional reactions to interpersonal conflict
- ▶ Determine whether to address interpersonal conflict
- ▶ Address interpersonal conflict appropriately
- ▶ Express your position assertively in an interpersonal conflict



Real-World Example

A **line cook** at a busy restaurant has a co-worker who is repeatedly late, yet she manages her emotions, appropriately addresses the conflict caused by the co-worker's frequent tardiness, and influences the co-worker to begin arriving on time without escalating the issue or damaging relationships.



NEGOTIATE MUTUAL SOLUTIONS

- ▶ Identify your position prior to negotiations
- ▶ Determine mutual interests in negotiations
- ▶ Generate ideas to reach mutual solutions
- ▶ Choose a mutually acceptable course of action



Real-World Example

A **video editor** is frequently asked to create several iterations of marketing videos until the manager's expectations are met, which causes a project backlog. The editor negotiates a solution with the manager that they create a template, so expectations are clear before projects are started, acceptance criteria are established, and project backlogs are mitigated.



DELEGATE EFFECTIVELY

- ▶ Determine whether or not to delegate tasks
- ▶ Match delegated tasks to team members appropriately
- ▶ Communicate delegated tasks to team members effectively
- ▶ Support team members in completing delegated tasks
- ▶ Monitor progress of delegated tasks



Real-World Example

A **freelance wedding photographer** sub-contracts other photographers to help with large weddings and delegates which photographers will be responsible for capturing wedding details, wedding party prep, and ceremony or reception shots, as well as determining how post-event duties such as editing, gallery uploading, and invoicing will be handled.



LEAD FOR RESULTS

- ▶ Differentiate leadership and management skills
- ▶ Establish a vision of the future
- ▶ Align people to an established vision
- ▶ Influence people's motivation to work toward a shared vision



Real-World Example

An **administrative assistant** wants his company to be "greener" so he proactively researches opportunities and notices his company underutilizes its e-signature software because many employees are unaware the software exists. He proposes to his boss that they market the software, train employees on usage, and communicate the benefits, which results in a 55% increase in utilization and a 40% reduction in print and paper costs.

ANALYTICAL SKILLS



DERIVE LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ Distinguish premises and conclusions in arguments
- ▶ Differentiate facts from opinions in arguments
- ▶ Investigate the accuracy of information in arguments
- ▶ Diagnose if arguments are acceptable



Real-World Example

A **digital marketing coordinator** analyzes multiple reports on marketing best practices, reads online forum discussions, runs experiments on her company's social media campaigns, and concludes which best practices are applicable to her company and will have a positive impact before blindly implementing what the reports suggested.



SOLVE PROBLEMS EFFECTIVELY

- ▶ Define "problem"
- ▶ Diagnose root causes of problems
- ▶ Generate possible solutions to problems
- ▶ Implement optimal solutions to problems



Real-World Example

An **HVAC technician** troubleshoots different potential causes of a malfunctioning air conditioning unit, diagnoses the root cause and fixes the unit properly, avoiding a misdiagnosis and having to return to fix the unit correctly on a separate visit.



MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

- ▶ Establish criteria for your decision
- ▶ Gather information relevant to your decision criteria
- ▶ Evaluate alternative decision options
- ▶ Decide on an optimal course of action



Real-World Example

An **auto technician** wants to purchase a pneumatic impact wrench, so she gathers information and compares criteria such as power output, price, customer ratings, warranty, company reputation, and customer service before deciding.



DEVELOP CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

- ▶ Restructure your typical thinking pattern
- ▶ Generate new ideas to solve problems
- ▶ Determine which new ideas are feasible to implement



Real-World Example

A **barista** works for a small drive-thru coffee shop that has a plan to run advertisements and promotions to boost sales but she thinks of a simple way to delight existing customers by writing positive, kind messages on their to-go cups which ends up generating buzz on social media and word-of-mouth traffic to their business.

PLANNING SKILLS



DESIGN FEASIBLE PLANS

- ▶ Break down the goals of your plan into tasks
- ▶ Avoid problems that can interfere with plans
- ▶ Prepare for contingencies
- ▶ Evaluate your plans before implementing



Real-World Example

An **electrician** drafts a plan estimate for a customer to install a new power line including sub-tasks such as drafting a sketch of the plan to submit for city permitting, installing a new circuit, trenching, running conduit and wire from the existing service panel, and site cleanup so the customer can understand the scope of work, costs, and time estimates.



DEVELOP REALISTIC SCHEDULES

- ▶ Define tasks necessary to achieve your goal
- ▶ Sequence tasks in a logical order
- ▶ Estimate task completion times
- ▶ Manage your schedule to completion



Real-World Example

A **landscaper** develops realistic daily schedules for driving to client properties for service, providing quotes, picking up and delivering supplies, and returning calls, so that business-related tasks are managed to completion on a regular basis.



ALLOCATE RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY

- ▶ Prioritize tasks that need resources
- ▶ Determine resource availability
- ▶ Assign resources to prioritized tasks



Real-World Example

A **retail associate** at a rental car company prepares 35 high-end vehicles to be picked up in three days for an important client by prioritizing the tasks necessary, identifying team members available for shuttle service, vehicle delivery, fueling, and cleaning, and coordinating with teammates to carry out prioritized tasks to fulfill the rental order to the satisfaction of the customer.



MANAGE PROJECTS EFFECTIVELY

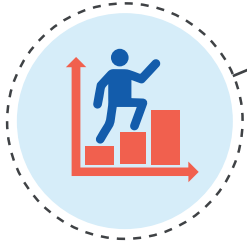
- ▶ Divide projects into tasks and sub-tasks
- ▶ Estimate project costs
- ▶ Match project tasks to team member skills
- ▶ Monitor projects to completion



Real-World Example

Preparing to host a large private event, a **bartender** provides inventory and supply estimates, details the prep work necessary prior to the event, helps estimate the extra staff needed, and identifies on-call backup staff as a contingency plan in case the restaurant needs more help on short notice, resulting in a smoothly executed event.

CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS



CREATE A CAREER PATH

- ▶ Identify your career preferences
- ▶ Assess your skills accurately
- ▶ Evaluate potential careers
- ▶ Set personal career goals
- ▶ Manage your career action plan



Real-World Example

A **nurse** wants to explore new opportunities, so she identifies her career preferences, assesses her skills, evaluates potential careers, and achieves her goal of transitioning to a clinical informaticist combining her skills and experience in nursing with her passion for analytics and technology.



DEVELOP TARGETED RESUMES

- ▶ Recognize the employer resume screening process
- ▶ Organize your resume into relevant sections
- ▶ Write compelling experience bullet statements
- ▶ Design your resume to be easy to scan
- ▶ Evaluate your resume



Real-World Example

A **CNC machinist** in a rural area lands interviews with the few employers in the area faster and more frequently than his friends because he develops an effective targeted resume emphasizing the right information to entice an invitation to interview.



DEVELOP TARGETED COVER LETTERS

- ▶ Organize your cover letter in business format
- ▶ Write persuasive cover letter content
- ▶ Design your cover letter to be easy to scan
- ▶ Evaluate your cover letter



Real-World Example

A **gunsmith** develops an effective targeted cover letter and submits it with her resume to a well-known firearms manufacturer. Even though no available jobs are advertised she is invited to an interview because the employer is impressed with how she articulated her value proposition, her fit, and her passion for the company.



DEVELOP A CAREER PORTFOLIO

- ▶ Collect relevant career portfolio items
- ▶ Present your career portfolio to your target audience effectively
- ▶ Identify multiple uses of your career portfolio
- ▶ Manage your career portfolio



Real-World Example

A **construction worker** lands frequent contract gigs despite an economic recession because his portfolio of work ranging from building assembly to flooring and cement finishing helps him prove his abilities better than competitors.



DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

- ▶ Develop a personal branding statement
- ▶ Find people with whom to network
- ▶ Develop rapport with people when networking
- ▶ Manage relationships with people in your network



Real-World Example

A **fitness instructor** moves to a new city and strategically networks to meet new people, learn about the local fitness scene, and find unadvertised employment opportunities.



MANAGE ONLINE REPUTATION

- ▶ Diagnose your current online presence
- ▶ Build a professional online presence
- ▶ Publish content that supports your online reputation
- ▶ Protect your professional online presence



Real-World Example

An **esthetician** not looking for a job is contacted by a recruiter for a high-end spa at a well-known resort who found her online and thought she'd be a good fit based on what the recruiter learned about her via her online presence.



MANAGE JOB SEARCH

- ▶ Develop job leads
- ▶ Complete job applications
- ▶ Evaluate your job search performance



Real-World Example

A **massage therapist** lands a job in half the time it takes her fellow recent graduates because of her ability to use multiple strategies to develop job leads, complete applications, and evaluate her job search performance to adjust her strategies.



EXCEL IN JOB INTERVIEWS

- ▶ Identify the steps in the hiring process
- ▶ Conduct research to prepare for job interviews
- ▶ Establish a positive first impression in interviews
- ▶ Answer interview questions effectively
- ▶ Ask effective interview questions
- ▶ Follow up after your interview



Real-World Example

A **3D animator** with less experience than other competitors interviewing at a highly competitive video game studio is offered the job because of his ability to articulate his fit and perform better than competitors in the extensive interview process.



NEGOTIATE JOB OFFERS

- ▶ Estimate job salary ranges
- ▶ Evaluate job offers
- ▶ Discuss concerns with job offers tactfully
- ▶ Make informed decisions about job offers
- ▶ Communicate your job offer decision professionally



Real-World Example

A **front-end developer** gets multiple job offers, successfully negotiates a higher salary from her desired employer, and tactfully declines her other offers, successfully landing the job she wants with competitive compensation based on industry ranges in her geographical area, current market conditions, and her personal market value

COMMUNICATION SKILLS



SPEAK WITH INTENTION

- ▶ Think before speaking
- ▶ Organize your thoughts before speaking
- ▶ Distinguish types of noise that disrupt verbal messages
- ▶ Reduce noise when speaking
- ▶ Match verbal and nonverbal messages
- ▶ Verify that verbal messages are understood as intended



Real-World Example

A **teacher's assistant** for young children is very deliberate in how he speaks to the children, what he says, and how he matches his nonverbal and verbal communication when giving instructions, disciplining children, giving corrective feedback, and managing the classroom.



WRITE FOR RESULTS

- ▶ Establish your purpose for writing
- ▶ Analyze your audience before writing
- ▶ Organize your writing
- ▶ Write concisely
- ▶ Evaluate your writing



Real-World Example

A **certified nursing assistant** thoroughly yet concisely charts patient interactions to maintain accurate and current medical records, thus ensuring patient safety and continuity of care while mitigating malpractice claims.



LISTEN ACTIVELY

- ▶ Empathize with the person communicating with you
- ▶ Show listening through your behavior
- ▶ Reduce noise when listening
- ▶ Manage your emotions when listening
- ▶ Respond after listening



Real-World Example

A **licensed cosmetologist** actively listens to clients, asks clarifying questions, and empathizes with how they want their look, thereby satisfying clients' emotional needs and increasing repeat and referral business.



INTERPRET NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ Differentiate types of nonverbal signals
- ▶ Recognize intentions of nonverbal signals
- ▶ Distinguish cultural differences in nonverbal signals
- ▶ Evaluate the context of nonverbal signals



Real-World Example

A **corrections officer** closely observes inmate behavior, identifying and accurately interpreting nonverbal cues to respond strategically to potentially threatening behavior, de-escalate situations, and protect inmates and guards.



PRESENT FOR RESULTS

- ▶ Establish the goals of your presentations
- ▶ Analyze your audience before presenting
- ▶ Adapt to the circumstances of your presentations
- ▶ Organize your presentations
- ▶ Engage your audience during your presentations
- ▶ Evaluate your presentations



Real-World Example

A **nutrition coordinator** at a health clinic prepares and delivers slide presentations to patients and local community members on healthy eating, dieting, and exercise choices as part of a wellness and preventive health program.



CONDUCT EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- ▶ Determine when a meeting is needed
- ▶ Establish the purpose of your meeting
- ▶ Plan a meeting
- ▶ Facilitate a meeting
- ▶ Conclude a meeting
- ▶ Follow up after a meeting



Real-World Example

An **interior design project** coordinator conducts routine phone, video, and face-to-face meetings with business clients about space planning, furniture selection, and logistical planning to ensure projects are completed on time and clients are happy.



COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY ON THE PHONE

- ▶ Make phone calls to achieve your objectives
- ▶ Respond to phone calls to meet callers' needs
- ▶ Record accurate phone messages on behalf of others



Real-World Example

An **emergency dispatcher** manages a high volume of calls and quickly ascertains caller needs, responds appropriately, and relays accurate information to team members to handle emergency situations.