

Career Readiness Outline

Source: Johnson, E; Shah, T. *Career Readiness Framework*. Chicago Jobs Council. March 2021

Workplace Navigation Skills

Workplace Navigation Skills are a set of transferable or “soft” skills that are essential for effective performance in the workplace. Unlike technical or “hard” skills, these skills are generic in nature, and are common to all work roles and workplaces across all industry types. Workplace navigation skills are typically considered essential qualifications for many job positions and hence have become necessary for an individual's employment success at just about any level.

Communication: The ability to explain what one means in a clear and concise way through written and verbal means. It also includes how one takes in and then interprets the verbal and non-verbal messages sent by others; how one listens and relates to other people; and how one acts upon key information/instructions.

Creativity: The ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions.

Critical Thinking: The capacity to carefully discern, analyze, and evaluate information; and determine how to interpret it in order to make a sound judgement. It also includes taking outside information into account during the thought process.

Decision Making: The ability to make deliberate and thoughtful choices by gathering information, assessing options, considering alternatives, and taking action. It also includes evaluating one's choices and the consequences.

Leadership: The ability to motivate, take responsibility for, and lead others effectively to accomplish objectives and goals.

Problem Solving: The ability to understand a problem by breaking it down into smaller parts, and identifying the key issues, implications and identifying solutions. It also involves applying knowledge from many different areas to solving a task.

Teamwork & Collaboration: The ability to work well with other people from different disciplines, backgrounds, and expertise to accomplish a task or goal.

Executive Function Skills

Executive function skills are a set of mental processes that all have to do with managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal. It is an umbrella term for the neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation. Executive function skills⁴ can be broken down into three broad categories, each with specific sub skills:

How we organize and plan things:

Organization: The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.

Planning/Prioritization: The ability to create a road map to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what is important to focus on and what is not important.

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Time Management: The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.

How we react to things:

Emotional Control: The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

Flexibility: The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.

Response Inhibition: The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.

Stress Tolerance: The ability to work in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands.

How we get things done:

Goal-Directed Persistence: The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of that goal, and not be put off or distracted by competing interests.

Metacognition: The ability to stand back and take a bird's eye view of yourself in a situation, to observe how you problem-solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills.

Sustained Attention: The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.

Task Initiation: The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.

Working Memory: The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.