

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: FOSTERING, ASSESSING AND REPORTING

## What are they?

In Australia<sup>1</sup> employability skills are defined as:

... **the skills required** to gain employment or establish an enterprise, but also to progress within an enterprise or expand employment capability, so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions.

## Why are employability skills important?

- > Employers generally view employability skills, along with technical skills, as highly desirable for employees
- > Employability skills can assist employees gain jobs, perform effectively at work and win promotions
- > Employability skills can also lead to success in other domains of life.

## The eight skills

The eight employability skills are:

- > initiative and enterprise
- > learning
- > self-management
- > communication
- > teamwork
- > problem solving
- > planning and organising
- > technology.

## What are they in detail?

The table on the reverse of this pamphlet lists aspects of each of the eight employability skills that employers identify as important.

## Where are employability skills in Training Packages?

Employability skills are not described as discrete requirements within units of competency in Training Packages. While there are some stand-

alone units of employability skills in some Training Packages, as a general approach:

- > Employability skills are contained in the units of competency as part of the other performance requirements that make up the competency as a whole.
- > Employability skills are specifically expressed in the context of the work outcomes described in units of competency, and they appear in Elements, Performance Criteria, Range Statements and Evidence Guides.

## How are employability skills to be assessed?

The National Quality Council has endorsed the integrated approach to assessment and descriptive reporting.

The integrated approach to assessment involves assessing employability skills in an integrated manner with technical skills, within a qualification and the corresponding units of competency. This integrated approach is made possible because employability skills are being embedded progressively in all Training Packages.

## How are the skills to be reported?

The National Quality Council has also endorsed an approach to reporting on employability skills which involves:

- > learners downloading qualification specific Employability Skills Summaries for Training Package qualifications from an online repository; and
- > RTOs adding the following, mandatory, single standard sentence to all qualification testamurs for Training Package qualifications:

A summary of the employability skills developed through this qualification can be downloaded from <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>

1. Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia, 2002, *Employability Skills for the Future*, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.



## Good practice teaching/training strategies

- > introduce learners and employers to employability skills
- > promote the value of employability skills
- > reinforce the definition of competency and its relation to employability skills
- > explain that employability skills are now embedded in Training Packages
- > provide learners with copies of the relevant employability skills summary for a qualification
- > describe how the training will foster the learners' development of employability skills
- > encourage the learner to take responsibility for recognising and acquiring the skills
- > provide guidelines for how learners can voluntarily collect examples of their own employability skills
- > promote the benefits – for example, to assist recognition of prior learning – of learners voluntarily collecting examples of their own employability skills
- > use teaching strategies that cater for a range of learning styles and preferences and recognise experiential learning

## Good practice assessment strategies

- > explore with learners the full range of assessment techniques
- > identify opportunities to provide recognition of prior learning services in relation to employability skills
- > contextualise the teaching and assessing activities to a work or industry setting, to suit the needs of enterprises and individuals

- > design and use valid assessment strategies and tools that suit the relevant employability skills
- > collect evidence holistically, where appropriate

## Good practice reporting strategies

- > become familiar with the way employability skills are integrated in Training Packages
- > understand the meaning of the Employability Skills Summaries
- > as above, add the mandatory, single standard sentence to all qualification testamurs for Training Package qualifications
- > remind graduating students that the Employability Skills Summary for their qualification is available at <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>

## What support is available?

Professional development resources are available to assist VET practitioners to improve the ways they support learning and conduct assessments related to employability skills. See [www.employabilityskillsresources.com](http://www.employabilityskillsresources.com) to access the professional development resources produced by the National Quality Council project. In addition, you can:

1. examine training organisations' websites that are dedicated to employability skills, for example: [www.skillsonline.net.au](http://www.skillsonline.net.au)
2. consult with your Industry Skills Councils [www.isc.org.au/](http://www.isc.org.au/) about whether they have produced guidelines for trainers and assessors.
3. contact your State or Territory Training Authority for advice about other professional development opportunities.

Skill	Facets
<b>Communication</b> that contributes to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; listening and understanding</li> <li>&gt; speaking clearly and directly</li> <li>&gt; writing to the needs of the audience</li> <li>&gt; negotiating responsively</li> <li>&gt; reading independently</li> <li>&gt; empathising</li> <li>&gt; using numeracy effectively</li> <li>&gt; understanding the needs of internal and external customers</li> <li>&gt; persuading effectively</li> <li>&gt; establishing and using networks</li> <li>&gt; being assertive</li> <li>&gt; sharing information</li> <li>&gt; speaking and writing in languages other than English</li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork</b> that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; working across different ages irrespective of gender, race, religion or political persuasion</li> <li>&gt; working as an individual and as a member of a team</li> <li>&gt; knowing how to define a role as part of the team</li> <li>&gt; applying teamwork to a range of situations e.g. futures planning and crisis problem solving</li> <li>&gt; identifying the strengths of team members</li> <li>&gt; coaching and mentoring skills, including giving feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Problem solving</b> that contributes to productive outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; developing creative, innovative and practical solutions</li> <li>&gt; showing independence and initiative in identifying and solving problems</li> <li>&gt; solving problems in teams</li> <li>&gt; applying a range of strategies to problem solving</li> <li>&gt; using mathematics, including budgeting and financial management to solve problems</li> <li>&gt; applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas</li> <li>&gt; testing assumptions, taking into account the context of data and circumstances</li> <li>&gt; resolving customer concerns in relation to complex project issues</li> </ul>
<b>Initiative and enterprise</b> that contribute to innovative outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; adapting to new situations</li> <li>&gt; developing a strategic, creative and long-term vision</li> <li>&gt; being creative</li> <li>&gt; identifying opportunities not obvious to others</li> <li>&gt; translating ideas into action</li> <li>&gt; generating a range of options</li> <li>&gt; initiating innovative solutions</li> </ul>

Skill	Facets
<b>Planning and organising</b> that contribute to long and short-term strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; managing time and priorities – setting time lines, coordinating tasks for self and with others</li> <li>&gt; being resourceful</li> <li>&gt; taking initiative and making decisions</li> <li>&gt; adapting resource allocations to cope with contingencies</li> <li>&gt; establishing clear project goals and deliverables</li> <li>&gt; allocating people and other resources to tasks</li> <li>&gt; planning the use of resources, including time management</li> <li>&gt; participating in continuous improvement and planning processes</li> <li>&gt; developing a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it</li> <li>&gt; predicting – weighing up risk, evaluating alternatives and applying evaluation criteria</li> <li>&gt; collecting, analysing and organising information</li> <li>&gt; understanding basic business systems and their relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Self-management</b> that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; having a personal vision and goals</li> <li>&gt; evaluating and monitoring own performance</li> <li>&gt; having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and visions</li> <li>&gt; articulating own ideas and visions</li> <li>&gt; taking responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b> that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; managing own learning</li> <li>&gt; contributing to the learning community at the workplace</li> <li>&gt; using a range of mediums to learn – mentoring, peer support and networking, IT and courses</li> <li>&gt; applying learning to technical issues (e.g. learning about products) and people issues (e.g. interpersonal and cultural aspects of work)</li> <li>&gt; having enthusiasm for ongoing learning</li> <li>&gt; being willing to learn in any setting – on and off the job</li> <li>&gt; being open to new ideas and techniques</li> <li>&gt; being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills</li> <li>&gt; acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b> that contributes to the effective carrying out of tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; having a range of basic IT skills</li> <li>&gt; applying IT as a management tool</li> <li>&gt; using IT to organise data</li> <li>&gt; being willing to learn new IT skills</li> <li>&gt; having the OHS knowledge to apply technology</li> <li>&gt; having the appropriate physical capacity</li> </ul>

The list of facets set out above is not an exhaustive list and the facets will vary from one qualification to another.



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Disclaimer: the views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Australian Government or state and territory governments.