



## Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework and Self-Assessment



## ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework is designed to define and clarify the essential employability skills and provide a standard for the state. Essential employability skills are those general skills that are required to be successful in all sectors of the labor market and are separate from the technical skills attained in career pathways or academic skills such as math and reading. The framework was developed through the collaboration of the Illinois Community College Board; the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; representatives of Illinois businesses; local chambers of commerce; secondary, postsecondary and adult educators and professionals; and other important stakeholders.

A part of this collaboration was the undertaking of regional forums, hosted by the Illinois Community College Board, to develop a Workforce Education Strategic Plan. The purpose of the Workforce Education Strategic Plan is to strengthen and build upon the existing foundation for future workforce initiatives in the state, to expand and enhance Illinois' ability to attract businesses and develop educational opportunities to support students' success as they prepare to enter the workforce, and to align education and workforce to meet workforce needs. During the regional forums many partners articulated a need to define essential employability skills and ensure those skills are taught at all levels of education. Additionally, skill gaps were consistently articulated by numerous partners in different regions. The Essential Employability Skills Framework focuses on the specific areas where these skill gaps currently exist, particularly those that are considered high priority by employers.

The following document will assist programs with self-assessment to ensure that technical and basic skills training aligns with the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework. The document is divided into two sections. Section one includes an overview of the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework. Section two is the Essential Employability Skills Program Self-Assessment. The first part of the assessment focuses on developing program goals related to the framework. The second part of the assessment addresses exposure to employability skills in classrooms and work-based learning activities and is designed to provide an opportunity to reflect on how instruction is aligned with the framework's definition of essential employability skills.

## ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TASKFORCE MEMBERS

### TASKFORCE MEMBERS

The Illinois Community College Board would like to thank those who served on the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Taskforce. Our committee members brought together a range of diverse perspectives and expertise and included representatives from core partners that included state agencies, businesses, educational entities, and community groups. Only through the knowledge, skills, and commitment of our committee members could we construct a framework that adequately addresses the needs of the modern workforce and maintains the highest standards of personal and educational development for Illinois' students.

#### **The members of the taskforce include:**

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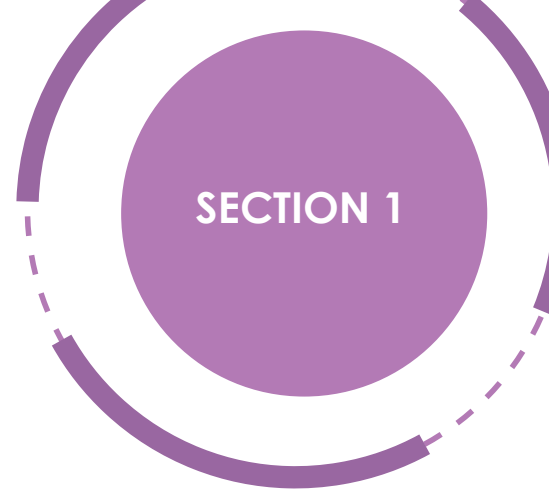
Lavon Nelson – Senior Director for Workforce Development, Illinois Community College Board

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Whitney Thompson – Director for Career & Technical Education, Illinois Community College Board

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# SECTION 1: ILLINOIS ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK



This graphic illustrates the interconnected nature of employability skills by providing an overview of the elements of the Essential Employability Skills Framework and actions or behaviors that demonstrate competency in those elements.

# SECTION 1: ILLINOIS ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK



## SECTION 1

### 1. Personal Ethic

#### *a. Integrity*

- i. Treats others with honesty, fairness, and respect
  - 1. Demonstrates respect for company time and property
    - a. Is present and engaged in the workplace
    - b. Demonstrates appropriate use of technology in the workplace
  - 2. Accepts responsibility for one's decisions and actions

#### *b. Respect*

- i. Works effectively with those who have diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures
- ii. Exhibits respect for authority

#### *c. Perseverance*

- i. Stays on task when provided with strategies for overcoming barriers

#### *d. Positive attitude*

- i. Cooperates in a pleasant and polite manner with clients, coworkers, and supervisors
- ii. Exhibits flexibility and adaptability
- iii. Takes direction and correction willingly

### 2. Work Ethic

#### *a. Dependability*

- i. Shows up on time and ready to work
  - 1. Fulfills obligations, completes assignments, and meets deadlines
  - 2. Behaves consistently and predictably
- ii. Regular Attendance
  - 1. Demonstrates minimum absenteeism
  - 2. Communicates absenteeism with direct supervisor
- iii. Commitment
  - 1. Desires to effectively work toward the employer's goals
  - 2. Takes the initiative in seeking new responsibilities, maintaining professional goals, and striving to exceed standards and expectations of their position

#### *b. Professionalism*

- i. Maintains a professional demeanor at work
  - 1. Demonstrates self-control by maintaining composure and keeping emotions in-check, even in difficult situations
  - 2. Exhibits professional appearance by dressing appropriately for the workplace and maintaining personal hygiene
  - 3. Understands employer's objectives

### 3. Communication Skills

#### *a. Active Listening*

- i. Listens to and considers other's viewpoints
- ii. Maintains open and factual lines of communication appropriate to one's position

#### *b. Clear Communication*

- i. Follows directions
- ii. Is open to correction
- iii. Comprehends written material
- iv. Effectively explains a process or problem verbally and/or in writing

### 4. Team Work

#### *a. Critical Thinking*

- i. Demonstrates sound decision making
- ii. Exhibits problem solving skills

#### *b. Effective and Cooperative Work*

- i. Demonstrates an ability to work effectively with others
  - 1. Is willing to ask questions and seek clarification or guidance
- ii. Uses appropriate strategies and solutions in dealing with conflicts/differences to maintain a smooth workflow

## SECTION 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL



### SECTION 2

The following self-assessment tool has been designed as a resource to help programs assess their alignment with the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework and to aid long term planning and development. This tool is designed to be used as a platform for examination of the integration of essential employability skills into classroom or work-based learning activities at a programmatic level and during the process of instruction. The tool is broken into two major sections. The first section, broken into three parts, is designed to assist administrators in reviewing program identification, goals, and objectives; professional development; and stakeholder engagement related to the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework. The second part is intended to be used by instructors to reflect on their individual courses and determine the extent to which essential employability skills are, and can be, embedded in their instruction.

### PROCESS

In general, the review process is intended to be used to:

- systematically examine the instructional activities and course content of individual instructional programs;
- involve faculty and appropriate administrators who are directly responsible for instruction in the area;
- ensure that the process is well documented;
- aid in curriculum development;
- advance quality improvement efforts;
- create professional development; and
- implement strategies to address deficiencies discovered during the review process.



# SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM ALIGNMENT WITH ILLINOIS ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK

## SECTION 2

### PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

Program Title

Degree

Certificate

Credential

Other

Identify the total credit hours for program (if applicable):

List all certificate programs that are stackable within the parent degree (if applicable):

### PROGRAM GOALS

Provide a clear statement of current program goals related to essential employability skills and identify specific program objectives related to each current goal.

Example:

Goal = Student demonstrates regular attendance

Objective = Demonstrates minimum absenteeism and communicates absence with instructor



## SECTION 2

Are essential employability skills classes required for this program? If so, list them:

Describe how you are integrating the essential employability skills into current curricula.

List any applicable courses.

How are essential employability skills integrated into co-curricular activities?  
(e.g. career counseling, advising, orientation)



## SECTION 2

List any applicable activities.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

How have instructors been provided guidance on the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework?

How has additional training been provided to instructors on integrating essential employability skills into coursework and providing feedback on those areas to students?

What methods are used to inform faculty of program goals and objectives related to essential employability skills?

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

How have business and industry representatives been consulted on specific skill gaps they have identified related to essential employability skills? List any skill gaps identified.



## SECTION 2

What goals have business partners articulated and prioritized related to skill gaps?

What objectives have other partner groups (e.g. WIOA Title I partners) identified related to essential employability skills?

How were these goals and objectives considered when developing program goals?



## SECTION 2

In what ways do the program goals align or converge with the essential employability skills outlined in the framework?

How do the current objectives align with the student behaviors defined in the framework?

What further steps can be taken to bring the goals and objectives in line with the framework?

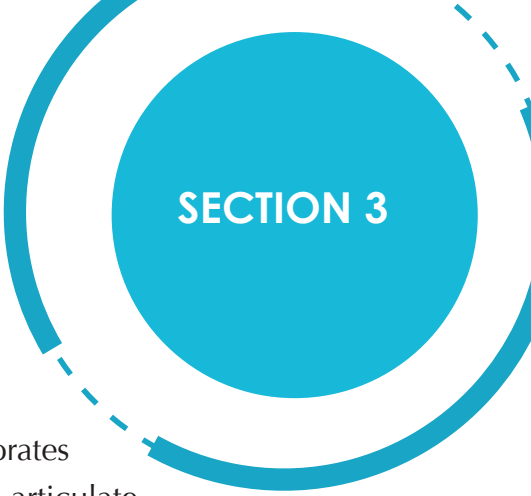
How is input from stakeholders used to improve the delivery of essential employability skills in your program?



## SECTION 2

Based on skill gaps identified in your self-assessment describe your plan to address these gaps.

# SELF-ASSESSMENT OF EXPOSURE TO EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND WORK-BASED LEARNING



## SECTION 3

This section of the self-assessment is designed to identify work that incorporates essential employability skills into classroom instruction and can be used to articulate the connection between classroom activities or work-based learning activities and essential employability skills. The log should be filled out by instructors throughout the course of the year. It can then be used to track weekly activities and reflect on changes that can be made to more closely align instructions with the Essential Employability Skills Framework.

Instructor	Course Taught		
Question		Yes	No
Have you received training on essential employability skills instruction?			
If yes, provide more detail on the training you have received:			
<p>List any additional training, support, or information you would like related to teaching essential employability skills:</p>			



# ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS ACTIVITY LOG

## SECTION 3

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY LOG		
Please take time to identify activities or lessons related to the Essential Employability Skills Framework that are required in your class or related work-based learning then answer the questions that follow.		
Identify Essential Employability Skill Aligned with Activity or Lesson	Activity or Lesson	Assessment Methodology



## SECTION 3

What strategies do you use to teach essential employability skills in each of the classroom activities listed above?

What method(s) do you use to reinforce the essential employability skills taught in your classroom?

Reflect on the activity log and detail what changes you will make in the future.

The Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework was commissioned by the Illinois Community College Board and facilitated by the Illinois Center for Specialized Support.

Questions or comments can be directed to:



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