



Essential Skills Rubrics

Essential skills apply across all sectors and impact a career at any point. These rubrics are designed to support understanding and growth in application of these essential skills. Although many of these skills are embedded in our educational and professional training programs, it is crucial to model, evaluate and set goals around essential skills in order to support career readiness, growth and promotion within a career. These rubrics can be used in a variety of settings, from classrooms and internships to web calls and worksites, and may be applied in individual work, group projects or daily life.



These skills were chosen based on labor market needs and an analysis of online job postings. The [essential skills poster](#) summarizes the six essential skills and can be used in conjunction with these rubrics. These rubrics are meant to support meaningful application of these skills in educational and workplace settings. Although many criteria could fit in multiple rubrics, we only incorporated criteria in the one we found to be the best fit in order to reduce redundancies.



The following draft rubrics were developed in partnership between the San Diego Workforce Partnership and the San Diego County Office of Education.

Please go to cte.innovatesd.org/essentialskills to find links to workshops and other resources to support implementation.

Visit workforce.org/mynextmove for more career exploration tools, including information on high-growth, high-wage jobs and sectors.



Rubrics:

[Emotional Intelligence](#)

[Dependability](#)

[Resourcefulness](#)

[Collaboration](#)

[Creative and Critical Thinking](#)

[Communication](#)

[Career Development](#)



Emotional Intelligence

Considering the feelings and perspectives of others to infuse empathy and thoughtfulness into all interactions. Working on your own self-awareness to approach situations with humility, kindness and patience.

Areas for Growth	Criteria	Evidence of meeting or exceeding criteria
	Can identify and articulate their own emotions and biases, as well as the emotions of others.	
	Approaches situations with humility, tolerance, and patience and maintains a positive attitude.	
	Seeks out others': - feelings - perspectives - backgrounds, and - motivations and uses that context to guide interactions, adapt to environments and achieve goals.	
	Acts as a model for others by providing encouragement, promoting integrity, offering understanding and empowering others to do the same.	
	Navigates difficult situations with composure and maintains focus on finding solutions that drive toward goals.	
	Shows resiliency to recover quickly from difficulties and becomes stronger through overcoming challenges.	

Dependability

Building trust with others by keeping your word. Managing your time by planning and controlling how your work time is spent to achieve goals. Meeting deadlines and producing quality work. Taking initiative and working independently to move things forward.

Areas for Growth	Criteria	Evidence of meeting or exceeding criteria
	Takes initiative to identify and complete tasks.	
	Displays good time management; prioritizes work based on deadlines and importance and completes it with enough time to gather and incorporate feedback.	
	Arrives on time and is prepared, both with materials and mindset.	
	Anticipates challenges and communicates with others if help is needed or deadlines can't be met.	
	Persists and seeks out approaches to overcome obstacles.	
	Builds trust by acting with integrity and being true to your word.	

Resourcefulness

Relentlessly seeking solutions and opportunities. Understanding your own strengths and weaknesses and knowing when to ask for help or lean on another person’s expertise. Being a lifelong learner who approaches problems and obstacles with perseverance, adaptability and a make-it-happen mentality.

Areas for Growth	Criteria	Evidence of meeting or exceeding criteria
	Is able to identify cases where essential information to complete tasks/projects is missing and takes initiative to obtain the needed information.	
	Approaches problems independently by conducting research and brainstorming ideas before asking for help.	
	Proactively develops new skills and seeks out new sources of information, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles - Books - Online resources - Conducting Interviews - Data (quantitative and qualitative) - Experience and prior knowledge - Classmates or coworkers - Teacher or supervisor - Family or personal network - Other organizations - Subject matter experts 	
	Considers all possibilities for completing a task and experiments with new approaches if the first doesn’t work.	
	Demonstrates flexibility in adapting to new information, new objectives or changes in situation.	

Collaboration

Building helpful, respectful and productive relationships with others to work toward a common goal. Using strategies that incorporate the ideas of many people to promote agreement or compromise. Listening to critique with openness and approaching conflict with an inclusive mindset. Leveraging a variety of skills, strengths and diverse backgrounds on a team.

Areas for Growth	Criteria	Evidence of meeting or exceeding criteria
	Understands one’s role(s) within a collaboration and how it contributes to the group’s objective.	
	Values, respects and incorporates group diversity, including strengths, skills, experiences and backgrounds of others. Creates an inclusive team culture.	
	Applies technology and tools to improve group work and efficiency.	
	Motivates the team by acknowledging and celebrating the contributions of others.	
	Is open and receptive to critique and incorporates feedback from others.	
	Works with others to resolve disagreements, promote compromise and ensure balanced distribution of work.	
	Supports others by sharing expertise and showing patience in helping them learn.	

Creative and Critical Thinking

Using imagination and problem solving to apply knowledge or address challenges in new, exciting and innovative ways. Using reasonable and logical thought to prioritize, make decisions and achieve a desired outcome.

Areas for Growth	Criteria	Evidence of meeting or exceeding criteria
	Uses reasoning, evidence and context to make decisions.	
	Defines and solves problems by asking questions, gathering perspectives from diverse sources and making connections between knowledge, facts and data.	
	Evaluates the quality, legitimacy and bias of information and source.	
	Keeps an open mind to discover unexpected connections, find hidden patterns and explore multiple innovative solutions.	
	Identifies, creates and applies processes to organize thinking.	
	Considers the impact and implications of designs, solutions and decisions.	

Communication

Exchanging information, feelings and meaning in person or digitally through actions, words, body language, listening and writing to achieve understanding among people.

Areas for Growth	Criteria	Evidence of meeting or exceeding criteria
	Adapts communication responsiveness, style and modality (e.g. phone vs. email vs. in-person) to be appropriate and effective for audience, content and platform.	
	Actively listens and uses strategies to ensure comprehension. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asks clarifying questions - Verbally summarizes using statements like, "What I hear you saying is..." - Takes notes - Affirms by nodding or saying "Mmmhmm" or "I see." - Holds comments until the speaker is finished 	
	Understands the role that body language, facial expressions, tone, diction and timing play in communication and uses them appropriately.	
	Conveys concepts accurately, clearly and concisely, in both verbal and written communication.	
	Creative delivery of information results in an engaging presentation.	
	Strives to use proper grammar, vocabulary, and syntax when speaking and by reviewing work before sharing.	

Career Development

In order to develop a career, people need both essential skills and tangible workplace skills. The career development skills can be evaluated in any setting with the end goal of workplace success. Attention to these skills will help people adapt to new working environments as both their career and the world of work itself evolve.

Areas for Growth	Criteria	Evidence of meeting or exceeding criteria
	Applies experiences in Work-Based Learning, industry research and input from mentors as they plan and advance along their career pathway.	
	Represents themselves professionally through comments, conversations, language, dress, technology and phone use and manners appropriate to a situation or work environment.	
	Builds, leverages and maintains lasting personal and professional relationships through networking and seeking out mentors (i.e., builds social capital).	
	Understands and follows health, safety and harassment laws, regulations, procedures and acknowledges their role in ensuring safety in the workplace.	
	Develops an understanding of and respects policies, chain of command, procedures and culture at a given workplace; works through proper channels to make positive change when needed.	
	Understands the dynamic nature of technology and seeks to improve skills to meet industry needs and expectations.	
	Curates a positive online presence in work portfolios, social media and other digital content.	
	Demonstrates the ability to lead a group, project or conversation and steps into leadership when needed.	