Career Competencies
What Employers Want //////

Professional Communication

Cultural Agility, Inclusion, and Anti-Racist Practice

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Community Engagement

Ethical Decision Making

Digital Literacy

Curiosity

Teamwork

Career Management

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This list of 9 career competencies can be thought of as a skill set that you should be able to put on a résumé or talk about in an interview by the time you graduate.

1 Professional Communication

The ability to use interpersonal and intercultural skills to engage with individuals, groups, and communities. It requires the use of interpersonal skills and self-reflection. Adaptations are made according to audience, purpose, and nature of communication (written, verbal, and other modes).

2 Critical Thinking

The ability to question assumptions and discern biases, analyze information, and determine appropriate actions in relation to an idea, concept, or situation. It requires creativity in thinking and openness to fresh perspectives and news sources of information.

3 Ethical Decision Making

The ability to apply an ethical code of conduct or framework to a situation that is grounded in the values of a community, profession, and/or belief system. It requires perspective-taking to understand the impact of ethical decisions on the people involved in a situation.

4 Curiousity

The desire to learn new things and explore fresh perspectives, and in doing so apply that knowledge in innovative ways. Curiosity is a catalyst for growth and positive change. To be curious is to engage in learning for its own sake.

5 Teamwork

The ability to work collaboratively with other people to meet a goal or outcome. Each person provides skills and abilities to support progress and help with task, process, and relational functioning. This includes the ability of each person to step forward as a leader or collaborator as relevant to the situation.

6 Cultural Agility, Inclusion, and Anti-Racist Practice

Cultural agility, inclusion, and anti-racist practice requires individuals to identify, challenge, and change the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic oppression in order to create a more equitable society. People are agents of change.

7 Community Engagement

The ability to work together and leverage community strengths in a collaborative process to address shared concerns, resolve issues, or enhance the community.

8 Digital Literacy

The ability to find, evaluate and use technology as appropriate to a specific purpose, including communicating, solving problems, and completing tasks. Technology can include simple programs (word processing) to more complex applications (artificial intelligence).

9 Career Management

A strategic approach to advancing one's career, that includes setting goals, networking, and staying current with trends in the chosen industry. It requires continuous learning, curiosity, and the ability to be proactive in seeking out new opportunities to develop knowledge and skills and build relationships with others.

We started with two sources to develop our own set of career competencies—thanks to the U of M College of Liberal Arts and the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The Career Readiness Project Faculty Workgroup revised Metro State's Career Competencies spring 2025.

cla.umn.edu/career-readiness/implementation-model

naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/

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