



Recommended Technical and Essential Employability Competencies

For College and Career
Pathway Endorsements

January 2022



Background

The competencies set forth in this document were developed through an iterative process involving public-private steering committees established pursuant to the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act in order to implement College and Career Pathway Endorsements.

The competencies have been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Workforce Readiness through Apprenticeships and Pathways Steering Committee of the Governor’s Cabinet on Children and Youth, but they remain subject to further review and modification by State agencies. This process has been led by a partnership between Education Systems Center at NIU and JFF with generous support from JPMorgan Chase & Co.



About JFF

JFF is a national nonprofit that drives transformation in the American workforce and education systems. For 35 years, JFF has led the way in designing innovative and scalable solutions that create access to economic advancement for all. JFF’s Pathways to Prosperity Initiative develops, implements, and scales systems of college and career pathways to expand economic opportunity for all young people and meet state and regional talent needs. This forward-looking approach depends on strong cross-sector partnerships and mobilizes K–12 and postsecondary education leaders, policymakers, and employers, bringing together diverse stakeholders to build a future that works. For more information, visit jff.org and jff.org/pathwaystoprosperity.

About Education Systems Center



Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University (EdSystems) shapes and strengthens education and workforce systems to advance racial equity and prepare more young people for productive careers and lives in a global economy. EdSystems leads and manages the Illinois P-20 Council’s College and Career Readiness Committee, which drove the development and adoption of the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (pwreact.org). For more information, visit edsystemsniu.org.

About JPMorgan Chase

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Table of Contents

Introduction and Background.....	4
What Do the Competencies Represent?	5
Competency Research Approach and Development Process.....	6
Top 10 Cross-Sector Essential Employability Competency Statements.....	7
Entrepreneurial Competencies.....	7
Top 8 Technical Competency Statements for Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources.....	8
Top 10 Technical Competency Statements for Arts & Communications.....	9
Top 10 Technical Competency Statements for Finance & Business Services.....	10
Top 10 Technical Competency Statements for Health Sciences & Technology.....	11
Top 10 Technical Competency Statements for Human & Public Services: Education.....	12
Top 10 Technical Competency Statements for Information Technology.....	13
Top 10 Technical Competency Statements for Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering.....	14
Appendix I: Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework Cross Analysis.....	15
Appendix II: State Agency Engagement and Approval.....	16



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Introduction and Background

Enacted in 2016, the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act established a voluntary system for school districts to award College and Career Pathway Endorsements (CCPEs) to high school graduates. Endorsements signify that a student is ready to pursue postsecondary education or enter a career related to the CCPE industry area. Endorsements incentivize career exploration and development and are available in eight sector areas, including a multidisciplinary option.

Students earn CCPEs by completing an individualized learning plan, a career-focused instructional sequence, and professional learning (which includes career exploration activities, 60 hours of career development experiences, and two team-based challenges). Technical and professional competencies connected to CCPEs indicate that a student is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to advance to entry-level employment, college-level coursework, or advanced sector-based training in the endorsement sector area. School districts can apply to the Illinois State Board of Education to offer CCPEs during the 18-19 school year, and can start to award them to the graduating class of 2020.

College and Career Pathway Endorsements Indicate:



Completion of individualized learning plan



Career-focused instructional sequence: two years of coursework or equivalent competencies



Professional learning including career exploration activities, 60 hours of career development experiences, such as internships, two team-based challenges



Demonstration of readiness in reading and math for postsecondary education pathways courses

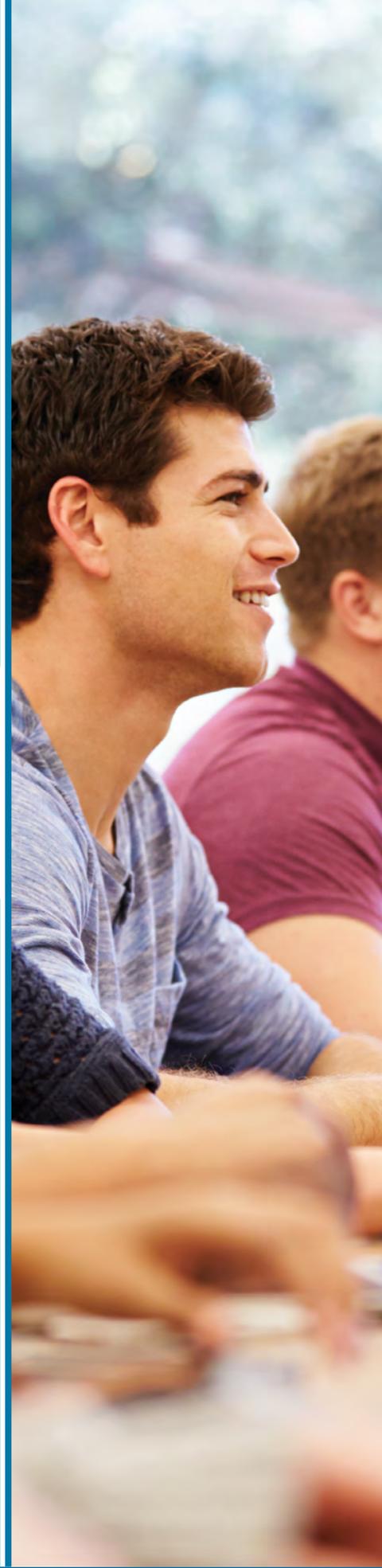
In consultation with state agencies and key industry experts including hiring professionals, education and training professionals, and industry associations, industry-based steering committees were formed to identify and propose technical and professional competencies in six sectors. The first iteration of this document included four industry areas selected due to their alignment with state economic development priorities:

- Health Sciences and Technology (HST)
- Information Technology (IT)
- Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades (METT)
- Finance and Business Services (FBS)

Competency mapping was completed for an additional two industry areas from June 2018 to March 2019. These areas are:

- Arts and Communication (A&C)
- Human and Public Services (HPS) (specifically, the Education Pathways within HPS)

In 2021, technical competencies for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) were developed as part of the Perkins Model Programs of Study development process.



What Do the Competencies Represent?

The CCPE Technical and Employability Competencies serve as quality indicators of an individual's readiness to enter an industry or to pursue further education. Competency statements apply to current industry needs, contain both employability skills and technical skills, and leave opportunity for specialized training and career advancement.

While competencies are defined differently depending on the desired outcome and setting, the U.S. Department of Labor (U.S. DOL) defines a competency as "a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and abilities that affects a major part of one's job that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards and can be improved through training development and experience." This description ensures that competency statements are defined as a combination of learned content and the application of skills and abilities that can be demonstrated and evaluated.

For each CCPE sector area, competencies are organized into two broad categories: essential employability competencies, including entrepreneurial competencies, and technical competencies. Essential employability competencies, often connected to employability skills or "soft" skills, are workplace dispositions and attitudes connected to often-performed work tasks and behaviors. Applicable across many industries, employability competencies include the ability to connect industry knowledge to one's personal efficacy in the workplace. The ten employability competencies included in this report apply across all sectors. A core element of essential employability competencies also include entrepreneurial skillsets focused on growth mindset and the ability to innovate in the workplace for both personal and professional pursuits. Technical competencies relate to specific industry knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply that learning in a workplace environment. Taken together, the universal employability competencies and sector-specific technical competencies will inform how schools design pathways courses and professional learning experiences.



Competency Research Approach and Development Process

From June 2017 through March 2018, public-private steering committees consisting of industry experts across Health Science, Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering, Finance and Business Services, and IT reviewed national research and data from Illinois Human Resource professionals to draft core technical and essential employability competencies. From June 2018-March 2019 public-private steering committees of industry experts in Arts & Communications and Human Public Services, with a focus on Education, edited existing essential employability competencies and drafted industry specific core technical competencies. Cross-sector entrepreneurial competencies emerged and were incorporated as a part of the essential employability competencies.

All industry areas drafted competency statements through the following phased process:

Phase 1: Analysis of Historical and Real-Time Labor Market Information

Phase 1 provided an analysis of historical and real-time labor-market information to identify or verify high-growth, high-demand, high-wage industries in the region.

Based on this analysis, JFF conducted and synthesized research, including the following:

- Review and analysis of existing national resources, e.g.; Department of Labor, O*Net, and national credentialing agencies
- Industry-specific implications regarding the future of work

Phase 2: Analysis of National Resources and Local Talent Pipeline Demands

To ensure competencies are aligned with the demand of the local labor market, Phase 2 of the competency mapping process involved the following:

- Interviews with local Human Resources and Talent Acquisition professionals in the industry
- Review and analysis of state and/or regional entry level job descriptions along with trends and implications

Phase 3: Establish Sector-Specific Steering Committee for Iterative Review

In Phase 3, sector-specific steering committees reviewed the national and local research and coalesced on a list of top ten essential employability and sector-wide technical competencies. These committees convened and developed competency statements in a series of in-person and virtual meetings.

Committees included local industry experts with the following perspectives: Human Resources and Talent Acquisitions, Workforce Development and Training, Higher Education, Secondary Education and Career and Technical Education.

Phase 4: Public Comment Period

Prior to finalization and dissemination, broad-based industry feedback was collected and incorporated to encourage wider adoption for use in educational and industry-based settings. Public comment occurred through a digital survey. The survey results were then collected, analyzed and incorporated.



TOP 10 CROSS-SECTOR ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCY STATEMENTS

Teamwork & Conflict Resolution	Students can use their understanding of working cooperatively with others to complete work assignments and achieve mutual goals.
Communication	<p>Verbal: Students can use their understanding of English grammar and public speaking, listening, and responding, convey an idea, express information, and be understood by others.</p> <p>Written: Students can use their understanding of standard business English to ensure that written work is clear, direct, courteous, and grammatically correct.</p> <p>Digital: Students can use their understanding of email, keyboarding, word processing, and digital media to convey work that is clear, direct, courteous, and grammatically correct.</p>
Problem Solving	Students can use their critical thinking skills to generate and evaluate solutions as they relate to the needs of the team, customer, and company.
Decision Making	Students can use their understanding of problem solving to implement and communicate solutions.
Critical Thinking	Students can use their understanding of logic and reasoning to analyze and address problems.
Adaptability & Flexibility	Students can use their understanding of workplace change and variety to be open to new ideas and handle ambiguity.
Initiative & Self-Drive	Students can use their understanding of goal setting and personal impact to achieve professional goals and understand personal impact.
Reliability & Accountability	Students can use their understanding of commitment, time management, and follow through to ensure that a professional team functions properly and meets collective goals.
Cultural Competence	Students can use their understanding of diversity and inclusion to communicate and work effectively across a multitude of abilities, cultures, and backgrounds.
Planning & Organizing	Students can use their understanding of time management to plan effectively and accomplish assigned tasks.

ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES

Principles of Entrepreneurship

Students can apply their understanding of the process and characteristics of business development and promotion in order to apply strategies of innovation to personal and professional business pursuits.

Innovation & Invention

Students can use their understanding of idea generation, design thinking, product and business development in order to introduce and process new and effective ideas.

Growth Mindset

Students can use their understanding of learning from challenges, set-backs, and failure in order to adapt strategies and continue efforts to achieve personal goals.



AFNR Systems & Integration

Students can identify and analyze the breadth, depth, and interconnectivity of AFNR systems in order to make sustainable and innovative management decisions.

Technology

Students can apply their understanding of relevant technology and tools to collect information and execute effective practices across AFNR systems.

Policy & Regulations

Students can seek out, analyze, and apply information about relevant public policy and regulations to manage their impact on AFNR production, processing, distribution, and management practices.

Society & Culture

Students can use their understanding of the local natural and cultural resources, food, and economic context to steward consumer education and connections to AFNR stakeholders.

Resource Stewardship

Students can identify and analyze essential resources in order to steward them and implement sustainable management practices.

Ethical Production

Students can apply their understanding of ethical standards and practices in order to produce, process, and distribute AFNR goods and services with integrity.

Research & Innovation

Students can apply research and critical thinking skills to design innovative practices that address complex challenges in AFNR operations and industries.

Health, Safety, & Compliance

Students can use their understanding of personal safety and environmental regulations to comply with health and safety requirements as well as maintain safe and proper use of AFNR tools and equipment.





CREATIVE PROCESS COMPETENCIES

Creating	Students apply their understanding of idea generation, conceptualization of work, and work plans in order to produce, adapt, refine, and complete work.
Presenting, Performing, & Producing	Students can use their ability to select, interpret, and present artistic work in order to convey meaning and share ideas with an audience.
Responding	Students can use their ability to perceive, analyze, and interpret work in order to evaluate and apply meaning to a creative presentation.
Connecting	Students can use their understanding of how societal, cultural, and historical context influences ideas and works in order to deepen understanding and evaluation of creative work.
Investigation & Research	Students can use their ability to identify and evaluate appropriate content and data in order to apply knowledge, revise, and refine individual works and presentations.

CREATIVE CAREERS COMPETENCIES

Project Management	Students can use their understanding of setting project deadlines, task-break down, and delegation in order to successfully complete projects independently or as part of a team.
Creative Technology & Design	Students can use their understanding of digital technology, cloud computing artistic elements, and composition techniques in order to create, edit, and complete work.
Resource Management	Students can use their understanding the principles of managing, monitoring, and controlling resources including assets, money, and products in order to successfully achieve project expectations.
Brand Identity, Marketing, & Brand Management	Students can use their understanding of developing and adhering to an identity and core message in order to maintain consistency, market, and influence customer and community behavior.
Human Interaction	Students can use their understanding of communication, listening, and collaboration in order to ensure audience, customer, and team satisfaction.



Cash & Capital Principles	Students can use their understanding of the nature of cash, monetary systems, and the value of money in order to recognize the risk, return, and opportunity cost associated with capital.
Technical Applications	Students can use their understanding of spreadsheets and accounting software to maintain, update, and retrieve data from records.
Project Management	Students can use their understanding of time management and organization to set timely and measurable goals leading to project completion.
Principles of Economics & Business	Students can use their understanding of micro- and macro-economics to understand how an economy functions locally and globally.
Financial Reporting	Students can use their understanding of financial statements to assess a business's financial information.
Financial Statements	Students can use their understanding of financial statements to prepare and interpret balance sheets, income statements, cash flow statements, and retained earnings.
Customer Care & Marketing	Students can use their understanding of market demands to meet the needs of a client.
Business Operations	Students can use their understanding of transaction management to perform business operations.
Principals of Customer Relationship Management	Students can use their understanding of customer communication and customer relationship management software to attract new customers and sustain existing customers.
Fundamentals of Sales	Students can use their understanding of personalized service and market demands to secure successful sales interactions.



Medical Terminology	Students can use their understanding of basic medical terminology, including abbreviations, acronyms, and diagnostic terms, to communicate effectively with healthcare personnel and patients.
Healthcare Industry & Culture	Students can use their understanding of the basic components and culture of the health industry to understand the purpose and function of key stakeholders, practices, practitioners, and regulations.
Healthcare Delivery Practices	Students can use their understanding of the practices, procedures, and personnel involved in delivering quality patient care to evaluate the appropriateness of a plan, instructions, or assigned task.
Healthcare Industry Ethics	Students can use their understanding of confidentiality, morality, and legal concepts to evaluate and apply the merits, risks, and social concerns to workplace decisions.
Health Professions Licensure	Students can use their understanding of education requirements, licensure, and certification to ensure proper adherence to regulations that guide service delivery.
Emergency Response	Students can use their understanding of emergency procedures and protocols to respond to and expedite safety in an emergency situation.
Healthcare Confidentiality	Students can use their understanding of HIPPA to adhere to legal requirements and maintain confidentiality.
Healthcare Personnel & Roles	Students can use their understanding of the practices, procedures, and personnel used to deliver quality patient care to identify one's role on a team and within the overall health environment.
Healthcare Sanitation	Students can use their understanding of sanitation and health regulations to ensure that healthcare facilities and tools meet standards for cleanliness.
Healthcare Rules & Regulation	Students can use their understanding of basic laws and regulations (Patient Bill of Rights, CLIA, EMTALA, OSHA, etc.) to meet accreditation standards and to obey the law.



PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Childhood & Student Development	Students can use their understanding of learner development theory from early childhood through adult learning including cognitive development, self-esteem, motivation, perseverance, and intellectual risk taking in order to provide appropriate content and supports for students.
Curriculum & Program Design	Students can use their understanding of learner development theory from early childhood through adult learning including cognitive development, self-esteem, motivation, perseverance, and intellectual risk taking in order to provide appropriate content and supports for students.
Curriculum Relevance & Collaboration	Students can use their understanding of current events, cross-curriculum connections, and out-of-classroom realities to create linkages among content areas and learners' lived experiences.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Managing & Monitoring Learning	Students can describe and demonstrate strategies to enrich, maintain, and alter learning environments in order to engage and motivate student learning.
Equitable Treatment	Students can use their understanding of diversity of language, culture, and ability to ensure an inclusionary environment for all students to learn.
Learning Environment	Students can use their understanding of motivational, social and physical environmental elements to optimize learning and establish a positive environment for all learners.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Citizenship, Family, & Community Relationships	Students can use their understanding of community and family engagement in order to connect students to opportunities and effectively support learning.
Health, Safety, & Legal Responsibilities	Students can use their understanding of health, safety, and legal expectations in order to adhere to organizational procedures, local, state, and federal law.

INSTRUCTION

Evaluation & Assessment	Students can use their understanding of learning standard and multiple measures and methods to demonstrate learning in order to evaluate growth in learning and adjust to learners' needs.
Observation & Adaptation	Students use their understanding of individual student and classroom observation in order to adjust curriculum to meet individual and group learning needs.



Basic Principles of Information Technology Concepts, Systems, Platforms & Tools	Students can use their understanding of fundamental IT concepts, systems, platforms, tools, and technology to understand the common roles of IT professionals.
Security	Students can use their understanding of malware, firewall, IDS, and IPS to recognize and describe basic threats to networked computers.
Logic & Fundamentals of Computer Languages	Students can use their understanding of how computer languages communicate to build basic mobile and web applications.
Routing & Network Configuration	Students can use their understanding of common networking protocols to explain the purpose of routing, network configuration, and monitoring.
User & Customer Support	Students can use their understanding of the range of services used to provide assistance and technical support to help users implement and solve problems related to information technology.
Basic Principles of Hardware	Students can use their understanding of communication systems hardware to describe the purpose and function of fundamental end user devices, switches, routers, wireless access points, etc.
Risk Management & Information Assurance	Students can use their understanding of the standards and applications needed to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information and information systems.
Basic Principles of Software Development	Students can use their understanding of designing, writing, testing, and maintaining source code of computer programs to manage and maintain software.
Networks	Students can use their understanding of hardware and software to facilitate communication between people and computer systems.
Basics of Virtualization & Cloud Computing	Students can use their understanding of the features, benefits, and concepts of virtualization and cloud computing to differentiate among types of cloud services.





Equipment Safety	Students can use their understanding of equipment usage, practices, and procedures to maintain a healthy, safe, and secure work environment.
Manufacturing Environment	Students can use their understanding of workstations, tools, and equipment operations to safely navigate a manufacturing environment.
Personal Health & Safety	Students can use their understanding of personal safety and environmental regulations to comply with local, federal, and company health/safety demands.
Spatial Reasoning	Students can use their understanding of objects in relation to one another to understand three-dimensional imaging.
Process, Design, & Development	Students can use their understanding of technical drawings and schematics to complete the design and development process.
Installation	Students can use their understanding of tools to assemble and disassemble simple tools.
Customer Focus	Students can use their understanding of communication and project management to understand client needs and complete project accordingly.
Quality Assurance & Continuous Improvement	Students can use their understanding of product and process to meet quality systems requirements as defined by customer specifications.
Digital Manufacturing	Students can use their understanding of digital manufacturing tools and computer-based programs to complete the design and develop implementation process.
Supply Chain Logistics	Students can use their understanding of materials, suppliers, and internal systems to plan and monitor movement and storage of materials and products.

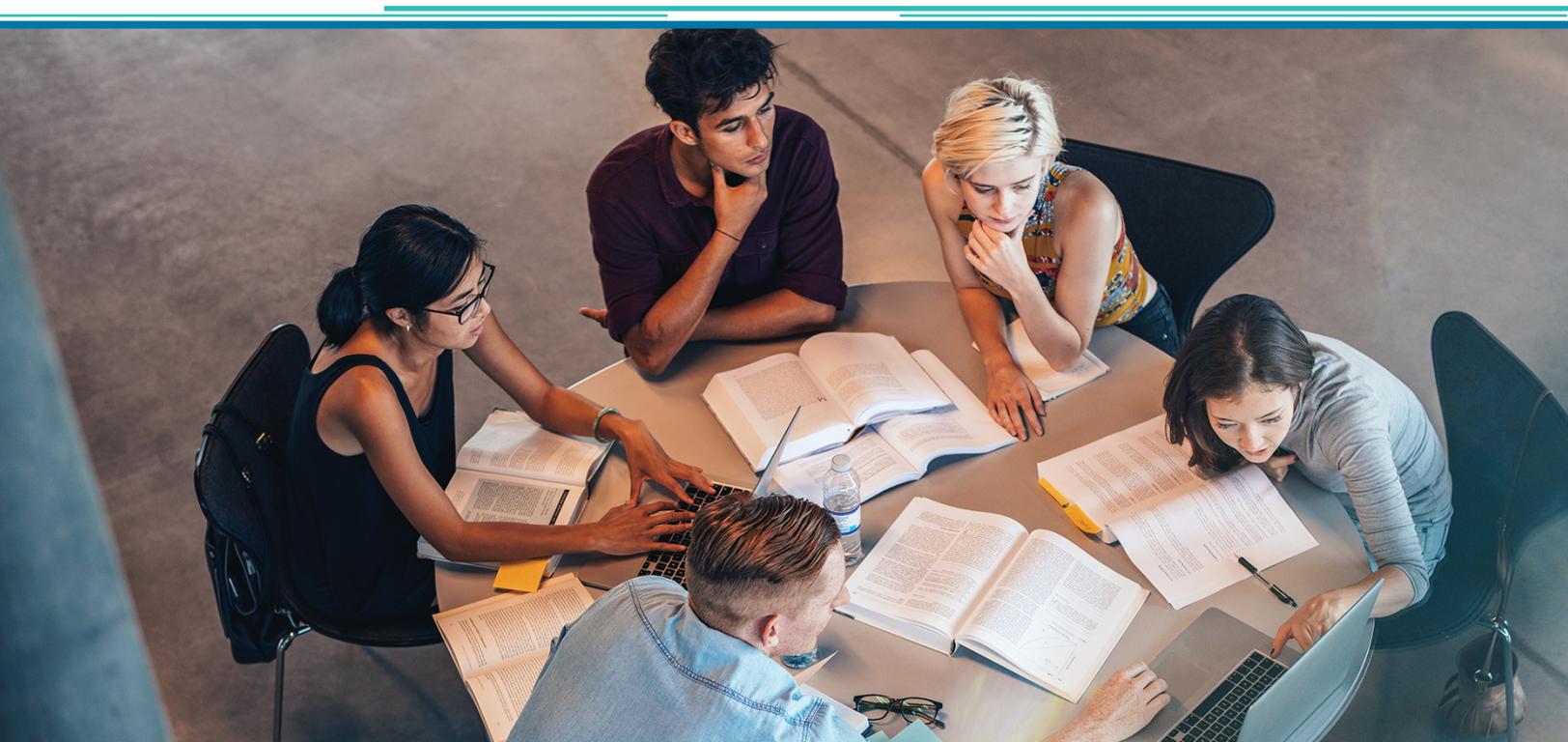


Appendix I: Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework Cross Analysis

In order to ensure cross-systems alignment, committees reviewed the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework, a resource designed to define and clarify essential employability skills and provide a standard for the state. This framework was developed through a collaboration of the Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, representatives of Illinois businesses, local chambers of commerce, educators, and other stakeholders.

The chart below illustrates the ten PWR Act CCPE Essential Employability Competencies' alignment with the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework. A full review of the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework can be found at <https://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/2-home/63-illinois-essential-employability-skills-framework>.

ILLINOIS ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FRAMEWORK	PWR ACT CCPE ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCIES
Personal Ethic: Integrity, Respect, Perseverance, Positive Attitude	Decision Making, Critical Thinking, Adaptability and Flexibility, Reliability and Accountability
Work Ethic: Dependability, Professionalism	Initiative and Self-Drive, Planning and Organizing
Teamwork: Critical Thinking, Effective and Cooperative Work	Teamwork and Conflict Resolution Problem Solving, Cultural Competence
Communication: Active Listening, Clear Communication	Communication: Written, Verbal, and Digital



Appendix II: State Agency Engagement and Approval

As referenced in the Background section, the 2018 version of this document was approved by the agencies comprising the Workforce Readiness Through Apprenticeships and Pathways (WRAP) Committee of the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families. These agencies included:

- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)
- Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE)
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
- Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)
- Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Guardianship and Advocacy Commission (IGAC)

In 2019, the Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) was formed to support implementation of Executive Order 2019-03 ("Executive Order Strengthening the State's Commitment to Workforce Development and Job Creation") and aligned efforts including PWR Act implementation. This body approved the updates to this document in February 2020 and August 2021. IIT agencies include:

- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)
- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)
- Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)
- Department of Human Services (DHS)

