

Skills England

Guidance

Employability Skills Framework

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The Employability Skills Framework draws on the Standard Skills Classification and aligns to other recognised frameworks, including the Skills Builder Universal Framework and Essential Digital Skills Framework, to provide a practical translation resource that can be used across the skills and employment system.

The framework stems from recognition that young people and employers often struggle to recognise the same employability skills in each other. At the same time, digital and AI capabilities are increasingly embedded within core employability requirements, yet existing employability, digital and AI skills frameworks are fragmented and often expressed in language that is difficult to apply in recruitment and employment contexts.

1. Planning and organising

Definition

Managing time and tasks to get things done.

What this looks like in a first job

- follow instructions carefully
- break tasks into steps
- organise what to do first
- meet deadlines
- keep track of work
- be reliable, on time and focused
- work independently to complete tasks accurately

Developing this skill

- managing school deadlines
- organising an event (for example a club, trip or fundraiser)
- balancing study, part-time work or caring responsibilities

- participating in structured programmes (for example Duke of Edinburgh's Award or project-based learning)
- coordinating tasks in a team activity, sports team, or enterprise project

What employers should look for

- can describe how they approached and completed a task
- shows awareness of deadlines
- attempts to plan ahead
- prioritises reliability, commitment, preparedness and follow-through

How employers can assess

- ask candidate to talk through how they completed a task step by step
- give a simple 'what would you do first?' task
- check if they arrive on time and prepared
- use scenario questions and examples that test dependability and prioritisation

How employers can help develop

- set clear tasks and deadlines
- show how to break work into steps
- check progress regularly and give simple feedback
- reinforce professional habits through mentoring and ownership of tasks

AI skills - employer view

Uses AI tools to assist planning, prioritisation and organising tasks, while checking

outputs and maintaining control over accuracy

AI skills - young person view

I can use AI tools to plan and organise my work, checking the outputs carefully and making changes to ensure they are accurate and make sense.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C01

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Self-Management – Planning

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 11, 12

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB2 (act in a professional manner including good time keeping and conduct), EB4 (complete own work tasks and ask for help when needed), EB8 (work in line with health, safety and environmental requirements)

T Level outline content employability skills: Planning, Self-managing, Recording, Reliable, Independent, Self-controlled, Committed, Professional, Responsible, Attention to detail, Focussed, Punctual

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Planning, Recording, Self-managing, Attention to detail, Committed, Focussed, Independent, Professional, Punctual, Reliable, Responsible, Self-controlled

Skills Imperative 2035: Organising, Planning, Prioritising

2. Adapting

Definition

Adjusting to change, feedback or new situations.

What this looks like in a first job

- handle change well
- change approach when needed
- stay calm and in control
- keep a positive attitude
- keep going when tasks are difficult. Learn from mistakes

Developing this skill

- moving schools or courses
- handling changes in routine
- adapting in part-time work or group activities
- responding to feedback in coursework or training
- adjusting approach during team sports, performances or competitions
- participating in outdoor or residential experiences that require flexibility

What employers should look for

- speaks positively about change
- shows willingness to try again
- gives examples of perseverance, learning from mistakes and responding positively to feedback

How employers can assess

- ask about a time something did not go to plan
- listen for how they reacted to feedback and what they did next to recover from difficulties

How employers can help develop

- give small changes in tasks
- reassure that mistakes are normal
- talk through what they learned and what to do next time
- continue to build confidence through coaching

AI skills - employer view

Adapts how they work as AI tools and processes change, being curious about using new tools as they emerge and adjusting approach where needed.

AI skills - young person view

I can adapt how I work as AI tools change, and I am confident trying new tools and approaches when needed.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C02

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Self-Management – Adapting

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 12, 25

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB6 (seek ways to manage own financial, health and wellbeing needs using available

resources), EB7 (overcome challenges and adapt to changes at work)

T Level outline content employability skills: Self-managing, Persistent, Flexible, Adaptable, Resilient, Inclusive, Reflective, Independent, Responsive, Tolerant

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Self-managing, Adaptable, Flexible, Inclusive, Independent, Persistent, Reflective, Resilient, Responsive, Tolerant

3. Working with others

Definition

Collaborating to achieve a shared outcome.

What this looks like in a first job

- work well with other people
- be respectful, inclusive and polite
- support colleagues and contribute positively to team culture
- play your part and help the team achieve shared goals

Developing this skill

- team sports
- group coursework
- volunteering or social action projects
- participation in clubs (for example drama, coding or debating)
- community activities

- family responsibilities
- contributing to group challenges such as enterprise projects or Duke of Edinburgh's Award

What employers should look for

- describes working with others
- demonstrates inclusion and shows respect for different views
- explains their role in a group and how they contributed to group success

How employers can assess

- ask for an example of working in a group
- use a short paired or group task if assessing more than one candidate at the same time
- notice how they treat others, including the interviewer

How employers can help develop

- put them in team tasks
- explain roles clearly
- allocate a mentor in the team
- give feedback on how they work with others

AI skills - employer view

Collaborates effectively using AI tools and shares effective practice with colleagues.

AI skills - young person view

I can work with others using AI tools, sharing how I use them and learning from others to improve my approach.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C03

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Collaboration – Teamwork

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 4, 12

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB2 (act in a professional manner including good time keeping and conduct), EB4 (complete own work tasks and ask for help when needed), EB5 (work with colleagues to contribute to team outcomes)

T Level outline content employability skills: Working in a team, Negotiating, Integrity, Socially adept, Empathetic, Tolerant, Honest, Helpful, Inclusive, Respectful, Polite

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Communicating, Empathetic, Helpful, Honest, Inclusive, Integrity, Respectful, Polite, Socially adept, Tolerant

Skills Imperative 2035: Collaboration

4. Listening

Definition

Understanding information and perspectives from others.

What this looks like in a first job

- listen carefully
- understand instructions
- notice when others need help or clarification
- respond appropriately
- check understanding before moving on

Developing this skill

- following instructions in lessons or training
- taking part in group activities or discussions
- responding to coaching in sports or arts activities
- volunteering or helping others
- participating in structured programmes where instructions or safety briefings must be followed (for example outdoor activities, workshops)

What employers should look for

- gives others time to speak
- understands questions, taking time if needed
- responds appropriately
- exhibits curiosity and reflects back what others have said
- respects other perspectives

How employers can assess

- give simple instructions for a short task to complete
- describe a simple workplace situation (for example a customer asking for help) and ask what they would do

How employers can help develop

- model active listening
- give structured instructions
- provide clear guidance
- encourage active listening habits

AI skills - employer view

Interprets information from digital and AI-supported communications, checking requirements before acting.

AI skills - young person view

I can understand information shared digitally, including AI-supported content, and I check I understand what others need before using AI tools.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C04

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Communication – Listening

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 3, 4

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB1 (communicate and share information using verbal, non-verbal, written and digital

methods), EB2 (act in a professional manner including good time keeping and conduct)

T Level outline content employability skills: Communicating, Negotiating, Perceptive, Responsive

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Communicating, Perceptive, Responsive

Skills Imperative 2035: Communication

5. Speaking

Definition

Expressing ideas clearly to others.

What this looks like in a first job

- explain ideas clearly
- speak in a polite and professional way
- adjust depending on the situation
- show confidence and speak up when needed

Developing this skill

- presentations in school or college
- participating in discussions, debates or public speaking activities
- customer-facing roles (for example part-time work or volunteering)
- performing in drama, music or other arts activities

- contributing to student council or leadership groups

What employers should look for

- speaks with confidence so that others can hear
- explains ideas clearly in their own words
- shows willingness to contribute to conversation

How employers can assess

- ask them to explain something they have done
- check if they can explain clearly and confidently

How employers can help develop

- give opportunities to speak (for example updates or customer interaction)
- give simple feedback on how clear they were

AI skills - employer view

Communicates clearly about their work, including how AI has been used and any limitations of the output.

AI skills - young person view

I can explain my ideas clearly, including how I have used AI and any limitations in the results.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C05

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Communication – Speaking

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Task 3

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB1 (communicate and share information using verbal, non-verbal, written and digital methods), EB2 (act in a professional manner including good time keeping and conduct)

T Level outline content employability skills: Communicating, Presenting, Negotiating

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Communicating.

Skills Imperative 2035: Communication

6. Leadership

Definition

Guiding or supporting others to achieve a goal.

What this looks like in a first job

- take responsibility
- follow through on tasks
- support and encourage others
- take initiative and step up when needed
- set a positive example even without a formal leadership role

Developing this skill

- leading part of a group task
- mentoring or supporting peers
- organising activities or events
- taking responsibility in clubs, societies or sports teams (for example team captain)
- involvement in student council, youth voice or community projects
- contributing to structured leadership programmes (for example Duke of Edinburgh's Award, cadets)

What employers should look for

- shares examples of taking responsibility (formal or informal)
- shows initiative
- describes supporting or guiding others

How employers can assess

- ask about a time they took responsibility or helped others
- look for examples where they stepped up or followed through

How employers can help develop

- give responsibility for small tasks
- encourage them to take ownership
- recognise when they show initiative

AI skills - employer view

Takes responsibility for decisions supported by AI and uses tools in a safe, ethical and responsible way.

AI skills - young person view

I take responsibility for how I use AI tools, making sure I use them in a safe, ethical and appropriate way.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C06

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Collaboration – Leadership

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 14, 15, 25

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB3 (apply new learning and feedback to everyday practice)

T Level outline content employability skills: Leading, Self-managing, Self-confident, Committed, Enthusiastic, Integrity, Responsible, Responsive, Takes initiative

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Leading, Self-managing, Assertive, Committed, Enterprising, Enthusiastic, Integrity, Responsible, Responsive, Self-confident, Takes initiative

7. Learning and investigating

Definition

Finding out information and building understanding.

What this looks like in a first job

- show curiosity and interest
- ask questions
- find information when needed
- think about what went well and what could improve
- learn from feedback and take steps to improve

Developing this skill

- school or college projects
- self-directed learning (for example learning a new skill or hobby)
- participating in STEM clubs, competitions or research projects
- exploring topics through enrichment activities such as museum visits, fieldwork or guest talks
- engaging in problem-based or project-based learning

What employers should look for

- shows curiosity
- asks questions
- describes how they learned something new
- reflects on what they improved

How employers can assess

- ask how they learned something new
- look for examples of asking questions or improving over time

How employers can help develop

- encourage questions
- show how to find information
- give feedback and time to reflect and improve

AI skills - employer view

Uses AI tools to find and evaluate information, checking reliability and building their own understanding.

AI skills - young person view

I can use AI tools to find information and help me learn, but I check sources and build my own understanding.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C07

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Creative Problem Solving – Problem Solving

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 9, 10, 23

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB3 (apply new learning and feedback to everyday practice), EB6 (seek ways to manage own financial, health and wellbeing needs using available resources)

T Level outline content employability skills: Investigating, Analysing, Evaluating,

Observing, Persistent, Self-aware, Enthusiastic, Reflective

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Analysing, Investigating, Observing, Enthusiastic, Independent, Persistent, Reflective, Self-aware

Skills Imperative 2035: Information literacy

8. Creating

Definition

Generating ideas and improving ways of doing things.

What this looks like in a first job

- suggest ideas
- look for ways to improve how things are done
- take initiative
- be proactive and willing to try new approaches

Developing this skill

- creative subjects (art, music, drama)
- generating ideas in group projects or enterprise activities
- problem-solving in daily life
- organising events or campaigns
- participation in creative clubs (for example media, design, coding, performance)
- contributing ideas in social action or community projects

What employers should look for

- suggests ideas or improvements
- shows willingness to try different approaches
- describes thinking beyond the obvious

How employers can assess

- ask for an example of improving something or suggesting an idea
- prompt with ‘what would you do differently?’

How employers can help develop

- ask for their ideas
- encourage small improvements and experimentation
- show that new ideas are valued in everyday work

AI skills - employer view

Uses AI tools to generate ideas and refine outputs creatively, applying their own judgement to refine outputs.

AI skills - young person view

I can use AI tools to generate ideas, but I improve and refine them using my own judgement.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C08

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Creative Problem Solving – Creativity

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 12, 13

T Level outline content employability skills: Designing, Creativity, Enterprising, Takes initiative

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Creativity, Takes initiative, Enterprising

Skills Imperative 2035: Creative thinking

9. Problem solving and decision making

Definition

Understanding issues and choosing appropriate actions.

What this looks like in a first job

- break down problems into smaller parts
- think about different options
- keep trying to find a solution
- use judgement
- take ownership of decisions with support when needed

Developing this skill

- resolving everyday challenges
- managing conflicts in school, work or social settings
- coursework tasks requiring analysis
- participating in team sports or competitions where decisions are needed under pressure
- involvement in enterprise challenges, STEM activities or outdoor problem-solving tasks

What employers should look for

- talks through how they approached a problem
- shows logical thinking
- explains what they tried and what they learned

How employers can assess

- give a simple scenario and ask what they would do
- ask them to talk through their thinking

How employers can help develop

- talk through problems together
- show simple ways to approach problems
- review what worked and what did not

AI skills - employer view

Uses AI to explore options and solutions, testing outputs and using judgement to decide the best approach.

AI skills - young person view

I can use AI tools to explore solutions, but I check the outputs and decide what is the best option.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C09

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Creative Problem Solving – Problem Solving

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 11, 12, 13

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB4 (complete own work tasks and ask for help when needed), EB7 (overcome challenges and adapt to changes at work)

T Level outline content employability skills: Solving problems, Assessing risks, Analysing, Critical thinking, Decision making, Evaluating, Assertive

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Critical thinking, Decision making, Evaluating

Skills Imperative 2035: Problem solving, Decision making

10. Numeracy

Definition

Using basic maths to understand and work with numbers.

What this looks like in a first job

- use numbers with confidence
- understand and explain information
- double check work
- pay attention to detail
- be honest about mistakes and correct them

Developing this skill

- budgeting or managing money (personal or project-based)
- handling money in part-time work or volunteering
- measuring or estimating in practical activities (for example cooking, construction, design projects)
- analysing data in coursework
- applying numbers in sports, fitness tracking or enterprise activities

What employers should look for

- shows confidence using numbers in everyday situations
- explains how they checked their work or ensured accuracy

How employers can assess

- use a simple real-life task (for example reading a chart or completing a basic calculation)
- ask how they would check their answer

How employers can help develop

- give practical tasks using numbers
- show how to check work
- encourage checking and asking if unsure

AI skills - employer view

Uses AI tools to work with numerical data, checking outputs and ensuring results are accurate and make sense.

AI skills - young person view

I can use AI tools to work with data and numbers, but I check the results to make sure they are accurate and make sense.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C10

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Creative Problem Solving – Problem Solving

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Task 11

T Level outline content employability skills: Integrity, Honest, Attention to detail, Analysing

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Integrity, Honest, Attention to detail, Analysing

11. Digital literacy

Definition

Using digital tools effectively and safely (including AI).

What this looks like in a first job

- use digital tools in the right way and independently
- communicate clearly using digital tools
- check outputs (including AI) are correct
- use technology safely and responsibly

Developing this skill

- using devices and school systems
- engaging with digital platforms for coursework or communication
- participating in digital or STEM clubs (for example coding, robotics, media production)
- using technology in creative activities
- informal use of AI and digital tools
- contributing to online collaboration or content creation

What employers should look for

- describes using digital tools confidently
- shows awareness of checking information or outputs (including AI)
- understands appropriate use

How employers can assess

- ask what digital tools they have used
- give a simple task if possible, (for example following instructions)
- ask how they check information
- explore their approach to AI outputs and checking

How employers can help develop

- provide training
- show how to use tools step by step
- explain what ‘good’ looks like
- reinforce checking work and safe use

AI skills - employer view

Uses digital and AI tools confidently, understanding what they can and cannot do and checking outputs appropriately.

AI skills - young person view

I can use digital and AI tools confidently, and I understand their strengths and limitations which helps me to use them appropriately.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C11

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Cross-cutting

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 12, 13, 23

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB1 (communicate and share information using verbal, non-verbal, written and digital methods), EB2 (act in a professional manner including good time keeping and conduct)

12. Reading

Definition

Understanding written information.

What this looks like in a first job

- read and understand instructions and information
- pick out the most important points
- check understanding
- pay attention to detail
- follow written guidance correctly

Developing this skill

- school or college learning
- interpreting written instructions in activities or tasks
- engaging with online information and research
- reading materials linked to enrichment activities (for example scripts, briefs, guidance for projects or competitions)
- following written guidance in volunteering or part-time work

What employers should look for

- interprets written information and identifies key messages
- uses appropriate tone for the situation

How employers can assess

- give short written instructions and ask them to explain or summarise key points or follow them
- check understanding

How employers can help develop

- provide clear written instructions
- encourage them to highlight key points
- check understanding regularly

AI skills - employer view

Reads and evaluates written and AI-generated content, identifying what is relevant, accurate and useful to their work.

AI skills - young person view

I can read and assess written and AI-generated content, deciding what is accurate, relevant and useful.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C12

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Communication

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 9, 23

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB1 (communicate and share information using verbal, non-verbal, written and digital methods), EB2 (act in a professional manner including good time keeping and conduct)

T Level outline content employability skills: Communicating

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Communicating

Skills Imperative 2035: Communication

13. Writing

Definition

Communicating ideas clearly in written form.

What this looks like in a first job

- write clearly and accurately
- organise information in a clear way
- use a professional and appropriate tone
- be polite and respectful
- check written work and take responsibility for it

Developing this skill

- coursework and assignments
- writing emails, applications or messages
- producing content for enrichment activities (for example student newspapers, blogs, project reports)
- completing forms or documentation in volunteering or part-time work
- contributing written work in group or enterprise projects

What employers should look for

- clarity and structure rather than perfection
- ability to communicate ideas in writing

How employers can assess

- ask for a short written response (for example a message or form)
- check clarity and structure rather than perfection

How employers can help develop

- provide simple templates (for example emails)
- give feedback
- show examples of good writing

AI skills - employer view

Produces clear written work using AI tools, checking content for accuracy, clarity and appropriateness.

AI skills - young person view

I can use AI tools to support my writing, but I check and improve the content to make sure it is clear, accurate and appropriate.

Mapping to frameworks

UK SSC Core Skills: SSC.C13

Skills Builder Universal Framework: Communication

Essential Digital Skills Framework: Tasks 4, 13

Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours: EB1 (communicate and share information using verbal, non-verbal, written and digital methods), EB2 (act in a professional manner including good time keeping and conduct)

T Level outline content employability skills: Communicating

V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certificate: Communicating

Skills Imperative 2035: Communication

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