Skills England

Guidance

Introducing the Employability Skills Framework

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1. Introduction

Building on the Standard Skills Classification, the Employability Skills Framework provides the skills system with a consistent language around employability skills - also sometimes referred to as transferable, core or essential skills. It has been designed to provide a practical translation resource that can be used across the skills and employment system.

2. Why we developed the framework

Young people often find it difficult to recognise the value of skills developed through education, volunteering, caring responsibilities, hobbies, sport and community activities.

At the same time, employers consistently report that many young people struggle to explain how their experiences demonstrate skills that are relevant to work. They also highlight the challenge of recruiting for potential when candidates have limited work experience.

This framework aims to create a shared language that helps young people describe their capabilities and helps employers identify potential more consistently.

3. How to use the framework

The framework is available to be used by employers, skills planners, organisations supporting young people in careers information and advice, education and training providers, and youth support organisations. Integrated into the right processes and resources, the framework can help provide better skills for young people and greater recognition from employers.

For young people it can support:

- CV and application writing and interview preparation – identifying what skills employers want and how they can demonstrate these with specific real examples
- career exploration – understanding what different jobs entail
- skills reflection and self-assessment – using AI prompts to think about their strengths and preferences

For employers, it can support:

- recruitment for potential – providing opportunity to young people with promise but little experience
- skills-based recruitment approaches – opening out their recruitment to new pools of talent through clearer job descriptions with desired skills made explicit, and candidate assessment based on an individuals' capacity to do a job
- early-career development – identifying where additional support would help entry-level workers to grow their skills, maintain employment and progress in their careers

For educators and employment professionals, and those supporting young people in their lives, it can support:

- employability coaching programmes – working with young people to articulate their experience and skills in language employers understand and value
- skills development programmes – designing programmes to cover the relevant skills employers want
- alignment across existing employability frameworks – coherent and progressing development programmes that build on existing skills

4. How the framework was developed

The framework is not intended to replace existing employability frameworks or create a new skills taxonomy. Instead, it brings together established frameworks and standards.

The primary foundation is the UK Standard Skills Classification, which provides the 13 core skills included within the framework. These have been supplemented by practical examples and developmental progression drawn from the following:

- Skills England Foundation Apprenticeship employability skills and behaviours
- T Level outline content – employability skills
- V Level, foundation certificate, occupational certification Framework for transferrable skills and work-related behaviours
- Skills Builder Universal Framework
- Essential Digital Skills Framework
- Skills Imperative 2025 Essential Skills for the Future

Digital and AI-enabled skills have been embedded throughout the framework to reflect the growing importance of technology in both recruitment and the workplace. Particular emphasis has been placed on responsible use, critical evaluation of outputs, understanding limitations and maintaining human judgement.

Following initial formulation of the framework, Skills England collaborated with the King's Trust, the Youth Futures Foundation, the North West Business Leadership Team and the St Martin's Group to host feedback sessions with young people and employers. Participants responded positively to the framework and recognised a

clear need for a tool that helps bridge the gap between young people's experiences and employer's expectations. Employers were particularly supportive of the framework's intention to align existing frameworks and provide a shared language for education, training providers, employers and employment support organisations.

5. Development of use cases

Future development of the framework will focus on embedding it across the skills and employment system. Skills England will work with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education to align relevant services, programmes and data with the framework wherever possible.

We encourage partners to adopt and embed the framework in their programmes, systems and communications. By using the framework consistently, organisations can create practical tools and digital services that help employers and young people understand and apply employability skills.

Widespread adoption will help establish a shared language for employability across the system. This will make it easier for young people to demonstrate their skills and potential, while helping employers identify, recruit and develop talent more effectively.

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