

Why Are We Doing This? Enhancing Curriculum with a Career Readiness Toolkit

Identifying the competencies



Critical Thinking/Problem Solving

1. Identify relevant information and analyze data.
2. Restrain emotions during analysis.
3. Collaborate to develop and test possible solutions.
4. Adopt multiple perspectives and distinguish between fact and opinion.



Oral/Written Communications

1. Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively when speaking and in writing.
2. Write/edit memos, letters and complex reports clearly and effectively.
3. Public speaking skills and ability to express ideas to others.
4. Express complex ideas clearly and accurately to a variety of audiences.



Leadership

1. Manage projects from beginning to end.
2. Define and clarify roles, objectives, and processes.
3. Use interpersonal skills to coach others on performance improvement.
4. Understand how to motivate others and delegate responsibilities.



Digital Technology

1. Value continuous learning and be responsive to a variety of training formats.
2. Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task.
3. Demonstrate the ability to adapt to new and emerging technologies.
4. Use technology ethically and efficiently to solve problems and accomplish goals.



Teamwork/Collaboration

1. Build collaborative relationships while understanding others' viewpoints.
2. Negotiate and manage conflict.
3. Reach consensus on processes and solutions.
4. Work together to identify and utilize the strengths of each member.



Professionalism/Work Ethic

1. Demonstrate accountability and effective work habits (e.g., punctuality, time workload management, working productively with others).
2. Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.
3. Have a professional work image.
4. Act responsibly (e.g. use social media responsibly) and learn from mistakes.



Career Management









1. Identify and articulate skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals.
2. Identify areas of professional growth.
3. Navigate and explore job options.
4. Take necessary steps to pursue and advocate for opportunities in the workplace.



Global/Intercultural Fluency

1. Value differences and implement strategies for inclusion.
2. Interact respectfully and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.
3. Understand one's own biases and use that awareness to work to eliminate them.

Mapping the competencies to classroom assignments

Course Assignments	Career Readiness Competencies							
								
Example 1: Class Participation	✓	✓		✓				
Example 2: Online discussion	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Example 3: Research paper	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Example 4: Group project with presentation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Example 5: Extra credit – student-selected event with prior instructor approval	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Example 6: Extra credit – LinkedIn profile	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Sample syllabus text

This course will help you refine your three-part path to career readiness. In , you will learn more about ways to use your degree, explore ways to gain the hands-on experience employers expect, and effectively communicate what you have learned and the skills you bring to the workplace.



In UNIV 220, you will demonstrate career competencies as you:

- Apply **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving** skills by researching careers and industries of interest, using career assessments to evaluate possible career paths, and developing career/academic action plans based on your learning
- Practice **Oral/Written Communications** through articulation of your career concerns and learning through course assignments (e.g. career conversations with professionals, workview/lifeview) and presentations (e.g. Roundtables)
- Use **Teamwork/Collaboration** by taking an active role in your career development through participation in Accountability Groups and class discussions, ongoing conversations with your instructor about your career concerns/plans and course progress
- Employ **Digital Technology** skills through participation in class activities via Blackboard, MoccNote, Lynda.com, etc.
- Show **Leadership** by working cooperatively with classmates and instructor to empower peers achieve their career development goals while enabling them to help you achieve your own
- Demonstrate **Professionalism/Work Ethic** by developing appropriate classroom behaviors (e.g. fully engaging with course material by completing assignments to your best ability and participating fully while in the classroom) and networking strategies (e.g. connecting with a professional to request and conduct a career conversation)
- Practice **Career Management** through identification and articulation of values, interests, personality and skills, career goals, and areas necessary for professional growth
- Express **Global/Intercultural Fluency** by actively working to create an inclusive learning community through respectful and thoughtful interaction with peers and your instructor, virtually and in person

University Career Services (UCS) helps Mason students to connect what you know and have learned from your degree you're your career goals. UCS works with students at all points in the career development process: assisting you in exploring how to best use your talents, strengths, and interests to select majors and career paths, as well as connecting with employers and strategizing for breaking into your industry of interest. For individualized attention and assistance beyond what is covered in class, reach out: careers.gmu.edu.

Demonstrating the competencies in assignments

Example 1: Class Participation

Class Engagement and Participation

Description

Students are expected to attend each scheduled course, complete the readings before class, and actively participate. These assignments promote oral communication skills. The ability to think critically and communicate effectively is a highly desired skill by employers. The ability to concisely and clearly express your ideas is a vital part of interaction with classmates, colleagues, and employers. This task will help you learn to share your point of view in a professional and organized manner. Both presentation style and content can impact the reception of your ideas.

Examples of professional and business casual attire

Share with students in advance of class presentation, guest speaker, special event or career fair:

<https://www.pinterest.com/masoncareer/>

Samples of feedback for enhancing student professionalism

Missed event follow-up

We missed you at the [insert event name (e.g. alumni career panel)], and hope this email finds you well. When we arrange career-development events such as _____ and you do not attend, it reflects negatively on you, our department and Mason as a whole. As we are committed to educating students about the importance of professionalism, we encourage you to let your instructor know 24 hours in advance.

Sincerely,

Missed appointment follow-up

I missed you at your scheduled appointment today during office hours, and hope this message finds you well.

Missing an appointment without providing sufficient notice prevents other Mason students from meeting with an instructor during the time slot reserved for you. If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment in the future, please email or call as soon as possible.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

Unprofessional email follow-up

Effective written communication skills are important to your success at Mason and beyond. Mason is committed to raising the professionalism of students, and one of the ways we achieve this mission is by providing timely feedback to students about behavior that could be considered unprofessional.

Your recent email contains many of the errors listed below. Review the tips and sample email provided to improve the quality of your email communications.

Sincerely,

Sharing the Seven "S"es for Email Success with students

1. **Subject Line**- Use a concise but descriptive subject line that tells the reader what the email contains.
2. **Salutation**- Use a greeting, such as "Good Morning," or "Dear," and the recipients formal name in the beginning of your email.
3. **Substance**- Ensure the content of your email has a clear beginning, middle and end. Provide the reader with relevant context but avoid writing emails that are too lengthy. If you have multiple questions/concerns to address, consider calling/talking with the person directly instead.
4. **Signature**- Include an email signature that contains your full name, contact information, and title or degree information.
5. **Style**- Use standard fonts, and colors when creating your email. Avoid emoticons and "text speech" in email communication. Write in complete sentences using proper grammar and spelling.
6. **Send it Soon** -Respond to emails within one or two business days.
7. **Shy** away from CC and BCC: Only CC those who are vital to the conversation and BCC only if sending to a large group or protecting email addresses.

Sample successful email to share

SUBJECT: Mason student seeks your advice

Dear Mr. Jones,

I found your information on the Mason Alumni Association LinkedIn page. May I have 20 minutes of your time within the next couple weeks to ask about your experience working at Northrop Grumman? I am trying to learn more about IT careers at security companies, and your insights would be very helpful. I recognize this may be a busy time for you, so if we are unable to connect by email this week, I will try to reach you next week to find an agreeable time.

Kindly,

Isaac

*Isaac Bowman
B.S. Computer Science, 2018
ibowman@gmu.edu*

Example 2: Online discussion

Sample Assignment prompt

Randomly assign groups of 4-5 students.

The group will come up with three questions to ask the instructor that they feel are important to know and are course-related (e.g. aspects of the syllabus, assignments, text, exams, etc.). The group will also be given one guided question to help spark discussion. Examples of guided questions are:

- What does the instructor hope to accomplish for the semester?
- What is the instructor's theory of learning?
- What is the instructor's approach to evaluating students' learning in the course?
- What are the instructor's expectations for the students?
- What are the responsibilities of the instructor?
- What outcome would the instructor like from this course?

Assignment rubric

Competency/Skill evaluated	Exemplary Demonstrates consistently	Competent Demonstrates sometimes/ inconsistently	Developing Competency Demonstrates rarely	Unsatisfactory Did not demonstrate/ participate
 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify relevant information and analyze data. • Restrain emotions during analysis. • Collaborate to develop and test possible solutions. • Adopt multiple perspectives and distinguish between fact and opinion. 				
 Written Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in writing • Express complex ideas clearly and accurately • Write and edit with accuracy (spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors). 				
 Digital Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate continuous learning and responsiveness to online learning formats. • Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task • Demonstrate the ability to adapt to appropriate, designated technologies. • Use technology ethically and efficiently to accomplish assigned tasks. 				
 Teamwork and Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build collaborative relationships with classmates, seeking to understand and respect their perspectives. • Negotiate and manage conflict with classmates/group members. • Reach consensus on processes and solutions for achieving course goals. • Work together to identify and utilize the strengths of each group member. 				
 Professionalism/Work Ethic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate accountability and effective work habits (e.g., meeting course deadlines, working productively with others). • Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior. • Have a professional work image, demonstrating proper Netiquette. 				
 Global/Intercultural Fluency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate valuing of differences and model strategies for inclusion of others. • Interact respectfully and effectively with classmates from diverse backgrounds. 				

Example 3: Research paper

Writing assignments promote critical thinking, written communication skills, and organization. To see this project through from beginning to end you will need to organize your time and stick to a schedule much in the same way employers might give you tasks or reports to assemble prior to a deadline. Deductions for lateness are taken because employers value the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work.

Additionally, you will need to review a large quantity of material in your research in order to identify those elements which are pertinent to your topic. Finding relevant facts in large volumes of data and distilling that information into a, effective set of notes is not easy, but it is necessary in order to function in our data-filled environment. This information needs to be arranged into an essay that clearly expresses your unique insights to the reader. This involves synthesizing and distilling the things you have learned into a clear observation, critique, or argument.

Assignment Prompt

Final Paper: The final paper includes all of the elements of a standard journal article: introduction, literature review, methods, findings, discussion, recommendations/conclusion and references. You will revise all materials previously submitted as assignments (except the IRB protocol) for inclusion in the final paper. A detailed assignment guide will be posted on Blackboard.

Connecting classroom to career

As a group:

1. Brainstorm
 - a. skills you have gained or refined
 - b. general knowledge bases you have gained or developed (i.e., course content)
 - c. specialized knowledge bases you have gained or developed (e.g., knowledge of software or methodologies)
 - d. ways of thinking you have refined.
2. Reflect on
 - a. whether you've collectively missed any skills or themes
 - b. how you might use the information in documents and interviews as you apply for jobs, internships, grants, graduate work

Marketing Yourself

Senior Project Presentation

George Mason University

May 2018

Fairfax, VA

- Applied for and received Institutional Review Board permission to conduct research. Established protocol assuring protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects
- Develop, implemented, and evaluated research design and data collection strategy; collaborated with instructor to design survey instruments
- Reviewed and analyzed relevant legislation, scholarly journals, articles, and reports. Conducted internet-based and library research
- Provided brief, concise, helpful feedback to colleagues on draft presentations
- Designed and delivered a presentation communicating research findings to audience of 35, including professor, faculty advisors, and peers

Example 4: Group project with presentation

Students will work in groups of 4-5 over the course of the semester and will deliver a presentation. According to *Forbes* magazine, the top skill employers want in college graduates is the ability to work in a team structure. Learning how to share your skills and negotiate through differences in a group setting is an important job skill.

Assignment Rubric

Presentation Feedback Form			Points
1=Poor *2= Fair *3= Good* 4=Excellent			
Presentation Format	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an overview of the key concepts that would be discussed at the beginning of the presentation? Attempt to engage the audience with an interesting story, fact, question or interactive activity at the beginning of the presentation? 	
	Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate 3-5 main points during the presentation? Build time into the presentation for audience interaction? 	
	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the main points for the audience Create a welcoming environment for questions from the audience by encouraging the audience to ask questions, refraining from interrupting the speaker when a question is asked, restating the question for the audience, and checking in with the speaker to ensure their question was addressed 	
	Comments:		
Oral Communication	Voice Projection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could the audience hear the speakers from the back of the room? 	
	Pitch and Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vary their pitch and tone throughout the presentation to better engage the audience? 	
	Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak at a moderate rate of speech or was the content delivered too quickly or too slowly? 	
	Fillers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize the use of verbal fillers such as "like", "um," "you know", etc. 	
	Comments:		
Non-Verbal Communication	Body Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate confidence in their body language by standing up straight, minimizing distracting hand movements, refraining from pacing, and maintaining appropriate facial expressions during the presentation 	
	Eye Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain eye contact with the audience 	
	Comments:		
Audience Engagement	Audience Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the audience to participate through questioning, think-pair-share activities, ice breakers, etc. 	
	Checking for Understanding and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay attention to the non-verbal cues of the audience (i.e. facial expression, body movement, etc.) to determine if the content was being received 	
	Comments:		
Presentation Materials (Slides)	Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slide have the appropriate amount of text (i.e. 6 x6 rule) and was it easy to read 	
	Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formatting (i.e. headings, layout, etc.) is consistent throughout the presentation 	
	Comments		
Presentation Materials (Handouts)	Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handout reinforces the presentation Write and edit with accuracy (spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors). 	
	Information Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in writing Express complex ideas clearly and accurately 	
	Comments		

Connecting classroom to career

As a group:






1. Brainstorm
 - a. skills you have gained or refined
 - b. general knowledge bases you have gained or developed (i.e., course content)
 - c. specialized knowledge bases you have gained or developed (e.g., knowledge of software or methodologies)
 - d. ways of thinking you have refined.
2. Reflect on
 - a. whether you've collectively missed any skills or themes
 - b. how you might use the information in documents and interviews as you apply for jobs, internships, grants, graduate work

Marketing Yourself (Resume Statements) – Samples (to share after the activity)

- Sought out constructive criticism and implemented change based on feedback
- Gained experience by working successfully in teams on long-term complex projects
- Mastered time-management skills in individual and teamwork settings
- Collaborated with peers to conduct research in both applied theory and empirical areas
- Gained experience developing presentations and speaking publicly to large groups
- Conceptualized and developed project drafts and final report

Example 5: Extra credit – student-selected event with prior instructor approval

Sample Conduct an informational interview

Competency/Skill evaluated	Exemplary Demonstrates consistently	Competent Demonstrates sometimes/ inconsistently	Developing Competency Demonstrates rarely	Unsatisfactory Did not demonstrate/ participate
 <p>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a professional who is very knowledgeable of graduate programs and/or career interests • Provide clear details of conducted research create a thorough synthesis of interview questions and answers • Generate relevant interview questions resulting in information that aids in planning, decision making 				
 <p>Oral/Written Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively when speaking and in writing • Clearly describe the research conducted before the interview and how the research influenced his/her career decisions. • Include a copy of the thank you note and/or the email sent to interviewee. 				
 <p>Professionalism/ Work Ethic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present in a professional manner: utilize professional terms and words, makes proper eye contact, and carries him/herself in a professional manner • Demonstrate accountability and effective work habits (e.g. set and respected meeting agreement) • Demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior 				
 <p>Career Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on how the research influenced his/her career decisions. • Provide a clear description of how the interview was helpful and useful and how the information will be used. 				
 <p>Global/Intercultural Fluency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate valuing of differences and model strategies for inclusion of others. • Interact respectfully and effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds. 				

Example 6: Extra credit – LinkedIn profile

Sample LinkedIn Profile Template

Get LinkedIn to your Network

LinkedIn Profile

Use this space to jot down key words, adjectives, skill sets, etc. that may make your headline attractive to a potential employer:

LinkedIn Coursework/Academic Projects

Use this space to jot down some transferable skills you could add to your profile:

LinkedIn Companies

Use this space to jot down some companies that you want to research/have an interest in working for:

LinkedIn Groups

Use this space to jot down groups you may be interested in joining related to your career interests:

Resources:

<http://learn.linkedin.com/> (How To Videos)

<http://www.linkedin.com/alumni> (Information about where past Mason grads have gone)

<http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs> (Job postings site for recent college grads)