

# HOW EMPLOYABLE ARE YOU?

The importance of your personal skills and qualities when looking for a job

Sometimes called interpersonal skills, enterprise or foundation skills, or soft-skills, these 'employability skills' are about you as an individual. They are not specific to one job but are your personal qualities and attributes that are transferrable across jobs.

Employers seek staff with the right qualifications and skills, and many require relevant work experience. While all employers are unique and place emphasis on different attributes, they will not compromise on employability skills.



**Many job seekers don't understand how important these skills are and don't know how to demonstrate them!**

## Which employability skills do employers value?

Over time, there has been a shift in the economy towards jobs that are people-focussed, such as in health and social care, retail, hospitality, tourism and education. As such, it is no surprise that employers need their staff to have good people and communication skills. Other skills include:

### Traditional employability skills

- reliability and punctuality
- customer service skills
- a positive attitude and motivation
- the ability to work in a team
- good personal presentation

### 21<sup>st</sup> century skills

- creativity
- problem solving
- critical thinking
- digital and financial literacy
- presentation skills

## Jobs are unique and require different employability skills

All jobs have their own specific skill-set requirements, including the level of expertise or type of qualifications needed. Similarly, different jobs need different employability skills. For example, an accountant needs to be good with numbers, but they also need to be able to communicate with their clients.

**75%** of employers place at least as much emphasis, if not more, on personal qualities than they do on technical skills when recruiting

For some jobs, this is even higher! For example, for personal care workers, almost 90% of employers told us they place at least as much emphasis on personal qualities than technical skills. Aged and disability care businesses also told us why applicants weren't successful:

- 58% said they rejected candidates due to their poor communication skills
- 44% rejected candidates as they had inadequate people skills.

When applying for jobs, you need to research the job or industry to understand the types of skills the business will need. For example:

<b>Receptionists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ interpersonal skills</li><li>→ confidence</li><li>→ politeness</li></ul> 	<b>Fast food workers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ ability to work in a team</li><li>→ friendly</li><li>→ a positive attitude</li></ul> 	<b>Shelf fillers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ hard working</li><li>→ punctual</li><li>→ willing to learn</li></ul> 
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## How can you develop these skills?

You may think you are born with these personal qualities, or that you simply have them or you don't but there are ways you can develop and demonstrate these skills:

 <b>Part-time, casual or temporary jobs</b>	 <b>Work experience placements or internships</b>	 <b>Apprenticeships or traineeships</b>	 <b>Volunteering or other community activities</b>
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These all give you exposure to real situations, dealing with diverse people, sometimes in busy environments or in challenging conditions. In addition, they all help prove to future employers that you have developed your employability skills and can fit into their business.

## When applying for jobs, demonstrate your employability skills!

In job applications and interviews, you need to highlight examples of when and how you used these skills. Don't be afraid to explain your strengths and how your skills benefit the business, making you the right candidate for the job.

If you're a student, keep in mind that your group assignments demonstrate teamwork and negotiation skills; giving a speech demonstrates communication and presentation skills. Playing or coaching sport, or participating in other extra-curricular activities (like debating or helping in the library) can also be a selling point.

If you have worked at a fast food restaurant, you:

- worked in a busy environment, showing that you can work under pressure and as part of a team
- responded to customer complaints, which shows your problem solving, negotiation and customer service skills
- turned up on time for your shifts which demonstrates your reliability and punctuality

**JOB OUTLOOK<sup>®</sup>**

**Skills Match** on the Job Outlook website can help you work out what skills you have gained from your past jobs, and which careers or jobs use your skills. You can find **Skills Match** at [joboutlook.gov.au/skills-match.aspx](http://joboutlook.gov.au/skills-match.aspx)

While it may be harder at the moment to find a job as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding your employability skills will help you stand out in a competitive jobs market.

For more information about this resource, contact [employmentpathwaysanalysis@skillscommission.gov.au](mailto:employmentpathwaysanalysis@skillscommission.gov.au) or visit the Labour Market Information Portal at [lmp.gov.au](http://lmp.gov.au) and the National Skills Commission (NSC) website at [nationalskillscommission.gov.au](http://nationalskillscommission.gov.au).

Sources: NSC, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, 2019 data; The labour market for personal care workers, 2017; Foundation for Young Australians, The New Basics: Big data reveals the skills young people need for the New Work Order, 2017; ABS, Labour Force, Quarterly, seasonally adjusted data, May 2020.