

CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

Career readiness competencies are a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that support student success in the workplace and lifelong career management, as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). These competencies can support your success as a mentee and provide a strong starting point for developing SMART goals with your mentor. Below are descriptions of each competency, along with mentoring-specific examples.

1. Career & Self-Development

Proactively developing oneself both personally and professionally through continuous learning, self-awareness, and career exploration.

Example: Layla is a second-year graduate student preparing for life after graduation. She works with her mentor to identify career interests, expand her network, and explore opportunities that will support her long-term goals.

2. Communication

Clearly and effectively exchanging information, ideas, and perspectives in verbal, written, and nonverbal forms.

Example: Salma meets regularly with her mentor and practices clearly expressing her ideas, actively listening, and organizing her thoughts in both conversations and written communications.

3. Critical Thinking

Identifying and analyzing information to make informed decisions and solve problems.

Example: Talia is working in a research lab with guidance from her mentor. She analyzes data, identifies trends, and applies her findings to improve her research approach and communicate results effectively.

4. Leadership

Recognizing and building on personal and team strengths to guide, motivate, and support others in achieving shared goals.

Example: Minyang participates in weekly lab meetings where she collaborates with peers and contributes ideas that help the group stay focused and achieve shared research outcomes.

5. Professionalism

Demonstrating accountability, integrity, and effective work habits while contributing positively to academic and workplace environments.

Example: Elliot, as a mentee, consistently demonstrates reliability, ethical behavior, and respect in their interactions, helping to build trust and maintain a strong relationship with their mentor.

6. Teamwork

Building and maintaining collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals while valuing different perspectives.

Example: Walter participates in small mentoring groups where he collaborates with peers, shares responsibility, and contributes to group discussions and shared learning.

7. Technology

Using technology effectively and ethically to complete tasks, solve problems, and support decision-making.

Example: Evelyn uses digital tools to organize her work, communicate with her mentor, and prepare materials in advance of meetings, improving both efficiency and clarity.

Learn More

For additional information, detailed competency definitions, and examples of how each competency can be demonstrated, visit the [NACE Career Readiness Competencies website](#)