

FOUNDATIONAL WORK SKILLS

Students, job seekers, and currently employed workers should focus on building these holistic job skills— **the skills that form the foundation of training and job performance and those most sought by employers**, according to ACT research.

HARD SKILLS

These are the skills that employers say are critical for career success and on-the-job training:



APPLIED MATH

Critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving techniques in workplace situations. High levels of this skill include:

IDENTIFYING
errors in calculation

CONVERTING
systems of measurement

CALCULATING
areas and volumes



GRAPHIC LITERACY

Reading and comprehending graphical materials to solve work-related problems. High levels of this skill include:

INTERPRETING
trends, relationships,
and patterns

COMPARING
information and trends
among data sets

USING DATA
to make decisions



WORKPLACE DOCUMENTS

Reading and comprehending written information to make decisions and solve problems. High levels of this skill include:

INFERRING
meanings of words
and phrases from contexts

DECIPHERING
the meaning of acronyms,
jargon, or technical content

APPLYING
information and instructions
to a new situation

SOFT SKILLS

These skills are not typically taught in schools or colleges, but they're vital to virtually every job:

CAREFULNESS

Thinking before acting

COOPERATION

Likability and cordialness

CREATIVITY

Imaginative thinking

DISCIPLINE

Responsibility, dependability, follow-through without distraction

GOODWILL

Forgiveness and positivity

INFLUENCE

Impactful leadership

OPTIMISM

Positive outlook and confidence in success

ORDER

Neatness, organization

SAVVY

Understanding office politics

SOCIABILITY

Enjoyment in others

STABILITY

Composure and rationality

STRIVING

High aspirations

Why combine “hard” and “soft” skill assessments?

Together, ACT® WorkKeys® cognitive (hard) and non-cognitive (soft) skill assessments give a more complete picture of an individual's work-related competencies than either can provide alone. This “big picture” approach to testing benefits examinees by identifying their strengths, as well as skills they might wish to improve. This helps employers make more accurate predictions about an individual's job performance.

Measure these skills with ACT® WorkKeys® Assessments.

Build these skills with ACT® WorkKeys® Curriculum.

Certify these skills with ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®).

Learn more at act.org/workforce