

# Core Competencies for Career Readiness

**Career Readiness** is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite **core competencies** that broadly prepare college students for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.

## Career and Life Design

The ability to proactively manage your personal and professional growth throughout your life journey.

## Communication

The ability to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively to exchange information, using a broad range of communication styles, appropriate platforms to deliver and receive messages, and effectively communicate to different audiences in a variety of situations.

## Creative Thinking

The ability to engage dynamically with the unknown and willingness to reconsider existing problems or situations in new ways.

## Critical Thinking

The ability to exercise sound reasoning to analyze information, make decisions, identify problems, and develop workable solutions.

## Equity and Inclusion

The ability to demonstrate awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from all identities and cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

## Leadership

The ability to recognize and leverage personal and the individual strengths of others to achieve common goals and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

## Manage Information

The ability to obtain, critically interpret, use, and communicate information, turning qualitative and quantitative data into knowledge.

## Personal and Professional Effectiveness

The ability to demonstrate accountability to self and others through effective habits to be productive in work and life.

## Teamwork

The ability to collaborate with others toward a shared goal, participating actively, and maximizing team performance.

## Technology

The ability to select and leverage existing technologies and use them ethically to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals efficiently. Ability to identify, learn, and effectively use new and emerging technologies.

# Ready to Level Up?

By learning how to intentionally **develop, demonstrate, document,** and **articulate** core “career readiness” competencies, students can deepen their personal “career narratives,” strengthen their candidacy for internships and jobs, and accelerate their career mobility and advancement.

## Competency Awareness and Development: Suggestions for Getting Started

- Review and reflect on this framework of core competencies for career readiness.
- Reflect on your comfort and confidence in demonstrating and articulating each competency.
- Assess which competencies are your strongest and which ones require a more intentional focus.
- Meet with a Career Consultant at the Career Center to further explore the value of competency awareness, development, documentation, and articulation.
- Set goals for intentional competency development throughout your academic and co-curricular experiences at CC; strategically pursue activities and involvement that will enable you to further develop and demonstrate these competencies.
- Seek to incorporate career readiness competencies into your “story” and professional identity, including articulating related skills in your LinkedIn profile, resumes, cover letters, interview answers, and other application/self-marketing materials.
- Utilize the Career Center’s interview training platform, Big Interview, to practice answering interview questions about your competencies.
- Seek feedback from supervisors, mentors, and peers about their perceptions of your competencies based on their observations of your behavior in different settings.

# Career and Life Design

The ability to proactively manage your personal and professional growth throughout your life journey.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Create goals for your work and personal life, and actively work toward your goals on an ongoing basis.
- Actively engage in continuous learning.
- Adapt to the changing needs and demands in business and society.
- Engage in reflective practices.
- Practice self-care.
- Demonstrate awareness of desired skills, knowledge or abilities for a particular role.
- Develop essential knowledge, skills and abilities to increase your employability.
- Build meaningful personal and professional relationships.
- Communicate your knowledge, skills and abilities as an applicant/candidate for a job, internship, or graduate school.
- Negotiate the price of a high-cost item such as a vehicle.
- Manage relocation to a new residence and/or geographic location.
- Embrace informed risk taking.
- Learn and grow from failure or rejection.

## Examples of related skills:

- |                           |                          |                       |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Decision making         | • Resourcefulness        | • Negotiation         |
| • Goal Setting & Planning | • Resilience             | • Self-awareness      |
| • Accountability          | • Adaptability           | • Self-advocacy       |
| • Critical Thinking       | • Relationship Building  | • Self-care           |
| • Time Management         | • Interpersonal Skills   | • Growth Mindset      |
| • Organization            | • Emotional Intelligence | • Continuous Learning |
| • Creativity              | • Communication          |                       |

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Where did you see yourself in five years?
- Tell me about yourself.
- If you do not get accepted into this graduate program, what are your alternative plans?

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Adapt to changes imposed by external circumstances, such as a pandemic requiring you to transition to remote learning and working.
- Engage with the Career Center's programs, resources and support.
- Practice interviewing.
- Develop professional relationships and support network.
- Try things to test your interests or ideas.
- Develop plans and goals for your future.
- Seek and embrace development opportunities.

# Communication

The ability to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively to exchange information, using a broad range of communication styles, appropriate platforms to deliver and receive messages, and effectively communicate to different audiences in a variety of situations.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Communicate in a respectful tone and manner.
- Actively listen and effectively communicate with others.
- Write clearly and accurately for a variety of purposes and in various formats.
- Interpret, adapt and present complex information and/or ideas with consideration for the audience.
- Recognize and respond to verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Cultivate an awareness of cultural differences in communication.
- Actively seek others' perspectives to ensure inclusiveness and understanding.
- Consistently share accurate, timely information with the right people in the right format.

## Examples of related skills:

- Active Listening
- Writing skills
- Nonverbal communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Facilitation Skills
- Influencing
- Networking
- Presentation Skills
- Relationship Building
- Reflection

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Describe a time when you faced a conflict.
- Tell me about a time when you had to simplify a complex issue in order to explain it to another individual?
- Share a situation where you had to successfully persuade someone to see things your way on a project.
- Give me an example of when you had to rely on written communication to get your ideas across to your team.
- Describe a time when you had to develop and foster positive relationships with stakeholders across the organization.
- Tell me about a time when you had to collaborate with someone with different values/beliefs than your own.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Use the Colket Center for Academic Excellence to enhance your writing skills.
- Volunteer or participate in an issue-based coalition through the Collaborative for Community Engagement.
- Become a sustainability volunteer or intern.
- Join a club or organization and seek out opportunities to contribute.
- Become a leader for Outdoor Education.
- Participate in Residential Experience events.
- Seek out a student employment opportunity.
- Join a Wellness Resource Center organization or participate in a WRC workshop like the Journaling Series
- Become an Admission Fellow engaging with prospective students and parents.
- Ask open-ended questions so the person you're speaking with can provide you with relevant and necessary information.

# Creative Thinking

The ability to engage dynamically with the unknown and the willingness to reconsider existing problems or situations in new ways.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Approach a challenge or situation from multiple perspectives with curiosity and open mindedness.
- Develop, test, and implement possible solutions, reflect on the outcome, then iterate those possibilities.
- Can “stick with” something even when it’s uncomfortable, complex, or ambiguous.
- Take informed risks and try new ideas.
- Use divergent and convergent thinking.
- Ask insightful and probing questions.
- Generate a broad range of ideas, possibilities, and actions.
- Stray from the norm and not worry if something reflects a traditional idea or approach.

## Examples of related skills:

- Analytical thinking
- Problem solving
- Situational awareness
- Continuous learning
- Collaboration
- Communications
- Critical thinking
- Self-Leadership
- Managing Information
- Learning on the fly
- Growth mindset

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Describe a time when you had to use creative or out-of-the-box thinking?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone who did not understand your ideas because they were seen as different, or strayed too far from established norms.
- Tell me about a time where you inspired others to be more creative. How did you do this? What was the outcome?
- Share an example of when a creative idea did not work and how you handled it.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Participate in the Creativity & Innovation (C&I) Creative Confidence Project.
- Participate in the Student Facilitator Development Series by C&I.
- Take a C&I affiliated class.
- Develop a new/innovative way to address a need or problem, for example: increase student membership and participation in a club/organization.
- Identify a challenge and create an action plan with specific steps to overcome it.
- Facilitate an interactive brainstorm session for a team project.
- Brainstorm solutions to a problem before bringing it to a supervisor or faculty member.
- As a student employee or intern, evaluate a current process in your workplace and offer recommendations on how to enhance it.
- Practice making unusual connections between distinctly different ideas or shifting your perspective. For example, what if your last block class was taught by a professor in another discipline? How might they approach the material?

# Critical Thinking

The ability to exercise sound reasoning to analyze information, make decisions, identify problems, and develop workable solutions.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Effectively identify and use resources and technology to solve problems and achieve goals.
- Value diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences.
- Consider how other peoples' knowledge, expertise and perspectives might inform your goals and decisions.
- Analyze and interpret information to evaluate the validity and identify bias in data.
- Navigate ambiguous situations.
- Understand and select appropriate research methodology for studies, projects, experiments.
- Demonstrate quantitative and qualitative literacy.
- Ability to examine the implications and consequences of a belief, action, or decision.
- Critically examine issues by breaking them down into manageable parts.
- Analyze information to identify the most likely cause of a problem.
- Identify the logical, factual outcomes based on data, information and analysis.

## Examples of related skills:

- |                       |                           |                          |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Self-Leadership     | • Strategic Planning      | • Growth Mindset         |
| • Problem Solving     | • Managing Information    | • Continuous Learning    |
| • Analytical Thinking | • Planning and Organizing | • Recognizing complexity |
| • Data Analysis       | • Situational Awareness   | • Prioritization         |
| • Judgment            | • Change Management       | • Learning on the Fly    |

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Describe a time you had to deal with a difficult or challenging issue.
- Give me an example of a time when you solved a problem in a creative way.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with conflicting information.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Evaluate multiple job offers to choose the optimal opportunity.
- Take a class that requires you to recognize, build, and assess arguments and ideas.
- Join the debate team.
- Participate in one of the CCE's issue-based coalitions.
- Take a variety of classes that emphasize different "ways of knowing". Work with a faculty adviser and Student Success Specialist to help you select a class.
- Practice self-reflection in evaluating a recent decision you've made.
- Be open-minded when meeting with your team and listen to your partner's suggestions, hear them out and adjust your strategy based on their suggestions
- Evaluate the reliability of information sources used for research papers.
- Get involved in research projects with faculty such as SCoRE.

# Equity and Inclusion

The ability to demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from all identities and cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Implement strategies to recognize personal biases.
- Learn from, respect, and value diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Incorporate global/cultural awareness into your personal life and professional work.
- Adapt your language and behavior with others in a manner that conveys respect and builds trust and rapport.
- Strategically leverage differences to come up with more innovative solutions.
- Demonstrate sensitivity; relate to others with empathy and understanding.
- Display self-reflective awareness of your role in diverse communities.
- Actively seek to understand and respect the diversity and complexity of human identities.
- Actively promote equity and inclusion.
- Demonstrate ethical judgment and work towards a just society.
- Actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

## Examples of related skills:

- Situational Awareness
- Adaptability
- Judgment and Decision Making
- Negotiation
- Advocacy
- Building Trust
- Growth Mindset
- Continuous Learning
- Recognizing Complexity

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Describe a time you adjusted your communication to effectively collaborate with people from different backgrounds and identities.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with conflicting cultural or political views on an issue.
- Tell me about a time when you worked on a diverse team.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Solicit and use feedback from people with multiple cultural perspectives.
- Engage in conversation and dialogue around identities and cultures different than your own.
- Identify resources and engage in your own personal learning and development about your identity and identities different from your own.
- Join a multicultural student organization.
- Participate in an off-campus study opportunity.

# Leadership

The ability to recognize and leverage personal and the individual strengths of others to achieve common goals and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Use the appropriate leadership style for the situation.
- Understand the difference between leadership and management.
- Inspire others towards a shared vision.
- Seek out and leverage diverse resources and feedback from others to inform direction.
- Use innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods.
- Serve as a role model to others by approaching tasks with confidence and a positive attitude.
- Motivate others by encouraging them and building mutual trust.
- Plan, initiate, manage, complete, and evaluate projects.
- Use conflict resolution skills to resolve or defuse disagreements.
- Articulate team goals and ways to reach those goals.
- Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with team members.
- Develop understandings of larger work-related matters such as human motivation, conflict management, group dynamics, and effective work processes.

## Examples of related skills:

- |                           |                         |                      |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| • Communication           | • Interpersonal Skills  | • Empathy            |
| • Self-Leadership         | • Facilitation Skills   | • Managing Change    |
| • Problem solving         | • Influencing           | • Project Management |
| • Active Listening        | • Networking            |                      |
| • Nonverbal communication | • Relationship Building |                      |

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.
- Tell me about a time that you took the lead on a difficult project.
- When have you delegated effectively?
- Describe a time when you led by example.
- Describe a situation where you had to collaborate with someone with a different working style.
- Give an example of a strategy you have used to motivate others.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Follow your interest: join a campus organization and be active, become a Outdoor Education trip leader, or lead an intramural sports team.
- Become a Priddy Trip Leader.
- Apply for a position as a Residential Advisor.
- Lead a volunteer opportunity or become a part of the CCE coalitions.



# Managing Information

The ability to obtain, critically interpret, use, and communicate information, turning qualitative and quantitative data into knowledge.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Use information to inform and drive strategic decisions (personal, team, organizational).
- Critically analyze information to evaluate the validity and identify bias.
- Acknowledge the work of others by documenting your sources of information.
- Strategically use information and data to draw conclusions.
- Use information to analyze complex problems and navigate ambiguous situations.
- Communicate complex concepts to individuals with no special knowledge of the subject matter.
- Understand, choose, and use the appropriate research methodology for studies, projects, experiments, etc.
- Demonstrate quantitative and qualitative literacy.
- Uses technical academic knowledge (e.g., statistics) to complete tasks.
- Use appropriate technology to find and process information.
- Use information to contribute to a body of knowledge.

## Examples of related skills:

- Recognizing complexity
- Communication
- Prioritization
- Technology Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Data Analysis
- Collaboration
- Problem Solving
- Learning on the Fly

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- What information management systems do you have experience with, and what level of proficiency do you have?
- Describe how you approached a project when you were not familiar with the material or subject matter.
- Give us an example of a time in which you used data and research to persuade others.
- Explain a difficult concept to me like I was a 5-year-old.
- Tell me about a time you collected and synthesized information to help inform an important decision.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Seek a summer research opportunity with a faculty member.
- Considering taking a research methods class.
- Research career information and employer opportunities, analyzing what meets your needs and interests.
- Seek guidance and advice when using unfamiliar information platforms.
- Take an Excel course, workshop, or YouTube video online.
- Complete some LinkedIn skills assessments related to data management.

# Personal and Professional Effectiveness

The ability to demonstrate accountability to self and others through effective habits to be productive in work and life.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Ability to actively engage and interact while working with people from a range of cultures and backgrounds.
- Have an ability to plan and effectively use resources to achieve goals.
- Display situational awareness and knowledge of the current local and global landscapes, industries, organizations and specific roles.
- Have the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues both internally and externally.
- Effectively perform within team environments including the ability to recognize and capitalize on individuals' different thinking, experience and skills.
- Have timely communication when your actions or communications impact others. For example, when you will be late to class or work and give advance notice to your professor or supervisor.
- Be responsive to changing surroundings, both being flexible and proactive and displaying integrity.
- Broadly having an ability to demonstrate an innovative approach, creativity, collaboration and risk taking.
- Effectively adapting emotions, thoughts and behaviors to environments that may be unfamiliar, uncertain and/or diverse.
- Solicit, accept, and apply feedback from others in an open and constructive manner.
- Are accountable for your work and actions and follow through on your commitments.
- Take ownership of your decisions and actions and strive to do your best work for every assigned task big or small.
- Are productive and take initiative by seeing something that needs to be done and either doing it or figuring out ways to do it.

## Examples of related skills:

- |                           |                      |                       |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Self-Leadership         | • Team Collaboration | • Time Management     |
| • Self-Advocacy           | • Assertiveness      | • Active Listening    |
| • Advocacy for Others     | • Change Management  | • Growth Mindset      |
| • Planning and Organizing | • Communication      | • Continuous Learning |
| • Situational Awareness   | • Flexibility        |                       |

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Describe a time you had to deal with a difficult or challenging issue.
- Give me an example of a time when you solved a problem in a creative way.
- Tell me about a time when you applied feedback to improve your performance.
- Tell me about a time when you demonstrated Integrity.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Participate in related Career Center programs.
- Complete the PathwayU Assessments on the Career Center Website.
- Reflect on your goals and develop a plan with the Advising Hub and Career Center.
- Participate in The Butler Center and other Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programming.
- Complete skill assessments on LinkedIn.
- Ask for feedback from your supervisor or professor.

# Teamwork

The ability to collaborate with others toward a shared goal, participating actively, and maximizing team performance.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Create or contribute to an atmosphere of respect, helpfulness, cooperation, and a sense of team pride.
- Foster positive relationships and draw others into active commitment to the team's effort.
- Readily share information, knowledge, and personal strengths.
- Give and receive constructive feedback from peers or other team members in order to achieve the goal.
- Acknowledge others' skills, experiences, creativity, and contributions.
- Listen to and acknowledge the thoughts, feelings, concerns, and ideas of others.
- Assist others in solving problems and achieving goals.
- Seek out and value diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences.
- Leverage your individual strengths and those of others.
- Resolve team conflict skillfully.

## Examples of related skills:

- |                       |                     |                      |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| • Conflict Resolution | • Listening         | • Creativity         |
| • Communication       | • Critical Thinking | • Project Management |
| • Time Management     | • Collaboration     | • Delegation         |
| • Problem Solving     | • Leadership        |                      |

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- Describe a time when you collaborated on a project.
- Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult person on your team.
- Tell me about a time when you had to lead by example within a team.
- Describe a time when you had to convince someone to see things from your perspective. How did it end up?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with competing opinions.
- Tell me about a time when you had to play various roles on a team. (For example, leader vs. supporting role)

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Take a class that requires team projects.
- Be an active participant and volunteer to support work on a committee or team.
- Get a campus job where you contribute to the team.
- Pursue an opportunity with Outdoor Education.
- Volunteer through the Collaborative for Community Engagement.
- Join an intramural sports team.

# Technology



The ability to select and leverage existing technologies and use them ethically to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals efficiently. Ability to identify, learn, and effectively use new and emerging technologies.

## You demonstrate this competency when you:

- Use technologies responsibly and ethically.
- Adapt tools to meet changing needs.
- Create projects and express ideas through digital tools. For example: Design a website, create a brochure, use spreadsheets, write a blog, create an app or game, or write an algorithm.
- Maintain confidentiality of data and information.
- Streamline processes and/or improve efficiency by using technology.
- Use media channels and tools to engage with specific audiences, e.g., MyEmma, SLACK, SEO, Social Pilot, etc.
- Use general and/or specific technology skills to troubleshoot and solve problems.
- Manage technology to integrate information to support relevant, effective, and timely decision-making.
- Ability to identify training resources to learn new or unfamiliar technologies.
- Manipulate information, construct ideas, and use technology to achieve strategic goals.

## Examples of related skills:

- Social Media
- Presentation Skills
- Word Processing
- Spreadsheet Skills
- Data Analysis
- Website Navigation
- Digital Design Skills
- Internet/Data Security
- Email Management

## Employers/graduate programs may seek demonstration of this competency through behavioral interview questions such as:

- You have just been assigned to a project involving new technology. How would you get started?
- Tell me about a time when you had to explain a technical concept to someone who was unfamiliar with it.
- Tell me about a time when you used technology to streamline and improve a process.

## Examples of ways you can continue to develop this competency:

- Take a computer class at CC.
- Get a campus job where you will use technology.
- Volunteer through the CCE to help a non-profit organization that needs help with technology.
- Learn a computer language through a free class like CodeAcademy.
- Complete a micro project through an organization like ParagonOne.
- Get involved in a data science competition platform like Kaggle.

## Sources Include

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