

# ***Your Skillabus***

**An Academic Roadmap That Describes Five  
Stages of Your Undergraduate Journey During  
Which You Can Identify, Develop, Market, and  
Utilize the Skills You Will Need to Prepare for,  
Enter, and Succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace**

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# *Introduction*

**What is a skillabus, and why is a skillabus an academic road map that illustrates how you can create a personalized undergraduate journey whose destination is your successful entry into the workforce?**

The purpose of this document is to introduce you to a new concept. This concept is the skillabus whose name is a combination of the words skill and syllabus. This introduction will acquaint you with this new type of career-planning strategy and explain how it can help you utilize both the curricular and extracurricular components of your undergraduate education to develop and market the skills you will need to prepare for and successfully enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace when you graduate.

You receive a syllabus in each of your classes that is written to help you understand the nature, structure, and purpose of a particular class by describing the topics it will cover, the types and dates of its tests and assignments, its attendance and grading policies, and its learning outcomes (i.e., how you will change as a result of successfully completing the class). Thus, a syllabus provides you with a road map of the journey you will take between the first and the last days of a single class. A well-crafted syllabus will also explain how a class can help you develop the knowledge and skills you will need to succeed in the remaining classes you must complete before you graduate. The document that is the subject of this article—the skillabus—is similar to a syllabus in that it describes an educational journey, but it differs in three important ways.

- First, the journey it describes reaches farther into your future than the final day of a single class or even the moment you walk across the stage and receive your diploma. The purpose of the skillabus is to provide you with a strategy to use all the components of your entire undergraduate education to prepare for and successfully enter the next major stage of your life which—for those of you who are not planning to apply to graduate or professional school—will be the workforce.
- The second way in which the skillabus and the syllabus differ is that the skillabus—as its name implies—places emphasis on the skills, rather than the knowledge, you can acquire during your undergraduate education. The reason for this emphasis is simple. Employers are far less interested in what you know (i.e., your knowledge) than in what you are capable of doing in a competent manner on-the-job (i.e., your skills). They are also very interested in the personal characteristics—often referred to as soft or transferable skills—you possess that can help you to utilize your skills in an effective manner on-the-job. For example, a job ad may state that successful candidates for this position must be skilled in a particular software application they will need to perform statistical analyses and must also be capable of successfully collaborating with a diverse team in a time-sensitive environment to present the results of these analyses in a clear and convincing manner to a wide variety of audiences. To carry out these tasks in a successful manner, you must be able to demonstrate competence in a particular software application plus the following four transferable skills: collaboration, time management, communication, and inclusivity.
- The third—and perhaps most important—way in which a skillabus and syllabus differ is that your skillabus belongs to you and a syllabus belongs to one of your teachers. Your skillabus explains how you plan to use your college education to prepare yourself for your life after you

graduate. Your skillabus is a golden opportunity for you to develop a genuine sense of ownership and control over your college education as you begin to see it as a set of opportunities from which you can choose those that will be the most valuable in your process of making a successful transformation from college to the workplace. Until you develop this sense of ownership and personal control, you may perceive your undergraduate education as nothing more than a series of meaningless barriers imposed upon you by others that you must overcome in order to accumulate enough credit hours to be eligible to receive a diploma.

Your skillabus is composed of the set of five sequential stages of the journey you will take that begins on your first day of college and ends when you are a successfully employed college graduate. You will have completed this journey when you are able to create complete, compelling, and confident answers to the following five questions.

1. What are the skills you will need to enter and succeed in the 21st Century workplace that you can develop during your undergraduate education?
2. What resources are available on your campus that can help you develop these skills, and how can you utilize these resources in a maximally successful manner?
3. How can you use both the curricular and extracurricular components of your undergraduate education to develop these skills?
4. What strategies can you use to successfully market your skills during the job search process, and what resources are available at your school to help you do this?
5. What skills will you need to keep your job—and to flourish in it—once you are employed?

# *Stage One*

## **Identifying and Understanding the Transferable Career Skills You Can Develop**

**What are the skills you will need to enter and succeed in the 21st Century workplace that you can develop during your undergraduate education?**

Undergraduate psychology programs do not always provide the same level of support for their job-seeking students as they do for those preparing to enter graduate school to become psychologists (Appleby, 2018). One of the causes of this unfortunate situation has been the ethical reluctance of psychology faculty to provide career advice to their students because they have not received the appropriate professional training in this area that would enable them to help their students identify, understand, and market the skills they will need to enter and succeed in the workplace. The American Psychological Association (APA) decided to remedy this situation by assembling the *Skillful Psychology Student Working Group* to construct an evidence-based list of these skills and their definitions. This group gathered the information they used to construct this list from a wide variety of sources including employers, recruiters, job analysts, national employment reports, data-based research projects, *O\*NET* (the world's most comprehensive online database of worker competencies and occupational requirements), people employed in psychology-related careers, and thousands of actual online job ads posted on Indeed.com. They then compared their findings to the skills and attributes derived from *APA's Guidelines for Undergraduate Education* and performed a content analysis on these data that produced a taxonomy of five basic skill domains composed of 17 individual skills written in resume-ready form that are both (1) integral to the mission of undergraduate psychology programs and (2) necessary for successful workforce preparation. This taxonomy appears below, and is also available as a poster from a hotlink in the following publication that appeared in the *Psychology Student Network* (<https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2019/02/skillful-student>).

### **THE SKILLFUL PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT Prepared for Success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace**

**Psychology provides the following skills that employers value.**

#### **Cognitive Skills**

- *Analytical thinking*: Solve complex problems, attend to details, plan proactively, and display comfort with ambiguity.
- *Critical thinking*: Display proficiency with statistics, program evaluation, and research design necessary for the study of social and technical systems.
- *Creativity*: Use innovative and resourceful approaches to problem solving and new tasks.
- *Information management*: Be adept at locating, organizing, evaluating, and distributing information from multiple sources.
- *Judgment and decision making*: Engage in logical and systematic thinking and ethical decision making when considering the possible outcomes of a particular action.

## Communication Skills

- *Oral communication:* Demonstrate strong active listening and conversational abilities in both informal and professional environments, as well as aptitude for public speaking and communicating scientific information to diverse audiences.
- *Written communication:* Comprehend relevant reading materials to produce professional documents that are grammatically correct, such as technical or training materials and business correspondence.

## Personal Skills

- *Adaptability:* Adjust successfully to change by responding in a flexible, proactive, and civil manner when changes occur.
- *Integrity:* Perform work in an honest, reliable, and accountable manner that reflects the ethical values and standards of an organization.
- *Self-regulation:* Manage time and stress by completing assigned tasks with little or no supervision; display initiative and persistence by accepting and completing additional duties in a careful, thorough, and dependable manner.

## Social Skills

- *Collaboration:* Work effectively in a team by cooperating, sharing responsibilities, and listening and responding appropriately to the ideas of others.
- *Inclusivity:* Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and individual differences and similarities by working effectively with diverse people, respecting and considering divergent opinions, and showing respect for others.
- *Leadership:* Establish a vision for individuals and for the group, creating long-term plans and guiding and inspiring others to accomplish tasks in a successful manner.
- *Management:* Manage individuals and/or teams, coordinate projects, and prioritize individual and team tasks.
- *Service orientation:* Seek ways to help people by displaying empathy; maintaining a customer, patient, or client focus; and engaging in the community.

## Technological Skills

- *Flexibility/adaptability to new systems:* Be willing and able to learn and/or adapt to new computer platforms, operating systems, and software programs.
- *Facility with hardware and software:* Demonstrate competency in using various operating systems, programs, and/or coding protocols; troubleshoot technical errors; and use software applications to build and maintain websites, create web-based applications, and perform statistical analyses.

**Congratulations!** You now know and understand the skills that employers seek in the college graduates they hire, which gives you a substantial advantage over your peers who do not possess this information. But your journey to occupational success is far from over. The next stage of this journey will be to identify the resources on your campus who can provide you with the advice and support you will need to engage in the actions that will help you to actually develop and strengthen these skills. These human resources are the subject of the next section of your syllabus.

# *Stage Two*

## **Identifying and Utilizing Campus Career Resources**

**What resources on your campus can help you develop these skills, and how can you utilize these resources in an optimally successful manner?**

The tuition you invest in your undergraduate education pays for a wide variety of services your campus offers, not just the classes you take. Two of the most important of these services are academic advising and career counseling (<https://www.psichi.org/page/234EyeSum19Appleby#.XKJ3ZlVKipo>). The more aware you are of the nature and purposes of these two services, the more successful you will be in utilizing them to prepare for and attain your occupational goals.

All psychology departments offer academic advising and, in most departments, it is provided by two very different types of advisors, both of whom are knowledgeable about the set of classes you will need to graduate with a bachelor's degree in psychology. The first are **faculty advisors** who have earned graduate degrees (usually a doctorate) in specialized areas like social, clinical, or developmental psychology, and who were hired to teach and perform research in these areas. These advisors are very knowledgeable about what you will need to do if you plan to apply to graduate school and earn an advanced degree in their area of specialization. If graduate school and a career as a psychologist is your goal, then this is the type of academic advisor from whom you should seek advice because it will be based on their actual professional experiences of successfully applying to graduate school, earning a graduate degree, and becoming a psychologist. The second type of academic advisors in your department are **professional staff advisors** who are not psychologists, and who have earned advanced degrees in areas such as student development and educational leadership. These credentials enable them to successfully advise psychology majors about the wide variety of career paths that do not require graduate or professional school. The knowledge they possess about the value of extracurricular opportunities such as internships, service learning, study abroad, and student organizations helps them convince psychology majors that the skills they can acquire outside the classroom can as valuable—if not more valuable—for entrance into the workforce as the skills they learn in their classes. Their ability to help students become aware of the skills they will need to succeed on-the-job—and to identify and utilize the full spectrum of their educational opportunities to acquire these skills—puts them in a better position to provide advice for job-seeking psychology majors than faculty advisors.

A third type of campus professional who can aid job-seeking psychology majors are the **career counselors** employed in your campus career center. They can provide you with career self-assessment, help you navigate the job-search process, make you aware of job-placement opportunities, and provide you with professional counseling if you struggle with personal issues such as indecisiveness, which can pose a serious challenge during the career-selection process. They can also help you master the skills you will need to make a successful college-to-career transition such as writing effective cover letters, crafting strong resumes, and creating and practicing confident and convincing answers to challenging interview questions such as “What skills will you need to succeed in the position for which you are applying, and how did you use your undergraduate education to develop these skills?” An absolutely crucial aspect of your use of the

resources in your career center is that you should start this process as early as possible in your undergraduate career. A career center is not a placement center where you go the day after you graduate to see if they can “place” you in a job. You should make an appointment with a career counselor when you are a freshman and create a career-preparation plan with that counselor that requires regularly scheduled “progress checks” to insure that you are fully prepared for successful entrance into the job market when you graduate. Let me provide you with the following imaginary scenario that will help you understand the tragic consequences of a last-minute career center visit. Please put yourself into this situation. Your name is Chris Johnson, and I want you to imagine the look of utter horror on the face of the career counselor into whose office you have entered for the first time at 4:00 on a Friday afternoon with the following request.

*“Hi! I’m Chris Johnson, I’m graduating next week, and I just found the PERFECT job. But the application deadline is tomorrow, and I just discovered I need a cover letter and resume to apply. I know you’re busy, but do you have a few minutes to help me write them? I REALLY want this job!”*

The best way to avoid this extremely awkward situation is to make an appointment with both a professional staff advisor and a career counselor when you are a freshman so you can (1) become aware of the ways in which they can help you prepare for and enter your career and then (2) use the rest of your undergraduate experience to work with them on a regular basis—preferably once each semester—to avoid putting yourself into the same unfortunate situation that Chris experienced. If you are no longer a freshman, make these appointments as soon as possible because you are already behind schedule, and the farther behind you become, the less time you will have to become aware of, understand, and successfully create the strategies and documents you will need to succeed in today’s highly competitive job market. A systematic strategy you can utilize to take advantage of the services of both these professionals to identify, develop, and market your employer-valued skills is presented in one of the final sections of this document. This strategy also provides you with the opportunity to create a personal inventory of your skills accompanied by unique descriptions of the ways in which you used both your in-class and outside-of-class experiences to acquire and strengthen your skill set. The process of creating these descriptions will provide you with the confidence you will need to present your accomplishments in a clear and compelling manner in your cover letters, resumes, and interviews. This process will also help you develop a clear impression that you are in control of your own occupational destiny. If the following quotation from a student who does not possess this sense of control sounds like something you might say about yourself at this time, then this skillabus may very well be the answer to your current predicament (Colozzi & Collozzi, 2000, p. 75).

*Not knowing what to do next in my life is like a buzzing. It’s getting louder and louder, and its diminishing other aspects of my life. This inner turmoil eats away at me. I feel I am in a great transition in my life now, only I am lacking direction. I would very much like to be on a path that is productive toward my figuring out what my next step in my life will be.*

This section has the following very important take-home message. You are wasting a significant portion of your tuition if you do not take advantage of the services you have purchased with it. Think of this in two ways. Would you deliberately purchase a new car with several costly accessories if you never plan to use them? Would you pay for an expensive gym membership and then do push-ups and run-in-place in your dorm room? The same holds true for your college education. Your campus is literally overflowing with opportunities to help you develop the skills you will need to enter and succeed in the job market, and you have paid for all of them. As you



well know, a college education is a significant investment of your money, your time, and your effort. Please do all you can to maximize your return on this investment by taking full advantage of all the campus resources you have at your disposal that can help you maximize your future occupational success. According to a recent study based on the views of more than 32,000 undergraduates from 43 four-year colleges and universities (<http://stradaeducation.gallup.com/reports/225161/2017-strada-gallup-college-student-survey.aspx>), only about one third of these students believe they will graduate with the skills they will need to succeed in both the job market and the workplace. Utilizing the advice provided in this skillabus can and will enable you to be a member of this optimistic minority of college students.

# *Stage Three*

## **Using Your Undergraduate Education to Develop Your Career Skills**

**How can you use both the curricular and extracurricular components of your undergraduate education to develop these skills in a successful manner?**

You are now aware of the skills you will need to enter and succeed in the workplace and the human resources on your campus who can work with you to create strategies to develop these skills. This section will describe the next stage in your journey to occupational success by providing you with specific suggestions to help you acquire and strengthen these crucial skills.

Your undergraduate education can be divided into two basic parts: the part that occurs in the classroom and the part that takes place outside the classroom. Many students mistakenly believe that the only place they can learn in college is in a classroom. Nothing could be further from the truth. Let me explain why this is true by presenting you with a set of realistic ways to acquire and practice the job-related skills identified in Stage One both inside and outside the classroom. As you read these suggestions, please realize that a few of them may require you to change some of the following counter-productive beliefs that many undergraduates—perhaps including you—may hold about their education.

- I am entitled to and will acquire a good job after I graduate simply because I possess a college diploma certifying that I have accumulated the minimum number of credit hours I need to graduate.
- I take many of my required classes to simply “get them out of the way,” rather than taking them seriously so I can use them to acquire and practice the skills I will need to enter and succeed in the workforce.
- I choose easy electives that help me earn the grades I need to maintain a high GPA.
- I avoid extracurricular opportunities because they are a waste of my valuable time and cannot contribute to my efforts to prepare myself for the workplace.
- I doubt that the work I do in school as a psychology major can be applied to the “real world” of work I wish to enter when I graduate.
- My education is a spectator sport in which my only responsibilities are to be physically present in my classes, remain conscious, memorize what my teachers say, and then give them back what they said on their tests.

Hopefully you do not hold all these unfortunate beliefs, but it is wise to become conscious of those you do hold so you can begin to become a more savvy psychology student (<http://www.psichi.org/?201EyeFall15hAppleby#.VkZZ2XarSUK>) by deliberately using your undergraduate education as an opportunity to explore, identify, refine, and attain your occupational goals. If you continue to hold and act upon these unfortunate beliefs you may end up **buying a creducation** (i.e., paying tuition to pass required courses as quickly and efficiently as possible to simply accumulate enough credit hours to receive a diploma), rather than actually **earning an education** by devising a coherent plan to use your undergraduate career to develop the skills you

will need to attain the occupation of your choice, thus creating yourself in the image of the person you wish to become (<https://www.psichi.org/page/234EyeSum19Appleby#.XKJ3ZlVKipo>).

It is now time to revisit the list of skills from Stage One that can prepare you for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace, and to provide you with examples of specific ways you can use both your in-class and outside-of-class opportunities to acquire and strengthen these skills. Please know that while these examples can produce successful results, they are certainly not the only ways to do so. Consider them as starting points, and then seek the aid of your academic advisor and career counselor after showing them a copy of these skills (<https://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/transferable-skills.pdf>) for other strategies that will fit your unique set of interests, values, opportunities, goals, and educational circumstances.

### Cognitive Skills

- **Analytical thinking:** Solve complex problems, attend to details, plan proactively, and display comfort with ambiguity.
  - In Class:
    - Enroll in a problem-based-learning class in which you will be required to solve a complex real-world problem rather than just learning about it.
    - Take advantage of capstone classes during which you will identify and apply the skills you learned in your previous classes.
  - Outside Class:
    - Serve as an officer of a student organization that sponsors a complex event (e.g., a Psi Chi induction ceremony or an undergraduate research poster session) and practice your project management skills by playing an active role in the planning, organization, and execution of this event.
    - Identify and apply for an internship that will require you to solve problems, attend to details, plan proactively, collaborate with diverse people, and display comfort with ambiguity.
- **Critical thinking:** Display proficiency with statistics, program evaluation, and research design necessary for the study of social and technical systems.
  - In Class:
    - Stop just memorizing terms and definitions when you study. Concentrate on comprehending, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and integrating the material you want to learn.
    - Be sure to take your Statistics and Research Methods classes very seriously rather than just trying to “get them out of the way.” The purpose of these classes is to help you develop the critical thinking skills you will need to succeed in the remaining classes you take and in the career you plan to enter.
  - Outside Class:
    - The best way to practice the critical thinking skills you learned in your Statistics and Research Methods classes is to engage in an undergraduate research project.
    - Volunteering to serve as a research assistant in one of your professors’ labs will provide you with an opportunity to develop these skills and also gain a credible reference who can vouch for your competence as a critical thinker in a letter of recommendation.
- **Creativity:** Use innovative and resourceful approaches to problem solving and new tasks.
  - In Class:

- Many of your classes will address the topic of creativity. Learn as much as you can about how creativity is defined, how it can be developed, and why it is essential for success in a variety of occupational environments (e.g., education, business, and healthcare). While this knowledge is not a skill, you will need it to create a “skillful” answer to an interview question such as “What strategies would you use to increase the creativity of the students you will teach if you are hired for this job?”
    - In your Research Methods class you will learn how to create and test hypotheses based on the knowledge you have gained from examining and evaluating the methods and results of previous research performed on your topic of interest.
  - Outside Class:
    - Assume a leadership position in an extracurricular activity that will require creative strategies to solve challenging problems such as increasing the proportion of the members of your Psychology Club who are actively involved in its activities.
    - Identify the most important challenge you are facing as a college student, make an appointment with one of the counselors in your Counseling Center, and work with that person to create a feasible solution to your challenge. Then, when you encounter a similar challenge on-the-job, you can reflect back on this experience and use it to guide your process of overcoming this challenge.
- **Information management:** Be adept at locating, organizing, evaluating, and distributing information from multiple sources.
  - In Class:
    - Sign up for the software training workshops offered on your campus designed to help you access and manage online information.
    - Enroll in a Social Media Marketing class.
  - Outside Class:
    - Engage in an undergraduate research project that will require you to write a literature review for your study during which you will locate, evaluate, and organize a set of previous studies related to the topic of your project.
    - Join a student organization and volunteer to be its Social Media officer who will locate, organize, evaluate, and distribute online information to its members.
- **Judgment and decision making:** Engage in logical and systematic thinking and ethical decision making when considering the possible outcomes of a particular action.
  - In Class:
    - Enroll in a Cognition class and pay very close attention to the information presented in the section on judgment and decision making so you can apply this information in your own personal and professional life to help you make sound judgments and avoid unwise decisions.
    - Pay close attention to the section of your Research Methods class in which you will learn how to systematically evaluate the appropriateness of the internet sources you will need to create your literature review. You can also use the online *CRAAP Test* ([http://www.codlrc.org/sites/default/files/CRAAPtest\\_0.pdf](http://www.codlrc.org/sites/default/files/CRAAPtest_0.pdf)) to do this.
  - Outside Class:

- Join a student organization and run for the office of treasurer. This will provide you with an opportunity to act in an ethical and honest manner as you collect and disburse the organization's money, keep accurate financial records, and create complete and truthful financial reports. You can include this on your resume—and discuss it during your interviews—as proof of your honest and ethical behavior.
- Go to [https://www.psichi.org/page/Publications\\_Search#.XGwqUKJKipp](https://www.psichi.org/page/Publications_Search#.XGwqUKJKipp) where you can access articles on ethics published in *Eye on Psi Chi*.

## Communication Skills

- **Oral communication:** Demonstrate strong active listening and conversational abilities in both informal and professional environments, as well as an aptitude for public speaking and communicating scientific information to diverse audiences.
  - In Class:
    - Take your required Speech class very seriously, perform as well as you can, and then ask your instructor to suggest advanced speech or communication classes you can take as electives (e.g., Persuasion, Debate, Interpersonal Communication, and Nonverbal Communication).
    - Take a counseling class to enhance your active listening skills.
  - Outside Class:
    - Join a student organization (e.g., Psychology Club or Student Government) and become an officer whose duties include public speaking and being verbally active during meetings where your effectiveness will be determined by your ability to speak in a clear, concise, correct, and convincing manner.
    - After you have taken a counseling course to improve your active listening skills, volunteer to be a peer advisor or mentor in your department so you can practice and become more confident and proficient in your active listening skills and have evidence on your resume to prove it.
- **Written communication:** Comprehend relevant reading materials to produce professional documents that are grammatically correct, such as technical or training materials and business correspondence.
  - In Class:
    - Choose instructors who will (1) require you to write in APA style, (2) provide you with constructive feedback on both the style and content of your writing, and (3) enable you to improve the quality of your writing by encouraging you to submit multiple drafts of your assignments to polish your writing skills.
    - Utilize the APA Style Workshop available from the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/1/>) to help you master this challenging professional style of writing.
  - Outside Class:
    - Utilize the services of your Writing Center to improve your writing.
    - If you find the Writing Center's services to be helpful, pay back your gratitude by volunteering to be one of their peer writing tutors. The best way to master APA style is to teach it to someone else.

## Personal Skills

- **Adaptability:** Adjust successfully to change by responding in a flexible, proactive, and civil manner when changes occur.
  - In Class:
    - Stop taking “safe” classes that do not challenge you to learn new skills or to think in new and different ways. The occupation you enter will require you to respond in a flexible, proactive, and civil manner when changes occur, and changes will indeed occur. Do not pass up opportunities to learn how to deal effectively with these changes. Leave your comfort zone occasionally, stretch yourself, and take some risks. Risks are far less risky in college (e.g., you cannot be fired from a class, but you can be fired from a job).
    - Take a class whose subject matter is a characteristic you do not possess. For example, enroll in a Psychology of Women class if you are male, an African American Studies class if you are not African American, or an LGBTQ Studies class if you are not a member of any of these groups. Becoming aware of the history, beliefs, world-views, and challenges of people who are different from you will help you adapt in a more civil and proactive manner when you interact with diverse co-workers and clients in the future.
  - Outside Class:
    - If this is a skill you find difficult, you might want to become familiar with the concept of “openness to experience,” which is one of the Big Five personality characteristics, so you can become aware of how this trait affects your ability to handle change. If you discover that you are low on this trait (i.e., you prefer familiar routines to new experiences), I suggest you attempt to develop strategies that will enable you to respond in a more flexible, proactive, and civil manner when you experience changes in your environment. Making an appointment with one of the counselors in your counseling center to help you deal with this issue will be a very valuable investment of your time.
    - If you have the choice, choose to interact with as many people as you can who are different from yourself when you make decisions about what types of extracurricular activities to join.
- **Integrity:** Perform work in an honest, reliable, and accountable manner that reflects the ethical values and standards of an organization.
  - In Class:
    - Enroll in classes with writing assignments that must conform to APA style guidelines that prohibit plagiarism.
    - Become familiar with your school’s Code of Academic Integrity so you can understand how to avoid acting in an academically dishonest manner in your classes.
  - Outside Class:
    - Participate in a research project that requires CITI training before you create an IRB protocol that will explain how you will treat your research participants in an ethical manner.
    - Participate in internships that will require you to be aware of, understand, and act according to ethical guidelines such as those you will need to follow if you work with clients whose confidentiality must be protected or who may be exposed to risks.

- **Self-regulation:** Manage time and stress by completing assigned tasks with little or no supervision; display initiative and persistence by accepting and completing additional duties in a careful, thorough, and dependable manner.
  - In Class:
    - Be the type of student whose teachers would use the following sentences to describe you if they were contacted by a potential employer to provide support for your job application. *“Ashley was a joy to teach. She attended class faithfully, was never late, and always submitted her assignments on-time. She understood what was required in my class and completed her assignments in a correct and cheerful manner.”* A potential employer will interpret a description like this to mean that you will be the type of employee who will always come to work, come to work on time, understand your required tasks, and carry them out in a correct and positive manner. What more could an employer ask of an employee?
    - Avoid classes taught by instructors (a) whose classes are perceived as non-stressful because their subject matter is easy or they do not require students to learn new skills, (b) who reinforce procrastination and irresponsible behavior by accepting late assignments or allowing students to make up missed tests, and (c) who do not seem to care if their students come to class late, leave class early, or do not come to class at all.
  - Outside Class:
    - Use what you learned about the topic of stress in your psychology classes to create strategies that will enable you to manage your stressful life as a busy college student more successfully. If you are one of the many students who has a job, put this information to work for you on-the-job.
    - If your Counseling Center offers workshops on stress and time management, take them and put what you learn in them to good use in your life as a busy student. The strategies you gain from them will also be useful in your future life as a busy employee.

## Social Skills

- **Collaboration:** Work effectively in a team by cooperating, sharing responsibilities, and listening and responding appropriately to the ideas of others.
  - In Class:
    - Deliberately enroll in classes that require group work. All jobs require working in groups to solve complex problems, so use your classes as opportunities to practice this skill that you will need to be successful in the future.
    - Take a social psychology class and pay close attention to the concept of “social loafing.” Apply this information in your classes that require group work so you can improve both the morale and the productivity of the groups to which you belong.
  - Outside Class:
    - Volunteer to serve as a member of your school’s Orientation Team that is responsible for helping new students adapt to the unique culture and resources of your campus or as a member of your Admissions Department’s team of Student Ambassadors who take prospective students and their parents on campus tours. You will learn how to cooperate and share responsibilities with your fellow team members, and you will also have an opportunity to practice the active listening skills necessary to respond in a supportive manner to the questions of first-generation

students and their parents. You can also use what you have discovered in this document about the career-related skills that psychology students can develop when you are asked the perennial question, “What can I do—or what can my son or daughter do—with a major in psychology?”

- Join a student club or organization and ask the president to assign you a duty that will help her/him to achieve one of the important goals of that group (e.g., increase its membership or the attendance at one of its programs or activities). This experience will help you strengthen your skill of followership (i.e., the ability to successfully understand and carry out directions, to support organizational programs, to be an active and contributing member of a team, and to deliver on what your leader expects of you). After all, this is exactly what your supervisor will expect you to do on-the-job when you are employed and, if you do it well and make your supervisor look good to her supervisor, you may end up with a promotion to your supervisor’s job in the future when she is promoted.
- **Inclusivity:** Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and individual differences and similarities by working effectively with diverse people, respecting and considering divergent opinions, and showing respect for others.
  - In Class:
    - Do your best to sit next to different people in your classes, especially those who are not similar to you in terms of their age, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. You will have to interact comfortably and successfully with many different kinds of people on-the-job, so utilize your classes as opportunities to practice this essential skill.
    - Take sociology, anthropology, and religion classes that will provide you with opportunities to become familiar with and discuss the advantages of inclusivity. These classes will help you understand that behaving in an inclusive manner is not only the right thing to do from a personal and societal perspective; it is the smart thing to do in the classroom and the workplace.
  - Outside Class:
    - Pay attention to the composition of the student organizations on your campus and join one whose purpose interests you and whose membership is highly diverse.
    - The worst possible thing you can do as a student is to isolate yourself from diversity by living, working, and spending your time with only those students who are similar to you.
- **Leadership:** Establish a vision for individuals and for the group, creating long-term plans, and guiding and inspiring others to accomplish tasks in a successful manner.
  - In Class
    - Take an Organizational Leadership class in which you will learn what leadership is and how to develop strategies to lead others effectively.
    - Enroll in a leadership program in which you can earn academic credit.
  - Outside Class:
    - Become involved in your school’s student government, and eventually assume an active leadership role.
    - If your department or school provides an opportunity for more-experienced students to mentor less-experienced students, volunteer to be a mentor.
- **Management:** Manage individuals and/or teams, coordinate projects, and prioritize individual and team tasks.



- In Class
  - Enroll in an Introduction to Management class offered by your Business Department to become familiar with both the concept of management and the skills of effective managers.
  - Enroll in classes that involve group projects, and volunteer to lead one of the components of these projects.
- Outside Class:
  - If your academic department allows students to be members of its committees, volunteer to serve on one so you can begin to understand the methods and skills required to bring about change in a complex organizational environment.
  - If you need to support yourself with a job, try to find one in which you can work your way up to a position where you will be responsible for managing some aspect of your business or organization (i.e., being the night shift manager at a fast food restaurant).
- **Service orientation:** Seek ways to help people by displaying empathy; maintaining a customer, patient, or client focus; and engaging in the community.
  - In Class:
    - Take a Counseling class in which you will learn how to display empathy, listen actively, and focus on the needs and concerns of clients.
    - Enroll in a for-credit service learning project in which you will learn how to serve others and engage successfully in a community.
  - Outside Class:
    - Engage in a project (e.g., Habitat for Humanity) that will provide you with an opportunity to be actively engaged in your community in ways that will benefit others and help you to practice a variety of essential helping skills such as collaboration, communication, creative problem solving, and the ability to work effectively with diverse populations.
    - Volunteer to be an undergraduate teaching assistant or a peer advisor/mentor in your department. Go to <http://psychlearningcurve.org/should-you-become-an-undergraduate-teaching-assistant> for a detailed description of the skills you can develop as a teaching assistant.

## Technological Skills

- **Flexibility/adaptability to new systems:** Be willing and able to learn and/or adapt to new computer platforms, operating systems, and software programs.
  - In Class:
    - Actively seek out classes in which you will be required to
      - write with word-processing programs
      - organize information with databases
      - manipulate numbers with spreadsheets
      - analyze data with statistical programs
      - locate information with search engines
      - enhance speeches with presentation software
      - communicate with your instructors and fellow students via the Internet

- Be sure to become adept and comfortable with the campus-wide online instructional platform your instructors use (e.g., Moodle or Blackboard).
- Outside Class:
  - Attend workshops sponsored by your library designed to teach you how to use online search engines.
  - If you are techno-phobic, do all you can to overcome this unfortunate trait. The world will continue to become increasingly more technology-dependent, and the more you try to resist this trend, the less employable you will become.
- **Facility with hardware and software:** Demonstrate competency in using various operating systems, programs, and/or coding protocols; troubleshoot technical errors; and use software applications to build and maintain websites, create web-based applications, and perform statistical analyses.
  - In Class:
    - Enroll in a basic computer class such as the Introduction to Computing class taught at Texas A&M University whose description is “*An introduction to computers, network communications, and information systems. This course provides the student with knowledge about hardware, software, and data management systems. The student is provided experience with an operating system environment, application software including productivity tools, and the use of the internet to communicate and search for information.*”
    - Once you are comfortable with the basic principles of computing, enroll in as many classes as possible that will require you to actually apply these principals to solve problems.
  - Outside Class:
    - Sign up for a blog that interests you and become familiar with this type of online information dissemination system. For example, if you are interested in topics that involve the application of psychological principles and methods to educational topics, sign up to receive *Psych Learning Curve: Where Psychology and Education Connect* at <http://psychlearningcurve.org>.
    - Once you are comfortable with and enjoy the concept of blogging, start a blog of your own about a concept or issue that interests you.

The take-home message of this section is clear. Your undergraduate education provides you with a truly unbelievable amount of freedom to choose from an incredible variety of fascinating classes and an amazing array of valuable extracurricular activities. You will never again have this amount of freedom to choose how to prepare yourself to live the rest of your life in a successful and meaningful manner. Please take full advantage of this freedom to purposefully create yourself in the image of the person **YOU** want to become.

# *Stage Four*

## **Searching for Jobs and Marketing Your Skills**

**What strategies can you use to search for potential jobs and then market your skills effectively during the job-acquisition process? What campus resources can help you create these strategies?**

Once upon a time, the success of the job-search process relied on the results of a careful perusal of printed newspaper job ads combined with word-of-mouth tips and connections provided by a network of supportive family members and friends. That time has passed. Just like many other aspects in your life, this process is now almost exclusively web-based, which is a fact supported very persuasively in the following Monster.com career-advice article (<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/top-10-ways-to-use-the-web-to-get-a-job-hot-jobs>). Although the manner in which you will conduct a successful job search has changed (i.e., it will consist of using online job-search sites such as *Indeed*, *Glassdoor*, *Monster*, *LinkedIn*, and *CareerBuilder*), the documents you will create (cover letters and resumes), the words you will choose to describe yourself to potential employers (detailed answers to challenging interview questions), and your ability to cultivate credible references to support your applications remain the same.

Perhaps the best way to introduce you to the complex task of locating and applying for the job you would like to acquire is to introduce you to the stages of this process beginning with the results of an online search performed by a fictional psychology major named Kristen Kelly. Kristen decided she wanted to pursue a career as a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative after consulting with her career counselor and then evaluating the information she gathered about this occupation from *An Online Career-Exploration Resource for Psychology Majors* (<http://teachpsych.org/psycareer>). Kristen then made a conscious decision to use her undergraduate career and her part-time job to deliberately strengthen the job-related skills she knew she would need to enter and succeed in this position. As she neared graduation, she began to use several online job-search sites to locate ads for pharmaceutical sales representative positions, and eventually discovered the following ad on *Indeed*. BTW: Although Kristen is not a real person, the following job ad is genuine.

### **Pharmaceutical Sales Representative**

#### **Job Information**

The Professional Sales Representative (PSR) engages Health Care Professionals (HCPs) in face-to-face discussions to promote assigned client product(s), maximize the product(s) selling potential, and meet program and client objectives. The PSR achieves this by developing and maintaining relationships with HCPs and educating them about product features, benefits, safety profile, and approved indications to ensure appropriate patient use. The PSR utilizes approved tools and resources for product promotion and maintains a competent level of product, territory, and customer activity knowledge.

## Qualifications and Minimal Requirements

- A bachelor's degree (any major) from an accredited college or university is required
- Prior pharmaceutical sales within the identified territory are considered, but are not required
- Entry level or new-to-industry candidates are considered
- Knowledge of the medical, healthcare, or pharmacy industry and skills in clinical selling are preferred
- Demonstrated effective organizational and communication skills
- Leadership, self-motivation, and initiative
- Demonstrated judgment and decision-making capability
- Be results oriented with demonstrated time management skills
- Ability to learn, analyze, understand, and convey complex information
- Demonstrated technical aptitude and computer skills are essential
- A valid driver's license and safe driving record are required

## Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills
- Clear, articulate, and grammatically correct speech
- Strong focus on providing customers with superior support and service
- Ability to learn, understand, and communicate complex information
- Strong rapport building skills and active listening skills
- Excellent selling, closing, and persuasion skills

Kristen printed hard copies of this ad and the list of skills possessed by “The Skillful Psychology Student” (from Stage One) and presented them to her career counselor. Together they used five different colored highlighters to create the following color-coded strategy to compare the skills from the job ad with those from her list of skills she had deliberately developed as she chose her “in-class” and “outside-class” activities.

Skills → **Cognitive** **Communication** **Personal** **Social** **Technological**

## Qualifications and Minimal Requirements

- Bachelor's degree (any major) from an accredited college or university required.
- Prior pharmaceutical sales within the identified territory considered but not required
- Entry level or new to industry candidates considered
- Knowledge of the medical, healthcare or pharmacy industry and skills in clinical selling are preferred
- Demonstrated effective **organizational** and **communication** skills
- **Leadership**, self-motivation, and initiative
- Demonstrated judgment and decision-making capability
- Be results oriented with demonstrated **time management skills**
- Ability to **learn, analyze, understand**, and **convey** complex information
- Demonstrated **technical aptitude and computer skills** are essential
- A valid driver's license and safe driving record

## Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- **Excellent verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills**

- Clear, articulate, and grammatically sound speech
- Strong focus on providing customers with superior support and service
- Ability to learn, understand and communicate complex information
- Strong rapport building skills and active listening skills
- Excellent selling, closing, persuasion skills

Much to her absolute delight, Kristen realized that she had literally created herself in the image of the person she had decided to become—a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative—by deliberately choosing to engage in both the curricular and extracurricular components of her undergraduate education that would enable her to develop the skills necessary for this career. The next step in her application process was to work with her career counselor to create the following cover letter and resume that documented the experiences she had used to develop the skills required by this particular job.

# Kristen C. Kelly

2060 Magnolia Avenue, Atlanta, GA 39807

Residence: (404) 123-4567 ~ Cell: (545) 549-8721 ~ Email: kckelly@gmail.com

April 11, 2019

Mr. Daniel Troutman  
Director of Human Resources  
Roswell Pharmaceuticals  
1984 Abernathy Road  
Atlanta, GA 30276

Dear Mr. Troutman,

I would like to apply for your Pharmaceutical Sales Representative position posted on *Indeed*. I am well-qualified for this position, and I can use the skills I developed in my classes, practiced during my internship, and applied successfully on-the-job to make a positive contribution to Roswell Pharmaceuticals. As indicated by my enclosed resume, I will receive my Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a concentration in Health Psychology from Georgia State University on May 25, 2019.

The description of this position indicates that applicants should possess the social, communication, and cognitive skills that will enable them to develop successful relationships with Health Care Professionals by providing them the features, benefits, and safety profiles of Roswell's products in a way that maximizes their selling potential. The combination of classes, extracurricular activities, and work experiences I engaged in during my undergraduate education provided me with the following opportunities to develop and strengthen these skills and to use them to produce positive outcomes in both my academic and workplace settings.

- The classes I took to earn my Concentration in Health Psychology helped me understand the effects that pharmaceuticals have on human behaviors and mental processes. They also enabled me to develop the vocabulary I will need to successfully engage the health care professionals with whom I will communicate during the process of helping them develop the positive attitudes toward Roswell Pharmaceutical products that will produce an increase in their sales.
- I applied the technological skills I acquired in my classes during my internship at Northside Hospital's Emergency Room where I worked with the staff to create a more user-friendly on-line patient information gathering system and during my senior collaborative research project when I analyzed our data with SPSS and created the tables for our 20-page research report and the PowerPoint presentation we gave at Georgia State's 2019 Undergraduate Research Conference.
- When I served as a teaching assistant in Introductory Psychology by providing students with both in-person and online tutoring for their examination that tested their knowledge of the chapter on Biological Psychology.
- When I worked as an apartment leasing agent at North Point Towers, I developed and strengthened the customer service and sales skills (e.g., rapport-building, active listening, persuasion, and closing) that enabled me to receive the Top Leasing Agent Award in both 2017 and 2018.

I would also like you to be aware that my high level of motivation, my strong work ethic, and my ability to demonstrate effective time- and stress-management strategies enabled me to complete my bachelor's degree and my concentration in four years, and that I graduated with no student-loan debt as a result of maintaining my academic scholarship with a 3.56 grade point average while working 20 hours a week for North Point Towers.

I would be most happy to meet with you to further describe my qualifications for and interest in this position. I look forward to receiving your reply to this letter.

Sincerely,

*Kristen C. Kelly*

Enclosure: Resume

# Kristen C. Kelly

2060 Magnolia Avenue, Atlanta, GA 39807-1674

Residence: (404) 123-4567 ~ Cell: (545) 549-8721 ~ Email: kckelly@gmail.com

**OBJECTIVE:** I seek a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative position in which I can utilize the skills I developed in college, during my internship, and on-the-job to maximize my company's products' selling potential.

## EDUCATION:

- Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Georgia State University** 2019
- Concentration in Health Psychology 2019

## WORK EXPERIENCE:

- **Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, Georgia State University** 2017-2018
- **Intern, Northside Hospital Emergency Room** 2019
- **Apartment Leasing Agent, North Point Towers** 2016-present

## SKILLS:

**Communication Skills** - developed in my Speech, English Composition, and Psychology classes and during my job, my internship, and my service as a teaching assistant in Introductory Psychology

- Demonstrating strong public speaking and conversational abilities in professional and informal environments
- Giving full attention to what other people are saying and taking time to understand the points they are making
- Communicating scientific information in a credible and persuasive manner to diverse audiences
- Producing clear and grammatically correct documents based on my understanding of scientific literature

**Social Skills** – developed on-the-job as an apartment leasing agent for North Point Towers

- Demonstrating the ability to create and maintain a successful customer focus with a widely diverse clientele
- Utilizing strong rapport-building, active listening, persuasion, and closing skills
- Strengthening the leasing agent team by serving as a mentor who guided and motivated newly hired agents

**Cognitive Skills** - developed in my Research Methods and Statistics classes and during my senior research project

- Displaying proficiency with research design and statistics necessary for the study of scientific variables
- Solving complex problems, attending to details, planning proactively, and displaying comfort with ambiguity
- Using creative and resourceful approaches to solve problem and approach new tasks
- Gathering, comprehending, and evaluating information from multiple scientific sources
- Engaging in logical decision making when considering the potential outcomes of actions

**Technological Skills** – developed in my Statistics class, senior research project, and internship

- Using statistical software to organize, analyze, evaluate, and display data
- Using presentation software to organize and clarify complex information during formal presentations
- Using Microsoft Access during my internship to create a more efficient and user-friendly patient information gathering system

**Personal Skills** – developed by learning how to balance a full-time class load, an internship, and a 20-hour per week job

- Demonstrating a high level of self-motivation and a results-oriented work ethic that produced both a strong grade point average and an award-winning sales history
- Developing the time and stress management skills necessary to support myself financially and graduate in four years with no college debt



- Adjusting successfully to change by responding in a flexible, proactive, and civil manner when changes occurred
- Performing work in an honest, reliable, and accountable manner that reflected the ethical values and standards of the organizations to which I belonged

-- References Available Upon Request --

After Kristen created and then used her cover letter and resume to apply for this job, her career counselor suggested that she begin to prepare for the next step in the application process: the interview. He told her that although employers ask job applicants many different questions, they all reflect that same basic theme, which is “Why should I hire you rather than all the other people who have also applied for this job?” According to an article in *Forbes Magazine* (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgebradt/2013/01/02/acing-the-only-three-true-job-interview-questions/#38617a4f4ca2>), this type of question is actually composed of the following three sub-questions that enable employers to hire the person who will be the best possible fit for a particular job.

1. Can you do this job?
2. Will you love this job?
3. Will we be able to tolerate working with you?

In other words...

1. Do you possess the skills you will need to perform the tasks this job requires?
2. Will you be sufficiently motivated to perform these tasks in a positive, energetic, and successful manner?
3. Will your personal characteristics enable you to be a good fit for our organization?

Based on this information, Kristen’s career counselor provided her with the following strategies to create compelling answers to these three crucial questions.

- Do you possess the skills you will need to perform the tasks this job requires?

The best way to answer this question is to begin by making sure the interviewer knows that you are fully aware of the skills required by the position for which you are applying. You can do this by first referring to the specific set of skills contained in the job ad, then describing how you have developed these skills, and finally explaining why you believe these skills are necessary for successful performance in this job.

For example, “This job will require me to demonstrate the same strong communication and persuasion skills that enabled me to earn high grades in my classes in which I was required to read and comprehend complex scientific publications and then use this information to write well-documented reports and to make clear and compelling technology-enhanced presentations based on the contents of these reports. I specifically chose professors who graded both the style (e.g., grammar and spelling) and the content of my reports and presentations, which enabled me to practice and strengthen the communication skills that I will need to be perceived as a credible and reliable source of information by the well-educated healthcare professionals with whom I will interact on-the-job.

- Will you bring a level of motivation to this job that will enable you to convince your potential customers that both you and our company can provide them with support and service that are superior to those of our competitors?

The best way to answer this question is to explain (1) that you genuinely enjoy—and therefore will be motivated to perform—the activities required by the job for which you are applying and (2) that you have produced successful results in the past when you have engaged in these activities.

For example, “I have been a salesman ever since I opened a lemonade stand when I was eight years old and discovered that I could make a profit of 19 cents on each glass I sold. This early entrepreneurial enterprise convinced me that selling is a highly enjoyable activity when you sell something you truly believe in and that you know will benefit the people who purchase it. I loved selling my lemonade because I knew it was the best in the world because it was my Grandmother’s “secret” recipe and my customers said it was the most delicious lemonade they had ever tasted. My job for the past three years has been as an apartment leasing agent. My strategy to lease apartments is simple, but effective. I don’t begin with a grand sales pitch designed to “set the hook” in all my potential renters because I do not yet know what they are looking for in an apartment. So I ask each of them to tell me about themselves, their life styles, and their specific housing needs. I then listen carefully and actively—as I learned to do in my Counseling class—as they help me to understand what they want and need in an apartment (e.g., two bathrooms, dog-friendly, smoke-free, a nice view, quick access to our exercise room, etc.). After I fully understand their unique set of needs—and compare them with the characteristics of our available units—I show them the apartments that meet the greatest number of their needs. In essence, my sales strategy is to discover what my customers want and then to use my extensive knowledge of the apartments we offer to create a customer-product match that is strong enough to allow me to “close the deal.” I will use this same strategy in the job for which I am applying after I thoroughly acquaint myself with the characteristics of the pharmaceuticals I will be selling. If I am hired, I will use the same rapport-building, active listening, persuasion, and closing skills to promote the pharmaceuticals I am offering as I did when I was a successful apartment leasing agent. I am very proud of being North Point Towers’ Top Leasing Agent for the last two years, and I can say with confidence that I am not only a successful salesperson, but that I very motivated to continue my sales success as a Pharmaceutical Sale Representative for your company.

- Will your personal characteristics enable you to be a good fit for our organization?

The best way to answer this question is to reflect upon the skills you possess, and select those that are most crucial for establishing and maintaining good relations with your supervisors and co-workers in the job you wish to attain.

For example, “I possess a strong preference to engage in activities that produce tangible positive results that can benefit both myself and others. If you asked my teachers, my fellow students, my supervisors, my co-workers, and those who I served during my internship to describe me, they would say that I am a “team player” because I always do my best to make sure that the groups to which I belong are successful. I have found that being dependable, responsible, persistent, detail-oriented, honest, good-natured, and cooperative are the characteristics of the members of a successful team. If you hire me, I will bring these same characteristics to the sales team I join, and I

will use them to make sure our team is successful in its efforts to meet and exceed our organization's program and client objectives.

There are many other questions you may be asked during a job interview. The following is a list of some of these questions compiled by *Monster*. If you think that some of these questions could catch you "off-guard," go to <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/top-10-interview-questions-prep> for strategies to help you answer these questions in ways that will produce a positive impression on your interviewers.

- What are your weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are your goals?
- What salary are you asking?
- If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

The line -- References Available Upon Request -- appears at the bottom of Kristen's resume. While not all employers seek input from references, many of them do. One of the advantages of a having a strong reference is that it allows someone other than yourself to say positive things about you, such as the instructor who invited Kristen to serve as a teaching assistant in his Introductory Psychology class who used the following words to describe her during a telephone conversation with her potential employer.

*"I invited Kristen to serve as a teaching assistant in my Introductory Psychology class because my students' scores on my test that covered the chapter on Biological Psychology were perennially low. When I discussed this problem with the Chairman of my department during my annual review, she suggested that I consult with the head of our Health Psychology Concentration to see if he could recommend a teaching assistant to help my students prepare for this test and, when I did, he immediately recommended Kristen. I was pleased with his recommendation because I remembered Kristen as being a very enthusiastic student in my Introductory Psychology class and that she had earned a perfect score on my test covering Biological Psychology. She was thrilled when I approached her about this, and immediately volunteered to provide a tutoring session to my students the night before the test. My students' scores were 10% higher than the previous semester. When I announced this in class, those who had been unable to attend Kristen's session expressed their disappointment, and when I shared this with Kristen, she volunteered to create an online tutorial for the next semester's class so that everyone could have access to her tutoring. I enthusiastically accepted her proposal. I explained Kristen's double offer to my students the following semester, and 85% of them used her services (with several utilizing both her in-person and online sessions). Their scores were 9% higher than the previous semester's class, which was a 19% increase over the class that had not received her tutorials the previous year. I was truly thrilled with the results of Kristen's work—as was my Chairman—but I think Kristen was more thrilled that either of us. When she provided me with the description of the Pharmaceutical Sales Representative job for which she is applying—and I realized that she would be providing your customers with "tutorials" on your products—I completely understood her joy. Her strong*

*knowledge of Biological and Health Psychology (including both the positive and negative effects of drugs on human behaviors and mental processes) coupled with her proven ability to communicate this information to others in an effective and results-producing manner enable me to recommend her to you for this job without the slightest reservation.”*

# Stage Five

## Transitioning Successfully from College to the Workplace

**What skills will you need to adjust to, maintain, and flourish in your job once you are hired?**

**Congratulations!** You are now an employed college graduate, and I am sure you are delighted that you will soon be receiving paychecks instead of tuition bills. Your life is going to change in many important ways as your role changes abruptly from student to employee, and your ability to keep your new job and flourish in it will depend upon your ability and willingness to put the skills you learned in college to work on-the-job. This section addresses these changes by identifying (1) the ways in which college and the workplace differ and the skills you will need to make a successful student-to-employee transition; (2) the skills you will need to help you avoid negative on-the-job consequences such as being reprimanded, disciplined, or fired; and (3) the skills that will help you experience positive on-the-job consequences such as promotions to higher-paying positions.

First, let us address some specific ways in which your life as a college student will change as you assume your new role as an employee. In a publication by Dr. Paul Hettich titled *How to "Ace" Your Freshman Year in the Workplace With C's: Culture, Competence, and Consequences* ([https://www.psichi.org/page/143EyeSpr10dHettich#.XH\\_opsBKipp](https://www.psichi.org/page/143EyeSpr10dHettich#.XH_opsBKipp)) the results of a survey of college graduates who described how their lives as employees differed from their lives as students were reported. A more recent study from the *Harvard Business Review* ([https://hbr.org/2019/04/the-biggest-hurdles-recent-graduates-face-entering-the-workforce?utm\\_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm\\_campaign=feae3dc3a2-roundup-apr-12-2019&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_ff6044c3a5-feae3dc3a2-92273453](https://hbr.org/2019/04/the-biggest-hurdles-recent-graduates-face-entering-the-workforce?utm_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm_campaign=feae3dc3a2-roundup-apr-12-2019&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ff6044c3a5-feae3dc3a2-92273453)) concluded that most of these differences fall into three major categories: feedback, relationships, and accountability. The following list contains examples of these differences, each of which is followed by at least one of the skills (underlined) of the *Skillful Psychology Student* provided in Stage One that you will need to make a successful transition from student to employee.

**Student:** In school you are essentially responsible only for yourself. Although you will participate in collaborative projects, the end product of these activities is the individual grade you earn that will appear on your transcript. Any mistakes you make are quickly forgiven and rapidly forgotten as you begin new classes the next semester.

**Employee:** There is much more at stake when you are on the job, and any mistakes you make can produce dire consequences. You are no longer accountable only to yourself. You are accountable to your supervisor, your fellow employees, your organization, and to those who your organization serves. If you make a mistake, you are no longer able to make it up, ask for extra credit, or just wait until the semester ends so you can start all over with a “clean record” when the new semester begins. Mistakes are no longer perceived as just learning opportunities, and—if they are serious enough—they can have dangerous and long-lasting consequences for your reputation and your career.

**Necessary Skills:** Acting in an honest, reliable, and accountable manner that reflects the ethical values and standards of an organization.

**Student:** Discretionary time is readily available; breaks, vacations, and time off are abundant.

**Employee:** There is little or no discretionary time; time off is much more limited, especially for new hires.

**Necessary Skill:** You will have far less free time when you are employed, so your time management skills will be crucially important for your success on-the-job.

**Student:** Passive participation is allowed.

**Employee:** Active participation is required.

**Necessary Skills:** You will no longer be able to simply sit back and let your teachers teach you. Your employer will inform you of your duties, and then it will be up to you to actively display the initiative and persistence necessary to both begin and complete you assigned tasks with little or no supervision.

**Student:** Curricula are highly structured and classes have specific directions contained in their syllabi.

**Employee:** There is much less structure and far fewer specific instructions.

**Necessary Skill:** Your ability to deal effectively with supervisors who present you with ambiguous tasks that lack specific instructions will be determined by your ability to display comfort with ambiguity.

**Student:** You are free to set your own schedule, and once your schedule is set, there are few changes in routine because of the fixed times and days of classes for which you are registered.

**Employee:** Changes in routine are frequent and often unexpected.

**Necessary Skill:** Adaptability to change is a skill you must possess if you want to succeed while operating in a constantly changing and often chaotic workplace environment.

**Student:** Your individual effort and performance are emphasized.

**Employee:** Team effort and performance are emphasized.

**Necessary Skill:** No one works alone, so being able to work effectively in a team is essential for success on-the-job.

**Student:** The focus is on your own personal development.

**Employee:** The focus is on the development of the organization.

**Necessary Skills:** Given that seeking ways to help others in order to help the organization that employs you will be your focus on-the-job, maintaining a customer/patient/client focus will be an absolutely essential skill for success.

**Student:** You can choose your own acceptable level of performance (e.g., a “D” is a passing grade).

**Employee:** “A” level work is expected continuously.

**Necessary Skills:** Performing duties in a careful, thorough, and dependable manner that reflects the standards of an organization is essential for success.

**Student:** Grades on tests, papers, and assignments provide you with frequent and specific feedback.

**Employee:** Feedback is often infrequent and nonspecific.

**Necessary Skill:** Employees receive formal feedback very infrequently (e.g., perhaps only once a year during an annual review), so they must become adept at listening and responding appropriately to the ideas of others (e.g., their supervisors) if they want to improve their performance on-the-job in a manner that will increase their chances of promotions and/or salary increases.

**Student:** An extensive network of personal support services exists to help you adapt to the stresses of your educational environment where your continued success is valued by your school because you are one of its paying customers.

**Employee:** There is much less personal support.

**Necessary Skill:** The ability to develop and utilize effective strategies to manage stress and time without having to continually rely on the guidance and support of others is essential for success on-the-job.

**Student:** You can control and sometimes eliminate the occurrence of non-preferred behaviors or situations (e.g., public speaking or getting up early) by choosing classes that do not require them.

**Employee:** Employees must engage in the behaviors and activities specified by their supervisors.

**Necessary Skill:** Successful employees must learn to adapt to the non-preferred tasks required by their jobs.

**Student:** You can choose those with whom you interact on a daily basis.

**Employee:** Employees must interact with their co-workers and the clientele served by their organizations.

**Necessary Skill:** Success on-the-job is dependent upon the ability to demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and individual differences and similarities by working effectively with diverse people, respecting and considering divergent opinions, and showing respect for others.

You are now aware of how the skills you can develop in college can help you make a successful initial transition to the workforce. But as you continue your employment, you will also become acutely aware of situations you would like to avoid (e.g., being reprimanded, disciplined, or fired by your supervisor), and situations you would like to experience (e.g., being promoted to a higher position with a higher salary). The behaviors that produce these positive and negative consequences for new college hires have been carefully and systematically studied by Dr. Phil Gardner who is the Director of Michigan State University's Collegiate Employment Research Institute. His most recent findings (which are available at [www.ceri.msu.edu](http://www.ceri.msu.edu)) are presented below.

Employers surveyed by Dr. Gardner reported that the following behaviors were those that most often cause supervisors to discipline new college hires or discuss specific negative behaviors with them.

- failing to follow instructions
- ignoring an organization's protocols
- being late or absent for work
- displaying a lack of commitment to work (i.e., possessing a weak work ethic)
- missing assignment deadlines
- engaging in negative behaviors such as whining, pranks, or forming cliques
- lacking the ability to communicate in an effective manner
- failing to demonstrate initiative

Revisiting the list of skills valued by employers that psychology students can develop presented in Stage One reveals that all of these causes for supervisor reprimands can result from an absence of

one or more of the following skills: integrity, self-regulation, oral communication, and written communication.

While the thought of being disciplined by your supervisor for engaging in one of the above behaviors is certainly not pleasant, an even less pleasant thought is hearing your supervisor tell you that you are fired, that you must clean out your desk, and that you will be escorted out of the building by security. The results of Dr. Gardner's research indicate that the following reasons were given most often by employers who have fired new college hires.

- being late or absent for work
- violating organizational policies
- lacking motivation or a strong work ethic
- engaging in unethical behaviors
- engaging in negative behaviors
- failing to follow instructions

Once again, it appears that a lack of the ability to demonstrate the skills you can develop in college is often the cause for this unfortunate situation. These skills are time management, integrity, active listening, and self-regulation.

On a more positive note, I am sure you do not want to remain in your initial position and at your beginning salary forever, so I am certain you want your supervisor to perceive you as a valuable employee who deserves to be promoted to a higher position with a more generous salary. The employers who Dr. Gardner surveyed reported that the following behaviors were most often those that caused supervisors to promote new college hires.

- showing initiative
- commitment and passion for work
- personal attitude
- cognitive abilities
- learning
- team effectiveness
- leadership and followership

All of these are the direct results of the skills you can learn in college (e.g., leadership, learning new systems, collaboration, management, and critical and analytical thinking).

Dr. Gardner's also asked employers to report the challenges they had experienced as they attempted to hire high-quality employees. Three of their challenges were applicants who lacked the appropriate soft skills (see <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2017/09/soft-skills> for a definition of soft skills), applicants who lacked the appropriate technical skills, and the low number of applicants for open positions. When you reflect on these findings, you will quickly conclude that the possession of a combination of the soft skills (i.e., cognitive, communication, social, and personal skills) and the technological skills you can develop in college puts you in a very strong position to be hired, especially because another of the challenges employers face reported by Dr. Gardner is a lack of qualified applicants. One more of his findings is that students who are able to make a successful transition from college to career will have more job opportunities than those who cannot.



# The Skillful Psychology Student's Skills Inventory and Cover Letter, Resume, and Interview Preparation Worksheet

The American Psychological Association (APA) has created a list of 17 employer-valued skills that will help you prepare for success in any career (<https://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/transferable-skills.pdf>). These skills are organized into the following broad categories: Cognitive, Communication, Personal, Social, and Technological. APA has also published a companion article that provides the rationale for their list, a description of how it was created, and a strategy to use it to prepare for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace (<https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2019/02/skillful-student>) by accomplishing the following three goals.

1. Becoming keenly aware of these skills and their definitions.
2. Creating and carrying out a strategy to work with your **academic advisor** to identify and engage in the curricular and extracurricular activities that will enable you to develop and strengthen these skills.
3. Creating and carrying out a strategy to work with a **career counselor** to learn how to market these skills during the job-search process by including them in the cover letters and resumes you will send to potential employers and then using them to create confident and convincing answers to challenging interview questions such as, "How did your use undergraduate education to develop the skills you will need to succeed in the job for which you are applying?"

The following table contain all 17 skills from APA's list followed by their definitions, thus helping you to accomplish the first goal from the above list. Each of these skills and its description is then followed by a box containing an example of a curricular or extracurricular strategy you could use to acquire and strengthen that skill written in the form of an entry you could include on a resume, thus helping you to begin the process of accomplishing the second goal from the above list in collaboration with your academic advisor.

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Analytical Thinking:</b> Solve complex problems, attend to details, plan proactively, and display comfort with ambiguity.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	I assumed the role of president of our Psychology Club when its former president resigned amidst rumors of the possible misappropriation of club funds. I worked with the other officers and our club advisor to regain the trust of our department chairman (who was considering disbanding our club) to create a more transparent way of financial record keeping, and to dispel the false belief that our club membership was open only to graduate-school-bound students.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Critical Thinking:</b> Display proficiency with statistics, program evaluation, and research design necessary for the study of social and technical systems.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	I earned a final grade of "A" in all three of my psychology research classes: Statistics, Research Methods, and Capstone Senior Research. I presented the results of my capstone research project during our department's Undergraduate Psychology Research Poster Session where my poster was recognized as "One of the Top Five Posters" based on faculty ratings. My research mentor has encouraged me to publish the results of my research, and I am currently collaborating with her on the manuscript.

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Creativity:</b> Use innovative and resourceful approaches to problem solving and new tasks.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	When I served as the Public Relations Officer of our Psi Chi chapter, I created and distributed a questionnaire that surveyed the opinions of our members regarding their interests in a set of possible projects for our chapter. The results revealed a strong interest in inviting alumni to talk to our members about their experiences of either entering graduate school or the workforce immediately after graduation. I worked with our Alumni Office to identify alumni speakers and, with the support of our department chairman, I scheduled and hosted a series of well attended “Lunch With an Alum” gatherings.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Information Management:</b> Be adept at locating, organizing, evaluating, and distributing information from multiple sources.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	My work-study job on campus was to serve as an assistant to one of the research librarians whose job is to help faculty and students use the library’s search engines to locate and evaluate the online information they needed for their research. During the two years I served in this capacity, I developed a working knowledge of Google Scholar, PubMed, Scirus, and Infoplease, and I used this knowledge to assist undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty in a variety of academic areas.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Judgment and Decision Making:</b> Engage in logical and systematic thinking and ethical decision making when considering the possible outcomes of a particular action.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	One of my duties as a Teaching Assistant in our Research Methods class was to “pre-read” student papers to detect APA-style errors so that the instructor could concentrate on the content—rather than the style—as he graded his students’ papers. The most common error I encountered was a lack of understanding of how to avoid plagiarism by citing the work of others in an appropriate manner (i.e., by either paraphrasing it or placing it in quotation marks). I provided my students with logical and systematic explanations of their errors so they could become aware of and understand the nature of their current unethical behaviors and hopefully avoid these behaviors in the future.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Oral Communication:</b> Demonstrate strong active listening and conversational abilities in both informal and professional environments, as well as an aptitude for public speaking and communicating scientific information to diverse audiences.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	The research I performed on the occupation I want to enter made me acutely aware of the strong verbal skills I would need for success, so I made an appointment with an advisor in our Communication Studies Department, explained my occupational aspirations to her, and asked her to suggest a set of courses that would provide the verbal skills I would need to succeed in my desired job. The courses she recommended in addition to my required Fundamentals of Speech class were Nonverbal Communication, Media Studies, Interpersonal Communication, Small Group Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Persuasion. She also explained that the credit hours I would earn for taking these courses would enable me to graduate with a minor in Communication Studies, which would be a very valuable entry on my resume.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Written Communication:</b> Comprehend relevant reading materials to produce professional documents that are grammatically correct, such as technical or training materials and business correspondence.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	I was invited to serve as a teaching assistant in our Research and Writing class by its instructor who had been impressed with my ability to write in APA style when I took her class. She provided me with a small room in her lab where her students could schedule my assistance as they wrote their formal research reports. The number of students who failed the writing component of the class decreased by 16% during the first semester I served in this capacity, and by 21% the following semester.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Adaptability:</b> Adjust successfully to change by responding in a flexible, proactive, and civil manner when changes occur.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	My senior thesis supervisor suffered a fatal heart attack during Christmas break of my senior year. Although I was initially overwhelmed by this loss, I was able to manage my emotions, find another faculty member who was willing to serve as my supervisor, complete my research project,

	and present its results at the National Undergraduate Research Conference.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Integrity:</b> Perform work in an honest, reliable, and accountable manner that reflects the ethical values and standards of an organization.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	I learned about the crucial importance of making ethical decisions in my Ethical Decisions in Leadership class, and then I applied what I learned during a research project that involved the creation of an institutional review board ethics protocol, in writing assignments that conformed to APA-style guidelines that prohibit plagiarism, and during an internship that required strict client confidentiality.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Self-Regulation:</b> Manage time and stress by completing assigned tasks with little or no supervision; display initiative and persistence by accepting and completing additional duties in a careful, thorough, and dependable manner.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	My high level of motivation, my strong work ethic, and my ability to demonstrate effective time- and stress-management strategies enabled me to complete my bachelor's degree in four years and to graduate with no student-loan debt as a result of maintaining my academic scholarship with a 3.56 grade point average while working 20 hours a week as an apartment leasing agent.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Collaboration:</b> Work effectively in a team by cooperating, sharing responsibilities, and listening and responding appropriately to the ideas of others.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	I intentionally enrolled in as many classes as I could that required group work because success in the workplace is almost always the result of a successful team effort. My strategy to develop this skill was to behave in the responsible, cooperative, and collegial manner that was necessary to produce a high quality deliverable in a timely, efficient, and competent manner.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Inclusivity:</b> Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and individual differences and similarities by working effectively with diverse people, respecting and considering divergent opinions, and showing respect for others.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	My career goal is to become a Training and Development Manager in a large corporation. I obtained an internship in our campus Human Resources Office where I served as an assistant to the person whose job was to attend departmental meetings and present a report that explained our new campus policy on equal opportunity during the hiring process. The products of my internship were a PowerPoint my supervisor used during her presentations and a set of accompanying handouts. This experience opened my eyes to the challenges that non-majority people face as they attempt to gain meaningful employment and the policies and procedures that can mitigate these challenges.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Leadership:</b> Establish a vision for individuals and for the group, creating long-term plans, and guiding and inspiring others to accomplish tasks in a successful manner.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	After earning a grade of A+ in our department's Careers in Psychology class, I was invited to serve as a teaching assistant whose duty was to act as mentor to its students by sharing with them the strategies I had used to "take control" of my career-preparation process by setting realistic goals, utilizing campus resources, and creating a step-by-step process to use my college education to prepare myself for successful entrance into the workforce.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Management:</b> Manage individuals and/or teams, coordinate projects, and prioritize individual and team tasks.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	When I was promoted to night manager at Starbuck's, I the used the management skills I developed in my Organizational Leadership class to create a series of weekly "Barista Buzz" meetings during which I solicited both positive and negative feedback from the five baristas I managed, and then used this feedback to create and implement changes that produced a 20% decrease in employee turnover during my shift.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Service Orientation:</b> Seek ways to help people by displaying empathy; maintaining a customer, patient, or client focus; and engaging in the community.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	I developed my strong service orientation in my part-time job as an apartment leasing agent for North Point Towers by demonstrating the ability to create and maintain a successful customer focus with a widely diverse clientele; utilizing strong rapport-building strategies, active listening, persuasion, and closing skills; and strengthening the leasing agent team by serving as a mentor

	who guided and motivated newly hired agents. The quality of the service orientation skills I demonstrated on-the-job enabled me to receive the “Top Leasing Agent Award” in both 2017 and 2018.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Flexibility/Adaptability to New Systems:</b> Be willing and able to learn and/or adapt to new computer platforms, operating systems, and software programs.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	When our online course management system was changed from Blackboard to Moodle, I was approached by my tech-phobic academic advisor to help him adapt to the new system. He was given permission to bring me to a series of workshops on our new system offered by our Teaching and Learning Center, and we learned the new system together. I continued to serve as his “Moodle Mentor” until I graduated.
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Facility with Hardware and Software:</b> Demonstrate competency in using various operating systems, programs, and/or coding protocols; troubleshoot technical errors; and use software applications to build and maintain websites, create web-based applications, and perform statistical analyses.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	When I became the treasurer of our Psi Chi chapter, I discovered that all our financial records were entered by hand into an old fashioned ledger book. I used my knowledge of Excel to create a financial spreadsheet into which I entered and stored all our financial information and with which I was able to create reports for our meetings and the annual report that I was required to submit electronically to the Psi Chi national headquarters.

The following table is the same as the previous one, except that it contains no Resume Entries. This will be the table **you** will use—so replace Jane Doe with your name—to describe the actual activities you have already engaged in to acquire and strengthen your skills and the new strategies to strengthen your skills that you and your academic advisor and career counselor can create. After you fill in as many Resume Entry boxes as possible on the basis of your past experiences, the next stage of your strategy will be to bring your partially completed table to the next planning meeting with your **academic advisor** during which you and she can collaborate to determine the classes you will take and the extracurricular activities you will engage in during the following semester. Be sure to give her the table and explain its purpose **before** you begin the class-selection process. As you do this, tell her that you do not want to enroll in classes just to “get them out of the way” or simply because they are required for graduation. Tell her that you want to become a “**career-savvy advisee**” whose purpose is to maximize your career success by (1) identifying the skills that employers value, (2) deliberately choosing to use both the curricular and extracurricular components of your education to develop these skills, and then (3) successfully marketing these skills in a confident and credible manner during your job-search and acquisition process. When your advising session ends, give your advisor your table, ask her to add it to your advising file, and tell her that you will bring an updated version of your table to your next advising session that includes the skills you developed as a result of the classes and activities you and she decided upon during your current advising session.

The third step of your strategy to use APA’s skills list to create yourself in the image of the employed person you want to become is to visit your school’s **Career Center** to acquaint yourself with the services it offers and to schedule an appointment with one of its **career counselors** to begin to take advantage of these services. Present your partially-completed table during this appointment, explain its purpose, and describe how you are using it during your academic advising sessions. Then seek your career counselor’s assistance in identifying and refining your occupational goals and discovering more opportunities to develop the specific skills you will need to attain these goals. Please be aware that all jobs require the transferable/soft skills described in this document, but that each individual job also requires a unique set of specific skills, so try to

narrow your career choices as much as possible so that you and your career counselor can begin to create strategies to acquire and practice these job-specific skills as well. Please note that although the table on the following page contains space for only four of these job-specific skills, you can add as many more as you wish by simply inserting rows into your table. Schedule a meeting with your career counselor every semester to gain feedback on the style and content of your resume entries and to seek advice about how to create effective cover letters, resumes, and interview answers that can identify and describe your skills. Stress the fact—as you did with your academic advisor—that you want to be as **savvy and purposeful** as possible by **wisely investing your tuition in an education** that will enable you to develop the skills you will need for your future occupational success rather than **simply spending your tuition money on a creducation** that says nothing more about you than that you have accumulated a sufficient number of credit hours to be eligible to receive a college diploma (<https://www.psichi.org/page/234EyeSum19Appleby#.XKJ3ZlVKipo>).

### **A Word of Warning and a Piece of Valuable Advice**

Be sure not to overload yourself with skill-building activities. Work with your advisor and career counselor to determine a realistic skill-building load for the next semester. A good strategy might be to engage in one or two skill-building classes and one extracurricular activity each semester.

You should also share your table with other important people in your life, such as anyone who has provided you with financial, social, and/or emotional support during your education (e.g., your parents, significant others, and/or friends), your teachers who will appreciate how you are planning to use what you learned in their classes to develop the skills you will need to attain your post-baccalaureate goals, and your supervisors if you are employed or have an internship. These are the members of the network you should be creating to support you when it is time to begin the job search and application process. They are also the best people to use as references—except, of course, your family and friends—if an employer requests a recommendation from someone who can vouch for how you developed and demonstrated the skills you will need to be hired for a particular job.

# Jane Doe's Job Skills Inventory and Cover Letter, Resume, and Interview Preparation Worksheet

**Last Updated on April 11, 2019**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Analytical Thinking:</b> Solve complex problems, attend to details, plan proactively, and display comfort with ambiguity.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Critical Thinking:</b> Display proficiency with statistics, program evaluation, and research design necessary for the study of social and technical systems.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Creativity:</b> Use innovative and resourceful approaches to problem solving and new tasks.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Information Management:</b> Be adept at locating, organizing, evaluating, and distributing information from multiple sources.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Judgment and Decision Making:</b> Engage in logical and systematic thinking and ethical decision making when considering the possible outcomes of a particular action.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Oral Communication:</b> Demonstrate strong active listening and conversational abilities in both informal and professional environments, as well as an aptitude for public speaking and communicating scientific information to diverse audiences.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Written Communication:</b> Comprehend relevant reading materials to produce professional documents that are grammatically correct, such as technical or training materials and business correspondence.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Adaptability:</b> Adjust successfully to change by responding in a flexible, proactive, and civil manner when changes occur.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Integrity:</b> Perform work in an honest, reliable, and accountable manner that reflects the ethical values and standards of an organization.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Self-Regulation:</b> Manage time and stress by completing assigned tasks with little or no supervision; display initiative and persistence by accepting and completing additional duties in a careful, thorough, and dependable manner.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Collaboration:</b> Work effectively in a team by cooperating, sharing responsibilities, and listening and responding appropriately to the ideas of others.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Inclusivity:</b> Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and individual differences and similarities by working

	effectively with diverse people, respecting and considering divergent opinions, and showing respect for others.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Leadership:</b> Establish a vision for individuals and for the group, creating long-term plans, and guiding and inspiring others to accomplish tasks in a successful manner.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Management:</b> Manage individuals and/or teams, coordinate projects, and prioritize individual and team tasks.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Service Orientation:</b> Seek ways to help people by displaying empathy; maintaining a customer, patient, or client focus; and engaging in the community.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Flexibility/Adaptability to New Systems:</b> Be willing and able to learn and/or adapt to new computer platforms, operating systems, and software programs.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Facility with Hardware and Software:</b> Demonstrate competency in using various operating systems, programs, and/or coding protocols; troubleshoot technical errors; and use software applications to build and maintain websites, create web-based applications, and perform statistical analyses.
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Job-Specific Skill</b>
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Job-Specific Skill</b>
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Job-Specific Skill</b>
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???
<b>Skill</b>	<b>Job-Specific Skill</b>
<b>Resume Entry</b>	???

# Epilogue

An epilogue is a short section that appears at the end of a literary work whose purpose is to allow its author to describe the ultimate fates of the characters she created. *Your Skillabus* is not a literary work, nor does it portray the trials and tribulations of a set of fictional characters. In fact, its only character is you, and your fate (i.e., your ability or inability to prepare for, enter, and succeed in the 21st Century workplace) will depend upon your understanding of and willingness to use the advice it contains about how to utilize the opportunities provided by your undergraduate education to develop and market the set of skills you will need to obtain the occupation of your choice.

If you read *Your Skillabus* carefully, take the time to fully understand its contents and purpose, and are willing and able to apply the knowledge and strategies it provides to your life, you are in a strong position to use your undergraduate journey to prepare yourself for your ultimate destination of occupational success. In order to determine your occupational **fate** at this point in time, let us return to the five stages described in *Your Skillabus*. Read the statement that follows each stage given below and—as honestly as possible—select the answer that best describes your level of agreement with that statement.

**Stage One** → I am now aware of and understand the set of employer-valued skills I will need to prepare for, enter, and succeed in the 21st Century workplace.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**Stage Two** → I am now aware of and willing to utilize the resources on my campus from which I can receive the guidance I will need to develop these skills.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**Stage Three** → I am now aware of and willing to utilize strategies to use both the curricular and extracurricular components of my undergraduate education to develop these skills.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**Stage Four** → I am now aware of and am willing to use the resources on my campus to create strategies to search for potential jobs and then market my skills effectively during the job-search and application process.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

**Stage Five** → I am now aware of the skills I will need to adjust to, keep, and flourish in my job once I am employed.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Undecided      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Your fate—at this particular point in time—can be inferred from the number of Strongly Agree responses you give to these statements. You may not be happy with your current results, but at least you are now aware of your location on your journey to occupational success (i.e., you are not lost), and you can use this knowledge to begin to create a realistic plan to reach your desired occupational destination.



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