

The Recognition of Essential Workforce Skills

One Accreditor's Mission to Enhance Student Success

Presented by: Dr. Michale S. McComis

Executive Director

Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)



“Soft Skills”

Poll Question: With Regard to Soft Skills:

- a. I know exactly what soft skills are and can define them.
- b. I know soft skills when I see them and can talk about them with some certainty.
- c. I have a general idea of what soft skills are, but can't define them.
- d. I thought there were going to be doughnuts at this presentation.

Executive Director's Report

“Soft Skills”

What is your definition of “soft skills.”

Soft Skills - Working Definition

“Soft skills”
then are
Essential
Workforce
Skills.



But, What Are They?
(Wait for it, its Coming)

Essential Workforce Skills

Focusing
Only/Primarily
On “Hard
Skills” is
Insufficient for
the Future

WORK → RETIRE

The Path is not
Straight

Essential Workforce Skills

Students Need
More Tools



Essential Workforce Skills

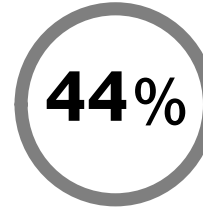
Schools “say” they address soft skills.

Then why do employers continue to find graduate ill-equipped in these areas?

Essential Workforce Skills Matter. Candidates Lack Them. They are Hard to Find.



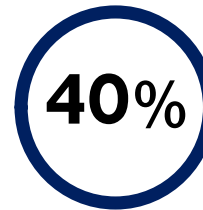
of executives say soft skills are equal to or more important than hard skills –
Wall Street Journal



of U.S. senior executives think Americans lack soft skills
– Adecco



of talent professionals said bad hires typically lack soft skills
– LinkedIn



of new hires fail within 18 months because of inadequate soft skills
– Leadership IQ

Essential Workforce Skills

Where Are They?
Show Me.

Essential Workforce Skills -

A Framework for High-Quality program



Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification



Institutions can choose :

Level II: Program demonstrates alignment to EWS standards in all **six (6)** ACCSC Essential Workforce Skills competency areas.

Level I: Program demonstrates alignment to ACCSC EWS standards in **four (4)** ACCSC EWS competency areas of the institution's choosing.

<https://www.essentialworkforceskills.org/>

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

- **Six Competency Areas**
 - **Self-Management Skills**
 - **Communication Skills**
 - **People Skills**
 - **Analytical Skills**
 - **Planning Skills**
 - **Career Management Skills**

Essential Workforce Skills – Skills that Define Each Competency Area

Each Competency Area is defined by a set of Skills

Communication Skills

**One of the 7 Essential Workforce Skills used to
define this competency area is:**

Speak With Intention

<https://www.essentialworkforceskills.org/>

Essential Workforce Skills – Skill Ability Statements

➤ Speak with Intention

Each Skill is defined in granular, concrete “Skill Ability Statements.”

- Think before speaking
- Organize your thoughts before speaking
- Distinguish types of “noise” that disrupt verbal messages
- Reduce distractions when speaking
- Match verbal and nonverbal messages
- Verify that verbal messages are understood as intended

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

➤ Real World Example

Manage Time	Real-World Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Prioritize tasks✓ Estimate time required to complete tasks✓ Create a time management plan✓ Complete planned tasks✓ Control time-wasters	<p>A truck driver optimizes her time to deliver loads by planning optimal driver routes, avoiding city streets and traffic, and adhering to a tight schedule.</p>

<https://www.essentialworkforceskills.org/>

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

- **Defined Set of Skills for the Workforce**
- **EWS Standards**
 - **I. Program Design**
 - **II. Program Implementation**
 - **III. Program Outcomes**
 - **IV. Program Evaluation**



Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

➤ Competency-Program Alignment Map

- Shows Alignment to the EWS Taxonomy
- Align Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) to EWS Skill Definitions
- PLOs should reasonably align to the “ability statements” that define each essential workforce skill.
- Aligned Course-Level Assignments & Required Co-Curricular Activities to demonstrate Standard I & II are met.

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

➤ EWS in Co-Curricular Activities

- Orientation Course
 - Goal Setting
 - Personal Finance
 - Communicating with Faculty and Peer Students
- Community Service Projects and Activities
- Student Government
- Working in School Store



Essential Workforce Skills – Make Experiences Work Relevant

- Intentionally Introduce “Problems” into Tasks
 - Welding “Problem” Assignment
 - Identify Problem -Improper weld requested
 - Diagnose Root Cause - Spec Sheet includes incorrect materials
 - Generate Solutions - Return to Manager (Faculty)
 - Get Spec Sheet corrected and complete proper weld



Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

➤ Standards I & II

- School Maps Skills to Curricular and Co-Curricular projects
- Complete the **Alignment Map** and provide **Evidence** to demonstrate how and where all required essential workforce skills are reasonably addressed
 - Not a Measure of “Competence” or “Mastery”
- “Skill Spotting” - Baking lessons into program

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

- **Standard III Program Outcomes**
- All students graduate with evidence that they've developed, practiced, and can articulate the EWS skills
 - Policies and procedures to assess workforce skills and that students graduate with evidence indicating they've developed and practiced the skills.
 - Rubrics

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

➤ Standard IV - Program Evaluation

- The school systematically engages in program evaluation and continuous program improvements related to the skills encompassed in the workforce competency areas required for the EWS programmatic distinction level
- See ACCSC110 for tips on documenting this area

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

ACCSC's Online Course

[ACCSC110](#)

[Preparing for ACCSC's Essential Workforce Skills
Programmatic Certification](#)



Available at www.accsctraining.org

Essential Workforce Skills – Programmatic Certification

Questions

Essential Workforce Skills – A New Accreditation Approach

- **Why Do This...**
 - **Employers** Need These Skills for the Workforce
 - **Students** Need These Skills for the Workforce
 - **Differentiation**



<https://www.essentialworkforceskills.org/>

The Recognition of Essential Workforce Skills

One Accreditor's Mission to Enhance Student Success

Presented by: Dr. Michale S. McComis

Executive Director

Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)

