Employability as Educational Quality Assurance

QA Commons Overview
November 2023

the QA commons
EMPLOYABILITY. MOBILITY. PROSPERITY.

QA Commons Mission

Ensuring all learners are prepared for the changing dynamics of the workforce and economy.

Focus

In working to **bridge the gap between education and employment**,
our focus is on the proficiencies employers say are most needed,
which candidates often lack,
and can be the most challenging to develop.

Referred to as "employability skills," "soft skills,"
and "noncognitive skills," we characterize them as
Essential Employability Qualities (EEQs).

Organization background

2016-17

Research

Funded by
USA Funds
(now Strada)

2018-19

National Pilot

Funded by
Lumina Foundation

2019-21

**Kentucky Council on
Postsecondary Education**

First EEQ Certified
Programs &
Faculty Fellows
Cohort

2020-21

**Connecticut State
Colleges & Universities**

Equity through
Employability
Initiative

2021-present

**National Expansion
Broadened Focus**

Working with
educational
providers across
the country on a
diverse set of
Employability
projects

40 institutions | **90** programs | **87,000** students reached
Universities, community colleges, workforce & social programs
Public, private, for-profit

The Need

Over 90% of employers believe "soft skills" are as important as technical or"hard" skills.

—National Association of Colleges & Employers

Nearly **3 in 4** employers report difficulty hiring graduates with the "soft skills" they need.

—Society for Human Resource Management

"In today's world of software engineering and ever-more technology, **it's soft skills that employers want**.

91% of companies cited this as an issue and **80%** of companies are struggling to find better soft skills in the market."

—|LinkedIn, Global Talent Trends Report

The future

Deloitte reported that "soft skill-intensive" occupations will account for **two-thirds** of all jobs by 2030."
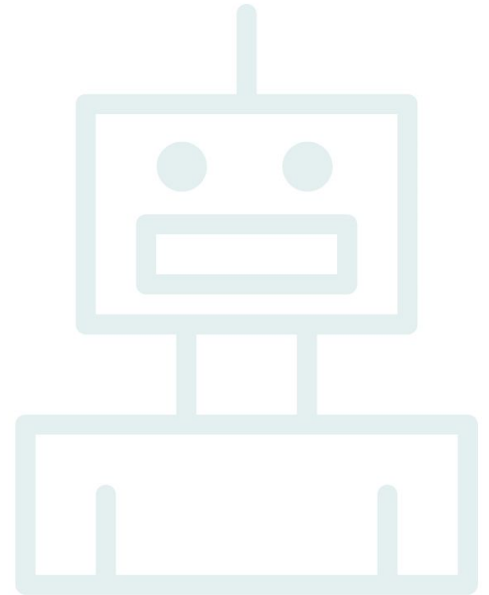
Game Changer: Artificial Intelligence

How will AI change the need for employability skills in the workplace? We asked Chat GPT...

"AI will augment human capabilities rather than replace them entirely. Therefore, a combination of **technical proficiency**, **adaptability**, **creativity**, **emotional intelligence**, **ethical reasoning**, **critical thinking**, and **domain expertise** will be vital for individuals to thrive in the AI-driven workplace."
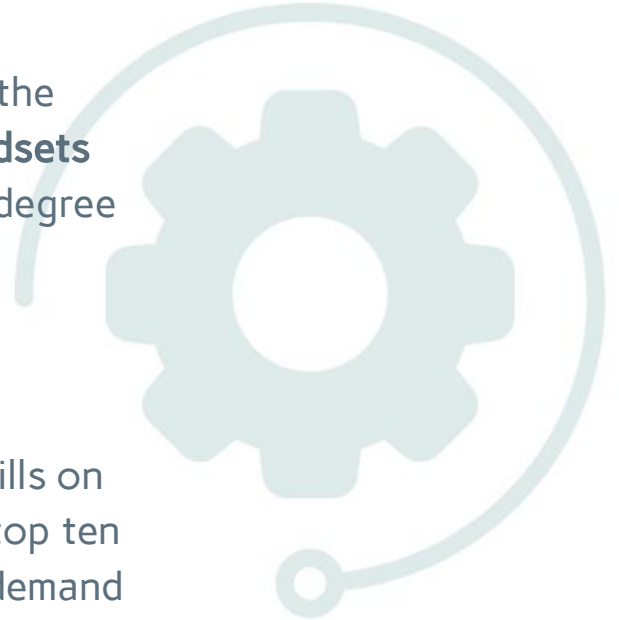
Emerging Theme: Skills-Based Hiring

2023 Skills-First Report, LinkedIn

LinkedIn's 2023 Skills-First Report is centered on reimagining the labor force and breaking down barriers - done by **shifting mindsets** so that we **hire based on skills and learning** and not solely on degree or job title.

The Job Skills of 2023, Coursera

This report presents the fastest-growing digital and human skills on Coursera entering 2023. An interesting find is that while the top ten digital skills vary significantly from 2022, the human skills in demand remain steadier - suggesting an "evergreen" demand for skills like change management and communication.

Employability Framework

Essential Employability Qualities

- ▶ Effective Communication
- ▶ Teamwork
- ▶ Critical Analysis
- ▶ Problem-Solving
- ▶ Learning & Adaptability
- ▶ Professionalism & Responsibility
- ▶ Motivation & Initiative
- ▶ Digital Literacy

Standards of Care

- ▶ EEQ Preparation
- ▶ Employer Engagement
- ▶ Integrated (Career) Support Services
- ▶ Learner (Student & Alumni) Engagement
- ▶ Transparency of Outcomes (Public Info)

Comprehensive & Integrated

What We Do

EEQ CERTIFICATION

Draws out curricular activities that develop employability skills.

Equal parts professional development, program enhancement, and student services.

SKILLS BADGING

Learners earn digital Employability Skills badges based on specific activities within an academic/training program or work-based learning experience.

Helps learners connect the dots between education & employment.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Workshops & academies tailored to the needs of faculty, instructors, and staff.

Interactive sessions and unique exercises get participants thinking out of the box around learners' employability preparation

EVALUATION & CONSULTING

Third party project evaluations.

Customized solutions to meet institutions' needs.

Evolution of our organization

From Programatic Accreditor to **Solutions Provider**

We have a flagship service and enjoy projects that are responsive to institutions' needs

Events/News

Noteworthy New Certified Program – MSU Public and Community Health

BY qacommons | July 19, 2023

Spotlights

Shippensburg University: A Leader in Noncredit Teaching and Learning

BY qacommons | March 23, 2023

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Our work is specific, but broad

Higher Education

Liberal Arts Majors Have What Employers Are Looking For!

BY qacommons | October 26, 2023

Events/News

Employability Skills in Corrections and CTE

BY qacommons | October 19, 2023

Employability & US Accreditors

➢ Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)

➢ Regional Accreditors and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

➢ Education Quality Outcomes Standards (EQOS), Postsecondary Commission, and Jobs for the Future (JFF)

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