

# Essential Attributes and Skills for Employability

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**Abstract:** Skills are very important element for the development of the individuals. It helps to enhance the productivity, working conditions and the employability of the workers. Globalization increased the importance of the skills essential for the employability. Now days other skills are become essential in addition to the vocational and technical skills which is desired by the employer. Employers needs that employee must have a variant inbuilt skills like ready to learn, adapt, effectively communicate, innovative skills, creativity and analytical skills, self-management, interaction with peers and supervisors, team work, knowledge of updated technology and supervision and leadership skills. These skills become essential for the individual's job security as well as for employer retention. This is useful for the both for long term in learning and flexible moving in labor market. In the present study, a conceptual model for the graduate attributes for employability including career management skills is framed. List of attributes required for employees were also discussed.

**Keywords:** Employability skills, core skills, graduate attributes, career management skills

## 1. Introduction

Students learned two type of skills during their academic career such as technical and non-technical. Technical skills refer to subject-specific or content-specific knowledge and competence relevant to, or within, a particular discipline such as information technology or psychology. Technical skills are required for the competent functioning in a specific discipline. On the other hand, non-technical skills are generic skills also known as soft skills that are the outside the discipline specific syllabus.

Employability skills are not specific related or job related, it applied to all levels of the organizations from the lower level to top level as well as applicable to all industries. In human capital theory education and training are reconceptualized as economic devices which is required for the participation in the global economy. Foray and Lundvall (1996) stated that in the western countries knowledge stock and learning capabilities is directly related to the overall performance. Opengart and Short (2002) described that employability security becomes at top position leaving behind the job security and structural workforce presence in the labour market. Here, non-technical skills are known as employability skills which involve all soft skills such as oral communication, written skills, learning skills, decision making skills, analytical skills and traits such as positive attitude, self-management, team work, responsible and ability to work without supervision.

Employers wants that their employee must possess the employability skills in comparison to the technical or specific discipline skills. Now-days employability skills are not only desired skills they become the basic requirement by all employers. The institutions are responsible for these skills to incorporate in their students. Institutions should focus on the course development and assessment for the development of employability skills in individuals. Instructions methods, teaching pattern of the teachers and their attributes, involvement of students and their activity

and students' responsibility are the essential factors which are contributed for the development of the employability skills. In educational practice new era has been developed which contributing towards the development of employability skills i.e. Student peer assessment. Falchikov and Goldfinch (2000) stated that standards and criteria as the best judgment tools for the work of the peers.

### Government Initiatives

Government of India has taken so many initiatives to bridge the gap of the employability skills in students. Many new schemes, institutions, agencies and policies has been framed for achieving this objective.

**National Vocational Education Qualification Framework-** This has been initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The framework aims at developing a pool of skilled professionals and providing opportunities to start doing job just after completing intermediate.

**National Skill Development Corporation** – it was set as a public-private partnership (PPP) to catalyze the skills landscape in India.

**National Skill Development Corporation** – aims to bridge the industry academia gap by integrating skill-based trainings into the academia cycle of the university. It currently works with 21 universities, UGC and AICTE

**National Skill Development Fund** – it was set up by Government of India in 2009 for raising funds both from government and non-government sector for skill development.

**Skill Development Bureau** – arranges investment for harnessing the country's demographic dividend

## 2. Model of the Study

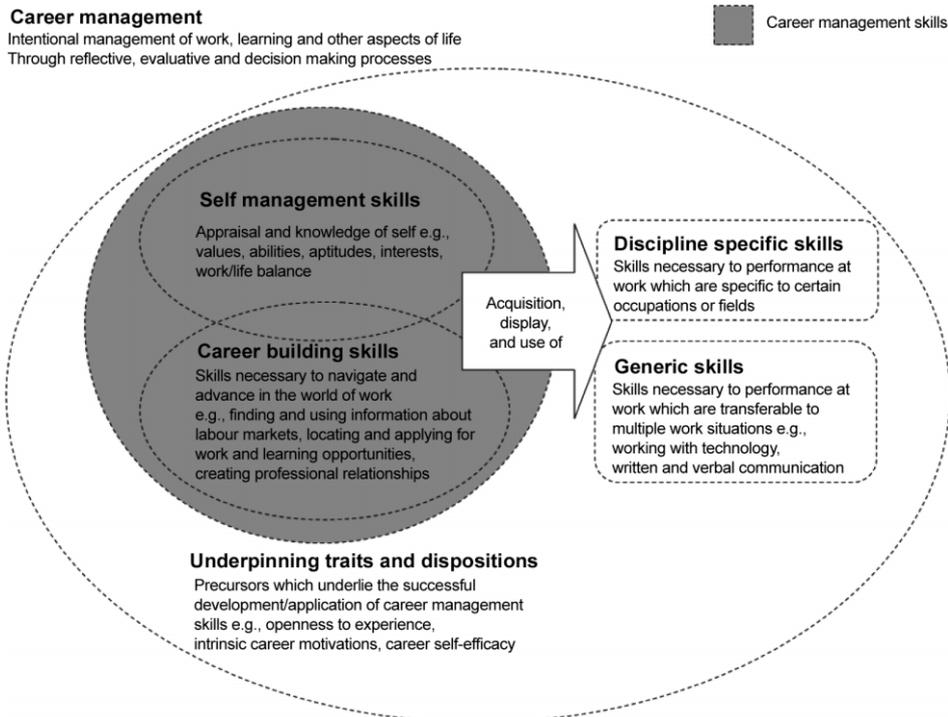


Figure 1: Conceptual model of graduate attributes for employability including career management skills

In this model, we explained self- management skills and career building skills which is required for the employability. In career building skills include the Generic skills and Discipline specific skills. Now days, universities are having curricular for various courses at UG and PG level which are having subjects related to discipline specific and Generic skills. In discipline specific skills that skills are required which is necessary for the performance in specific fields. The Generic skills include which is applicable in multiple situations like computers, communication. Generic skills have also been variously known as ‘core skills’, ‘key competencies’, ‘transferable skills’ or ‘under- pinning skills’ (Mayer, 1992). These generic skills are defined as ‘those transferable skills which are essential for employability at some level for most’ (Kearns, 2001). Lamb and McKenzie, (2001) and OECD (2002a) mentioned that many university graduates are under-prepared for the bewildering array of shifting employment and training options between which they must construct a career.

**Employability skills:** Employability skills are the skills that are directly pertinent to obtaining and maintaining work (Harvey, 2001). They are comprised of the generic and discipline-specific skills required for performance in a work situation; and career management skills, divided into two categories of competence: self-management and career building. Career management skills and knowledge are essential to employability in that they play a large part in determining which, to what extent, in what manner, when and where generic and discipline-specific skills are learned, displayed (e.g., in applying for a job) and used.

The report of SCANS (2001) has showed employability skills. They mentioned seven competencies and then further divided this in two main groups.

Table 1: List of employability skills from SCANS (2001)

Group	Skills and Competencies	Elements
Foundation	Basic Skills	Reading Writing Arithmetic/Mathematics Listening Speaking
	Thinking Skills	Creative thinking Decision making Problem solving Seeing things in the mind's eye Learning skills Reasoning
	Personal Qualities	Responsibility Self-esteem Sociability Self-management Integrity Honesty
Workplace Competencies	Resources Skills	Time management Money management Material and facilities Human resources
	Interpersonal Skills	Participates as a team member Teaches others new skills Serves clients/customers Exercises leadership Negotiates Works with diversity
	Informational Skills	Acquires and evaluates information Organizes and maintains information Interprets and communicates information Uses computers to process information
	System and Technology Skills	Understands systems Monitors and corrects performance Improves or designs systems Selects technology

		Applies technology to task Maintains and troubleshoots equipment
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of the labour market (Watts, 1999) and fewer mismatches between labour market supply and demand resulting in poor employment outcomes (Mayston,2002).

**Discipline-specific skills:** These are the skills traditionally included in university curricula to address specific occupational requirements. These skills originate in specific domains, disciplines or subject matter areas.

**Generic skills.** Generic skills are the transferable skills previously discussed in this article. These skills are the most widely acknowledged ‘employability skills’ in university, policy and employer graduate attribute lists such as the ACCI/BCA *Employability Skills Framework* (ACCI and BCA, 2002). They include such skills as information literacy, working with technology, written and verbal communication, working in teams and numeracy. In investigating the links between generic skills and employability, researchers have content-analysed graduate job advertisements (Bennett, 2002).

Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) in Australia published a list of generic skills in 2003.

**Table 2:** List of generic skills from NCVER (2003)

Skills	Elements
Basic/fundamental skills	Literacy Using numbers Using technology
People-related skills	Communication Interpersonal Teamwork Customer-service skills
Conceptual/thinking skills	Collecting and organizing information Problem-solving Planning and organizing Learning-to-learn skills Thinking innovatively and creatively Systems thinking
Personal skills and attributes	Being responsible Resourceful Flexible Able to manage own time Having self-esteem
Skills related to the business world	Innovation skills Enterprise skills
Skills related to the community	Civic or citizenship knowledge and skills

**Self-management skills.** These skills relate to the individual’s perception and appraisal of themselves in terms of values, abilities, interests and goals. These competencies are closely related to the concept of career identity (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Jones & deFillippi, 1996), which is the perceived congruence between aspects of the individual and their career roles. In their study of mentoring and career success.

**Career building skill:** Career building skills are the skills relating to finding and using information about careers, labour markets and the world of work and then locating, securing and maintaining work, as well as exploiting career opportunities to gain advancement or other desired outcomes. It has been suggested that the acquisition of this kind of competency will result in more realistic expectations

### 3. Conclusion

Non-technical or employability skills have been identified as being of critical importance to employers who express concerns regarding the lack of such skills in entry-level job applications. Given the current emphasis on employability issues in higher education, and the need for graduates to maximise their potential for employment by adding generic employability skills to their repertoire of traditional technical skills and knowledge,

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