YOU’RE HIRED!
The Skills Employers Seek in New Hires

Employers are increasingly noting that **soft skills**, in addition to academic and technical skills, are key to enabling employees to work successfully in an organization.¹ Therefore, soft skills merit attention from schools. According to peer-reviewed research,² research conducted by regional and national industry representatives,³ and a convening of regional employers in western Pennsylvania, employers look for the following soft skills in new hires.⁴

**Self-Management**
- Stay organized
- Manage your time
- Act professionally: be on time, be prepared, and do your work
- Be accountable for your actions

**Communication**
- Write and speak clearly
- Maintain a conversation
- Give feedback
- Summarize what you know

**Motivation**
- Take initiative
- Have a strong work ethic
- Persevere through challenges
- Learn on your own
- Maintain a positive attitude

**Teamwork**
- Collaborate with others
- Be a good listener
- Have empathy

**Problem Solving**
- Think critically
- Be flexible
- Be adaptable and resourceful

**SOFT SKILLS: Why do they matter?**

Jobs are available, but good candidates are lacking.⁵ In a recent survey, 60% of employers responded that they have job openings that remain open for three months or more due to a lack of qualified candidates, and the gap between the number of jobs posted each month and the number of people hired for them is growing.⁶

New hires say they have the right competencies, but employers say they don’t.⁷ In a 2015 survey of hiring officials and new hires in western Pennsylvania, 63% of new hires felt they and their peers were extremely or very prepared in soft skills. When asked of their own perceptions of new hires’ preparedness in soft skills, only 14% of the employers agreed that new hires were extremely or very prepared. Increasingly, good job candidates need to be adaptable, self-motivated, and flexible, as research indicates that workers must be prepared to succeed in dynamic organizations and changing work environments.⁸

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¹ Cappelli, P. (1995)
³ National Network of Business and Industry Associations (2014); Allegheny Conference on Community Development and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2016); Allegheny Conference on Community Development (2017).
⁷ Allegheny Conference on Community Development and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2016).