Tables of Professional Skills and Behaviours

Employers have consistently identified 10 professional skills as most desirable in new graduates.

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The following Tables expand each of the four quadrants above, and add example behaviours to help you understand some of the actions that demonstrate each skill.

<table>
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<th>Personal skills and behaviours</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employers want people who show initiative and are responsible</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
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| Initiative | You exercised personal initiative when you...  
   ● took action that went beyond requirements in order to achieve objectives  
   ● demonstrated a readiness to try new things  
   ● implemented new ideas or potential solutions without prompting  
   ● introduced improvements to the way things are done  
   ● used feedback to improve your performance  
   ● looked for opportunities to improve your work practices  
   ● anticipated potential problems and took action  
   ● took immediate action when confronted with a problem  
   You also demonstrated initiative with others when you exercised leadership skills. |
| Responsibility | You exercised responsibility independently when you...  
   ● planned ahead and managed your time/resources to achieve goals  
   ● accepted responsibility for mistakes/wrong decisions  
   ● followed through on deadlines and commitments  
   ● remained self-motivated even when things went wrong  
   You exercised responsibility with another person or in a team when you...  
   ● showed accountability to the team and followed through on your commitments  
   ● agreed to workload division  
   ● took advice and acted on it  
   ● came to team meetings prepared and on time  
   ● completed your share of the work in a timely manner  
   ● did a fair share of the work  
   ● did work that was complete and accurate |
### Interpersonal skills and behaviours

*Leadership, teamwork, and conflict management* are examples of interpersonal skills, i.e. the ability to get along with others.

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| **Leadership**      | You exercised leadership skills when you...  
  ● took responsibility for the direction and actions of a team  
  ● introduced improvements to the way things were done  
  ● provided constructive feedback to others on the team  
  ● motivated others on the team to do their best  
  ● made sure that everyone on the team understood important information  
  ● made sure that everyone was helping with the project  
  ● helped the team to plan and organize its work  
  ● delegated tasks and responsibilities that leveraged others’ strengths |
| **Teamwork**        | You facilitated teamwork when you...  
  ● shifted between a leading and supporting role to help team dynamics and goals  
  ● responded constructively and respectfully to the opinions/ideas/differences of others  
  ● worked effectively with different personalities in a team  
  ● collaboratively adjusted to changing requirements/goals/deadlines  
  ● collaborated by sharing information virtually/in person that supported the success of the team  
  ● helped improve communication among team members and facilitate the exchange of ideas |
| **Conflict management** | You managed team conflicts when you...  
  ● listened carefully to the arguments of both parties and assessed the logic of their reasoning  
  ● negotiated differences of opinion so all parties felt respected and heard  
  ● listed all the issues important to both sides and identified the key concerns  
  ● distinguished between points that could and could not be compromised  
  ● understood any outside forces that were affecting the problem  
  ● used tact and diplomacy to defuse tensions |

### Communication skills and behaviours

Communication skills are critical to interacting with others. These include *written* and *oral* forms of communication.

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| **Written communication** | You communicated in writing when you...  
  ● clarified your thoughts and the purpose of your communication before you started writing  
  ● communicated ideas clearly, concisely and persuasively  
  ● wrote and edited documents using appropriate grammar, punctuation, and structure  
  ● decided on a logical order for what you had to say  
  ● wrote in a style appropriate to the audience |
| **Oral communication** | You communicated in speaking when you...  
  ● clearly expressed your thoughts orally to persuade and hold the attention of an audience  
  ● varied your tone, pace and volume to enhance the communication and encourage questions  
  ● listened actively and asked questions to understand other people’s viewpoints  
  ● reflected back what the speaker said in other words to clarify understanding  
  ● encouraged the speaker to elaborate and to define their problems |

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### Thinking skills and behaviours

*These skills are a type of higher order thinking, i.e. “thinking about thinking”, which include decision-making, problem solving, and critical thinking*

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<td><strong>Decision-making</strong></td>
<td>You made a decision when you… &lt;br&gt;● clarified the nature of the problem before deciding a course of action &lt;br&gt;● collected and summarized the information you needed to make a decision systematically &lt;br&gt;● produced a list of all the courses of action you could think of &lt;br&gt;● formulated clear decision criteria &lt;br&gt;● differentiated between practical and impractical solutions &lt;br&gt;● evaluated each of your shortlist of options, considering its advantages and disadvantages &lt;br&gt;● evaluated options by considering implications and consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Problem solving</strong></td>
<td>You solved a problem when you… &lt;br&gt;● examined a problem from a variety of perspectives &lt;br&gt;● clarified the nature of a problem &lt;br&gt;● defined the desired objective of solving a problem &lt;br&gt;● broke down a problem into smaller, more manageable, parts &lt;br&gt;● decided on further information to be gathered before taking action &lt;br&gt;● evaluated solutions to a problem through feedback/reflection to make improvements &lt;br&gt;● adapted decisions and created contingencies to adjust to changing requirements</td>
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<td><strong>Critical thinking</strong></td>
<td>You thought critically when you… &lt;br&gt;● synthesized and organized information from a variety of sources, perspectives and/or frameworks &lt;br&gt;● identified key concepts/ideas/assumptions and provided evidence to support or refute them &lt;br&gt;● compared and contrasted to make connections between new and existing information &lt;br&gt;● considered the context of sources when analyzing and evaluating information &lt;br&gt;● evaluated and applied new information/ideas to a different situation/context &lt;br&gt;● sought out and considered alternative explanations &lt;br&gt;● distinguished between weak and strong evidence &lt;br&gt;● distinguished fact from opinion &lt;br&gt;● assessed your assumptions/those of others to determine whether those assumptions were based in sound reasoning and evidence</td>
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