

What competencies do employers assess?

What do you assess during your recruitment process and how important are they in your selection decisions?

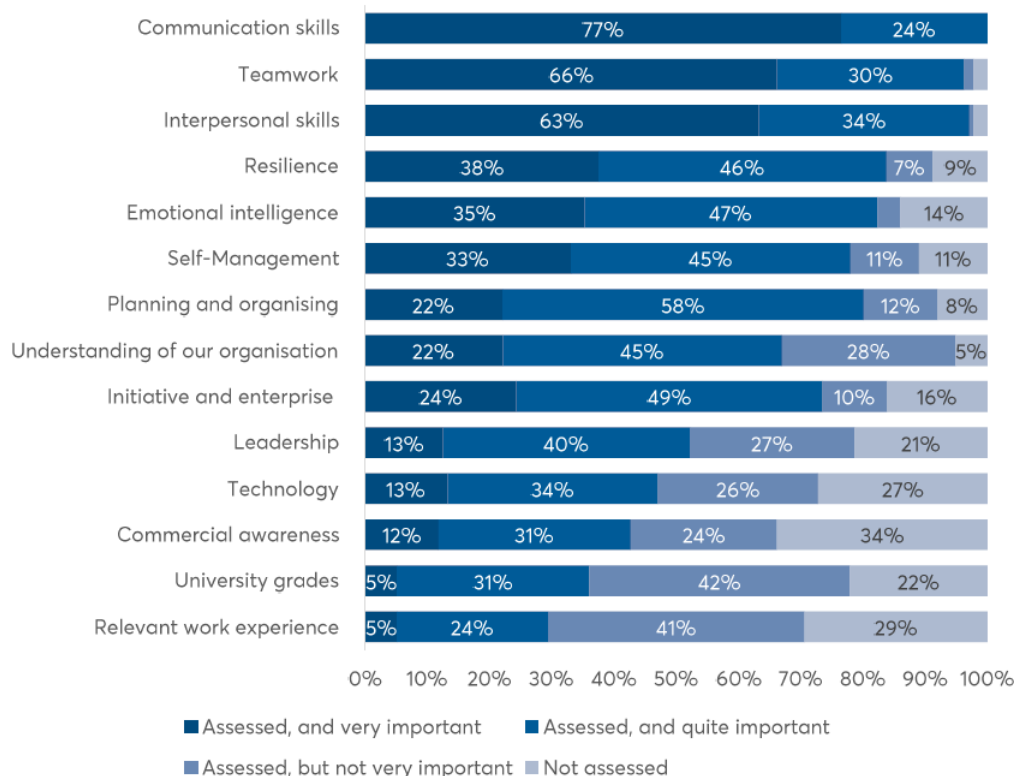


Figure above: Competencies that Employers Access in the Recruitment Process – according to the 2022 Employer Survey by the Australian Association of Graduate Employers.

Are you on track developing the skills that will get you a job? This document explains some of the top skills listed above and suggests co-curricular activities that can help you develop them.

Verbal Communication

Matching the vocabulary and level of formality depending on the situation and your audience. It is also expressing your view or agenda clearly, succinctly and assertively while acknowledging others' contributions; using active listening techniques (questioning, rephrasing, paraphrasing etc.) to ascertain the information you need; being mindful of how your use of language can impact others including perceptions of aggression,

bullying and harassment, that could put your reputation and that of your employer at risk.

Verbal communication can be developed or demonstrated through: course formal presentations, group discussions, debates, mootings, part time work and [volunteering positions](#) dealing with individuals such as helping positions or information/helpdesk, [mentoring](#), [student clubs and societies](#), [Toastmasters](#) club (public speaking).

Written Communication

In addition to accurate punctuation, correct grammar and spelling, written communication involves the ability to convey maximum relevant content with a minimum word count, while adjusting your style and level of formality according to the type of audience and purpose of your communication piece (e.g. a formal letter, memo, professional report, group email, email to a

client, media release, a social media post or text on a website).

It is essential to always remember that you are representing the organisation as much as your professional persona, and that written communication detached from the context can be misunderstood, misconstrued and used against you or your organisation. Think twice before you commit a hilarious joke or facetious comment about your colleague or client, or a fleeting moment of anger or a grievance with your employer to any form of writing such as email, or a Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn post. Many people have missed out or lost their jobs after the employer had seen an inappropriate post on social media.

Interpersonal

The ability to read other people's emotions (e.g. happiness, anger, confusion) and expectations by observing facial expressions, body language and tone and volume of voice and respond to them to build trust and rapport. Interpersonal skills are a prerequisite to successful verbal communication, teamwork, leadership, influencing and negotiating skills.

Interpersonal skills can be developed through participation in the [JCU Student Mentor Program](#) – both as a mentee and/or mentor, plus through volunteering in positions requiring social interaction such a [Hospital](#) volunteer or [Lifeline](#) Telephone Crisis Supporter.

Emotional Intelligence

This is the capacity to be aware of one's own emotions, how they influence our moods, behaviours, decisions and interactions with others including attention to other peoples' emotions (empathy). This type of intelligence is at the base of all our social skills and interactions.

Self-Management

Involves emotional intelligence, judgment, time management skills and safety behaviours. Being aware of one's own trigger points, negative thoughts, stress levels, amount of sleep needed etc. in order to proactively maintain a positive outlook, high energy levels, healthy work/life balance, good mental health and resilience (the ability to bounce back quickly after a setback).

Self-management involves planning your tasks effectively so you can deliver on your responsibilities and workplace promises; keeping focus and motivation at work and maintaining positive, productive and mutually enjoyable work relationships. All activities at the university are an opportunity to cultivate your self-management and there is a number of [resources and support services](#) to help you raise your awareness.

Initiative and Enterprise

You show initiative when you come up with ideas or take actions without being asked. Enterprise consists of two distinct skill clusters: first – the **enterprising skills** - seeing a problem as an opportunity; generating ideas to address the problem; choosing the most viable idea; identifying experts and supporters who can help you develop it into a usable solution and implement it. The second skill cluster - the **business skill set** (e.g. developing a business plan, marketing, financial management, logistics etc.) is used to turn your solution into a commercial success. The two skillsets combined with such character attributes as risk taking and resilience (90% of new ventures end in failure) make an **entrepreneur**.

Most employers value initiative and enterprising skills very highly. Employees who are entrepreneurial and show initiative often [improve workplace processes](#) and develop ideas for new products and services. Therefore, while not everyone may want to become an entrepreneur, everyone can and should develop enterprising skills and initiative.

A good way to do so is setting up a [new student club](#), or if you are an Arts student creating a blog or website through which you [showcase your work](#) and offer services. You may investigate setting up a [tutoring](#), copy writing or graphic design service and advertising it through Airtasker, Fiverr, Gumtree or your own website. You can show initiative and enterprising skills in your part-time job or volunteering position as well. Make sure you record details in a journal and keep any physical evidence if applicable.