

Skill Development

Career Lab
Lucina Hall Room 235

Skill development is one of your most important college accomplishments. Employers seek people who have developed and enhanced their skills in a variety of areas. If you want to be marketable and ultimately the best candidate, you will have to develop skills that set you apart from your competition and effectively demonstrate to potential employers how you have obtained those skills. Richard N. Bolles, author of *What Color is your Parachute?*, explained it best:

When you are face-to-face with a person-who-has-the-power-to-hire-you, you want to be able to explain what makes you different from nineteen other people who can basically do the same thing that you can do.

Transferable skills are abilities and characteristic ways of working with people, information, or things. You can apply them to a wide variety of jobs or situations, and they can be transferred from one job to another. Some examples are coordinating, creative thinking, budgeting, communicating, managing, supervising, and problem solving.

The time to begin developing new transferable skills and refining those you already have is now. It is important to first assess or take inventory of the skills you already have. You can find one of the best tools for doing this in Bolles's *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, which is available in the Career Lab, Lucina Hall 235. You can also find skill inventories on the web. Career assessment links are available on the Career Center's website at <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/links>. Scroll down and click the category Career Assessment.

One of the easiest ways to assess your skills is to study a comprehensive list of skills and check the ones you have. Compare these to job descriptions for your field to see if you have what you need. Most job descriptions will list both required and preferred skills that employers are looking for in their candidates.

After doing your own skills inventory you will have a clearer picture of your professional strengths, and you will know what skills you need to work on. It's then time to take action! There are many ways, in addition to your course work, to begin acquiring and refining skills. These include participating in student organizations and activities, volunteering, student employment, and internships.

Opportunities for Skill Development

As a Ball State University student, you have a number of opportunities available to you that will help you develop and enhance skills that you can transfer from one place to another over your lifetime.

- **Student Employment**

Part-time employment offers the opportunity to gain new skills at the same time you are earning money! Through part-time employment you could obtain clerical, interpersonal, supervision, and customer-service skills. Holding a part-time job while in school can also help build time-management and organizational skills as you learn to balance multiple tasks and activities. In addition, your job gives you the opportunity to work for people who can become part of your network and serve as future references by telling potential employers how you used your skills on the job. The Career Center posts on-campus part-time job vacancies on Cardinal Career Link at <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/careerlink>. Part-time off-campus jobs, internships, and full-time jobs are also listed on Cardinal Career Link.

- **Leadership and Service Learning**

Volunteering is another excellent way to obtain skills. Employers often seek candidates who show interest and have experience in serving their communities. To find out about opportunities to develop leadership skills visit Student Life's leadership development page at <http://www.bsu.edu/studentlife>. Through volunteering you can develop valuable leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and creative thinking skills. The Office of Leadership and Service Learning is home to one of Ball State's largest active student programs, Student Voluntary Services (SVS). Each year SVS collaborates with more than 100 nonprofit service agencies to offer more than 2,000 students opportunities to engage in community service. Semester-long, short-term, and one-time programs and activities are available. For more information about volunteer opportunities visit the Student Voluntary Services website, <http://www.bsu.edu/svs/>.

- **Organizations and Activities**

Getting involved on campus is an important part of college life, and student organizations offer many opportunities for skill building. Ball State University has more than 300 student honorary, athletic, recreational, multicultural, special interest, social, professional, and performing arts organizations. Holding an office in and providing leadership to an organization is a great way to develop important leadership and management skills. Some organizations may also directly relate to your chosen career and allow you the chance to gain professional experience. The *Pride Guide* offers a list of all student organizations with brief descriptions and contact information. You can pick up a copy in the Office of Student Life, Student Center 133, or visit <http://www.bsu.edu/studentlife/>.

- **Internships**

Internship programs offer you the chance to integrate classroom theory with career-related work experience. Employers prefer candidate who have developed job-related skills and knowledge; internships are one of the best ways to gain that experience. In addition, internships expand your network of professionals in your field of interest, they enable you to explore and clarify your career goals, and they give you the opportunity to discover what skill areas you still need to acquire or refine. You can find more information on internships through your department, by visiting the Career Center's website, or by visiting the Career Lab, Lucina 235.

For more information on skill development, visit the Career Center's Great Links to Explore page at <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/links>. Scroll down and click the category Career Assessment. Click 12 Essentials for Success (Michigan State University) to find a list of skills employers are looking for. Also be sure to visit the Career Lab in Lucina Hall 235 where you will find books on the importance of demonstrating your skills during an interview. These are a few of the items available:

- *10 Things Employers Want You to Learn In College*
- *Becoming the Best Me: 10 Career and Character Education Essentials*
- *Co-Curricular Activities: A Pathway to Careers*
- *Discover the Best Jobs for You*
- *Discover What You're Best At*
- *Don't Wait Until You Graduate!*
- *The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book: Everything You Need to Know to Put Your EQ to Work*
- *Exceeding Expectations: Mastering the Seven Keys to Professional Success*
- *First-Job Survival Guide*
- *Job Savvy: How to Be a Success at Work*
- *Job Survival: How to Adjust to the Workplace and Keep Your Job*
- *Internship Success*
- *Interview Power: Selling Yourself Face to Face*
- *The Leadership Skills Handbook*
- *The Quick Interview and Salary Negotiation Book*
- *What Color Is Your Parachute?*
- *What's Your Type of Career?*
- *When Reality Hits: What Employers Want Recent College Graduates to Know*

Websites

- Career Center: <http://www.bsu.edu/careers>
- Career Management Action Plan (Career MAP): <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/cmap/>
- Quest: <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/quest>
- 12 Essential for Success (Michigan State): <http://careernetwork.msu.edu/pdf/Competencies.pdf>
- Qualifications Employers Seek: <http://www.clarion.edu/28029.pdf>
- Transferable Skills (Quintessential Careers): http://quintcareers.com/transferable_skills.html
- What Employers Want (Quintessential Careers) http://www.quintcareers.com/job_skills_values.html

Examples of Transferable Skills

- Achieving
- Adapting
- Administering
- Advertising
- Advising
- Analyzing
- Arranging
- Assembling
- Budgeting
- Building
- Calculating
- Coaching
- Collaborating
- Collecting
- Communicating
- Compiling
- Completing
- Composing
- Conceptualizing
- Conducting
- Constructing
- Consulting
- Controlling
- Coordinating
- Counseling
- Creating
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Decision making
- Defining
- Delegating
- Demonstrating
- Designing
- Detailing
- Developing
- Devising
- Directing
- Discovering
- Distributing
- Drawing
- Editing
- Encouraging
- Entertaining
- Establishing
- Estimating
- Evaluating
- Examining
- Expanding
- Explaining
- Facilitating
- Financing
- Formulating
- Founding
- Guiding
- Heading
- Hiring
- Identifying
- Illustrating
- Implementing
- Improving
- Increasing
- Influencing
- Informing
- Initiating
- Innovating
- Inspiring
- Installing
- Integrating
- Interacting
- Interpreting
- Interviewing
- Inventing
- Investigating
- Leading
- Maintaining
- Managing
- Marketing
- Mediating
- Mentoring
- Monitoring
- Motivating
- Negotiating
- Obtaining
- Operating
- Organizing
- Originating
- Performing
- Persuading
- Pioneering
- Planning
- Preparing
- Presenting
- Prioritizing
- Problem solving
- Processing
- Proofreading
- Programming
- Promoting
- Providing
- Publicizing
- Purchasing
- Recommending
- Reconciling
- Recording
- Recruiting
- Reducing
- Reorganizing
- Reporting
- Researching
- Reviewing
- Revising
- Scheduling
- Serving
- Solving
- Supervising
- Surveying
- Synthesizing
- Teaching
- Team building
- Training
- Troubleshooting
- Unifying
- Using
- Visualizing
- Writing
- Winning

If you need adaptations or accommodations for any of our educational programs or publications because of a disability, please contact
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