NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEBRASKA STANDARDS FOR

career readiness

{ www.education.ne.gov/nce/careerreadinessstandards }

Applies Appropriate
ACADEMIC & TECHNICAL SKILLS

CTE®
Learning that works for Nebraska

The career ready individual...

COMMUNICATES
Effectively & Appropriately

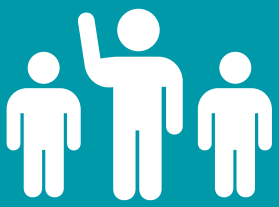
Contributes to
EMPLOYER & COMMUNITY SUCCESS

MAKES SENSE OF PROBLEMS
& Perseveres In Solving Them

Uses
CRITICAL THINKING

Demonstrates
INNOVATION & CREATIVITY

Models Ethical
LEADERSHIP & EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT



WORKS PRODUCTIVELY IN TEAMS
& Demonstrates Cultural Competency

Utilizes
TECHNOLOGY

Manages
PERSONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Attends to
PERSONAL & FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

The Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are an outgrowth of the Nebraska Summit on Career Readiness held November 3 and 4, 2009 in Lincoln, Nebraska.
To view the Summary and Synthesis Report visit:
www.education.ne.gov/nce/documents/CareerReadinessSummit.pdf

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the countless individuals, schools, businesses and industries that contributed to the creation and preparation of this document.

A detailed report of the Nebraska Summit on Career Readiness can be found at: **www.education.ne.gov/nce/Standards.html**

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CTE®

Learning that works for Nebraska

The Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice were unanimously adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education on December 8, 2011.

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A career ready person capitalizes on personal strengths, talents, education and experiences to bring value to the workplace and the community through his / her performance, skill, diligence, ethics and responsible behavior.

— Definition of career readiness adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education on May 5, 2010.

This simple sentence will change the face of Nebraska education. And, as a result, the future of our entire state.

Wouldn't it be something if every student graduating from a Nebraska high school fit this description? If every graduate was "Career Ready?" If every high school graduate brought these attributes to the next stage of his or her life—either in the workplace or on a college campus?

Imagine the effect on Nebraska communities, Nebraska businesses, Nebraska's economy. Imagine the effect on Nebraska's future.

Ensuring that every student who graduates from a Nebraska high school is Career Ready is not a simple task. And it won't happen overnight.

Career Readiness is our objective. And Nebraska's schools are determined to achieve it.

How are Nebraska schools going to achieve

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice provide learning experiences that are valuable to every student regardless of career path or college plans.

By incorporating the ***Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice*** into appropriate curriculum, programs and extra curricular activities as they are developed, implemented and evaluated.

By integrating core academic courses and career education programs to bring even greater relevance and value to every student's school experience.

By providing opportunities for students to become aware of career choices throughout their education—as early as elementary school.

By helping students understand the relationship between today's educational choices and tomorrow's career potential.

Career Readiness for every student?

By developing *Personalized Learning Plans* for each student to help them match their educational plans, interests and talents with careers that offer the greatest promise for success.

By linking the student, the classroom and the counselor's office to facilitate student success in high school, college and the workplace.

By engaging students in ways that build their confidence, encourage personal responsibility and develop behaviors that are critical to success in their personal and professional lives.

By creating opportunities for parents and their children to explore career possibilities together.

By providing students who have the entrepreneurial spirit with the skills, encouragement and inspiration needed to start their own business.

By establishing even stronger relationships with business and industry to ensure that students are acquiring the skills needed for high skill, high wage and high demand Nebraska jobs of today and tomorrow.

All these initiatives are driven by one powerful, game-changing, life-changing concept in Nebraska schools: **Career Readiness**.

Career Readiness is about the next step in life.

Career exploration tools such as NebraskaCareerConnections.org can help students discover career options they didn't know they had—and the educational path that leads to success.

When students are **Career Ready**, they are prepared for the next step in their lives—whether that means getting their first job or beginning their college "career" (which eventually leads to the workplace as well)!

Every Nebraska student, regardless of background, interests or intent after graduating from high school, can and should be **Career Ready**. Because being **Career Ready** also means being ready for life.

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are about the basics. A strong academic foundation—and personal ethics. Speaking and writing effectively. Analyzing situations and solving problems. Understanding fundamental concepts in math and science. Being where you're expected to be—when you're expected to be there. Meeting deadlines. Conducting yourself professionally.

Career education courses help students discover their talents and may provide the entrepreneurial spark for them to start a business in their community.

And the many steps after that.

Career Readiness is about knowing your stuff. Understanding available technology and how and when to use it appropriately. Using what you know to address new challenges and new opportunities. Knowing what you don't know—and being enthusiastic about learning more and getting even better. Having the knowledge, drive and confidence to start your own business.

Career Readiness is about relationships. Collaborating with co-workers. Respecting the opinions, privacy and cultures of others. Working well on your own and as a member of a team. Accepting responsibility and understanding the consequences of your decisions. Making healthy choices. Understanding your role in the bigger picture of your community, state, nation and world.

Career Readiness is about generating a powerful, homegrown workforce across Nebraska. Creating a steady supply of responsible leaders and skilled employees in a wide range of industries—in all 93 counties. Inspiring young entrepreneurs and young professionals to start businesses in their hometowns.

Career Readiness means a more vibrant economy, a sustainable business environment—and greater opportunity, growth and revenue for Nebraska at every level.

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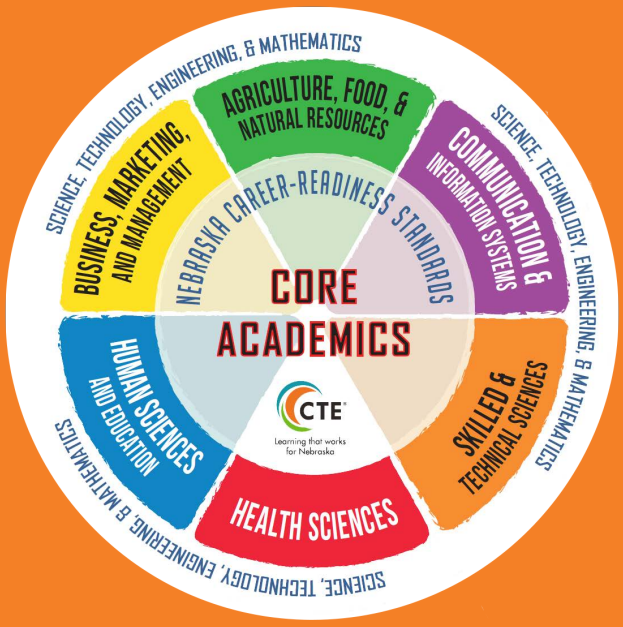

The ***Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice*** describe varieties of expertise that educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. These standards rest on important "practices and proficiencies" with long-standing importance in career education. These standards and related practices are not limited to formal CTE programs nor to the middle school or high school level. Rather, these standards and practices should be used over and over again with increasing complexity and relevance by students as they progress through their educational pathway. The standards themselves do not dictate curriculum, pedagogy or delivery of content. Schools and colleges may handle the teaching and assessing of these standards in many different ways.

The ***Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice*** were derived from extensive input from business and industry representatives expressing the most critical skills needed for employee and/or entrepreneur success. The standards were developed in conjunction with the *National Career Clusters Framework*. The *Career Cluster Framework* has been developed over the past decade with input from national business and industry committees representing the 16 comprehensive Career Clusters. In short, the ***Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice*** provide a valid source of workplace expectations for all students to be career ready.

The following standards are provided as a resource to assist schools, colleges, teachers and faculty members in defining curricular and assessment outcomes. The benchmarks are provided as examples and are neither exhaustive nor conclusive. Educators are encouraged to work with local business and industry councils to define learning objectives most appropriate for their situation.

An alignment study to Nebraska's academic standards is also available at: **www.CEStandards.education.ne.gov**.

Additionally, the Career Readiness Inventory (CRI) is now available on **NebraskaCareerConnections.org**. This tool allows students to assess their own performance on the ***Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice*** and receive feedback on their performance from three to five individuals. It also provides a graph of the students' self-assessment as well as a consolidated score from the other individuals.

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Nebraska Career Education:

Career education courses help college-bound students make an easier transition between high school and college.

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are about improving the value, impact and relevance of students' education—from elementary through high school.

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are about improving the prospects for all students' success in college and the workplace.

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are about a shared vision and purpose for all professionals in a school system.

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are about strengthening the role of Nebraska schools in economic development throughout the state.

Nebraska Standards for Career Ready Practice are about providing a foundation to build strong individuals, families and communities across Nebraska.

For more information on Career Readiness and the career education programs in your school district, visit with your local school or go to:

www.education.ne.gov/nce/Standards.html

An important component in Career Readiness.

Career education courses play an important role in **Career Readiness** by offering real-life work experiences, leadership opportunities and confidence building. When career education courses are integrated with core academic courses, school counseling, parental involvement and collaboration with business and industry, it's no longer simply about education. It's also about sustainable economic development for every Nebraska community. Developing a skilled and talented workforce that is prepared to lead, collaborate and innovate in the industries and professions that matter to Nebraska's future. Improving the prospects of success as students transition from high school to college. Inspiring young entrepreneurs and professionals to start businesses in their hometowns. Creating involved citizens, strong families and economic vitality in every Nebraska county.

Career Readiness is purpose-driven education—and career education courses are critical to achieving **Career Readiness** in every Nebraska student.

NEBRASKA STANDARDS FOR

career readiness

THE CAREER READY INDIVIDUAL...

1. Applies appropriate academic and technical skills

2. Communicates effectively and appropriately

3. Contributes to employer and community success

4. Makes sense of problems and perseveres in solving them

5. Uses critical thinking

6. Demonstrates innovation and creativity

7. Models ethical leadership and effective management

8. Works productively in teams and demonstrates cultural competency

9. Utilizes technology

10. Manages personal career development

11. Attends to personal and financial well-being

The career ready individual...

1. Applies appropriate academic and technical skills

Academic skills and technical skills complement one another. A career ready individual applies these skills in a strategic manner to accomplish workplace tasks.

A. Academic Attainment

1. Demonstrates proficiency in the academic core standards. (Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, Social Studies).
2. Reads and comprehends written material in a variety of forms and levels of complexity.
3. Completes secondary courses to meet high school graduation requirements.
4. Assimilates and applies new learning, knowledge and skills.

B. Technical Skill Attainment

1. Identifies the training, education and certification requirements for entrance and advancement in a chosen occupation.
2. Completes a career and technical education program of study.
3. Passes certification tests to qualify for licensure and or certification in a chosen occupational area.

C. Strategic Thinking

1. Practices reasoning and systems-level thinking to deal with varied concepts and complexity.
2. Analyzes elements of a problem situation to develop solutions.
3. Uses acquired academic and technical skills to improve a situation or process.
4. Seeks to enhance knowledge and skills through ongoing professional development.

The career ready individual...

2. Communicates effectively and appropriately

Expressing ideas, providing instruction, informing others, sharing knowledge and providing customer service are critical in a career.

A. Speaking

1. Asks pertinent questions to acquire or confirm information.
2. Demonstrates interpretation of verbal and non-verbal messages in a conversation.
3. Converses with diverse individuals in an all-inclusive manner to foster positive relationships.
4. Practices active and attentive listening skills.

B. Writing

1. Produces clear and coherent written communication in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
2. Composes focused written documents such as: agendas, audio-visuals, bibliographies, drafts, emails, forms, notes, oral presentations, reports and technical documents.
3. Constructs a well reasoned position, based on an openness to new information and ideas, to support a theory or validate a point of view.

C. Presentations

1. Prepares presentations to provide information for specific purposes and audiences.
2. Delivers presentations that sustain listeners' attention and interest.
3. Uses technology appropriately to effectively present information.

D. Professional Etiquette

1. Uses professional etiquette and observes social protocols when communicating.
2. Practices appropriate use of social media in personal and professional environments.
3. Uses proper word choice and tone when communicating to superiors, customers/clients and co-workers.

E. Customer Service

1. Establishes positive relationship with internal/external customers.
2. Identifies and addresses customer's needs and wants.
3. Recommends appropriate products and services.
4. Uses effective follow-up techniques to assure that the needs of the customer have been met.

The career ready individual...

3. Contributes to employer and community success

Career ready means more than attending to self-interest. It also means the ability to see the bigger picture of playing a role in the success of the employer and community through personal, civic and community actions.

A. Personal Responsibility

1. Takes responsibility for individual and shared group work tasks.
2. Models behaviors that demonstrate reliability, dependability and commitment to the organization.
3. Pursues results with personal energy and drive to completion.

B. Meets Workplace Expectations

1. Arrives on time to work, appointments or meetings adequately prepared and appropriately dressed.
2. Complies with workplace policies, norms/culture, procedures and protocols.
3. Exhibits professional etiquette in all interactions.
4. Understands the importance of health, safety, human resource and environmental regulations.

C. Civic Responsibility and Service

1. Participates in leadership and teamwork opportunities available through professional organizations and community groups/boards/committees.
2. Engages in local government through attendance, participation and service.
3. Demonstrates a respect for laws and regulations and those who enforce them.

The career ready individual...

4. Makes sense of problems and perseveres in solving them

Recognizing and solving problems is a daily requirement of nearly every American worker and entrepreneur. From small technical issues, to group dynamics, to design of overall systems, opportunities abound for the career ready individual to solve problems in the workplace.

A. Perceptiveness

1. Accurately defines a problem or issue.
2. Recognizes factors, constraints, goals and relationships in a problem situation.
3. Identifies irregularities in processes and environments and seeks to understand their cause.

B. Problem Solving

1. Presents multiple solutions to the problem based on evidence and insights.
2. Evaluates solutions and determines the potential value toward solving the problem.
3. Employs critical thinking skills independently and in teams to solve problems and make decisions.

C. Perseverance/Work Ethic

1. Establishes and executes plans to completion even when faced with setbacks.
2. Requires minimal supervision to successfully complete tasks on schedule.
3. Prioritizes tasks to ensure progress toward stated objectives.

The career ready individual...

5. Uses critical thinking

Nearly all careers now require interaction with complex systems of technical components, complex dynamics of people or both. Many decisions are not simple and straightforward; rather, they require the ability to intelligently reason through and make complex decisions.

A. Critical Thinking

1. Demonstrates the ability to reason critically and systematically.
2. Uses reason and logic to evaluate situations from multiple perspectives.
3. Critiques possible solutions using valid research, historical context and balanced judgment.
4. Recognizes and makes use of systems and relationships including interdependent cause-and-effect analysis and feedback.

B. Decision Making

1. Conducts research, gathers input and analyzes information necessary for decision-making.
2. Develops and prioritizes possible solutions with supporting rationale.
3. Determines a course of action with the greatest perceived potential for success while considering its impact on the human resources (workforce) of the organization.

C. Adaptability

1. Demonstrates a willingness to learn new knowledge and skills.
2. Considers multiple and diverse points of view.
3. Manages multiple tasks and priorities.
4. Exhibits the ability to focus, prioritize, organize and handle ambiguity.

The career ready individual...

6. Demonstrates innovation and creativity

The 21st century workplace requires innovation through creative thinking. Successful individuals will be expected to generate and share new ideas.

A. Creativity

1. Uses information, knowledge and experience to generate original ideas and challenge assumptions.
2. Initiates brainstorming to generate ideas to solve problems or maximize opportunities.
3. Appreciates new and creative ideas of others.
4. Knows when to curb the creative process and begin implementation.

B. Innovation

1. Searches for new ways to improve the efficiency of existing processes.
2. Determines the feasibility of improvements for ideas and concepts.
3. Accepts and incorporates constructive criticism into proposals for innovation.
4. Takes informed risks to introduce innovation while understanding the limits of authority.

The career ready individual...

7. Models ethical leadership and effective management

The ability to influence others relies on leadership. Today's workplace provides greater transparency and accountability where the ability to ethically lead and manage is essential.

A. Leadership

1. Employs organizational development skills to foster positive working relationships and accomplish goals.
2. Enlists the support of others to accomplish a goal.
3. Models the positive attributes of effective leaders (e.g. self awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills).

B. Ethics

1. Considers the ethical implications of decisions and actions and their impact on personal reputation and credibility.
2. Recognizes personal and long-term workplace consequences of unethical or illegal behaviors.
3. Practices ethical behavior at all times and complies with organizational code of conduct.

C. Management

1. Differentiates between leadership and management.
2. Determines the objectives, parameters and deadlines involved in managing a project prior to beginning work.
3. Develops personal management skills to function effectively and efficiently.

The career ready individual...

8. Works productively in teams and demonstrates cultural competency

Teams of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds have become the new norm of operation in the American workplace. The career ready individual is prepared to collaborate with colleagues representing various backgrounds.

A. Teamwork

1. Builds consensus within a team to accomplish results.
2. Contributes to team-oriented projects and assignments.
3. Engages team members and utilizes individual talents and skills.

B. Conflict Resolution

1. Anticipates potential sources of conflict and employs conflict resolution skills to facilitate solutions.
2. Disagrees with a team member without causing personal offense.
3. Negotiates with conflicting parties to agree on a reasonable and mutually acceptable solution.

C. Social and Cultural Competence

1. Gives and earns respect by interacting positively with people of different backgrounds, experiences and beliefs.
2. Stays aware of current local, national and global news and issues.
3. Uses awareness of world cultures and languages to effectively communicate with co-workers and customers/clients.

The career ready individual...

9. Utilizes technology

The career ready individual has an understanding of how to use technology and apply it successfully in the workplace. Advances in technology require individuals to quickly learn and use many tools and applications.

A. Data Gathering, Access and Management

1. Uses various methods to search for valid, relevant data to complete workplace tasks.
2. Evaluates Internet resources for reliability and validity.
3. Develops and uses a consistent approach for managing data.

B. Tools and Applications

1. Uses the appropriate technology tools for conveying information, solving problems and expediting workplace processes.
2. Demonstrates the technology skills needed for a chosen career field.
3. Identifies the workplace value of technology tools and applications.

C. Technology Ethics

1. Understands the ethical uses of information and technology related to privacy, intellectual property and workplace issues.
2. Uses computer and Internet protocols that ensure cyber security and confidentiality of private information.
3. Abides by organizational policies on the acceptable use of workplace technology.

The career ready individual...

10. Manages personal career development

Continued on the following page.

Managing a personal career includes exploration, preparation and participation. Each person is responsible for creating and maintaining their own career. Career management includes understanding and meeting the expectations for behavior and skills in the workplace.

A. Planning

1. Identifies opportunities in one or more career pathways that aligns with personal interests and aptitudes.
2. Develops career goals and objectives.
3. Develops a personal education and career plan to meet goals and objectives.

B. Job Seeking

1. Uses multiple resources, including personal and professional networks, to locate job opportunities.
2. Researches information about a prospective employer to successfully complete an application.
3. Uses professional digital media to create a personal brand.
4. Markets self effectively to potential employers.

C. Résumés, Portfolios and Interviews

1. Prepares a professional résumé appropriate for each situation.
2. Produces a record of education and work experiences, licenses, certifications and projects/products to include in a portfolio.
3. Presents a professional image appropriate for the job interview.
4. Communicates experiences, knowledge and skills identified in the résumé and portfolio when interviewing.

The career ready individual...

10. Manages personal career development

D. Professional Development

1. Identifies opportunities for career advancement.
2. Uses resources to develop goals that address training, education and self-improvement issues.
3. Maintains licensure, certification and credentialing requirements.

E. Entrepreneurship

1. Understands the knowledge and skills required of an entrepreneur.
2. Describes the opportunities for entrepreneurship in a given industry.
3. Weighs the opportunities, benefits and risks of entrepreneurship versus employment in a career.

The career ready individual...

11. Attends to personal and financial well-being

The career ready individual recognizes the benefits of physical, mental, social and financial well-being to be successful in a career.

A. Personal Well-being

1. Recognizes the value of a wide range of knowledge and experiences from the arts, culture and humanities to promote intellectual curiosity.
2. Follows a personal wellness plan that includes healthy eating, exercise and disease prevention.
3. Builds positive social relationships with supportive friends and family in a community.

B. Financial Well-being

1. Analyzes choices available to consumers for saving and investing.
2. Develops a personal budget that aligns to near-term and long-term priorities.
3. Establishes a good credit history by using credit responsibly.
4. Understands principles of insurance and identifies appropriate coverage.
5. Makes wise consumer purchasing decisions and avoids fraudulent financial practices.
6. Files and pays local, state and federal taxes in a correct and timely manner.

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301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509

www.education.ne.gov/nce
email: nde.nce@nebraska.gov

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