



Liberal Arts Skills Checklist:

Assess and articulate your experience

To avoid the fatal flaws of the tragic Shakespearean heroes...

To uncover and communicate the social implications of business policy...

To appreciate cultural nuances in a local economy...

To understand the interpersonal dynamics inherent in teamwork...

To give a voice to pressing matters of health and environment...

-Figler et al (2002: xiii)

During your liberal arts education you have the opportunity to develop these and numerous other marketable skills. You will discover the interconnectedness of all knowledge, look at your actions in terms of the effect they have on others and on the world and be comfortable when a new body of knowledge is thrown on your desk and someone says, "Here. Learn it." Take full advantage of your in- and out-of-class experiences to foster these skills and qualities. To help you discover your strengths and articulate them on resumes and in interviews, use the following list to get started:

Information and Management Skills

- Sort data and objects
- Compile and rank information
- Apply information creatively to specific problems or tasks
- Synthesize facts, concepts and principles
- Understand and use organizing principles
- Evaluate information based on appropriate standards

Design and Planning Skills

- Identify alternative courses of action
- Set realistic goals
- Follow through with a plan or decision
- Manage time effectively
- Predict future trends and patterns
- Accommodate multiple demands for commitment of time, energy, and resources
- Assess needs
- Make and keep a schedule
- Set priorities

Research and Investigation Skills

- Use a variety of sources of information: Identify the information and the knowledge that contribute to moving an organization toward a goal (e.g. library research, computer research, first-hand data collection)
- Apply a variety of methods to test the validity of data
- Identify problems and needs
- Design an experiment, plan or model to define a problem systematically
- Identify information sources appropriate to special needs or problems
- Formulate relevant questions to clarify a particular problem, topic or issue
- Synthesize information into a coherent, usable whole

Communication Skills

- Listen with objectivity and paraphrase with accuracy: Focus on another person's words and non-verbal cues, be empathetic to their thoughts and feelings, respond in ways that demonstrate you "hear" them
- Use various writing styles and forms: Write memos, reports, letters, position statements, emails, etc. clearly and persuasively and hold the reader's interest
- Speak effectively to individuals and groups: Talk comfortably to groups ranging in size from 3 to 300, get your point across in a manner that is clear and enjoyable for the audience (e.g. committee meetings, board meetings, informal discussion and formal speaking occasions)
- Use media to present ideas imaginatively
- Express one's needs, wants, opinions and preferences without violating the rights of others
- Identify and effectively express value judgments
- Describe objects or events with few factual errors
- Convey a positive self-image
- Effectively represent an organization to the public, including a wide range of potential customers, clients or constituents; handle complaints, give talk to community groups, educate public about organizations activities

Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills

- Keep a group moving toward the achievement of a common goal
- Maintain group cooperation and support
- Delegate tasks and responsibilities
- Interact effectively with peers, superiors and subordinates
- Express one's feelings appropriately
- Understand the feelings of others
- Persuade and argue well
- Make commitments
- Teach a skill, concept or principle to others
- Analyze one's behavior and the behaviors of others in groups
- Behave appropriately in a variety of social settings and under different circumstances
- Work under the pressures of time and the work setting: Produce good work when you're governed by external deadlines and be capable of functioning on other people's schedules, even when the time frame is hurried

Critical Thinking Skills

- Identify quickly and accurately the salient issues when making a decision or solving a problem
- Identify a general principle that explains related experiences or data
- Define the parameters of a problem
- Identify reasonable criteria to assess the value or appropriateness of an action or behavior
- Adapt one's concepts and behavior to changing conventions and norms
- Apply appropriate criteria to strategies and plans of action
- Take a given premise or reason to its conclusion
- Create innovative solutions for complex problems
- Analyze from several perspectives the relationships among events and ideas
- Adopt different perspectives and examine an argument carefully from all sides

Management and Administrative Skills

- Analyze tasks
- Identify people who can contribute to the task or solution of a problem
- Identify resource materials useful to the finding of a solution
- Delegate responsibility to complete a task
- Motivate and lead others
- Organize people and tasks to achieve specific goals: Take responsibility for progress made toward a goal

Value Setting Skills

- Assess a course of action in terms of its long-range effects on the general human welfare
- Make decisions that increase both the individual and common good
- Understand the contributions of the arts, literature, science, and technology
- Identify one's own values
- Assess one's own values in the face of difficult decisions

Personal Skills

- Analyze and learn from one's experience and the experience of others
- Relate the skills learned in one place to the requirements of another
- Identify, describe, and assess the relative importance of one's own needs
- Develop personal goals and motivation
- Identify and describe skills acquired from formal education and experience, as well as strengths and weaknesses
- Accept and learn from criticism
- Persist in the face of possible failure; let go of a project that cannot be carried out or does not merit the time and effort required to complete it
- Adapt to change: Move from one project, problem, situation or group of people to another, smoothly and with little friction; accommodate changing conditions in your job
- Earn the trust and confidence of others
- Take risks: Risk failure in pursuit of an important goal; try new things and be resilient
- Accept responsibility and the consequences of one's actions

SOURCES:

Figler, Howard, et al (2002). *Keys to Liberal Arts Success*.
Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey

Yale University Undergraduate Career Services:
www.smcm.edu/stulife/careerctr/yaleinfo.htm



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