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National Association of Colleges and Employers

EMPLOYERS: VERBAL COMMUNICATION MOST IMPORTANT CANDIDATE SKILL

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[Spotlight for Career Services Professionals \(/spotlight/index.aspx\)](/spotlight/index.aspx)

When asked to assess candidate skills/qualities, employers rated verbal communication skills the most important, according to NACE's *Job Outlook 2016* report.

Employers rated verbal communication skills (4.63 on a five-point scale) highest this year, above teamwork (4.62) and the ability to make decisions and solve problems (4.49), the two skills that tied for the top spot last year.

The remainder of the list has not changed at all in terms of order compared to last year. The one difference this year is that more of the skills/qualities were rated just below 4.0 ("very important") than last year. Just two skills/qualities were rated below 4.0 last year—ability to create and/or edit written reports and the ability to sell or influence others.

While those two remain at the bottom of this year's list, they are joined by technical knowledge related to the job and proficiency with computer software programs with ratings under 4.0.

The *Job Outlook 2016* survey was conducted from August 5, 2015, through September 13, 2015, among NACE employer members. A total of 201 NACE employer members participated in the survey—a 20.1 percent response rate.

NACE members can access the *Job Outlook 2016* report through MyNACE. (</job-outlook/index.aspx>).

Results of the annual *Job Outlook* survey—especially employer insight into the skills they seek in new college graduate job candidates—served as one of the foundation pieces upon which NACE constructed its *Career Readiness Competencies* (</knowledge/career-readiness-competencies.aspx>).

Figure 1: Employers rate the importance of candidate skills/qualities

ABILITY TO VERBALLY COMMUNICATE WITH PERSONS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION	
ABILITY TO WORK IN A TEAM STRUCTURE	
Weighted Average Rating	4.62
ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS AND SOLVE PROBLEMS	
Weighted Average Rating	4.49
ABILITY TO PLAN, ORGANIZE AND PRIORITIZE WORK	
Weighted Average Rating	4.41
ABILITY TO OBTAIN AND PROCESS INFORMATION	
Weighted Average Rating	4.34
ABILITY TO ANALYZE QUANTITATIVE DATA	
Weighted Average Rating	4.21
TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO THE JOB	
Weighted Average Rating	3.99
PROFICIENCY WITH COMPUTER SOFTWARE PROGRAMS	

Weighted Average Rating	3.86
ABILITY TO CREATE AND/OR EDIT WRITTEN REPORTS	
Weighted Average Rating	3.60
ABILITY TO SELL OR INFLUENCE OTHERS	
Weighted Average Rating	3.55

Source: *Job Outlook 2016*, National Association of Colleges and Employers

*5-point scale, where 1=Not at all important; 2=Not very important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Very important; and 5=Extremely important

