



Employability skills

What do employers want?

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Learning outcomes

- What are the employability skills?
- What do employers seek in Europe?
- How do European countries differ?



Exercise No1

Each team has to place themselves in various roles and positions and each one has to create a job description with clear vision of what sort of skills are vital, important or not so important for the position.

- Team 1: A national park management board needs a project manager for an EU Life bog restoration project
- Team 2: A freelance bat consultant needs a field biologist for a motorway survey
- Team 3: An NGO needs someone to lead the education team of their visitor centre

10 minutes team work and 10 minutes discussion



Factors in a European Employers Needs Survey

A relevant qualification

Analytical skills (research, data handling)

Business skills (report writing, giving presentations)

Consultancy skills (negotiating, influencing, networking)

Creativity and entrepreneurship

Emotional Intelligence (positive outlook, self-control, empathy)

Experience of paid/unpaid work in the sector

Field skills (surveying, identification, auditing)

Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector in your Country

Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector internationally

Organisational skills

Potential (career aspirations, drive and passion)

Practical skills (land management)

Professionalism (timekeeping, preparation, dress sense)

Teamwork and collaboration

Technology skills - generic (MSWord, MSEXcel etc)

Technology skills - specific (GPS, GIS, Apps)

Up to date with relevant current issues



Factors in an American Employers Needs Survey

Blickley et al. 2013

- Specific and analytical disciplinary
- Project management
- General disciplinary
- Field experience
- Personnel leadership
- Oral communication
- Outreach communication
- Independent, self-starter
- Fundraising, monetary
- Other communication
- Conflict resolution, negotiation



Exercise No2

Explore what employers seek in new recruits.

1. Identify the top five criteria that apply to all EU countries and provide numeric evidence for this
2. Give 3 examples for each criterion that show how the criterion could be evaluated during application/at interview.

10 minutes team work and 10 minutes discussion

Hungary	HU	Portugal	Pt	UK	UK
Potential (career aspirations, drive and passion)	4,5	Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector in your Country	4,1	Teamwork and collaboration	4,7
Field skills (surveying, identification, auditing)	4,4	Field skills (surveying, identification, auditing)	4,0	Professionalism (timekeeping, preparation, dress sense)	4,5
Up to date with relevant current issues	4,3	Teamwork and collaboration	4,0	Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector in your Country	4,3
Teamwork and collaboration	4,2	Business skills (report writing, giving presentations)	3,8	Experience of paid/unpaid work in the sector	4,3
Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector in your Country	4,2	Creativity and entrepreneurship	3,8	Organisational skills	4,3
Professionalism (timekeeping, preparation, dress sense)	4,1	Professionalism (timekeeping, preparation, dress sense)	3,8	Emotional Intelligence (positive outlook, self-control, empathy)	4,3
A relevant qualification	4,1	A relevant qualification	3,7	Potential (career aspirations, drive and passion)	4,1
Practical skills (land management)	4,1	Organisational skills	3,7	Technology skills - generic (MSWord, MEXcel etc)	4,1
Technology skills - generic (MSWord, MEXcel etc)	4,1	Up to date with relevant current issues	3,6	A relevant qualification	4,1
Emotional Intelligence (positive outlook, self-control, empathy)	4,0	Practical skills (land management)	3,6	Field skills (surveying, identification, auditing)	4,1
Business skills (report writing, giving presentations)	3,9	Analytical skills (research, data handling)	3,4	Up to date with relevant current issues	4,0
Creativity and entrepreneurship	3,9	Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector internationally	3,3	Business skills (report writing, giving presentations)	3,8
Technology skills - specific (GPS, GIS, Apps)	3,8	Experience of paid/unpaid work in the sector	3,1	Practical skills (land management)	3,8
Experience of paid/unpaid work in the sector	3,8	Consultancy skills (negotiating, influencing, networking)	2,9	Consultancy skills (negotiating, influencing, networking)	3,5
Analytical skills (research, data handling)	3,7	Emotional Intelligence (positive outlook, self-control, empathy)	2,1	Creativity and entrepreneurship	3,5
Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector internationally	3,2			Analytical skills (research, data handling)	3,4
Consultancy skills (negotiating, influencing, networking)	3,1			Technology skills - specific (GPS, GIS, Apps)	3,4
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Reverse Ranking^[1] scores:

Criterion	HU	PO	UK	Total
Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector in your Country	6	10	8	24
Field skills (surveying, identification, auditing)	9	9	1	19
Teamwork and collaboration	7	8	10	25
Professionalism (timekeeping, preparation, dress sense)	5	5	9	19
A relevant qualification	4	4	2	10

Common ranking using scores above

- 1 Teamwork and collaboration
- 2 Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector in your Country
- 3 = Field skills (surveying, identification, auditing)
- 3 = Professionalism (timekeeping, preparation, dress sense)
- 4 A relevant qualification

^[1] In other words, first place = 10 points, second = 9 and so forth...



Employer recruitment preferences – scores from survey

Criterion	UK	HU	PO	TOTAL	RANK
Teamwork and collaboration	4.57	4.20	4.00	12.77	1
Knowledge of the Biodiversity and Conservation Sector in your Country	4.18	4.20	4.11	12.49	2
Field skills (surveying, identification, auditing)	4.00	4.42	4.00	12.42	3
Professionalism (timekeeping, preparation, dress sense)	4.32	4.13	3.78	12.23	4
Up to date with relevant current issues	3.86	4.31	3.61	11.78	5
A relevant qualification	3.93	4.13	3.67	11.73	6
Business skills (report writing, giving presentations)	3.75	3.91	3.83	11.49	7
Practical skills (land management)	3.68	4.11	3.56	11.35	8
Creativity and entrepreneurship	3.46	3.87	3.78	11.11	9
Experience of paid/unpaid work in the sector	4.21	3.78	3.11	11.10	9



Summary

- Disciplinary and non-disciplinary employability skills are both important, however non-disciplinary skills might be more important during recruiting
- In the USA disciplinary, interpersonal and project-management skills were in the top 5 skills mentioned across all job sectors. Program leadership, conflict resolution and negotiation, and technical and information technology skills, varied across sectors.
- In the EU country-differences do exist (team work in the UK, field skills in other countries) these differences are not great, though

Handouts

- European employer recruitment preferences in the biodiversity management sector, Survey Report (2016)
- *BLICKLEY et al. 2013 Graduate Student's Guide to Necessary Skills for Nonacademic Conservation Careers Conservation Biology, Volume 27, No. 1, 24–34*
- LANTRA (UK) Environmental conservation factsheet 2010-2011