

Employability Skills: A Guide for Parents/Carers

Employability skills are those skills necessary for getting, keeping and being successful in a job.

For many young people today, a career for life is no longer an option. Your child will probably hold jobs with a variety of employers and move across different employment sectors throughout their working life. Because of this, they will need to be flexible in their working patterns and be prepared to change jobs and/or careers if they believe there are better opportunities elsewhere.

In order to be flexible, they need a set of '**transferable skills**' - skills that are not specific to one particular career path but are standard across all employment groups. These are commonly known as '**employability skills**' (or sometimes 'competencies'), skills that go beyond qualifications and experience.

While their education and experience may make them ready to apply for a job, to be successful in the role they will need to prove that they have a mix of skills: '**employability skills**'. This means that the specialist, technical skills associated with different roles may be less important than the '**soft skills**' that can be transferred between different jobs and different employment sectors.

For employers, getting the right people means identifying people with the right skills and qualities to fulfil the role and contribute to the organisation's success. Candidates may have the qualifications and 'hard skills' needed to be able to manage the job role but, without a well-honed set of '**soft skills**', employers are less inclined to hire.

These are the skills and attitudes that enable employees to get along with their colleagues, to make critical decisions, solve problems, develop respect and ultimately become strong ambassadors for the organisation.

UTC Engineers are

Resili **E** nt

I **N** dependent

G ood communicators

Amb **I** tious

Good with **N** umbers & finance

T **E** am workers

R **E** flective

Leade **R** s

Employability skills or '**soft skills**' are the foundation of their career, building blocks and they are frequently referenced in the media as lacking in school-leavers, graduates and those already in employment. Organisations spend a lot of time and money training staff, not in job-specific areas but in general and basic skills.

In times of high unemployment, employers have more choice of applicants and will favour those with well-rounded **employability skills**.

That is why we at the Energy Coast UTC will do our very best to help our students understand and develop their employability skills to make them a highly-skilled employee, whoever they work for in their career.

Your child's reference?

Read the example reference on the next 2 pages. This is a rough example of what can be written about your child by your child - as long as they have the evidence to prove they deserve this reference. And there's no need for them to write it out either - our UTC computers hold all of the sentences in one database which their Attitude to Learning (AtL) scores will automatically create 3 times a year as a reference.

To whomever it may concern,

_____ would like to apply for a position/apprenticeship in their company/university. Please finds below his/her **reference** from the Energy Coast UTC.

He/she is very good at working in a team. He/she know that this is true because he/she is happy to take on different roles in the team to achieve their goals, he/she works with other members of his/her team (even those who might be hard to work with), he/she knows how to speak differently to leaders and his/her peers, he/she always treats other members of the team with respect, no matter their opinion or skill level and he/she makes sure that, where necessary, a compromise is reached so that the team can be successful.

He/she is also very good at independently managing his/her own time, work and effort. He/she consistently uses his/her **initiative** to get things done and he/she makes sure that he/she always has the equipment he/she needs when he/she needs it. He/she is always on time and knows how to make the best use of the time given to him/her to complete any task. He/she tries to be confident but not arrogant when attempting tasks and can get on with these tasks without someone having to tell him/her to do so.

Furthermore, he/she has excellent communication skills. He/she is very good at getting his/her ideas across verbally as well as in writing and he/she is always polite. He/she is also highly skilled at changing what he/she says and how he/she says it to match his/her audience and he/she does his/her best to always use eye contact and positive body language to show that he/she is listening to others.

In addition, he/she prides him/herself on being an exceptionally **resilient**, adaptable and flexible person. He/she always has a positive attitude to whatever challenge faces him/her and he/she always tries to show that he/she is engaged and interested in the work set. He/she makes sure that he/she asks questions to help him/her and others understand what is required to be successful and he/she always tries to do more than the minimum required. He/she remains positive when things change during a task and willingly accepts new challenges, seeing every task through to completion and to a deadline no matter what.

Your child's reference? (cont.)

As the above shows, he/she is a reflective, **self-aware** person who is very good at **analysing** his/her own strengths and weaknesses. He/she is very good at problem solving and exploring different ways to find a solution to any given dilemma and he/she does his/her best to explain what the best course of action is and why. He/she likes to look back at what he/she has completed and discuss what went well and what could be improved the next time he/she comes across a similar problem. He/she also knows the best time to do things by him/herself and when to **collaborate** with others.

As far as being a leader is concerned, he/she has strong leadership qualities. He/she believes this because he/she works well under pressure & meets his/her deadlines. He/she always tries to make decisions only after seeking relevant advice but he/she takes full responsibility for the decisions and actions that he/she takes as a result of this advice. He/she is always honest, trustworthy and has strong, moral principles which guide him/her in every decision he/she makes. He/she is also willing to take an activity in a new direction if he/she believes that the direction it is going in will not, upon reflection, prove successful.

He/she is also excellent with numbers, having very sound IT skills to help with any **numerical** accuracy, even though he/she can easily perform basic maths in his/her head without having to use a calculator or computer. When it comes to finance, he/she always makes sure that his/her expenses never **exceed** his/her income. As mentioned previously, he/she is very good at problem solving and exploring different ways to find a solution to any given dilemma and can spot patterns in events, data, pictures, etc. which is a useful skill to have to speed activities along.

Finally, he/she is an extremely ambitious person. He/she has every confidence that he/she will be successful in the future, and frequently uses SMART targets to make sure that he/she is on target to achieve this success. He/she can clearly explain what this success looks like, is actively involved and engaged every day in making sure that he/she reaches his/her goals and is keen to succeed but not at the expense of others.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should they require further details concerning any of the issues raised in this **reference**.

Yours faithfully,

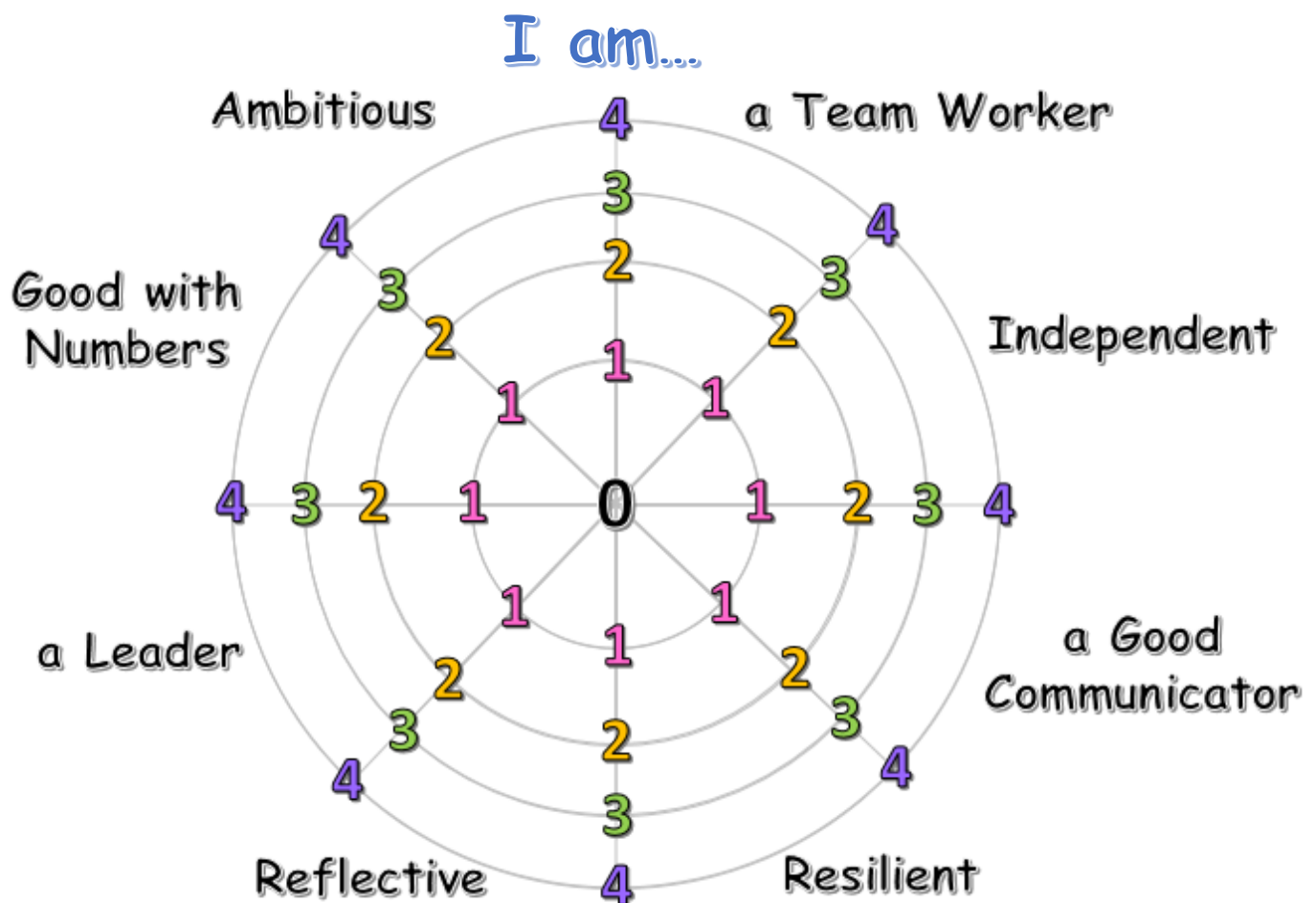
Starting their journey

Before they go any further, your child's first task will be to reflect upon their own **abilities**. Why not ask your child to attempt this task now?

There are 8 **Employability Skills** for them to rate on a scale of 4-1:

4 = I have an outstanding grasp of this skill	3 = I have a good grasp of this skill & am still developing	2 = I have a basic grasp of this skill & need to improve	1 = I have a poor grasp of this skill
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1. Complete the chart below, accurately and honestly **evaluating** each of the 8 **Employability Skills**. Place an **A** in each of the 8 boxes that most closely reflects your skill level in that particular skill.



2. Which of the above will be your main target for improvement over the course of the next 8 weeks? It is likely to be the one which scored the lowest. Circle this skill and tell someone else what their target is. Agree to help each other improve in this area. Your Form Tutor will help you keep track of this area too.