

Employability and Self-development

Unit Type: Mandatory

Level: 4

Credits: 15

GLH: 75

Assessment Method: Assignment

The nature of work is changing: the business environment is becoming ever more global and consequently, the skills required to work are also changing. In the past, getting a job based on qualifications and technical experience was the norm; today, employers are increasingly looking for people with commercial awareness and a 'can do' attitude, together with skills and behaviours that will enable them to quickly become part of an effective team and add value to the organisation. These 'soft skills' enable staff to make a positive contribution to the organisation from an early stage; work as part of various teams that are likely to be cross-functional in nature; and contribute more effectively over time, as they recognise how the skills they have, and others that they are willing to develop, can benefit the organisation.

This unit introduces you to the key skills, behaviours and attitudes they need to demonstrate in order to be 'employable', and how to develop them if they are missing through self-development and/or other learning, development and improvement opportunities. It provides guidance on how to integrate this information to the documents required for job applications, and how to present these skills at interview. It goes on to show how demonstrating employability skills can help enable a smooth transition into work by establishing you in your new job role and as part of a team.

The unit concludes by exploring how utilising feedback on performance can help ensure you maintain your value as an employee and use your experience to advance your career potential.

You will be introduced to self-development practices, including self-reflection in order to develop a unique and informative Curriculum Vitae, complete job applications and prepare for job interviews. The course should help to develop communication skills and self-awareness, and enable you to view your current position as part of a life-long journey of learning and development, both professionally and personally.

What You'll Learn

The table below shows the learning outcomes of this unit (what you will be able to do or what you will know), along with the assessment criteria (what you will be able to do to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome).

Learning Outcomes <i>The learner will:</i>	Assessment Criteria <i>The learner can:</i>
1. Explain the concept of employability, its relevance and value to both employing organisations and individuals (Weighting 10%)	1.1 Explain what is meant by employability and the attitudes, skills and behaviours that are increasingly demanded by employers when recruiting staff 1.2 Summarise the relevance and value of this shift in selection criteria for new staff in relation to the changing workplace

2. Assess your own skillset in terms of employability and use it to write a unique Curriculum Vitae and complete relevant job applications, maximising your potential value to an employer (Weighting 20%)

2.1 Compare your own skillset against the employability skills sought by employers in order to identify gaps and how you might address these through personal development plans

2.2 Utilise your skillset effectively and creatively to complete the documents required when applying for jobs

3. Outline how your skillset can be used to demonstrate your employability during the recruitment and selection process (Weighting 30%)

3.1 Outline the different screening processes that may be used as part of employee selection and how you would use your skillset to navigate this screening effectively

3.2 Reflect on how you intend to use your own skills and experience to maximise your potential to a prospective employer at interview

4. Appraise how employability skills can help establish you in a new job role and become part of the team (Weighting 30%)

4.1 Explain the usefulness of employability skills when starting a new job and how these could be evidenced during a probationary period.

4.2 Describe how employability skills can help a new employee integrate with and become an effective contributor to a team

5. Using a process of self-awareness and self-reflection, summarise opportunities for personal development planning in order to ensure you maintain your value as an employee and advance your career potential (Weighting 10%)

5.1 Utilise feedback on performance to maximise your value as an employee

5.2 Appraise the value of feedback on performance with your own career goals and aspirations

Capabilities

Alongside academic learning and development, ABE's qualifications have been designed to develop your practical skills and capabilities. These capabilities are highlighted as certain values, knowledge, skills and behaviours that will help you in your professional development.

Below is an overview of the behaviours, skills and attitudes that you will develop through this unit include:

Element of Learning

Key Capabilities Developed

Element 1 – Concept of employability

Understanding of what employability is and why employers are looking for these skills in addition to qualifications and experience.

Commercial awareness

Element 2 – Assessing your own skillset

Awareness of own skillset in terms of employability and how to develop and use it to write the documents that are required when applying for jobs.

Self-awareness, self-reflection and being objective about self; integrity; writing objectively and succinctly; desk research; matching own skills with those required for specific job roles; networking; IT skills

Element 3 – Demonstrating your

Awareness of tools and techniques used in the recruitment and selection process and how to utilise skillset to maximise

employability

employability prospects.

Self-confidence; interview skills; listening; verbal and non-verbal communication; independence; emotional intelligence

Element 4 – Establishing yourself in a new role

Utilising employability skills for a smooth transition into a new job and to integrate effectively with the team.

Communication skills; collaboration; openness; responsiveness; appreciation of diversity; respect for others; interpersonal sensitivity; time management and accountability; commitment;

Element 5 – Creating a personal development plan

Being responsive to feedback in order to maintain value to the organisation and maximise future career potential through self-development.

Self-development; openness; responsiveness; proactivity; commitment; life-long learning

Localisation

You need to appreciate employability skills within the context of your local business environment. The concept of employability has developed over recent years in the light of business practices that have become increasingly global, but there are local variations, which you should be mindful of.

You should therefore take the following into account when preparing your assessment:

- Local job opportunities and employment sectors
- Places to look for work opportunities
- Local training opportunities with regard to employability skills
- Local practices and customs in relation to work
- Local employment rules, regulations and legislation
- The influence of local culture and socialisation on employability and business practices
- Learning and development opportunities to fill skill gaps e.g. IT, numeracy, language, communication and other work-based capabilities, such as: teamwork, collaboration, customer service, commercial awareness and so on.

Indicative Content

1. Explain the concept of employability, its relevance and value to both employing organisations and individuals (Weighting 10%)

1.1 Explain what is meant by employability and the attitudes, skills and behaviours that are increasingly demanded by employers when recruiting staff

- Definitions of employability
- Value of employability skills to employers over and above qualifications and experience and why this shift in skillset has occurred
 - Transferrable skills (cross-functional)
 - Increased productivity (added value)
 - Flexibility and adaptability (agile workforce)
- Employability skills most frequently cited by employers:
 - Self-management – punctuality, time management, planning and organising, self-confidence, honesty, integrity, reliability, 'can do' approach, enthusiasm, commitment, good personal presentation, coping with pressure, emotional intelligence
 - Thinking and problem solving – attention to detail, negotiation, decision making, initiative, achievement drive, reflection
 - Working together and communicating – appreciating diversity, collaboration, cooperation, flexibility, responsiveness, willingness to learn, telephone skills,

taking responsibility, being accountable, tact and diplomacy, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, active listening, giving and receiving feedback, presentation skills, managing and leadership, delegation, conflict management,

- Understanding the business – commercial awareness, customer focus, service orientation, corporate social responsibility and ethicality
- Functional skills – numeracy, language and ICT at levels relevant to professional practice.

1.2 Summarise the relevance and value of this shift in selection criteria for new staff in relation to the changing workplace

- Value of employability skills to employers:
 - Differentiates between people with similar qualifications and/or experience
 - Increases effectiveness and efficiency – doing things right the first time
 - Ownership and accountability
 - Use of initiative within boundaries
 - Innovation and creativity
 - Flexibility – transferrable skills that can be used in different roles and project teams
 - Responsiveness to changing market and customer needs; improved customer satisfaction that leads to repeat business

- A sense of employee contribution and value creates loyalty and commitment, and reduces staff absence and turnover
- Value to individuals:
 - Increased sense of contribution and value leads to improved job satisfaction, commitment and likely progression/promotion
 - Employability skills are transferrable from role to role and will help with future employment prospects.

2. Assess your own skillset in terms of employability and use it to write a unique Curriculum Vitae and complete relevant job applications, maximising your potential value to an employer (Weighting 20%)

2.1 Compare your own skillset against the employability skills sought by employers in order to identify gaps and how you might address these through personal development plans

- Assess own skillset in terms of employability in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, preferences and gaps
- Identify opportunities to close the gaps through self-development, training and/or work experience in order to become more attractive in terms of employability.
- Personal development plans – presenting yourself as a 'rounded' individual – professional, social, personal; developing views, opinions and values; life-long learning and development; reflection and learning from experience.

2.2 Utilise your skillset effectively and creatively to complete the documents required when applying for jobs.

- Personal profile, Curriculum Vitae, LinkedIn profile – format, content – inclusion of soft skills as well as qualifications and experience

- Where to look for jobs – online, newspapers, journals, agencies, job centres, noticeboards, organisations' websites, networking eg, personal and LinkedIn, setting up alerts – and typical content of job adverts
- Desk research on specific organisations in preparation for applying for jobs – online, library, company information, contacts
- Matching and presenting skillset to what is required in the Job Description and Person Specification, adapting CV, completing job application forms, writing letters of application/supporting emails – selling yourself positively
- References – whom to ask.

3. Outline how your skillset can be used to demonstrate your employability during the recruitment and selection process (Weighting 30%)

3.1 Outline the different screening processes that may be used as part of employee selection and how you would use your skillset to navigate this screening effectively.

- Screening tests – aptitude and personality testing
- Assessment centres
- Application of own skillset to screening tests and assessment centres including presentations.

3.2 Reflect on how you intend to use your own skills and experience to maximise your potential to a prospective employer at interview

- Identifying skills that are sought and matching own strengths and abilities to these
- Interview skills – listening; clarifying what is required; rephrasing; using knowledge, skills and experience effectively when answering questions; supporting answers with relevant evidence and examples
- Presenting yourself effectively at interview – appearance, preparation, during the interview, non-verbal communication
- Asking for and responding to feedback after an unsuccessful interview.

4. Appraise how employability skills can help establish you in a new job role and become part of the team (Weighting 30%)

4.1 Explain the usefulness of employability skills when starting a new job and how these could be evidenced during a probationary period

- Making a good first impression – punctuality, personal presentation, being informed, showing interest and enthusiasm, listening carefully in order to retain information, making notes, reading and referring to information supplied
- Making a positive contribution – listening to instructions, clarifying understanding through questions, applying skills diligently, meeting deadlines, checking work carefully, responding positively to feedback
- Working to achieve goals set for probationary period.

4.2 Describe how employability skills can help a new employee integrate with and become an effective contributor to a team

- Accepting designated role within a new or established team and working within guidance and boundaries
- Effective use of own skills – balancing confidence with openness, responsiveness and willingness to learn
- Valuing diversity and appreciating the varying skillsets of others in the team – Belbin's team roles

- Learning from others and responding to feedback in order to meet team's objectives
- Going the extra mile when appropriate to demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm.

5. Using a process of self-awareness and self-reflection, summarise opportunities for personal development planning in order to ensure you maintain your value as an employee and advance your career potential (Weighting 10%)

5.1 Utilise feedback on performance to maximise your value as an employee

- Informal and formal – being open to and positive to day to day feedback as well as probationary reviews, performance review and feedback in order to improve performance and contribution
- Reflecting on feedback – consideration of feedback to ensure a good understanding of what it means, how it applies to you and how you can action it
- Closing the gap by striving for excellence – learning through observation and by asking questions; asking for and responding constructively to feedback; taking up opportunities for professional growth and development.

5.2 Appraise the value of feedback on performance with your own career goals and aspiration.

- Personal development plans and setting SMART objectives for your career – short, medium and longer term
- Utilising development opportunities – shadowing, training on the job, online and face to face opportunities
- Recognising how skills can be transferrable
- Life-long learning – keeping up to date through continuous professional development.