



NITIC

National Information Technology
Innovation Center

Business Industry Leadership Team (BILT)

Employability Skills KSAs June 2026

This prioritized Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) list was developed by the National IT Innovation Center (NITIC) in collaboration with IT industry subject matter experts (SMEs). This list is intended to help faculty and administrators align curriculum with industry needs so graduates are “workforce ready” when they graduate.

SMEs convened online to rank each KSA item one by one – a ranking of “4” meant that item was essential for entry-level IT workers, while a “1” meant that item could be removed from program curriculum. By default, items with an average vote of 2.6 or lower were turned pink to signal that this item may not be worth keeping.

After the vote, the SMEs discussed the results as a group. This discussion led to some revisions in the KSA descriptions and rankings. Some “pink” items the SMEs together deemed important despite the lower average and were kept, while some “green” items with a higher average the SMEs recommended be removed from the list. Those items can be found at the bottom of each KSA section under “Recommended Removal.”

The “To Be Included in the Next Vote” section at the bottom includes items the SMEs suggested that were not included in the original list vote.

This KSA prioritization process is a cornerstone of the successful Business and Industry Leadership Team (BILT) model which puts businesses in a co-leadership role.

Learn more about how the BILT works – and how you can implement it with your own program – by using these resources: <https://www.nitic.org/industry/local-bilt/>

Employability Skills (Abilities) August 27, 2024		# votes (4 = most important)					2.6 checksum
		4	3	2	1	Avg	
A-1	Interpersonal Skills - Open-minded and emotionally intelligent. Builds strong relationships with everyone.	8	5	0	0	3.62	13
A-2	Integrity - Accountable, ethical, and fair. Consistent in thought, word, and action.	10	3	0	0	3.77	13
A-3	Professionalism - Non-defensive and composed under pressure. Demonstrates good judgement and a positive presence in all situations.	6	6	1	0	3.38	13
A-4	Initiative - Self-starter. Begins challenging tasks with limited direction and sees them through to successful completion.	7	3	3	0	3.31	13
A-5	Adaptability and Flexibility - Agile. Able to find a path forward when situations are new, different, uncertain, unexpected, or rapidly changing.	4	7	2	0	3.15	13
A-6	Dependability - Consistent, timely, and prepared. Able to follow directions, attend to details, and fulfill obligations.	9	4	0	0	3.69	13
A-7	Lifelong Learning - Curious and growth-minded. Embraces unexpected or uncomfortable situations as learning opportunities.	5	5	3	0	3.15	13
A-8	Reading - Skilled in comprehension. Understands and uses text and figures in documents.	5	7	1	0	3.31	13
A-9	Writing - Skilled in writing. Uses business English in logical, organized documents.	5	5	3	0	3.15	13
A-10	Mathematics - Thinks in models. Expresses complex ideas and derives solutions mathematically.	2	3	7	1	2.46	13
A-11	Science and Technology - Understands how the world works. Applies scientific principles and methods to solve problems.	3	4	6	0	2.77	13
A-12	Communications - Skilled communicator. Listens and speaks clearly or uses alternative communication methods.	7	6	0	0	3.54	13
A-13	Critical and Analytical Thinker - Logical thinker. Analyzes information to draw conclusions.	7	5	1	0	3.46	13
A-14	Computer Skills - Tech-savvy. Shares information via safe and secure technology, hardware, and software.	7	5	1	0	3.46	13
A-15	Teamwork - Collaborative. Builds relationships and resolves conflicts to meet team objectives.	5	6	2	0	3.23	13
A-16	Client/Stakeholder focus - Customer-centered. Anticipates client needs and delivers personalized service.	5	7	0	1	3.23	13
A-17	Planning and Organizing - Prepared. Prioritizes tasks and manages time and resources to accomplish important work.	4	8	0	1	3.15	13
A-18	Creative Thinking - Innovative. Finds inspiration in unexpected places and uncovers useful patterns that others miss to generate diverse solutions.	4	8	1	0	3.23	13
A-19	Problem Solving, Prevention, and Decision Making - Disciplined. Detects warning signs, uncovers causes, assesses alternatives, and uses decision-making tools.	4	7	2	0	3.15	13
A-20	Seeking and Developing Opportunities - Proactive and forward-looking. Finds areas where improvements or revolutionary changes are needed.	3	7	2	1	2.92	13
A-21	Working with Tools and Technology - Tech-savvy. Selects, uses, troubleshoots, and maintains appropriate engineering tools and technology.	5	5	3	0	3.15	13
A-22	Scheduling and Coordinating - Connected. Synchronizes schedules and manages logistics to efficiently fulfill requirements.	1	7	4	1	2.62	13
A-23	Checking, Examining, and Recording - Careful and accurate. Effectively captures, checks, organizes, and maintains information in an accessible way.	4	8	1	0	3.23	13
A-24	Business Fundamentals - Strategic thinker. Keeps current on industry trends and uses economic principles to inform decisions.	1	8	4	0	2.77	13
A-25	Design - Creative problem solver. Develops systems and components while considering societal needs and safety.	3	8	2	0	3.08	13
A-26	Professional Ethics - Acts appropriately. Evaluates the merits, risks, and impacts of engineering activities.	5	6	2	0	3.23	13
A-27	Business and Public Policy - Logical thinker. Analyzes information to draw conclusions.	4	6	2	1	3.00	13
A-28	Quality Control and Assurance - Quality minded. Ensures products and processes meet the client's quality requirements.	6	5	2	0	3.31	13
A-29	Compassion and Kindness - Supportive and altruistic. Empathizes with others in both good times and bad.	2	5	5	1	2.62	13
A-30	Curiosity and Civility - Inquisitive and open minded. Excited about new and different perspectives and committed to respectful and free exchange of ideas.	5	6	2	0	3.23	13
A-31	Mentorship - ability to both mentor and be mentored. Provide critical feedback as well as accept critical feedback.	6	3	4	0	3.15	13

A-32	Goal Setting- Purposeful and focused. Defines clear, achievable objectives and creates a structured plan to reach them.	3	6	3	1	2.85	13
A-33	Enthusiasm - Positive and energetic. Approaches tasks with eagerness, optimism, and a willingness to engage fully.	6	5	2	0	3.31	13
A-34	High Motivation - Driven and committed. Approaches work with energy, persistence, and a strong desire to achieve high- quality results.	7	4	2	0	3.38	13
To Be Included in Next Vote							
Items that emerged from BILT group discussion after the KSA vote							
	Facilitation — Guide discussions, manage group dynamics, and help teams reach clarity and alignment.						
	Intelligent questioning — Ask targeted, thoughtful questions that deepen understanding and move conversations forward.						
	Public speaking — Communicate ideas confidently and clearly to groups of any size.						
	Seeking advice — Proactively reach out to others for insight, perspective, and expertise to strengthen decision making.						
	Storytelling — Translate technical or hard skill work into relatable narratives that highlight soft skills and communicate challenges with positive intent.						
	Unlearning — Let go of outdated assumptions and adopt new approaches when evidence or context changes.						