



The ultimate goal of education is to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to do a job well, and be successfully employed. Employers are looking for

people who are qualified for the job, but who also have a professional attitude, who are continually learning and growing. You become a professional by taking charge of your education. Look at the big picture to see how every class and every experience work together to build the competencies and credentials you need to do the job.

Get Organized

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Employers Want to Hire Professionals

Employers are looking for people who have the skills they need to do the job, but they expect you to bring a lot more skills than the technical skills of being an accountant or a chemist. You're expected to be able to:

- Solve problems
- Organize your time
- Teach someone else a process
- Communicate with others inside and outside the company
- Work as a team
- Bring a good work ethic, and an attitude that says you want to be there and do this job.

“Be a pro at what you do. No one shows-up to meetings of the Unsuccessful Skydivers Club.”

Ryan Lilly



Professionals are always building their knowledge and skills.

Know Your KSAs

Part of managing your education is knowing what knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) you are learning from each class.

- **KNOWLEDGE** - something that you have learned or discovered (the rules of the road for bicycles)
- **SKILL** - the ability to perform a task, usually something learned (riding a bike)
- **ABILITY** - qualities that enable you to perform a task - something you have within you that helps you do the skill. (The physical ability to move, pedal, steer, coordination)
- **COMPETENCY** - the capability to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform “critical work functions” or tasks in a defined work setting. (Being a bike messenger in the city)

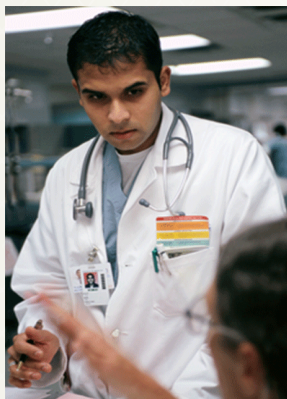


Why do these matter? Because **employers look at you to see what knowledge, skills, and abilities you can bring to a job.** Can you physically do the job? Do you have the background knowledge and skills to do the job well? Do you have the ability to learn new things and problem solve in this job? Start to identify the KSAs in everything you do, whether it's taking a class or volunteering at a 5K run. Look at how each experience adds to who you are. When you graduate, you should have the competencies needed to do your target job.

Professional Standards

Every career area or profession has a set of standards, or competencies, which must be met to do a job. A doctor needs a medical degree and a license, a teacher needs a teaching certificate, a lawyer must take the bar exam in order to be qualified to practice law.

Take a look at a job description for a position in your field. Then, look at the requirements and learning objectives for each course you are taking in your plan of study to see exactly what KSAs you are learning. **Instead of asking the question “why do I have to take this class?” Ask yourself “What skills am I gaining that I can use in my career?”**



Attributes of a Professional

- **Specialized knowledge**
- **Competency**
- **Honesty and integrity**
- **Respect**
- **Accountability**
- **Self-regulation**
- **Image**

Mastering the Rules of the Game

Using the Class Syllabus

On the first day of class, you receive a course overview sheet or syllabus that lists:

- course objectives
- assignments, tests, quizzes, and projects and their point values
- a schedule for the semester
- grading rubrics - the requirements for getting a specific grade in the class
- the grading scale.

Use your syllabus to identify the KSAs you are gaining from the class, as well as any class projects or assignments that could be used to show an employer samples of your work.

- Make a list of the key skills you are learning related to your degree
- Identify the type of information you are gaining, whether it's knowledge, skills, or abilities.
- Look at the textbook and list of assignments, and map out how the information builds as you go through the semester.
- Map out all the due dates, test dates, etc. on a calendar at the beginning of the semester.
- Set a specific time each week to review your grades for the class, and map out your schedule for completing work.
- If you don't understand content at the beginning of the class, be sure to ask questions.



Planning an Academic Program

It's your responsibility to keep track of the courses you need to graduate with your degree. Meet with your school advisor in your first year to map out your course plan, then meet each semester to review your plan and make sure you are on the right track for graduating.

Many courses have **prerequisites**, those courses you have to take first before you can take a more advance class. Spanish I would be a prerequisite for Spanish II. A course planner can help you keep track of the classes that are required and when you should take them in your school career. College course catalogs are your first source for identifying the classes needed for a particular degree. You will want to track:

- required courses for graduation.
- prerequisite courses and suggested timing for specific courses.
- number of credits for each class.
- electives required to meet minor or double major requirements.
- any community service requirements.
- locations where you can take the class - online or on campus.

