Employability Framework: Developing Career Ready Students

Carleton is educating over 31,000 students annually in a wide range of academic fields. For many students, the career options available to them are not clear. During their time at Carleton, students are engaging in numerous learning opportunities that are outside of the traditional learning environments; including experiential learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities. Through both their academics and these extra-curricular opportunities, students are developing key skills for the workforce during their time at Carleton; from field-specific and technical skills to analytical and communications skills. However, there is a gap between students gaining these employability skills and students' ability to recognize and articulate them.

Due to the increased value placed on the employability of our students through the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Strategic Mandate Agreement 3, and due to our students' needs, Carleton developed this employability framework that is designed to support and enhance the student's academic journey. In order to support students' skill development and meet this vital need, the Employability Framework is designed to map out the ways in which Carleton is providing pathways to develop employability skills in our students.

Our aim through the employability framework is to close this gap and ensure students are equipped to recognize the skills gained in the classroom, to identify the opportunities available to them outside of the classroom and to make connections to their skill development so they are better able to articulate their skills when seeking employment upon graduation.

In this framework, the following areas are outlined:

1. Carleton's Process in Developing the Employability Framework
2. Key Areas of Focus
3. Final Recommendations

PROCESS

While developing this framework, the working group consulted with a range of campus stakeholders and resources to ensure alignment with the needs of our students, as well as the objectives of faculty partners. The framework also aligns with the Strategic Mandate Agreement 3 and the priorities of the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Resources:

- Carleton University Strategic Transformation Group on Employability Report, 2017.
- Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Shared Responsibility – The Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, June 2016
- Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development's Guiding Principles for Experiential Learning, September 2017
- CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education, 10th Edition, May 2019

- Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance Degree-Level Expectations
- Carleton Office of Institutional Research and Planning – Employment Statistics
- Career Readiness for the New College Graduate: A Definition and Competencies - National Association of Colleges and Employers

Consultations:

- Consultations with Carleton student governments: Carleton University Student Association and Carleton Academic Student Government
- Consultations with Deputy Provost, Lorraine Dyke
- Consultations with Carleton's Program Assessment Specialist, Andrea Thompson
- Consultations with Associate Vice-President (Teaching and Learning), David J. Hornsby
- To be completed – consultations with the Carleton Experiential Learning Steering Committee

AREAS OF FOCUS

In the development of the employability framework, there are two key areas of focus. The first is a guide outlining the vast array of opportunities that exist on campus to build a student's employability. This guide will serve as a resource for students to develop their employability throughout their academic journey in an intentional manner. The four domains outlined in this guide are:

1. Curricular
2. Co-curricular
3. Service Delivery
4. Employer Connections

The development of career competencies was equally important in that they serve as a foundation for all opportunities listed within the guide. Students achieve key career competencies within the four domains. In addition to achieving these competencies, our goal is to ensure students are aware of their skill development and are able to articulate how they have developed these competencies during their time at Carleton.

CURRICULAR

Carleton offers many valuable opportunities to formally connect students' career goals to their academics, all while enhancing the employability and learning for our students. Below is a list of opportunities available to students at Carleton for academic credit.

International Internship Program

An international internship is an opportunity to work internationally for academic credit. Internships are an excellent way for students to gain real-world work experience, develop contacts in their field and build their resumes to market themselves for future career opportunities.

Labs

Provides hands-on application of course concepts in a controlled environment, including activities such as observing, measuring, testing, and experimenting. Labs may be scientific or technological in nature; however, other types of labs may also qualify, such as language labs.

Performance-Based Learning

Involves an individual or team-produced dramatic, artistic, or musical performance, exhibit or display that is prepared for an audience. This activity constitutes an integral component of the course.

Campus Entrepreneurship/Incubators

Students cultivate, organize and/or manage a business, social enterprise or creative idea from development through implementation.

Industry/Community Research Projects

Students work on a project that has been developed through collaboration with a community partner or organization in order to identify and analyze issues or opportunities and develop solutions. This can take place in the community or the classroom. Not only must the collaboration satisfy the student learning outcomes of the course but it must also satisfy the needs of the partner.

Practica/Field Placements

Placements and practica provide the opportunity for students to apply theories and concepts they have learned to a supervised practice-related environment and provide relevant reflections of such work. Usually these are linked to professional programs. Students are generally not paid for their work, but they receive credit and are evaluated. Placements/practica often include ongoing classroom instruction. This includes clinical placements.

Field Experiences

Field experiences may be directed or mediated by the instructor and include a range of time-intensive endeavours that require varying levels of student interaction. For example, field experiences include short-term field trips, fieldwork, and observational activities, such as classroom observations or attending a performance. Field experiences may or may not involve student interaction with members of the external community. Field experiences account for work-integrated educational experiences not encompassed by other forms, such as co-op, practica and internships.

Applied Research Projects

Involves, as a major course component, a process of substantial discovery, synthesis, and/or application of information to solving a particular problem in an original way. The research process can be undertaken independently or in teams.

Case Studies

Provides an opportunity for students to apply their learning to real-life scenarios by working through complex, ambiguous real-world problems. Learners are encouraged to work out their own approach to defining, analyzing and solving the challenge.

Interactive Simulations

Students engage with academic content through content-specific activities such as simulations, demonstrations, archival or design work and/or role-plays. Activities are designed to simulate "real life" situations.

CO-CURRICULAR

Carleton offers extensive co-curricular opportunities that complement the academic experience, while also building the employability of our students and serving as meaningful experiential learning opportunities. Co-curricular opportunities include, but are not limited to:

Co-operative Education

The Co-operative Education Program is a structured program in which students have the opportunity to gain practical work experience that is full-time, paid, and related to their program of study. Co-op work terms are alternated with academic terms to enhance a student's ability to both apply and further develop their knowledge and skills.

Job Shadow Program

The Job Shadow program pairs students with industry mentors in their field for a day of job shadowing to provide students with the opportunity to learn first-hand about their chosen field and to develop important contacts.

Mindtrust Leadership Program

The Mindtrust Leadership Development Program connects students with local industry leaders to provide university students with an opportunity to polish their leadership skills and help pave their way to future professional and personal success.

Alternative Spring Break Program

Alternative Spring Break is an experiential learning program that connects students to domestic and international partner communities. Students explore the social, environmental, and economic challenges affecting their partner community while supporting meaningful community-led projects.

Campus to Community Program

This community-engaged learning program connects students with local non-profit and community organizations to explore the social, environmental, and economic challenges effecting the greater Ottawa

community. By supporting the work of these organizations, students gain practical employment skills and identify real-world connections to their studies.

Clubs and Societies

Carleton's extensive network of clubs and societies is another great way for students to network and pursue interests outside the classroom. With more than 300 active clubs and societies to choose from, students will certainly find a venue for their academic, social, political or charitable interests.

Mentorship Programs

The Mentorship Network connects Peer Mentors and Mentees across the Carleton campus through mentoring relationships. The Mentorship Network provides mentorship training, resources, and information for all mentors connected to the network.

Accessible Career Transitions to Employment (ACT To Employ)

Accessible Career Transitions to Employment (ACT to Employ) is a formal experiential learning program which places students with disabilities in meaningful paid work experiences to bridge the employability gap that exists for persons with disabilities

SERVICE DELIVERY

Through Carleton and Career Services' extensive service delivery options, our students are prepared for all aspects of employability from career exploration through to the practicalities of developing a strong resume or preparing for an interview. Below is a list of services available to students to support the development of their employability.

Career Counselling/Career Coaching

Career Counselling and Career Coaching assists students in exploring career opportunities within their field, including non-linear approaches that would help students identify their options and way forward related to their field of study.

Resume Reviews

Career Services provides industry best practices through workshops and one-on-one guidance to build strong resumes that capture all work and extra-curricular experiences to ensure students are best positioned when competing for opportunities.

Interview Preparation

Career Services leads interview preparation for both in person and skype interviews to ensure students are best prepared to compete for roles.

Employability Skills Workshops

A range of workshops designed to build students' employability skills, knowledge and abilities to help prepare them for the workplace and enable them to secure competitive opportunities.

Co-Curricular Record (CCR)

The CCR serves as a way to record and encourage involvement in student leadership development, extracurricular activities, and community service opportunities. With a CCR students are able to present official documentation to prospective employers and graduate schools to both complement their academic transcript and demonstrate the holistic learning they engaged in during their academic career.

EMPLOYER CONNECTIONS

Carleton is active in the community and collaborates with community partners to provide students the opportunity to connect with employers and thereby, ensuring that Carleton students remain a strong talent pool in the minds of our employer partners. This community connection also allows students to learn first-hand about their chosen career paths.

Employer Information Sessions

Employer Information Sessions are a way for students to connect with industry-specific employers and learn more about local organizations and their recruitment methods.

Career Fairs

Career Fairs occur during peak recruiting seasons and are a way to connect students and alumni with actively hiring employers, while also assisting organizations to develop a talent pool from which they can draw.

Networking Events

These large-scale events are an effective way to develop students' networking abilities while also providing opportunities to network with actively hiring employers.

On-Campus Recruitment Events

Career Services supports hiring organizations by hosting recruitment events and information sessions on campus to ensure students and alumni have access to current opportunities in their field.

Job Shadow Program

The Job Shadow program pairs students with industry mentors in their field for a day of job shadowing to provide students with the opportunity to learn first-hand about their chosen field and to develop important contacts.

Alumni Mentorship Program

The Alumni Mentorship program pairs upper year students and new graduates with alumni mentors who currently work in their field of study as a way to build their knowledge of and network within their chosen field.

CAREER COMPETENCIES

Competencies are knowledge, skills and attributes that are acquired through different aspects of one's life. Opportunities will arise in which students will be able to develop such competencies through their academic journey and help them to bridge to the world of employment.

Carleton University, Career Services and Co-operative Education have established a list of nine competencies that represent our community stakeholders; including, students, faculty members, and employers.

It is through holistic experiential learning opportunities (curricular and co-curricular) that students will be able to reflect on the knowledge, skills and attributes that have been acquired and how to broaden them in order to serve them in their career development.

These competencies were developed to align with the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (OCAV)'s degree-level expectations. In developing these competencies, the working group referred to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' resource: Career Readiness for the New College Graduate and the Council of the Advancement in Higher Education Professional Standards. The working group also conducted a scan of career competencies across other universities in Canada.

Career Readiness Competencies:

1. Career Management
2. Research and Analysis
3. Innovation and Collaboration
4. Discipline-specific Knowledge
5. Diversity and Intercultural Awareness
6. Leadership
7. Communication
8. Community Engagement
9. Digital Literacy
10. Professionalism and Work Ethic

Career Management

- Identify and articulate skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth.
- Through openness and curiosity is able to navigate and explore job options, understands and demonstrates a level of adaptability while taking the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities in the workplace. (OCAV's degree-level expectation: *autonomy/professional capacity*)

Research and Analysis

- Demonstrates the ability to access, analyze and apply knowledge and skills from various disciplines.
- Strategically applies knowledge and skills from past experiences to new situations.

- Assesses situations and identifies problems in order to evaluate solutions and make decisions.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *depth and breadth of knowledge; application of knowledge*)

Innovation and Collaboration:

- Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and solve complex problems.
- Obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts and data in this process and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
- Work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *knowledge of methodologies; application of knowledge*)

Discipline-specific Knowledge:

- Acquire knowledge related to academic discipline as well as job and/or industry-specific knowledge.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *depth and breadth of knowledge; awareness of limits of knowledge*)

Diversity and Intercultural Awareness

- Build and manage inclusive relationships and collaborate on a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary level, as well as with local and global engagement.
- Demonstrate an openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and respect towards all people and understand individuals' differences.
- Substantive knowledge of Indigenous peoples and their history through discipline-specific studies and activities.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *autonomy and professional capacity*)

Leadership

- Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.
- Assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *autonomy and professional capacity*)

Communication

- Explain information, ideas and opinions effectively in a clear and concise manner; both verbally and in writing.
- Express ideas to others and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *communication skills*)

Community Engagement

- Social and civic responsibility demonstrated by meaningful links within the community.
- Establishes mutually beneficial relationships with community members.
- Demonstrates consideration of the welfare of community members in decision- making.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *autonomy and professional capacity*)

Digital Literacy

- Ethically and efficiently, solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals, while leveraging the existing digital technologies.
- Adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *autonomy and professional capacity; knowledge of methodologies*)

Professionalism and Work Ethic

- Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits.
- The individual demonstrates integrity, ethical behavior and acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind.

(OCAV's degree-level expectation: *awareness of limits of knowledge; autonomy and professional capacity)*

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Career Services and the Educational Development Centre:** It is recommended that Career Services and the EDC increase collaboration to assist faculty members with including the career competencies into the development of course learning objectives. In addition to building these competencies into course learning objectives, the goal would also be to assist faculty members in helping students better understand the competencies they are developing through courses, as well as increase their ability to articulate the competencies they are developing.

   Resources Required: Confirm Career Curriculum Specialist to permanent status (one full-time equivalent), as well as the possibility of an additional full-time equivalent. A base position will be requested in the 2020/2021 budget.

2. **Develop an Online Employability Framework Toolkit:** The development of an online employability framework toolkit would enable faculty and departments to easily implement employability goals into their courses and student programs. The toolkit would include access to resources for the career competencies, the employability guide with direct links to each opportunity or resource, and a student assessment tool (to be developed, see recommendation #4). The intent would be

to make it seamless for faculty and staff across campus to build up the employability of their students where appropriate.

Resources Required: One temporary full-time resource (8 months)

3. **Communication and Awareness Campaign** – In order to ensure this is a campus-wide initiative, it is key to develop an awareness campaign directed at both students and faculty/staff as we implement the employability framework. The campaign will create awareness for the goal to increase students' employability, as well as to generate engagement for this important outcome. Additionally, the communications plan will direct students, faculty and staff to the appropriate resources available to assist with this goal. Through engaging more of the campus in this endeavor, students will hear about employability throughout their degree and across campus, further driving the importance of this consideration home for students.

    Resources Required: One temporary full-time resource (8 months)

4. **Develop Student Assessment Tool**: The development and use of an evaluation tool would enable students to easily assess if they are on track with their employability, and if not, encourage them to access more support and opportunities to ensure they are setting themselves up for employability success. This tool could be a simple self-assessment that students access online through Career Services resources, or in-person with a Career Services team member. Once complete, students would be directed to the employability framework opportunity guide to assist them in selecting opportunities that will increase their employability. By ensuring we are regularly conducting these assessments, students will be engaged and make informed decisions about their employability earlier on in their degrees.

    Resources Required: Covered under resource for online employability framework toolkit

5. **Incorporate Career Competencies into CUHire:** It is recommended that Career Services investigate incorporating the career competencies into the university-wide hiring portal, CUHire. If possible, this would allow employers to identify the competencies they are seeking in candidates in a manner that is consistent with Carleton's development of employability within our students.

    Resources Required: One temporary full-time resource (8 months)

6. **Explore Career Competency Course Tagging:** It is recommended to explore tagging courses that have incorporated the career competencies into their course learning objectives, similar to how Carleton courses are tagged for experiential learning.

    Resources Required: Resource recommendations to be determined at the faculty level.

Through these recommendations, it is essential that we not only prioritize developing students' career competencies, but we also emphasize ensuring that our students are aware of the skills they are

developing, and are thereby able to articulate what competencies they have developed through the opportunities available to them at Carleton. As previously stated, students are actively engaging in many curricular and co-curricular opportunities that are enhancing their employability, however they are not always connecting these opportunities with the skills and abilities they are developing as a result. By ensuring students' understanding and articulation of their career competencies remains a priority, we will further work towards minimizing the gap that exists, and thereby positioning our students for greater employment success. As we guide our students in making these connections, through creating awareness for the opportunities and ensuring consistency with this approach to employability across campus, we will be successful in supporting the holistic student in all their goals, particularly those with respect to their employability beyond graduation.

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