

What is College and Career Ready?

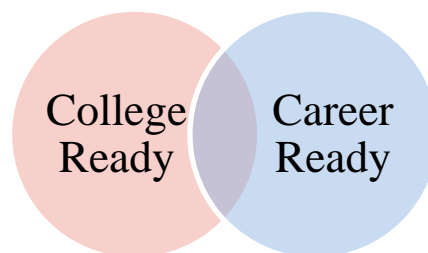
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There has been an increased focus by the Obama Administration and policy organizations on college and career readiness. But what does “college and career ready” mean? Many organizations have developed their own varied definitions of the term. For instance, Achieve, Inc. the education reform organization that launched the American Diploma Project, define college and career readiness as “the content knowledge and skills high school graduates must possess in English and mathematics – including, but not limited to, reading, writing communications, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving – to be successful in any and all future endeavors.” According to Achieve, college-readiness and career-readiness require the same set of knowledge and skills.

NASDCTEc believes that the nationally-validated Career Clusters essential knowledge and skill statements¹ represent the core of initial college and career readiness. The essential knowledge and skills are organized in the following categories:

- Technical skills
- Academic foundations (minimally defined as a state’s graduation requirements)
- Communications
- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Information technology applications
- Systems
- Safety, health and environmental
- Leadership and teamwork
- Ethics and legal responsibilities
- Employability and career development

While NASDCTEc believes that there is great commonality between the knowledge and skills individuals need to successfully transition into postsecondary education and into the workforce, additional competency will be needed in some, if not all, of the 10 categories of knowledge and skills.



For example, if an individual chooses to enroll in an environmental engineering program, he or she will require additional academic courses beyond most state graduation requirements. Similarly, if an individual chooses to enter the workforce immediately after high school in the medical field as a

radiology assistant, his or her high school education would have to include additional academics such as anatomy and physiology, as well as technical content such as imaging procedures.

Today's workplace requires that all workers be lifelong learners in order to advance in their careers. Therefore, it is necessary that there be a common set of knowledge and skills that all individuals acquire to successfully transition into postsecondary education or the workplace. As individuals select specific career paths, they will then have to focus on the amount and type of additional knowledge and skills (above and beyond core college and career readiness) they should acquire to be successful in their chosen field.

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ⁱ http://careerclusters.org/resources/pos_ks/Essential%20Statements%20-%20100608.pdf