

A European study on graduate employability: 'soft skills' vs. 'hard skills'

According to Andrews & Higson (2010) there is a lot of pressure put on universities to produce graduates who are able to respond to change and complex needs of their contemporary workplace. Definitions of employability vary from focus on graduates' abilities to adapt and use their soft and hard skills (Andrews & Higson, 2010; Knight & Yorke, 2004). Employability is complex and even somewhat vague because it varies from job to job and company to company. However, the following 11 integral soft skills that are important in every job can be identified:

1. Professionalism
2. Reliability
3. The ability to cope with uncertainty
4. The ability to work under pressure
5. The ability to plan and think strategically
6. The capability to communicate and interact with others
7. Good writing and communication skills
8. Information and communication technology skills
9. Creativity and self-confidence
10. Time-management skills
11. A willingness to learn and accept responsibility (McLarty, 1998; Tucker, Sojka, Barone & McCathy, 2000; Nabi, 2003; Elias & Purcell, 2004)

Sources

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