

21 Century Success Skills

Exam Information	Description
Exam number 300 Items 46 National Career Cluster 21st Century Success Skills Certification available Yes	The 21st Century Success Skills exam assesses learners' knowledge of the fundamental, yet critical, personal traits, knowledge, and skills that each person should possess to successfully transition from secondary education into the workforce and post-secondary education, and are to be continually developed throughout one's life.

Exam Blueprint and Performance Skills

Standard	Percentage of exam score
1. Personal Success Traits	15%
2. Research (Research/Learn Information	19%
3. Reason (Analyze Information to Situation)	17%
4. Relate (Apply Information to Situation)	17%
5. Results (Do, Record, Act, Produce Outcome)	32%

*Includes performance skill evaluation

Standard 1 - Personal Success Traits

The candidate demonstrates and develops personal traits that support productivity, quality work, self initiative, and employability in all situations.

Objective 1 Understand how a positive attitude affects the work environment.

1. Describe how having a positive and negative attitude can affect the work environment.
2. Identify ways to deal with challenges at work.
3. Identify ways to deal with conflict involving others at work.
4. Identify how attitude can affect one's ability to learn new things.

Objective 2 Understand the impact of being self-motivated, self-disciplined, and having a good work ethic in the work environment

1. Explain the importance of working and thinking independently.
2. identify the consequences of being self motivated and self disciplined.
3. Identify how to be helpful by finding ways to provide value at work.
4. Explain the value of self-improvement and continuous learning both professionally and personally.
5. Understand the importance of doing your best work while being paid by an employer.

Objective 3 Understand the importance of dealing honestly and with integrity in all situations.

1. Explain the importance of taking responsibility for your own actions.
2. Identify the consequences of acting with honesty and integrity.

Objective 4 Understand the importance of being dependable in all situations

1. Explain the importance of regular and on-time attendance.
2. Explain the importance of completing assigned tasks on-time.
3. Explain the importance of making and keeping commitments.
4. Identify the consequences of being dependable.

Objective 5 Understand the role of respect in the work environment

1. Explain the importance of respect for others and individuals.
2. Explain the importance of respect for others' time and possessions.
3. Identify the difference between personal time and work time.
4. Identify the appropriate use of work time.

Objective 6 Understand the importance of being adaptable and flexible in the work environment.

1. Identify how to handle change and setbacks.
2. Explain the importance of being teachable.
3. Understand the importance of seeking and accepting feedback.
4. Identify ways to resourcefully produce results regardless of challenges or tedious tasks.

Objective 7 Understand the importance of acting professionally in a work environment.

1. Identify how to dress appropriately for interviews.
2. Identify how to dress appropriately for different work situations.
3. Explain the importance of using appropriate and non-discriminatory language in a work environment.
4. Explain the importance of using appropriate body language in a work environment.

Optional: Standard performance evaluations on the final page of this document

Standard 2 - Researching Information to Solve Problems

The candidate understands and demonstrates effective research skills to find information and support success in work and everyday life.

Objective 1 Demonstrate how to develop and ask the appropriate questions to get the information that is needed.

1. Understand that information can consist of, or come from, any relevant data, evidence, knowledge, circumstances, surroundings, etc., that adds to your understanding.
2. Focus question development on a specific situation.
3. Properly use interrogative questions to research the needed information (who, what, where, why, when, which, how).
4. Understand the pros and cons of using the following questioning strategies:
 - a. Yes and no questions
 - b. Probing questions

Objective 1 Understand how to gather and determine if information is relevant.

1. Locate and gather information in printed and digital formats from various sources, including:
 - a. Different search engine results
 - b. Libraries, colleges, and universities
 - c. Community and industry groups, associations, publications, and businesses
 - d. Subject matter experts
2. Differentiate between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, and understand the basic pros and cons of each source type.
3. Understand the difference between quantitative and qualitative information.
4. Understand the difference between relevant and credible sources versus irrelevant and questionable sources
 - a. Understand how and why (for what purposes) different information (messages, content, media, advertising, research, etc.) is developed and presented.
 - b. Recognize bias or spin within the messages presented.
 - c. Recognize when information becomes propaganda and how it might influence beliefs and behaviors.
 - d. Identify the difference between fact and opinion.

Objective 3 Understand the ethical and legal issues surrounding the access and use of information.

1. Explain basic copyright and fair use laws, **including that the citation of copyrighted material without authorization is still unlawful.**
2. Explain the difference between paraphrasing and plagiarism.
3. Explain the importance of providing proper citation for sources, **including that the citation of copyrighted material without authorization is still unlawful.**

Standard 3 - Critical Thinking and Objectively Analyzing Information

The candidate will understand how to critically think and objectively analyze information.

Objective 1 Understand and demonstrate how to read, monitor, and interpret information presented in various formats or tools (i.e. news articles, journal articles, charts, graphs, tables, flow charts, gauges, dials, signs, controls, etc., that may be found in various work situations).

Objective 2 Apply critical thinking skills to objectively evaluate and analyze information.

1. Understand how bias and ego can affect objective reasoning.
2. Distinguish between fact and opinion.
3. Recognize past and current trends, patterns, or cycles in research.
4. Understand and apply different reasoning methods appropriate to the situation to logically analyze and test assumptions.
 - a. Understand and apply cause and effect reasoning (or “if, then” logic) - Understand the consequences of possible solutions (intended or unintended), including how those solutions will impact others.
 - b. Understand and apply the concept of “opportunity costs”.
 - c. Understand and apply the “pros versus cons” methodology.
 - d. Understand and apply inductive reasoning or “generalizing” (inductive reasoning takes specific observable instances and creates a general rule/law from those specific instance)
 - e. Understand and apply deductive reasoning or “deduction” (deductive reasoning takes a generally known rule/law and applies that rule to specific observable instances).

Objective 3 Demonstrate how to organize information for useful analysis.

1. Identify needed and relevant information from irrelevant information
2. Understand how to use appropriate technologies for the situation to help organize and evaluate information.
3. Conceptualize and reorganize gathered information into useful forms.
4. Narrow the gathered research by categorizing it into appropriate subgroups.

Standard 4 - Problem Solving by Relating Information

The candidate will understand how to relate the analysis of information to different situations (problem solving).

Objective 1 Use creative thinking as part of the problem-solving process.

1. Use “brainstorming” and “thinking outside the box” techniques to develop new ideas and ways of looking at the gathered information related to the problem to be solved
2. Identify ways to understand the information from another’s point-of-view (i.e. a customer, peer, teacher, family, etc.)
3. Understand the importance of asking questions which challenge prevailing assumptions, including one’s own assumptions and ideas.
4. Identify and ask clarifying questions that may lead to better solutions (ex. Who will do x? What will happen if x? Where will x be located? Why will x work? When could x be done? Which x works best? How will x happen?)

Objective 2 Apply the analysis of information to make decisions regarding the problem to be solved, include the following steps:

1. Identify multiple alternative solutions.
2. Analyze the consequences of possible solutions (intended or unintended), including how those solutions will impact others.
3. Make a decision based on achieving the desired results.

Standard 5 - Identify How to Effectively Lead a Meeting.

The candidate will understand how to apply the decisions/results made from the analysis of information by effectively communicating those decisions/results to others and work with others to achieve desired outcomes.

Objective 1 Understand how to effectively manage projects.

1. Set and meet S.M.A.R.T. goals, even in the face of obstacles and competing pressures.
 - a. Specific-focused on a specific thing
 - b. Measurable-can be quantified in some way
 - c. Achievable-can be realistically accomplished with the means and times available
 - d. Relevant-it will make a difference and applies appropriately to the desired outcome
 - e. Timely-timeframe when results should be achieved
2. Plan and prioritize tasks and workflow to achieve desired outcomes.
3. Understand how to manage multiple projects during the same period of time.

Objective 2 Understand how to effectively communicate to others.

1. Clearly document and communicate the problem or question to be solved and the identified solution.
 - a. Identify appropriate ways to explain the problem or question to others.
 - b. Identify the true purpose and intent of solving the problem or question.
 - c. Identify the potential effects and consequences of the purposed solution on others.
2. Understand the importance of identifying the intended/target audience(s), including their: viewpoints, experiences, circumstances, background, culture, environments, and demographics when communicating.
3. Understand verbal and non-verbal communication.
 - a. Verbal communication (ex. communicate with confidence, tone of voice, word emphasis, voice inflection, questioning, word choices, sighing, etc.)
 - b. Non-Verbal communication (ex. eye contact, body language, posture, facial expressions, gestures, spatial proximity, touching/physical contact, slow movement, etc.)
4. Understand how to clearly and concisely communicate in writing form as appropriate for the situation (ex. resume, general letter, set of instructions, basic presentation, email, persuasive letter, business report).
 - a. (using proper grammar, spelling, capitalization, word choice, etc.)
 - i. Apply the four basic parts of writing to any written communication. The four basic parts are: Basic information (title, author, contact information)
 - ii. Introduction (quick statement of purpose and intent to entice attention)
 - iii. Body (presentation of details related to one's intent)
 - iv. Conclusion (focused summary of most important parts of content, including one's findings, recommendation, and/or call to action)
5. Understand the use of basic productivity software, and how to determine which software to use for the intended purpose, including:

- a. Word processor software
- b. Spreadsheets software
- c. Presentation software

Objective 3 Understand how to effectively and respectfully interact and collaborate (work) with others.

1. Identify how to properly collaborate with others (teamwork).
 - a. Value the individual contributions of each group member including new and diverse perspectives.
 - b. Show sensitivity to differences in viewpoints, culture, and demographics.
 - c. Actively participate and contribute in group discussions and assignments.
 - d. Proactively accept and complete assigned tasks.
 - e. Understand the importance of having a positive attitude while working in group situations.
 - f. Respectfully accept and incorporate input and feedback from others about one's own work.
2. Understand the role of active listening in effective interpersonal communication and identify active listening skills (ex. eliminate distractions, pay attention, don't interrupt, take notes as appropriate, clarify/summarize what has been heard).
3. Understand how to appropriately work with challenging situations involving other people (client/customer, coworker, boss, peer), by doing the following:
 - a. Build a relationship of trust by finding common ground
 - b. Validate other's points of view
 - c. Show empathy and understanding
 - d. Do not minimize the individual's problem/concern (ex. use "and" vs. "but")
 - e. Identify the root cause of the problem
 - i. Ensure understanding by clarifying the individual's statements using appropriate questioning and listening techniques (ask open ended questions to narrow the scope of the problem, restate what is said to verify understanding)
 - ii. Identify if the root cause of the problem is a workplace practice/procedure vs. personal behavior
 - f. Avoid using absolutes such as "always" and "never"
 - g. Avoid arguing with the individual while interacting with them
 - h. Provide possible solutions, either in part or complete
 - i. Provide ways for follow-up or next steps
 - j. Show appreciation for willingness to work through the problem

Objective 4 Identify the qualities of a good leader.

1. Expects and encourages positive personal traits and quality results from one's self and from others
2. Is positive about others' abilities and efforts, and gives credit to others

3. Listens to others' ideas and leverages the strengths of others to accomplish a common goal
4. Demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior when using influence and power
5. Willing to do any tasks that the leader asks others to do
6. Continuously seeks to learn and improve self
7. Demonstrates courage by making tough decisions and not making excuses when things do not go as planned

Objective 5 Identify how to effectively lead a meeting.

1. Provide a meeting agenda to participants
2. Start and stop on-time
3. Provide clear purpose for meeting
4. Allow enough time to discuss desired topics
5. Encourage participation from all meeting attendees
6. Make specific assignments to specific individuals/groups (action items)
7. Record decisions and assignments
8. Set a plan to follow-up on action items and decision results

Optional: Standard performance evaluations on the final page of this document

Performance Skills Evaluation

Exam name: 21st Century Skills

Candidate Name: _____

Performance assessments may be completed and evaluated any time before the certification is issued. The following performance skills can be used in connection with the associated standards and exam. The evaluator will function as the subject matter expert to determine if the candidate meets the skills requirements with a Yes/No for passing.

Standard 1 – Personal Success Traits Choose 2: - Identify four personal traits and explain how these traits impact how others view one’s capabilities, employability, and professionalism (How these traits impact others perception of you). - Conduct a mock group meeting and practice and develop traits required to work effectively with others. - Develop a list of characteristics, qualities, and values desired in a marriage partner. - Identify a list of 5 characteristics, qualities, or values an employer in a field related to this class would most want in an employee and explain why	Pass:
Standard 2 – Research (Research/Learn Information) Choose 2: - In a class project, identify three ways to research, (ask relevant and pertinent (i.e. “right”) questions) to focus one’s efforts given a specific situation. - For an assigned class project, properly use interrogative questions to understand how to approach, organize, and complete the project (who, what, where, why, when, which, how). - Understand the difference between quantitative and qualitative information. - Differentiate between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, and understand the basic pros and cons of each source type.	Pass:
Standard 3 – Reason (Analyze Information) Choose 2: - For an assigned class project use and apply the “pros versus cons” methodology to determine the best way to complete the project. - As appropriate for the class, prove that the candidate can read and interpret information (with minimal instruction a candidate can, read, monitor, interpret, and understand information presented in various formats or tools (i.e. new articles, journal articles, charts, graphs, tables, flow charts, gauges, dials, signs, controls, etc., that may be found in various work situations.) - Use technology as a tool to help organize and evaluate information being used for a class project/assignment.	Pass:

- Distinguish between fact and opinion, truth and error. Give examples related to the class.

Standard 4 – Relate (Apply Information to Situation)

Choose 2:

- Develop new ideas that contribute to a class project/assignment using various techniques, including brainstorming and “thinking outside the box.”
- Seek to understand a point-of-view different from your own (i.e. a classmate, a customer, colleague, etc.) and explain how that could affect your work, position or outcome of a project.
- Identify and ask clarifying questions that may lead to better solutions (ex. Who will do x? What will happen if x? Where will x be located? Why will x work? When could x be done? Which x works best? How will x happen?) for a class project/assignment.
- Explain that all decisions and actions have consequences (intended or unintended). Give examples.

Pass:

Standard 6 – Results (Do, Record, Act, Produce Outcome)

Choose 3:

- Understand and demonstrate positive and negative verbal and nonverbal communication. Give examples of each and how they can affect a situation.
- Create a resume.
- Demonstrate how to work effectively, and respectfully, work with diverse teams, class members, co-workers.
- Can accurately define, identify, and create a S.M.A.R.T. goal.
- Show how a candidate planned and prioritized the tasks and workflow for a particular project/assignment.
- Effectively lead a meeting.

Pass:

Evaluator Name:

Date:
