Career Readiness Assessment Guide:

This is a short guide that outlines a simple assessment project about integrating career readiness competencies into your major curriculum. The guide is a product of the 2020-21 faculty CAIT on teaching toward career readiness.

February 2025 update: Oregon Rising Strategic Plan highlights *becoming a leader in career preparation* as one of four goals. You can find implementation details online.

One of the recommendations of the CAIT was that "**Departments can build explicit career readiness goals into the learning outcomes for their majors."** This short assessment guide is intended to simplify the assessment process and help a department incorporate and assess a career readiness learning outcome. The goal is not to add more to your curriculum -- we recognize that career competencies (like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking) are likely already integrated in your courses. However, recognizing these competencies within different contexts can be challenging for students. Instead the goal is to find ways to elevate these skills, and make students more aware of them in order to motivate learning, help students understand the relevance of academic work across disciplines, and give them tools to translate that relevance beyond the university.

Proposed Assessment Project Steps:

1. **Raise awareness: discuss career readiness in your department.**
    a. Have a department meeting to discuss career readiness -- Invite the career center (email Paul Timmins, Executive Director UO Career Center, ptimmins@uoregon.edu) , TEP (tep@uoregon.edu), or faculty from the career readiness CAIT to your unit to discuss career readiness with your faculty.
    b. Read how UO defines student success – and how career readiness fits within that definition
    c. Learn about career competencies, the skills valued most by employers.

2. **Adopt a career readiness learning objective.**
Adopting a career readiness learning objective in your major helps move beyond individual course experiences. It supports alignment and coordination of career-competency development across the curriculum.

After investigating the career competencies and the value of helping students explore, reflect, and translate these skills, have your department revisit your own objectives for existing overlap and then discuss potential career readiness learning outcomes.

Sample career readiness outcomes:
- Students will be able to **identify and communicate their competencies** relevant to their future career paths.
- Students will be able to **explore career paths and translate how their own skills and interests match** a chosen major/career path.

- Students will be able to **write professional documents** (resume, cover letter, thank you letter, and elevator pitch) to use for jobs, internships and post-graduate program applications.
- Students will **develop a mentoring network** that provides insights and connections to help them make their career goals a reality.

Adopting a specific career readiness outcome paves the way for the next steps for your department, mapping how students develop that career competency through the curriculum, and providing an opportunity to assess how well your department is meeting its objective.

3. Map and embed career readiness objectives to your courses.

The next step is to map your objective to your curriculum and consider areas where you may be able to more easily elevate career readiness competencies for students. Are there any classes where students are already meeting your objective? Is there an assignment that would provide a good opportunity to see if students can meet that objective?

Find out what your department is already doing to develop career ready students.

Survey faculty or students to find which competencies are found in your curriculum, in which courses, and to what extent. For example, many competencies are practiced in courses but students may not be able to name them or articulate how they are relevant to their careers.

See an example survey here and contact Austin Hocker, ahocker@uoregon.edu, to customize it for your own department.

Build in earlier opportunities for students.

Early experiences with career readiness help students prepare for their career journey throughout their UO experience instead of at the end when they prepare to graduate. Embedding career readiness assignments earlier in your major curriculum can help students see the relevance of more courses to their future careers, can help students take advantage of other resources at UO that can help prepare them for their careers, and can help them choose other courses that can develop the skills they want to be successful in their careers.

For example, are there entry-level courses where your unit can embed career relevant assignments and reflections?

Can you have students create a handshake account to explore careers or explore offerings in LinkedIn learning in an existing course?

Map your curriculum.

How do the career readiness experiences students have in your courses build upon each other as students' progress through the courses in your major? Are there gaps in which competencies students develop? Use a curriculum mapping process to identify where students are developing competencies and how those experiences may build on each other from one course to the next.

4. Gather evidence about student's career readiness

The next step of the assessment cycle is to gather evidence of whether students are meeting the career readiness goals you have set for them.

In alignment with the objective your department adopts, what would be appropriate evidence that students had met your objective? For example, if you want students to **identify and communicate their competencies**, student surveys, sample cover letters, or resumes could be appropriate sources of evidence. The data gathering process could draw from multiple sources including:

- **Direct evidence** from student coursework: Are there specific assignments where students can demonstrate the goals you have set for them? For example, students writing for an external audience, student presentations, students preparing resumes or other application materials.
- **Indirect evidence** from student surveys or focus groups asking students which competencies they develop, which are most relevant, and which are missing from their experiences.
- **Using existing data sources**: for example, you can request first destination survey results from your department or career outcomes data from UO students.

5. Interpret your findings and make a follow up plan.

Have a department meeting or sub-committee (e.g. curriculum committee) interpret what you found. What do you notice? What additional information would help you understand if students were meeting your objective? Are there opportunities for improvement?
The goal of assessment is action, not just data! What will you do next with what you have learned? Do you want to make changes to your assessment plan? Are their opportunities to improve an assignment, a course, or some other co-curricular experience for students?

6. Submit your new objective and write your assessment report:

If your department does adopt a career readiness outcome, submit your updated list of major learning objectives along with your annual assessment report. Department Learning objectives and assessment reports are posted to the provost webpages.

Drafted Assessment Plan Template

Program Learning Outcomes Current outcomes are published in the UO Catalog	Methods to Assess achievement of learning outcomes	Timeline for assessment activity
Students will be able to **explore career paths and translate how their own skills and interests match** a chosen major/career path.	In HPHY211, students complete an assignment exploring multiple career paths and reflect on those careers in relation to their own interests. The grading of those assignments each term directly assesses this learning outcome.	The career interests of students will be summarized and presented back to the faculty every 3rd year, along with summarized data of post-grad student outcomes from HPHY to consider student intentions alongside outcomes and identify areas we can better support students.

Drafted Report Template:

Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report
This year, our department chose to [adopt/refine] a new learning objective related to career readiness:
- *Students will be able to… [share objective here]*

Section 2: Assessment Activities
Our department met in Fall term to discuss the relevance of career competencies for our students…
- We wrote and adopted a new learning outcome *[briefly describe]*
- We identified where students are already experiencing career readiness opportunities and refined our curriculum map to reflect our new outcome *[briefly describe]*
- We created a plan to measure how well students were achieving our outcome… *[briefly describe plan]*
- We collected or reviewed data… *[briefly describe]*

Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis

We learned ____.
Next year, we will implement a plan to change ____.
AND/OR
Next time we assess this objective, we will ____.
AND/OR
Next year we will collect more data about ____.

Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience
Briefly describe one or two other improvement efforts that are not directly related to the outcome you stated above. In other words, what activity has the department engaged in to improve the student educational experience? This might include changes such as curriculum revisions, new advising approaches, revised or new co-curricular activities, etc. Describe the rationale for the change(s) and any outcomes resulting from the change(s).

Section 5: Plans for Next Year
Briefly describe tentative assessment plans for the next academic year. Which goals will be assessed and how? What follow-up actions will be taken as a result of this years' analysis of assessment information? What other plans does the department have to improve the student educational experience?