



Employers and Educators Collaborate on Scenario-Development Form to Facilitate Project-based Learning Experiences

Across all industry sectors there is increasing demand from employers for stronger employability skills among entry-level applicants. PayScale Human Capital's recent Workforce-Skills Preparedness Report noted that hiring managers identified core employability skills as those most deficient among new hires, with critical thinking and problem-solving ranking at the top of the list. A *Business News Daily* report on employability skills needed in the tech industry rated collaboration skills highest, in addition to creative problem-solving, communication, and leadership. "Tech professionals not only need to be able to work well within their own teams, but also work well with other employees in the company that lack their understanding of technology" (Brathwaite, 2017).

A National Science Foundation project focused on preparing students for positions in the cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing sectors, has been tackling the challenge from employers to boost employability skills of entry-level technicians. *Necessary Skills Now*, an Advanced Technological Education project, brought together faculty members and employer partners to collaborate on best practices for employability skills instruction. The need for students to develop employability skills within the context of problems they would encounter in the workplace was apparent. Together, teams of faculty and employers developed project-based learning experiences integrating employability and technical skills. To help faculty facilitate this process beyond the project, a form was created to make it easier for employers to share industry scenarios from which faculty could develop project-based learning activities.

The form is a Microsoft Word template that can be customized for a broad range of courses to request workplace scenario examples from industry partners. The form offers suggestions for faculty on communicating with employers about how the scenarios they contribute will be used to support employability skills instruction. The form captures relevant company information, includes a list of common employability skills with brief explanations, and provides an example scenario to give employer partners an idea of what faculty are seeking. The two-page form is brief enough to minimize time on task for employers but detailed enough to gather the specificity needed to support lesson development.

The image shows a preview of a Microsoft Word document titled "Engaging Employers in Scenario Development". The document is a form for requesting workplace scenarios from industry partners. It includes sections for:

- Company Information:** Fields for Company Name, Your Name and Position, and a checkbox to include the company name and logo when sharing your Community College. It also has radio buttons for whether the company name and logo can be used, shared, or neither.
- Employability Skills to be Emphasized:** A list of skills with checkboxes, including Teamwork, Problem-Solving, Verbal Communications, Written Communications, Dependability/Work Ethic, and Planning and Organizing.
- Scenario Example:** A sample scenario about an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico, with a space for "Your Scenario".
- Company's Desired Outcome for the Scenario:** A field for describing the desired outcome.
- Related Mission Statement or Company Value:** A field for providing a mission or value statement.
- Suggestions for Faculty on Information to Add:** A list of suggestions for faculty to include in their request.

- [Download](#) the Scenario Development Form
- Access the 10 project-based learning [modules](#) developed by the *Necessary Skills Now* project