# COVER PAGE

<u>Team Members:</u> Mohamed Khashafa, Kelly Lawlor, Feifan Liu, Zhonghan Xie
<u>Partner:</u> Salesforce

<u>Partner Organization Mission and Product</u>:

Salesforce is an Artificial Intelligence and Customer Relationship management company. Their CRM products bring together customer data across various channels from sales calls and interactions in brick-and-mortar stores onto a single, unified platform to enable businesses to track customer interactions across the customer journey and utilize this information to manage customer relations. Their latest product, Education Cloud, similarly aims to assist students throughout their lifetime, starting from the time they become prospective students and extending beyond their graduation once they have become alumni. Their core values and mission are to engender trust, facilitate customer success, and empower their business to enact change in the world.

<u>How might we</u>:

How might we develop strategies that enable career services at universities to identify, quantify and track the growth and development of STEM graduate students' soft skills?

<u>Problem statement</u>:

Problem Statement: Career advisors need a method to identify, quantify, and track the growth of a student's soft skills because soft skills are becoming increasingly important for entry-level workers.

<u>Word count:</u> 2366

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## Protocol 1 - Stakeholder 1 - Career Development Office - CDO

Stakeholder Description

UMSI Career Development Office staff (Email to invite)
- Director of Career Development, Joanna Kroll
- Associate Director of Career Development, Krystle Forbes
- Assistant of Undergraduate Career Education Jordan Hansen
- UMSI Career education coordinator: Carina Wilson

UM CoE ECRC Career Advisor Team (need UM CoE account to make appointment)

**What kind of data you hope to collect (1-2)**
- What soft skills do they consider important in the current technology job market?
- What methods are they using to currently evaluate students' soft skills? If they are using methods, what are the current challenges? If not, what are their main needs?

**How long you anticipate interview will last**
Our team aims for 45~60 minutes, but considering the scheduling difficulty 30~45 minutes is also acceptable.

## Overarching Question

How can we help career advisors evaluate and track the growth of student's soft skills over time in a quantifiable framework?

## Intro Scripts

Interview Purpose:

Hi [Participant's Name], thank you so much for taking the time to meet with us today! We are interviewing career advisors to learn more about your thoughts on soft skills in the context of the current job market for a project in our class SI 500 in collaboration with Salesforce to help them connect students with soft skills desired by businesses.

Team member introductions:

My name is [Interviewer Name] and I'll be leading the discussion today. This is [Note-taker's Name] and they will be taking notes.

What will happen during the interview & estimated time
I'll be asking you some questions regarding your previous experience in supporting students to grow their soft skills and our interview should last around 30-45 minutes. Is that okay with you?

[Wait for participant's response]

Stance as a learner
I wanted to let you know that as we're students and here to learn, please don't feel pressured to provide a 'correct' answer as there are no right or wrong answers to our questions and we will greatly appreciate your honest thoughts as it will be valuable in helping us to learn.

Right to stop at any time
Participation in the interview is voluntary so you have the right to stop at any time, if you would like to end at any point please let us know.

Confidentiality statement
As this is for a school project we may share research insights with our other group members, class instructor, our partner Salesforce, and other classmates in SI 500. However we will utilize anonymous names for participants to keep things confidential. Is that okay with you?

Plans for follow-up
Would you be open to a short follow-up conversation if we have additional clarification questions later?

Request for permission to record the interview
We would also like to record the interview to ensure we accurately capture your insights for later review. This recording would be kept private between members of our group and will not be shared outside of it. You may say no to being recorded if you are not comfortable. Would you be comfortable with us recording the interview?

[Wait for participant's response]


Key and Follow-up Questions
1. Walk me through the last time you worked with a student on developing their soft skills
   a. What method and metric do you utilize to evaluate students' soft skills?
   b. What are the current strategies or tools employed by the career development office to evaluate student's soft skills?
2. "What is the one thing you **wish you knew** about a student's skills that you **can't see right now**?"
3. How do you support students' soft skill development over time?
   a. If career services do not have any method for evaluating/tracking, why do they choose not to evaluate soft skills?
4. Are you collecting any data related to soft skills?
   a. What kind of soft skill data are you using?
   b. Where does the data originate?
5. What are the current barriers in tracking students' soft skills?
6. What information regarding students' soft skills do career services desire that current strategies are insufficient in collecting?

      a. Which aspects of soft skills (e.g., growth over time, context of development) are currently difficult to capture?
      b. What kind of data about soft skills would be the most useful for supporting students' career readiness?
7. What resource limitations affect career services' ability to support soft skill development?
      a. What constraints (budget, staff size, time) most limit your ability to track or promote soft skills?
8. How do we make students' soft skills credible/transferable?
      a. What forms of recognition or validation do you know or have you tried (e.g., certifications, digital badges, endorsements)?
      b. How do you ensure these recognitions are seen as legitimate by employers or faculty?
9. What are the expected outcomes or ideal results of the strategies used to measure and track students' soft skills?
10. How can career services encourage students to trust and engage with a tool for quantifying their soft skills?
      a. What concerns or hesitations do you think students might have about using such a tool?
      b. What strategies could be used to make students feel more confident that the tool is credible?


## Conclusion Scripts

Asking User if they have anything else to add
Those were all the questions we had. Thank you so much [Participant's Name] for sharing your insights with us!

Before we end, Is there anything else you would like to add or any additional questions you have?

Thank the interviewee

[After participant shares any additional information or questions they have]

Thank you so much again [Participant's Name] for your insight. We really appreciate you taking the time to meet with us and sharing your thoughts! They will be very valuable as we move on to the next step in our project.

Explain next steps

From here we will be taking the insights from all our interviews and using them to brainstorm a final proposed solution to our client's problem. If at any point in the future you have any additional questions please feel free to reach out to us. Thank you so much again and have a wonderful rest of your day!

# Protocol 2 - Stakeholder 2 - Students

**Describe interviewee role & name if known**
Students at the school of Information at the University of Michigan: Perspectives on soft skills across tracks and backgrounds.

**What kind of data you hope to collect (1-2)**
- Students' Perspectives on Soft Skills
  - I aim to understand whether students believe soft skills are important, which particular soft skills they consider most valuable,such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, or leadership.
- Students' prior experiences with soft skill measurement
  - I hope to collect data on students' prior experiences with soft skill measurement. I also want to understand their willingness to participate in future soft skill assessments, along with their preferences and concerns about different methods. I also want to find out how much time they are willing to dedicate to measuring these skills.

**How long you anticipate interview will last**
The interview will last approximately 30–45 minutes, depending on the interviewees' willingness to share.

## Overarching Question

How can we encourage students to develop their soft skills and support them in a way they find useful so they are more willing to participate in soft skill development methods?

## Intro Scripts

Hi [Participant's Name], thank you so much for taking the time to meet with us today! We are interviewing students to learn more about your thoughts on soft skills in the context of the current job market for a project in our class SI 500 in collaboration with Salesforce to help them connect students with soft skills desired by businesses.

Team member introductions:

My name is [Interviewer Name] and I'll be leading the discussion today. This is [Note-taker's Name] and they will be taking notes.

What will happen during the interview & estimated time

I'll be asking you some questions regarding your previous experience in soft skills and our interview should last around 30 minutes. Is that okay with you?

Stance as a learner
I wanted to let you know that as we're students and here to learn, please don't feel pressured to provide a 'correct' answer as there are no right or wrong answers to our questions and we will greatly appreciate your honest thoughts as it will be valuable in helping us to learn.

Right to stop at any time
Participation in the interview is voluntary so you have the right to stop at any time, if you would like to end at any point please let us know.

Confidentiality statement
As this is for a school project we may share research insights with our other group members, class instructor, our partner Salesforce, and other classmates in SI 500. However we will utilize anonymous names for participants to keep things confidential. Is that okay with you?

Plans for follow-up
Would you be open to a short follow-up conversation if we have additional clarification questions later?

Request for permission to record the interview
We would also like to record the interview to ensure we accurately capture your insights for later review. This recording would be kept private between members of our group and will not be shared outside of it. You may say no to being recorded if you are not comfortable. Would you be comfortable with us recording the interview?

Key and Follow-up Questions

1. How would you define soft skills? And what are some examples of soft skills that you can think of?
2. How would you assess the importance of soft skills in daily life and finding a job?
    a. (From 1-5 scale)
    b. Could you give us an example?
3. What soft skills do you believe are most important in daily life or at the workplace?
    a. Why do you think these skills are important (employer demand, personal experience, peer influence)? Can you give us an example?
4. Do you think the soft skills that are important for finding a job are the same as those that are important in daily life?
    a. Why do you think these skills are important for the workplace?
    b. How do you define or recognize growth in these skills over time?

5. Walk me through a time you tried to intentionally develop your soft skills?
    a. What activities or experiences (e.g., classes, internships, clubs, jobs) help you the most?
        i. Which of these experiences feels the most effective for you?
    b. What are some barriers/challenges they met in developing soft skills
6. Could you describe how your experience at U-M has supported your development of soft skills?
    a. What resources have you used from career services, if any?
    b. What are some things U-M could do to better support your development of soft skills?
7. What structured frameworks have you used in the past to grow soft skills?
    a. If yes
        i. What are the advantages you found? What are the limitations of that framework?
        ii. what was your reaction — did you trust it, use it, ignore it? Why?
    b. If not, would you be interested in one? Why or why not?
8. What is your ideal framework of growing your soft skills in your mind?
9. What do you think would make you more likely to use a tool that quantifies your soft skills?
    a. (If respondents have no idea… can we give them hints?)
        i. Would you be more motivated if it was recognized by employers?
        ii. Would you trust it more if it was integrated into your classes or official transcript?
10. What are your expectations for a soft-skill measurement strategy?
    a. Optional probes (use only if participant needs prompting)
        i. Expected Outcomes
            1. For example, would you prefer results expressed as scores, levels, or qualitative feedback?
        ii. Targeted Skills
            1. Which specific soft skills of yours do you think should be assessed (e.g., communication, teamwork, leadership, adaptability)?
11. How much time would you be willing to spend each semester/month on testing soft skills?(e.g., once per semester, annually, or more frequently)?

Asking User if they have anything else to add

Those were all the questions we had. Thank you so much [Participant's Name] for sharing your insights with us!

Before we end, Is there anything else you would like to add or any additional questions you have?

Thank the interviewee

[After participant shares any additional information or questions they have]

Thank you so much again [Participant's Name] for your insight. We really appreciate you taking the time to meet with us and sharing your thoughts! They will be very valuable as we move on to the next step in our project.

Explain next steps

From here we will be taking the insights from all our interviews and using them to brainstorm a final proposed solution to our client's problem. If at any point in the future you have any additional questions please feel free to reach out to us. Thank you so much again and have a wonderful rest of your day!