
KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COURSES GRADES 8 AND 9

Policy: Knowledge and Employability courses provide students who meet the criteria with opportunities to experience success and become well prepared for employment, further studies, citizenship and lifelong learning (*Knowledge and Employability Courses Policy 1.4.2*).

VISION

Through Knowledge and Employability courses, students become active and responsible citizens, achieve their educational and career goals, improve quality of life for themselves and their families and positively impact their communities.

Knowledge and Employability courses assist students in:

- transitioning from school to the workplace and community
- preparing for responsible citizenship
- gaining recognition, respect and value from employers and further education providers.

PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE

The development of the Knowledge and Employability courses was based on input received from consultations with education stakeholders throughout the province. The distinctive sequence of courses was designed to meet the educational needs of students who learn best:

- when focusing on the development and application of reading, writing and mathematical literacy,¹ and on essential employability skills
- through experiential learning activities
- when meaningful connections are made between schooling and personal experiences.

Knowledge and Employability courses promote student skills, abilities and work ethics, including:

- academic and occupational skills of a standard determined by the workplace to be necessary for success
- practical applications through on- and off-campus experiences and/or community partnerships
- career development skills to explore careers, develop a career-focused portfolio and assess career skills
- interpersonal skills to ensure respect, support and cooperation with others.

1. Mathematical literacy: Selecting and applying appropriate mathematical operations, problem-solving strategies, tools and technology, and communicating using mathematical vocabulary in home, workplace and community experiences.

Aboriginal Perspectives and Experiences

For historical, constitutional and social reasons, an understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) experiences and perspectives, and recognition that First Nations, Métis and Inuit students have particular needs and requirements, is necessary to enable all students to be respectful and responsible citizens.

Knowledge and Employability courses serve to facilitate positive experiences that will help Aboriginal students better see themselves in the curriculum and assist non-Aboriginal students to develop a better understanding of Alberta's First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

GOALS OF KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY COURSES

Knowledge and Employability courses provide students with practical and applied opportunities to develop the competencies necessary to meet or exceed the following goals. Knowledge and Employability courses prepare students to:

- earn a senior high school credential
- enter the workplace upon leaving school with employability and occupational skills that meet industry standards
- make successful transitions to other courses or to further education and training
- become responsible and contributing members of society.

CROSS-CURRICULAR, COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE CONNECTIONS

Programs of study and resources for Knowledge and Employability courses are distinctive, in part, because they promote cross-curricular, community and workplace connections.

Cross-curricular Connections

Knowledge and Employability courses promote the integration of subjects to emphasize their interrelationships and connections to other school subjects. The philosophy of Knowledge and Employability courses is that students learn best when they can clearly recognize, in their course

work, connections, applications and relevance to a variety of everyday experiences. Organizing for instruction may include thematic units, subject integration within units and/or projects in other subjects.

Community and Workplace Connections

Knowledge and Employability courses provide students with practical and applied opportunities to develop basic reading, writing and mathematical literacy. Community and workplace connections ensure learning within applied contexts, connecting the school with environments beyond school, and may include tours to local businesses and industries, mentorships, job shadowing and work experience.

Knowledge and Employability courses promote the development of career portfolios that help students connect their school experience to the world beyond school. Each portfolio will include exemplars of the student's on- and off-campus experiences and can be used when the student is seeking employment or further education/training opportunities. Items appropriate for inclusion in career portfolios include résumés, samples of written work, awards and/or their representations, teacher and self-evaluation checklists, workplace assessment tools and employer letters of recommendation.

SAFETY

Safety is emphasized and relevant information is incorporated throughout Knowledge and Employability courses, including basic safety rules and guidelines and information regarding the safe use of tools, equipment and materials in school, home, community and workplace settings.

TECHNOLOGY

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum is infused throughout the Knowledge and Employability courses, including the use of computers and other technology, to support the instruction of technology within an applied context.

ESSENTIAL UNIVERSAL SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Knowledge and Employability courses emphasize the universal skills and strategies that are essential to all students, including the following:

- Interpersonal skills promote teamwork and respect for, support of and cooperation with others.
- Critical thinking promotes the analysis and appropriate applications of information.
- Creative thinking promotes the identification of unique connections among ideas and insightful approaches to questions and issues.
- Decision-making processes promote the making of timely and appropriate decisions.
- Problem-solving processes promote the ability to identify or pose problems and apply learning to consider the causes and dimensions of, and the solutions to, problems.
- Metacognition² enables students to become more aware of, and have greater control over, their own thinking and learning processes.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

Each Knowledge and Employability course is consistent with the rationale, philosophy, program foundations and organization of other secondary courses. This consistency enables students, as appropriate, to progress through the Knowledge and Employability course sequence and/or to other secondary courses.

ENROLLMENT IN KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY COURSES

Students may take one or more courses in the sequence at any time during grades 8 through 12. Students may be enrolled in only Knowledge and Employability courses or in a combination of Knowledge and Employability and other secondary courses.

Information regarding the identification of students for enrollment in one or more courses can be accessed in the *Knowledge and Employability Courses Policy 1.4.2* and in the *Information Manual for Knowledge and Employability Courses, Grades 8–12, 2006*.

RATIONALE AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT

The Knowledge and Employability occupational component is for students who learn best through experiential learning activities in which the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes is relevant to their personal experiences. Meaningful connections between in-school learning and the community result in successful transitions from the school setting to the workplace and prepare students for responsible citizenship.

Throughout the Knowledge and Employability occupational component, student success is enhanced through continual:

- assessment of the needs, learning styles and developmental stages of students
- use of materials and school and community resources and strategies that assist in addressing cross-curricular, community and workplace connections.

GOALS OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT

The Knowledge and Employability occupational component will:

- provide opportunities for students to explore a variety of career pathways
- provide opportunities for students to develop essential, employability and workplace competencies through practical activities related to the home, workplace and community

2. Metacognition: Learning-to-learn strategies; awareness of processes and strategies one uses when learning.

- prepare students for employment by providing practical, workplace-related activities and projects common to and representative of a wide variety of careers; e.g., occupations at the C and D levels of the National Occupational Classification (NOC)
- promote curriculum integration by providing a practical environment and structure for the application, reinforcement and practice of Knowledge and Employability skills, as well as knowledge and attitudes in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies
- provide opportunities for students to explore their personal strengths and interests related to future life and career opportunities
- promote the development of community partnerships, which connect the school with the larger community that surrounds and supports it, to assist students to transition from school to the workplace.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT

Throughout the Knowledge and Employability occupational component, students will investigate careers within broad occupational classifications, examine and connect their personal competencies and interests to employment opportunities, and make career choices based on thoughtful consideration.

In junior high school, the emphasis is on *exploration*. Students will:

- gain an awareness of the multiplicity of careers and career opportunities
- investigate a range of occupational areas
- gain an awareness of various working environments through an initial exposure
- examine personal interests and competencies
- develop basic essential and employability skills.

In senior high school, the emphasis is on *orientation* and *preparation*.

During the *orientation* stage, students will:

- link personal interests and competencies to career interests
- focus on groups of related occupations, based on career interests
- gain an awareness of various working environments
- build upon and enhance their development of basic essential and employability skills.

During the *preparation* stage, students will:

- focus on specific occupations or occupational components
- continue to link personal interests and competencies to career interests
- continue to develop the basic essential and employability skills required for direct entry into the workplace in the occupational pathway(s) of interest.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND THE KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT

Community partnerships are experiences that bring the community into the classroom or take the classroom into the community. Community partnerships are fundamental to the Knowledge and Employability occupational component because they provide opportunities for practical applications of competencies developed in the classroom and expose students to experiences beyond the school.

Community partnership participation increases as students progress through the occupational component. In junior high school, community partnerships may involve classroom guest speakers, skill demonstrations and tours to a variety of community locations, including work sites. Job shadowing and/or work study experiences may take place near the end of junior high school and may continue into senior high school.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT

Strands

The junior high school Knowledge and Employability occupational component consists of nine strands, each with specific units. The strands emphasize practical skills used in the home, workplace and community. Units are based on the materials, tools, equipment, machines and/or processes used in related occupational sectors. The junior high school Knowledge and Employability strands are:

- Art/Design and Communication
- Auto Mechanics
- Business Services
- Construction
- Fabrics
- Foods
- Horticulture
- Human Care
- Workplace Readiness.

The strands and related units may be combined to form a course or several courses during each year of the students' junior high school involvement in Knowledge and Employability. The interests and abilities of students, and resources such as facilities and staff, determine the strategies used and the strands and units selected.

Levels of Study

Because students may enroll in Knowledge and Employability courses at any time during junior high school, specific outcomes in the strands and units are organized into two levels, based on expectations and student abilities rather than grade levels. Learning begins at the students' level of understanding and ability. Students progress through the levels as they demonstrate increased proficiency and capabilities.

Level 1: Students develop basic knowledge of the broad occupational classifications, general awareness of technical concepts related to the strands and units, desirable workplace attitudes and introductory practical competencies.

Level 2: Students develop a working understanding of technical concepts, continue to develop desirable workplace attitudes, demonstrate the ability to apply skills in specific situations and integrate competencies developed in Level 1.

Throughout the levels, students explore personal competencies and interests, identify competencies required for a variety of workplace environments and begin connecting workplace needs to personal competencies.

SAFETY IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT

Safety is emphasized and relevant information is incorporated throughout the Knowledge and Employability occupational component. The safe use of equipment and materials and general home, community and workplace safety are integral to the strands. Each strand includes outcomes on basic safety rules and guidelines that are to be applied when students are in the workplace and other settings and when they are handling and using tools, equipment, materials and supplies.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) outcomes have been infused into the specific outcomes of the Knowledge and Employability occupational component and are best learned within an applied context. As technology continues to advance, selecting and using appropriate, effective and efficient technologies that complement the learning process will enhance student performance.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The literacy and numeracy skills developed in the academic courses are further developed and reinforced in the Knowledge and Employability occupational component. Applying literacy and numeracy skills to a work context will enhance the

students' abilities to speak and write effectively to read, to comprehend and use written materials including graphs, charts and displays, and to use mathematical applications employed in the working world.

CAREER EXPLORATION AND AWARENESS

Career exploration and awareness is an important part of the junior high school occupational component. Junior high school students should be allowed to explore the various occupations within an area or industry. For their occupation of interest, students should strive to discover the:

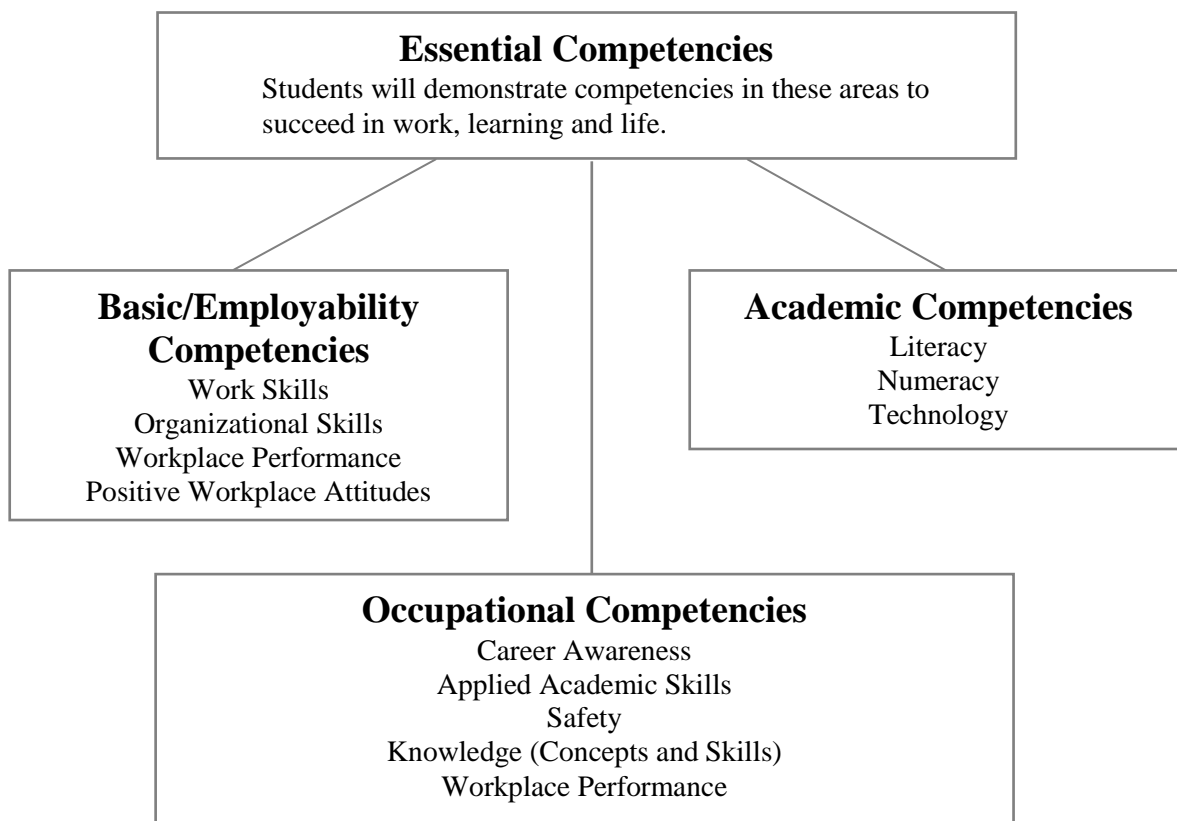
- required training or education
- employment expectations
- required duties
- salary expectations
- outlook for the future.

This exploration is crucial for students to identify occupations they might like and that are best suited to their individual strengths.

ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES

The primary focus of the Knowledge and Employability occupational component is the development and application of:

- essential competencies³ that relate to all careers
- basic/employability competencies that are relevant to finding and keeping work; e.g., appropriate workplace attitudes and related knowledge
- occupational competencies that are necessary for success in a specific occupation or career
- academic competencies that provide a foundation for further learning.



3. *The Alberta Framework of Essential Competencies for Working, Learning and Living* and the Conference Board of Canada's *Employability Skills 2000+* were considered when developing the competencies framework for the Knowledge and Employability occupational component.

The Alberta Framework of Essential Competencies for Working, Learning and Living and the Conference Board of Canada's *Employability Skills 2000+* were considered when developing the following set of skills outcomes for the Knowledge and Employability occupational component.

BASIC/EMPLOYABILITY COMPETENCIES

Essential competencies of the junior high school Knowledge and Employability occupational component include:

Work Skills

Work skills relate to the completion of general and specific workplace tasks.

- work safety
- layout and measurement
- materials, tools and equipment handling
- machine operation
- maintenance
- clean-up and sanitation

Organizational Skills

Organizational skills enhance students' ability to complete work skills.

- plan and prepare
- think critically
- think creatively
- make decisions
- solve problems
- design and draw
- estimate and calculate

Workplace Performance

Workplace performance is a demonstration of student knowledge and the application of work and organizational skills.

- follow instructions
- clarify task requirements
- attend to detail
- work independently and as a member of a team
- use initiative wisely
- meet standards; e.g., accuracy, precision
- demonstrate dependability; e.g., punctual, on schedule
- minimize waste
- continue to learn

Positive Workplace Attitudes

Positive workplace attitudes are encouraged during the application of work and organizational skills.

- safety consciousness
- self-discipline
- integrity
- adaptability
- perseverance
- cooperation, selflessness, concern for others
- responsibility
- enthusiasm; e.g., willingness to try
- commitment to improvement; e.g., accept advice and constructive criticism
- regard for the environment

KNOWLEDGE AND EMPLOYABILITY OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENT COURSES

Strand	EXPLORATION		ORIENTATION		PREPARATION
	Junior High <i>Units of Study – Levels 1 – 2</i>		Senior High		
Art/Design and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical Arts Ceramics Graphic Arts Photography Audio/Video 		Art/Design 10-4	Art/Design 20-4	Art/Design 30-4
			Art/Media Communications 10-4	Art/Media Communications 20-4	Art/Media Communications 30-4
Auto Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-stroke Engine Four-stroke Engine Basic Car Care and Maintenance 		Auto Mechanics 10-4	Auto Mechanics 20-4	Auto Mechanics 30-4
				Auto Services 20-4	Auto Services 30-4
Business Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating with Others Searching for Information Representing Information 		Business Services 10-4	Logistics 20-4	Logistics 30-4
				Office Services 20-4	Office Services 30-4
				Sales and Service 20-4	Sales and Service 30-4
Construction: Building*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layout, Design and Drafting Woods Metals 		Construction: Building 10-4**	Woodworking and Cabinetry 20-4	Woodworking and Cabinetry 30-4
				Wood Frame Construction 20-4	Wood Frame Construction 30-4
Construction: Metal Fabrication*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastics Electricity 		Construction: Metal Fabrication 10-4	Construction Systems 20-4	Construction Systems 30-4
				Metal Fabrication 20-4	Metal Fabrication 30-4
Cosmetology	N/A		Cosmetology 10-4	Cosmetology 20-4	Cosmetology 30-4
				Esthetics 20-4	Esthetics 30-4
Fabrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Sewing 		Fabrics 10-4	Fashion Textiles 20-4	Fashion Textiles 30-4
				Industrial Textiles 20-4	Industrial Textiles 30-4
Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Cooking Snacks and Convenience Foods Basic Baking 		Foods 10-4	Commercial Cooking 20-4	Commercial Cooking 30-4
				Food Preparation and Service 20-4	Food Preparation and Service 30-4
Horticulture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil Preparation, Plants and Planting Turf/Grasses Landscaping 		Horticulture 10-4	Greenhouse and Nursery 20-4	Greenhouse and Nursery 30-4
				Landscaping 20-4	Landscaping and Maintenance 30-4
Human Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Child Care (Noninfants) 		Human Care 10-4	Child Care 20-4	Child Care 30-4
				Home Care 20-4	Home Care 30-4
Natural Resources	N/A		Natural Resources 10-4	Agriculture 20-4	Agriculture 30-4
				Forestry 20-4	Forestry 30-4
				Oil and Gas 20-4	Oil and Gas 30-4
Workplace Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal and Workplace Safety Employment Exploration Acquiring a Job Keeping a Job 		Workplace Readiness 10-4	Workplace Practicum 20-4	Workplace Practicum 30-4

* These strands have been replaced by the single strand Construction at the junior high school level.

** Students who successfully complete Construction: Building 10-4 may take Construction Systems 20-4.