



SAIT Capability Framework

Introduction

The SAIT Capability Framework outlines what SAIT graduates and SAIT employees need to be successful in the world of work, both now and in the future. At the core of the framework are the industry-specific knowledge, skills and attitudes, the technical **competencies**, that are critical for success in a particular role. These continue to be the focus of the content of our programming, the *what we teach*, and reflect the minimum qualifications in our employee job descriptions. Complementing the technical competencies are five **capability** clusters which “underlie one’s ability to learn, apply, and effectively adapt”.¹ These capabilities are essential to equip our students and staff to continue to engage and thrive in an ever-changing environment. The capabilities are developed in our students through our teaching and assessment practices, the pedagogy or *how we teach*. And the capabilities are developed in our staff through our employee development strategy, systems and processes.

SAIT’s mission is to prepare students for successful careers and lives. The SAIT Capability Framework helps us accomplish that. Through the implementation of this framework, we will address components of SAIT’s *Strategic Plan*, the *Indigenous Learner Strategy* and the *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*.

Approach to developing the framework

The working group who led the development of the Capability Framework took a combined research and practice-based approach when developing these five clusters and approach to the framework. Competency, capability, and outcome models from across SAIT and external sources were analyzed, combined and categorized into themes. Additional sources were used to inform the knowledge, skills, and behaviours associated with each capability cluster. Feedback from industry, students and staff informed the final framework.

How to use the framework

Within the framework, there is a description of each capability cluster along with a few examples of knowledge, skills and behaviours that exemplify the capability. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive nor will each one apply in every circumstance or role within industry. They are intended to be used in context. For example, “willingness to experiment”, which partially defines the creativity capability, might not seem desirable for people who are in highly regulated environments where following a defined procedure exactly is important. However, within this context, it might be valuable for employees to be willing to experiment with how they organize their day or the workflow to increase efficiency. In this way, creativity is an important capability to contribute to the organization’s continuous improvement efforts.

We intend to test the framework through the implementation, and the continuous improvement process will cause us to revisit the framework to re-evaluate its relevance and functionality.

1. Hagel, Seely Brown and Wool, *Skills Change but Capabilities Endure*, 6.

Definitions

Capabilities:

“...observable human attributes that are demonstrated independent of context...are universally applicable and timeless” and “underlie ability to learn, apply, and effectively adapt...”²

Competencies:

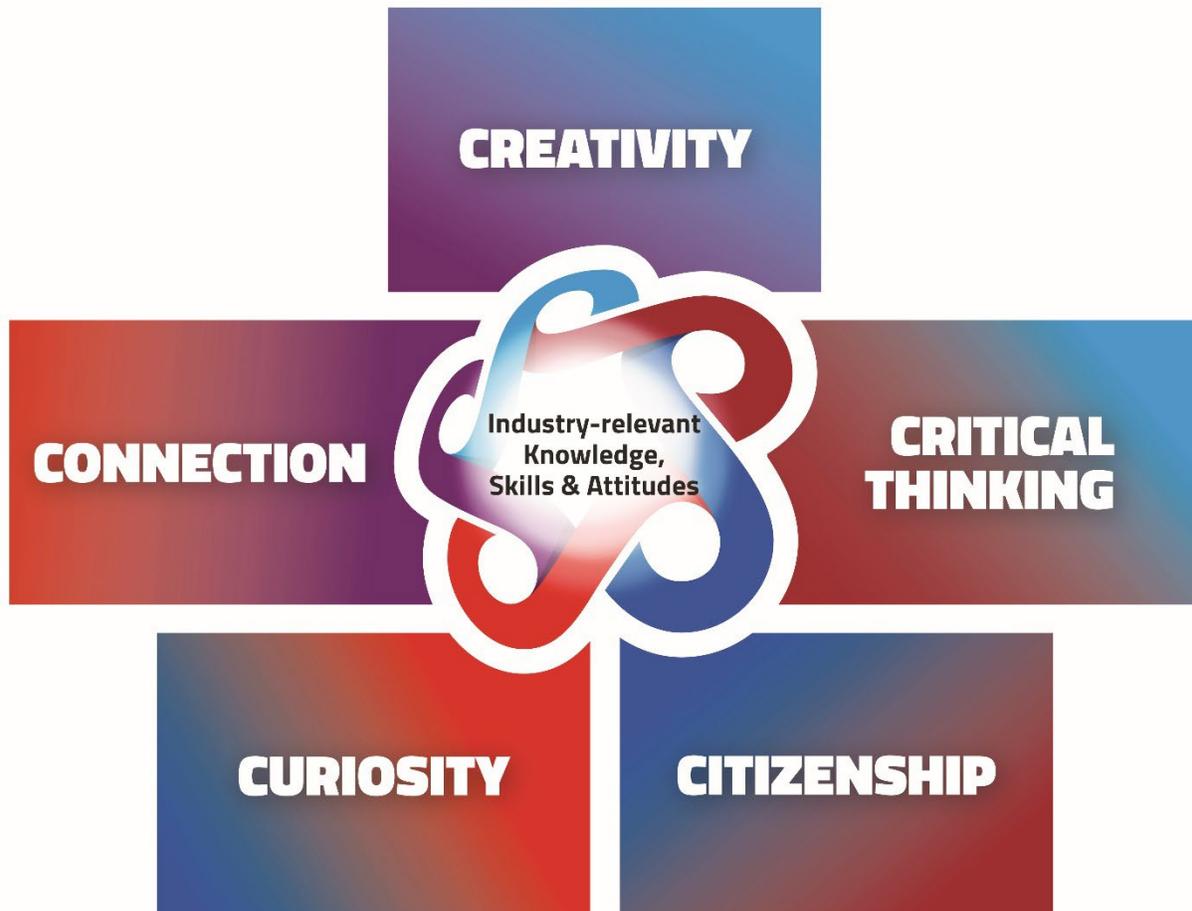
A combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes which is reflected in job behaviours that can be observed, measured and evaluated³

2. Hagel, Seely Brown and Wool, *Skills Change but Capabilities Endure*, 6.

3. Government of Canada, *IRCC Behavioural and Technical Competency Dictionary*, under “Introduction”.

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SAIT Capability Framework



The Five Capability Clusters

Creativity: *transforming ideas into reality*⁴

Description: Willingness to experiment, improvise, innovate, and imagine

Examples of skills, attitudes, and behaviours:

- cultivates and respects other ways of knowing and thinking
- uses resources in unexpected ways; navigates scarcity

4. Lobell, *What is Creativity?*, under "Defining What Creativity and Innovation Is".

- demonstrates a growth mindset
- is adaptable
- demonstrates digital innovation with a digital skillset
- uses design thinking
- challenges assumptions
- “offers suggestions to improve the way things are done”⁵
- acknowledges undesired results/failure as a learning opportunity
- builds and scales ideas

Critical thinking: *using data and logic to figure it out*

Description: Analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, and reconstructing information to inform and make logical and reasoned decisions and judgments⁵

Examples of skills, attitudes, and behaviours:

- has digital and information literacy skills (can recognize an information need, access, evaluate and assess information for truth, accuracy and relevance, and use it effectively and ethically)⁶
- considers diverse local and global experiences and points of view
- “demonstrates willingness to change ideas or perceptions based on new information or contrary evidence”⁷
- synthesizes and interprets information effectively
- “raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely”⁸
- “gathers and assesses relevant information”⁸
- “comes to well-reasoned, evidence-informed conclusions and solutions to problems, testing them against relevant criteria and standards”⁸
- “thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as needs be, their assumptions, biases, implications, and practical consequences”⁸
- “communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems”⁸

Citizenship: *for people, society and the planet*

Description: Understanding and facilitating the connection between people, society and the planet for the sustainability of systems, both cultural and environmental

5. Government of Canada, *IRCC Competency Dictionary*, under “Judgement/Analytical Thinking”.

6. SAIT Polytechnic, *SAIT Graduate Outcomes*, 3.

7. Government of Canada, *IRCC Competency Dictionary*, under “Adaptability & Flexibility”.

8. The Foundation for Critical Thinking, *Why Critical Thinking?*, under “The Result”.

Examples of skills, attitudes, and behaviours:

- “appreciates the perspectives and worldviews of others”⁹
- works across cultural boundaries; engages in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures
- encourages equity, diversity, individuality and an inclusive community
- models equitable and inclusive behaviours and mindsets and supports an environment of trust
- “examines local, global, and intercultural issues”⁹
- demonstrates ethical reasoning and respectful behavior; “upholds high moral standards at work” (work ethic)¹⁰
- acts for collective well-being and sustainable development
- has digital citizenship skills (“uses digital technology and media in safe, responsible, and ethical ways”¹¹)
- takes external environment into account when developing strategies
- anticipates the implications of decisions and actions (e.g., impact on others), and takes responsibility for the outcome of decisions/actions
- understands how “historical events have an impact on today’s decisions”, and how our perceptions today impact the “interpretation of historical and current events”¹²
- promotes societal well-being amidst different conceptions of the public good

Curiosity: *always asking, testing, exploring and engaging*¹³

Description: Seeking out information and experiences and striving for understanding

Examples of skills, attitudes, and behaviours:

- seeks to understand by asking exploratory questions
- demonstrates self-awareness by questioning own internal thinking, dialogue and biases (conscious or unconscious)
- seeks feedback from others to learn and grow
- engages in reflective practice and continuous learning
- recognizes that solutions to unstructured problems are complex and multidisciplinary in nature and is open to learning across fields of study, cultures, ideas and perspectives
- constructively challenges conventional practices
- remains objective when listening to others’ viewpoints; open-mindedness
- demonstrates a willingness to take informed risks

9. OECD, *Preparing Our Youth*, 11.

10. Indeed, *Work Ethic and Success in the Workplace*, under “What is Work Ethic?”

11. IEEE Inc. Standards Association, *IEEE Standard for Digital Intelligence (DQ)*, 16.

12. Consensus Citizenship Education Foundation, *Citizenship and Citizenship Education*, under “Essential Citizenship Competencies”

13. Ashcroft, Brown and Jones, *The Curious Advantage*, 23.

- “Listens attentively when another person is voicing a point of view”¹³
- “Copes effectively with change”¹³ (demonstrates resilience)
- “Demonstrates and encourages divergent thinking”¹³
- “Seeks opportunities to connect with a diverse range of people”¹³

Connection: *builds effective relationships*

Description: Working and communicating effectively with others across differences

Examples of skills, attitudes, and behaviours:

- demonstrates empathy – putting yourself in another’s shoes
- shows social intelligence (understands “interpersonal dynamics and behavioral impacts of human interactions”¹⁴)
- shows emotional intelligence (perceives, understands, uses, and manages emotions¹⁵ in positive ways to communicate, empathize, and overcome challenges)
- engages and communicates effectively with others across cultures, abilities, and generations (and other differences) using verbal, written and digital means
- builds relationships and teams through trust, transparency, alignment and empowerment
- contributes to a safe team environment including psychological safety
- collaborates with others to achieve common objectives as part of a growth mindset
- takes initiative and sees projects/work tasks through; dependable and responsible¹⁶
- is adept at adapting and flexing to meet the needs of others (e.g. customer service); demonstrates “desire to help or serve others, to meet their needs”¹⁷

13. Dillon and Bourke, *6 Traits of Inclusive Leadership*, 14.

14. Hagel, Seely Brown and Wool, *Skills Change but Capabilities Endure*, 8.

15. Mayer and Salovey, *What is Emotional Intelligence?*, 3.

16. Indeed, *Work Ethic and Success in the Workplace*, under “Characteristics of Good Work Ethic?”

17. Government of Canada, *IRCC Competency Dictionary*, under “Client Service Orientation”.

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