



Lesson 7.1 What is Employability?

To be successful in your role as a Production Sewing Machinist you will need a mix of personal qualities, in addition to the technical skills associated with industrial sewing. These qualities are often called employability skills or soft skills and can include things like reliability, integrity, hardworking etc

Employability Skills are not always listed on a job application/description because most employers will expect you to have them already or have the potential to develop them in the workplace. They are often a baseline that employers look for during interviews, when your suitability for the job, your aptitude and your attitude are considered.

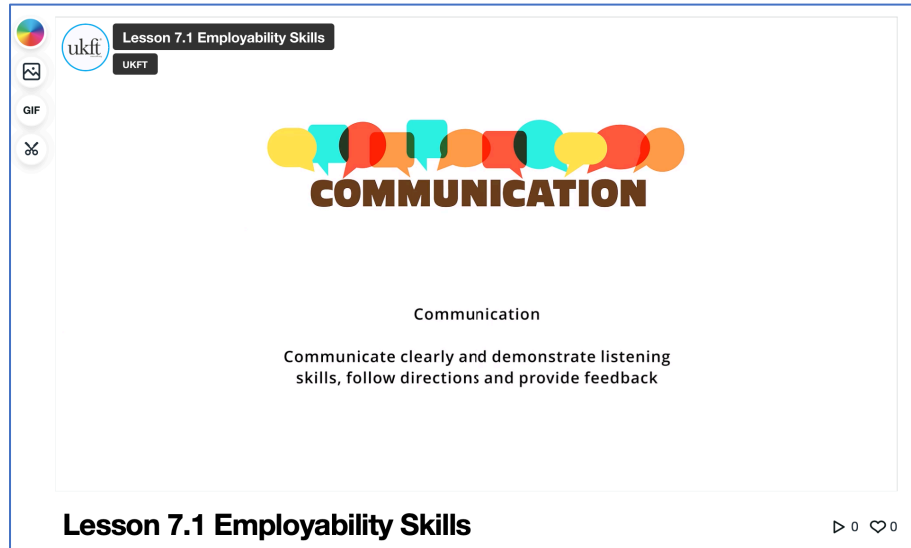
This lesson is about developing your awareness of employability rather than teaching you the actual skills, as you can develop these qualities without specific training, they are learnt via life experiences at school, work, hobbies, or extracurricular activities. For example, you can develop communications skills from team working in school or cooperative skills from playing a sport in a team.

It is also important to note that employability skills are transferable to any position, regardless of job type. For example, you need good communication skills at every level or position, whether you are the Chief Executive or newly hired trainee.

As previously mentioned, Employability Skills are often also called soft skills. They are very different to hard skills, which are the practical or technical skills you will learn as you train to become a competent

production sewing machinist. Hard skills would be sewing techniques or material handling. Soft skills are more personality-based qualities.

Go to the UKFT video Lesson 7.1 below, for more on employability skills that are important to the fashion and textiles industry.



<https://vimeo.com/586225136/f72f3fcb6a>

Employability skills are broken down into personal qualities as listed below. You must work on developing these qualities. They will help you to become a valued member of staff, earn respect from your employer and colleagues and generally do well in the world of work.



- **Reliability**
Be on time. Do what you were hired to do. Meet targets and deadlines and work to the best of your ability.
- **A positive attitude**
Adopt a 'can do' approach, good work ethic and willingness to learn.
- **Organised**
Be well-organised, especially when working to a tight deadline.
- **Co-operative**
Cooperate with work processes, colleagues, and co-workers.
- **Flexibility**
React quickly to change and adapt as required.
- **Honesty and integrity**
Made a mistake? Don't cover it up, admit it, and learn not to do it again.
- **Initiative**
Be motivated, proactive and be trusted to use your own initiative.
- **Good communicator**
Communicate clearly and demonstrate listening skills - follow directions and provide feedback.
- **Willing to learn**
Be eager and willing to add to your knowledge base and skills.
- **Determination and Persistence**
Accept challenging goals and find solutions when you encounter obstacles.
- **Problem-Solving Skills**
See when something needs to be done and react accordingly.
- **Loyalty**
Be trusted to meet the employer's best interests and represent the company positively in public.



Employability is not rocket science. It is mostly common sense!

Top employability skills for the fashion and textile industry

Research with fashion and textiles employers has identified the Top 10 Employability Skills required by a Production Sewing Machinist. These skills, (or the potential to develop them) are what employers look for when interviewing for new staff.

To ensure that you aim to develop the right employability skills for the role. We asked employers to define exactly what these skills are, and why they are important to the job role, see their response within the table below:

Skills that employers want...	What that means to you as an employee...	Why are they important...
Communication and interpersonal skills	To listen and relate to other people, act upon key information, and communicate in a clear, concise way	Two-way communication is important when taking instruction, learning the job and highlighting any issues
Problem solving skills	The ability to understand problems, break them down and identify the key issues and possible solutions.	Often sewing issues just require a simple solution which can be identified and solved using a methodical

Skills that employers want...	What that means to you as an employee...	Why are they important...
		approach, breaking down the problem bit by bit.
Working under pressure and to deadlines	Handling pressure that comes with deadlines and understanding the importance of meeting them.	Stress of deadlines can affect work and personal wellbeing. This needs to be balanced and handled sensibly.
Using your initiative and being self-motivated	Having ideas which can possibly improve production. Showing a strong personal drive and not waiting to be told to do routine things	Using your own intuitive is encouraged and helps with progress however it is important to understand limitations.
Organisational skills	Being able to plan work to meet deadlines and targets. Monitoring progress of work to ensure	Organising and monitoring your own work is key to meeting

Skills that employers want...	What that means to you as an employee...	Why are they important...
	you are on track to meeting a deadline.	production targets and eases the workload.
Team working	Working well with others from different disciplines, backgrounds, and expertise to accomplish a task.	We are all looking to meet the same production goals and must work together to achieve them
A positive work ethic	Enthusiasm about your work, and to identify ways to learn from mistakes for the benefit you and your employer.	Motivation and enthusiasm are refreshing! They are often key to meeting production requirements and to workforce well-being, your attitude at work rubs off on others!
Numeracy	The ability to read and follow specifications,	Specifications, work records and

Skills that employers want...	What that means to you as an employee...	Why are they important...
	quantity information and performance rates	work information is often communicated in numbers, these need to be understood.
Ability to adapt	To be flexible and adapt to new work/process quickly	Due shorter production runs the workforce have to be adaptable, learn quickly and be willing to take on new challenges
Reliability	To understand the effects of lateness and absence on colleagues and production	Absence and lateness have a serious detrimental effect on colleagues who will have to cover your work, the production flow and the meeting of deadlines.

Your company will also need you to be aware of rules and regulations around employment and Health and Safety. The next sections will give you an overview of these. But please note, there will be policies, rules, and regulations specific to your company



GROUNDWORK: Print out and complete the Employability Skills Review below. This will help you to better understand your current employability skills and recognise the areas on which you need to work.

[Download Employability Skills Review PDF](#)

Completing this review is an option, the result is for your own information only and will not be assessed towards achievement of your digital badge.

For those undertaking an apprenticeship these activities will help you gather information relevant to the End Point Assessment. Note: For those learners, who are independent and not yet working as an employed production sewing machinist, this exercise is recommended. It will help you prepare for interviews.

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Knowledge Challenge 7.1

1. What are employability skills?

- A set of personal qualities
- A set of technical skills
- A set of practical skills and knowledge learnt on the job

2. How can you learn and develop most basic employability qualities outside of the workplace?

- via life experiences
- via a formal training course
- via qualifications

3. Employability skills can also be called soft skills because they relate to your personal qualities. What is the difference between soft and hard skills?

- Hard skills are all learnt in the workplace skills and soft skills are learnt via formal training
- Hard skills are practical or technical skills and soft skills are more personality-based qualities.
- Hard skills are complex and difficult to learn where soft skills are more easier aspects of the job role

4. Employers surveyed, highlighted ten key employability skills they need to see in a production sewing machinist. Please find details of three of the skills listed below. Fill in the gaps...

Reliability:

Employees need to understand the effects of l_____ and absence on c_____ and p_____

Working under pressure and to deadlines:

Employees need to understand the importance of meeting d_____ but must ensure to b_____ and h_____ deadline s_____.

Using your initiative and being self-motivated:

Employees are encouraged to use their own i_____ which can possibly i_____ production and a strong personal d_____ and not w_____ to be told to do r_____ things