

Nebraska Career Readiness Standards and DESSA Crosswalk

January 2025

The [Nebraska Career Readiness Standards](#), adopted by the Nebraska State Board of Education in 2011, provide a valid source of workplace expectations for all students to be career ready. These standards and practices should be used over and over again with increasing complexity and relevance by students as they progress through their educational pathway.

The DESSA suite of assessments measures key social and emotional competencies essential for student success now and into the future. The DESSA assessments span kindergarten through 12th grade and can be completed by educators, students, and parents or guardians. The assessments are nationally standardized, norm-referenced, strength-based behavior rating scales, measuring the positive skills, behaviors, and mindsets necessary for students to thrive.

This crosswalk highlights the alignment between the Nebraska Career Readiness Standards and the DESSA assessment items. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used to ensure Nebraska students bring value to the workplace and the community through his/her performance, skill, diligence, ethics and responsible behavior.

Alignment Between the Standards for Career Readiness and DESSA Items

1. Applies appropriate academic and technical skills	
Academic skills and technical skills complement one another. A career ready individual applies these skills in a strategic manner to accomplish workplace tasks.	
Base Indicator	DESSA Items
A. Academic Attainment	
1. Demonstrates proficiency in the academic core standards (Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, Social Studies).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work carefully on projects or schoolwork• Can recognize their strengths• Seek out things that challenge them• Express high expectations for themselves• Keep working until they achieve a goal• Believe they can achieve their goals• Update their thinking as they learn more about something• Listen to feedback so they can improve• Can adjust their behavior to match different settings
2. Reads and comprehends written material in a variety of forms and levels of complexity.	
3. Completes secondary courses to meet high school graduation requirements.	
4. Assimilates and applies new learning, knowledge, and skills.	

<i>B. Technical Skill Attainment</i>	
<p>1. Identifies the training, education, and certification requirements for entrance and advancement in a chosen occupation.</p> <p>2. Completes a career and technical education program of study.</p> <p>3. Passes certification tests to qualify for licensure and or certification in a chosen occupational area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events. • Gather information before making an important decision • Describe the things that matter most to them • Set goals for themselves • Imagine a positive future for themselves • Express high expectations for themselves • Keep working until they achieve a goal • Believe they can achieve their goals • Expect that they will be successful
<i>C. Strategic Thinking</i>	
<p>1. Practices reasoning and systems-level thinking to deal with varied concepts and complexity.</p> <p>2. Analyzes elements of a problem situation to develop solutions.</p> <p>3. Uses acquired academic and technical skills to improve a situation or process.</p> <p>4. Seeks to enhance knowledge and skills through ongoing professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update their thinking as they learn more about something • Adapt well to new situations • Gather information before making an important decision • Take action to solve problems • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter • Ask questions when they did not understand something • Ask questions when learning new things • Work to develop their personal strengths • Seek out things that challenge them • Listen to feedback so they can improve • Set goals for themselves

2. Communicates effectively and appropriately	
Expressing ideas, providing instruction, informing others, sharing knowledge, and providing customer service are critical in a career.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
A. Speaking	
<p>1. Asks pertinent questions to acquire or confirm information.</p> <p>2. Demonstrates interpretation of verbal and non-verbal messages in a conversation.</p> <p>3. Converses with diverse individuals in an all-inclusive manner to foster positive relationships.</p> <p>4. Practices active and attentive listening skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions when learning new things • Ask questions when they did not understand something • Ask for advice when needed • Listen to others • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways • Get along well with different types of people • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective • Good at making and keeping friends • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn
B. Writing	
<p>1. Produces clear and coherent written communication in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>2. Composes focused written documents such as: agendas, audio-visuals, bibliographies, drafts, emails, forms, notes, oral presentations, reports, and technical documents.</p> <p>3. Constructs a well-reasoned position, based on an openness to new information and ideas, to support a theory or validate a point of view.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Think before they acted • Keep working until they achieve a goal • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Gather information before making an important decision • Update their thinking as they learn more about something
C. Presentations	
<p>1. Prepares presentations to provide information for specific purposes and audiences.</p> <p>2. Delivers presentations that sustain listeners' attention and interest.</p> <p>3. Uses technology appropriately to effectively present information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn • Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations • Adjust their behavior to match different settings • Adapt well to new situations • Expect that they will be successful

<i>D. Professional Etiquette</i>	
1. Uses professional etiquette and observes social protocols when communicating. 2. Practices appropriate use of social media in personal and professional environments. 3. Uses proper word choice and tone when communicating to superiors, customers/clients, and co-workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Adjust their behavior to match different settings • Get along well with different types of people • Interact positively with classmates • Think before they acted
<i>E. Customer Service</i>	
1. Establishes positive relationship with internal/external customers. 2. Identifies and addresses customer's needs and wants. 3. Recommends appropriate products and services. 4. Uses effective follow-up techniques to assure that the needs of the customer have been met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people • Make others feel welcome or included • Listen to others • Stay calm when faced with a challenge • Resolve conflicts positively • Take action to solve problems • Expect that they will be successful • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways

3. Contributes to employer and community success	
Career ready means more than attending to self-interest. It also means the ability to see the bigger picture of playing a role in the success of the employer and community through personal, civic, and community actions.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<i>A. Personal Responsibility</i>	
<p>1. Takes responsibility for individual and shared group work tasks.</p> <p>2. Models behaviors that demonstrate reliability, dependability, and commitment to the organization.</p> <p>3. Pursues results with personal energy and drive to completion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for their actions • Express high expectations for themselves • Can compromise for the good of the group • Contribute to group or team goals • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Express high expectations for themselves • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Keep working until they achieve a goal • Keep trying when unsuccessful • Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something • Believe they can achieve their goals
<i>B. Meets Workplace Expectations</i>	
<p>1. Arrives on time to work appointments, or meetings adequately prepared and appropriately dressed.</p> <p>2. Complies with workplace policies, norms/culture, procedures, and protocols.</p> <p>3. Exhibits professional etiquette in all interactions.</p> <p>4. Understands the importance of health, safety, human resource, and environmental regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Adjust their behavior to match different settings • Think before they acted • Get along well with different types of people

<i>C. Civic Responsibility and Service</i>	
1. Participates in leadership and teamwork opportunities available through professional organizations and community groups/boards/committees. 2. Engages in local government through attendance, participation, and service. 3. Demonstrates a respect for laws and regulations and those who enforce them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community • Believe working with others leads to greater success • Contribute to group or team goals • Make others feel welcome and included • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter • Can make a positive difference in the world • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Accept responsibility for their actions

4. Makes sense of problems and perseveres in solving them	
Recognizing and solving problems is a daily requirement of nearly every American worker and entrepreneur. From small technical issues, to group dynamics, to design of overall systems, opportunities abound for the career ready individual to solve problems in the workplace.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<i>A. Perceptiveness</i>	
1. Accurately defines a problem or issue. 2. Recognizes factors, constraints, goals, and relationships in a problem situation. 3. Identifies irregularities in processes and environments and seeks to understand their cause.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Ask questions when they did not understand something • Stay calm when faced with a challenge • Ask questions when learning new things • Can update their thinking as they learn more about something

<i>B. Problem Solving</i>	
<p>1. Presents multiple solutions to the problem based on evidence and insights.</p> <p>2. Evaluates solutions and determines the potential value toward solving the problem.</p> <p>3. Employs critical thinking skills independently and in teams to solve problems and make decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a willingness to update their thinking • Gather information before making an important decision • Believe they can achieve their goals • Ask questions when learning new things • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Can update their thinking as they learn more about something • Take action to solve problems • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Contribute to group or team goals • Ask for advice when needed • Believe working with others leads to greater success
<i>C. Perseverance/ Work Ethic</i>	
<p>1. Establishes and executes plans to completion even when faced with setbacks.</p> <p>2. Requires minimal supervision to successfully complete tasks on schedule.</p> <p>3. Prioritizes tasks to ensure progress toward stated objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals for themselves • Take action to solve problems • Keep working until they achieve a goal • Keep trying when unsuccessful • Believe they can overcome setbacks • Believe they can achieve their goals • Stay focused despite a distraction • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Motivate themselves when they don't want to do something • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events

5. Uses critical thinking	
Nearly all careers now require interaction with complex systems of technical components, complex dynamics of people, or both. Many decisions are not simple and straightforward; rather, they require the ability to intelligently reason through and make complex decisions.	
Base Indicator	DESSA Items
A. Critical Thinking	
1. Demonstrates the ability to reason critically and systematically. 2. Uses reason and logic to evaluate situations from multiple perspectives. 3. Critiques possible solutions using valid research, historical context, and balanced judgment. 4. Recognizes and makes use of systems and relationships including interdependent cause-and-effect analysis and feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective • Gather information before making an important decision • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Can update their thinking as they learn more about something
B. Decision Making	
1. Conducts research, gathers input, and analyzes information necessary for decision-making. 2. Develops and prioritizes possible solutions with supporting rationale. 3. Determines a course of action with the greatest perceived potential for success while considering its impact on the human resources (workforce) of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Take action to solve problems • Set goals for themselves • Believe they can make a positive difference in the world • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter
C. Adaptability	
1. Demonstrates a willingness to learn new knowledge and skills. 2. Considers multiple and diverse points of view. 3. Manages multiple tasks and priorities. 4. Exhibits the ability to focus, prioritize, organize, and handle ambiguity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a willingness to update their thinking • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people • Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions • Respect a person's right to have a different perspective • Recognize others' emotions • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Stay focused despite a distraction • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork

6. Demonstrates innovation and creativity	
The 21st century workplace requires innovation through creative thinking. Successful individuals will be expected to generate and share new ideas.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<i>A. Creativity</i>	
1. Uses information, knowledge, and experience to generate original ideas and challenge assumptions. 2. Initiates brainstorming to generate ideas to solve problems or maximize opportunities. 3. Appreciates new and creative ideas of others. 4. Knows when to curb the creative process and begin implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people • Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions • Believe they can overcome setbacks • Seek out things that challenge them • Ask questions when learning new things • Show appreciation of others • Show a willingness to update their thinking • Take action to solve problems
<i>B. Innovation</i>	
1. Searches for new ways to improve the efficiency of existing processes. 2. Determines the feasibility of improvements for ideas and concepts. 3. Accepts and incorporates constructive criticism into proposals for innovation. 4. Takes informed risks to introduce innovation while understanding the limits of authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people • Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions • Gather information before making an important decision • Listen to feedback so they can improve • Ask for advice when needed • Believe working with others leads to greater success • Seek out things that challenge them • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Believe they can achieve their goals

7. Models ethical leadership and effective management	
The ability to influence others relies on leadership. Today's workplace provides greater transparency and accountability where the ability to ethically lead and manage is essential.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
A. Leadership	
<p>1. Employs organizational development skills to foster positive working relationships and accomplish goals.</p> <p>2. Enlists the support others to accomplish a goal.</p> <p>3. Models the positive attributes of effective leaders (e.g. self awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people • Interact positively with classmates • Listen to others • Able to resolve conflicts positively • Encourage their friends and classmates • Compliment or congratulate others • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Believe working with others leads to greater success • Recognize their strengths • Listen to feedback so they can improve • Feel comfortable asking for help when they don't understand something • Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations
B. Ethics	
<p>1. Considers the ethical implications of decisions and actions and their impact on personal reputation and credibility.</p> <p>2. Recognizes personal and long-term workplace consequences of unethical or illegal behaviors.</p> <p>3. Practices ethical behavior at all times and complies with organizational code of conduct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can make a positive difference in the world • Express high expectations for themselves • Accept responsibility for their actions • Think before they acted • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Do the right thing in a difficult situation

C. Management

1. Differentiates between leadership and management.

2. Determines the objectives, parameters and deadlines involved in managing a project prior to beginning work.

3. Develops personal management skills to function effectively and efficiently.

- Ask questions when they did not understand something
- Show a willingness to examine their beliefs and opinions
- Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events
- Think before they acted
- Gather information before making important decisions
- Expect that they will be successful
- Believe working with others leads to greater success
- Believe their contributions to a group or team matter
- Work to develop their personal strengths

8. Works productively in teams and demonstrates cultural competency	
Teams of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds have become the new norm of operation in the American workplace. The career ready individual is prepared to collaborate with colleagues representing various backgrounds.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<i>A. Teamwork</i>	
1. Builds consensus within a team to accomplish results. 2. Contributes to team-oriented projects and assignments. 3. Engages team members and utilizes individual talents and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe working with others leads to greater success • Can compromise for the good of the group • Accept responsibility for their actions • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community • Believe their contributions to a group or team matter • Take action to solve problems • Contribute to group or team goals • Encourage others • Compliment or congratulate others • Show appreciation for others • Make others feel welcome or included
<i>B. Conflict Resolution</i>	
1. Anticipates potential sources of conflict and employs conflict resolution skills to facilitate solutions. 2. Disagrees with a team member without causing personal offense. 3. Negotiates with conflicting parties to agree on a reasonable and mutually acceptable solution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to resolve conflicts positively • Respect a person's right to have a different opinion • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways • Can compromise for the good of the group • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Show a willingness to update their thinking

C. Social and Cultural Competence

1. Gives and earns respect by interacting positively with people of different backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs.
2. Stays aware of current local, national, and global news and issues.
3. Uses awareness of world cultures and languages to effectively communicate with co-workers and customers/clients.

- Get along well with different types of people
- Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people
- Interact positively with classmates
- Gather information before making an important decision
- Update their thinking as they learn more about something
- Ask questions when learning new things
- Make others feel welcome or included
- Show appreciation for others

9. Utilizes technology	
The career ready individual has an understanding of how to use technology and apply it successfully in the workplace. Advances in technology require individuals to quickly learn and use many tools and applications.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<i>A. Data Gathering, Access and Management</i>	
1. Uses various methods to search for valid, relevant data to complete workplace tasks. 2. Evaluates Internet resources for reliability and validity. 3. Develops and uses a consistent approach for managing data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Update their thinking as they learn more about something • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Think before they acted
<i>B. Tools and Application</i>	
1. Uses the appropriate technology tools for conveying information, solving problems and expediting workplace processes. 2. Demonstrates the technology skills needed for a chosen career field. 3. Identifies the workplace value of technology tools and applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust their behavior to match different settings • Contributes to creating a positive learning environment • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn • Take action to solve problems • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Expect that they will be successful • Believe they can achieve their goals
<i>C. Technology Ethics</i>	
1. Understands the ethical uses of information and technology related to privacy, intellectual property, and workplace issues. 2. Uses computer and Internet protocols that ensure cyber security and confidentiality of private information. 3. Abides by organizational policies on the acceptable use of workplace technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for their actions • Think before they acted • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork

10. Manages personal career development	
Managing a personal career includes exploration, preparation and participation. Each person is responsible for creating and maintaining their own career. Career management includes understanding and meeting the expectations for behavior and skills in the workplace.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<i>A. Planning</i>	
1. Identifies opportunities in one or more career pathways that aligns with personal interests and aptitudes. 2. Develops career goals and objectives. 3. Develops a personal education and career plan to meet goals and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them • Recognize their strengths • Speak positively about their future potential • Express high expectations for themselves • Gather information before making an important decision • Describe the things that matter most to them • Set goals for themselves • Work to develop their personal strengths • Believe they can achieve their goals • Seek out challenging tasks • Keep working until they achieve a goal
<i>B. Job Seeking</i>	
1. Uses multiple resources, including personal and professional networks, to locate job opportunities. 2. Researches information about a prospective employer to successfully complete an application. 3. Uses professional digital media to create a personal brand. 4. Markets self effectively to potential employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision • Keep working until they achieve a goal • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Expect that they will be successful • Can imagine a positive future for themselves • Recognize their strengths • Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them • Believe they can achieve their goals • Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations

<i>C. Résumés, Portfolios, and Interviews</i>	
<p>1. Prepares a professional résumé appropriate for each situation.</p> <p>2. Produces a record of education and work experiences, licenses, certifications, and projects/products to include in a portfolio.</p> <p>3. Presents a professional image appropriate for the job interview.</p> <p>4. Communicates experiences, knowledge, and skills identified in the résumé and portfolio when interviewing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think before they acted • Work carefully on projects or schoolwork • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Adjust their behavior to match different settings • Adapt well to new situations • Recognize their strengths • Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them • Expect that they will be successful
<i>D. Professional Development</i>	
<p>1. Identifies opportunities for career advancement.</p> <p>2. Uses resources to develop goals that address training, education, and self-improvement issues.</p> <p>3. Maintains licensure, certification, and credentialing requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine a positive future for themselves • Seek out things that challenge them • Set goals for themselves • Work to develop their personal strengths • Expect that they will be successful • Believe they can achieve their goals • Gather information before making an important decision • Keep working until they achieve a goal • Update their thinking as they learn more about something
<i>E. Entrepreneurship</i>	
<p>1. Understands the knowledge and skills required of an entrepreneur.</p> <p>2. Describes the opportunities for entrepreneurship in a given industry.</p> <p>3. Weighs the opportunities, benefits, and risks of entrepreneurship versus employment in a career.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions when learning new things • Update their thinking as they learn more about something • Gather information before making an important decision • Imagine a positive future for themselves • List the personal traits that are most important to them

11. Attends to personal and financial well-being	
The career ready individual recognizes the benefits of physical, mental, social, and financial well-being to be successful in a career.	
<i>Base Indicator</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<i>A. Personal Well-being</i>	
<p>1. Recognizes the value of a wide range of knowledge and experiences from the arts, culture, and humanities to promote intellectual curiosity.</p> <p>2. Follows a personal wellness plan that includes healthy eating, exercise, and disease prevention.</p> <p>3. Builds positive social relationships with supportive friends and family in a community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people • Ask questions when learning new things • Update their thinking as they learn more about something • Describe the things that matter most to them • Set goals for themselves • Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something • Keep working until they achieve a goal • Believe they can achieve their goals • Imagine a positive future for themselves • Expect that they will be successful • Good at making and keeping friends • Get along well with different types of people • Feel like they belong in their school • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community

B. Financial Well-being

1. Analyzes choices available to consumers for saving and investing.
2. Develops a personal budget that aligns to near-term and long-term priorities.
3. Establishes a good credit history by using credit responsibly.
4. Understands principles of insurance and identifies appropriate coverage.
5. Makes wise consumer purchasing decisions and avoids fraudulent financial practices.
6. Files and pays local, state, and federal taxes in a correct and timely manner.

- Gather information before making an important decision
- Work carefully on projects or schoolwork
- Do the right thing in a difficult situation
- Set goals for themselves
- Believe they can achieve their goals
- Expect that they will be successful
- Imagine a positive future for themselves
- Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events
- Describe the things that matter most to them
- Accept responsibility for their actions
- Keep working until they achieve a goal
- Gather information before making an important decision
- Do the right thing in a difficult situation
- Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior



The DESSA System from Aperture Education: A Riverside Insights Company is a student resilience system that helps educators measure and strengthen social, emotional, and behavioral skills to reduce challenges that interfere with learning. The DESSA universal screening and supplemental assessments are widely used, practical, evidence-based measures of social and emotional competence of students in grades K-12. These powerful data analytic tools enable educators to identify trends, validate curriculum effectiveness, and drive positive academic and well-being outcomes for students. Robust reporting in the DESSA System provides insights for educators and staff to proactively differentiate instruction using DESSA-provided instructional strategies and tiered intervention resources. The DESSA System's strength-based approach is grounded in resilience theory and designed to bring the whole child into focus. To learn more, visit www.ApertureEd.com.