

Greeners at Work, 1999 Employer Survey Results

Total Respondents: 132 (112 Employers and 20 Graduate Faculty)

Supervisors of Evergreen Alumni, 112 employers and 20 graduate faculty, were interviewed by phone during Spring and Summer Quarters of 1999. Permission to interview supervisors was obtained by telephone interviews with Evergreen alumni who had graduated in 1996. Information about the purpose of the survey and use of survey results was mailed to all alumni and their employers or graduate faculty before the interviews were conducted.

Since the number of graduate faculty was low and differences between employers and graduate faculty generally were not statistically significant, responses from these groups have been combined for this report into the category of "supervisors." Supervisors gave Evergreen alumni mean ratings between 3 (good) and 4 (excellent) on all work-related skills on the survey. Alumni received highest ratings for the ability to work in a culturally diverse environment (3.72), willingness and aptitude to learn new skills (3.65) and the ability to work cooperatively in projects requiring team effort (3.57). (These ratings are shown in the bold box.)

With the exception of leadership (44%), at least 50% of all supervisors rated the job skills listed on the survey as having *A great deal* of importance to the job or graduate program. The three skills rated as most important (shown in bold type) were the abilities to work cooperatively in projects requiring team effort (90.7%), to speak clearly and effectively (89.3%), and to recognize problems and devise effective solutions (81.3%).

	Rated level of Alumni skill (1= Poor, 4 = Excellent)		Importance of skill to job or program		
	N	Mean (high to low)	Not at all	To some extent	A great deal
Work in a culturally diverse environment	118	3.72	4.1%	19.8%	76.0%
Willingness and aptitude to learn new skills	129	3.65	0.8%	26.7%	72.5%
Work cooperatively in team effort	129	3.57	0.8%	8.5%	90.7%
Independence and initiative	130	3.48	1.5%	23.1%	75.4%
Speak clearly and effectively	131	3.47	0	10.7%	89.3%
Organize and tackle work efficiently	131	3.40	1.5%	18.3%	80.2%
Creative thinking skills	121	3.38	4.8%	43.5%	51.6%
Critically analyze information	127	3.36	3.9%	25.2%	70.9% ¹
Research skills	102	3.35	13.0%	32.2%	54.8%
Written communication	110	3.34	8.5%	24.6%	66.9%
Computer literacy	105	3.34	10.3%	38.8%	50.0%
Give presentations	114	3.28	6.8%	30.5%	62.7%
Recognize problems, devise solutions	127	3.26	0.8%	18.0%	81.3%
Decision-making ability	130	3.26	0	31.5%	68.5%
Math skills/numeracy	75	3.25	22.9%	27.1%	50.0%
Negotiating skills	110	3.15	4.3%	34.8%	60.9%
Leadership	104	3.02	10.6%	45.1%	44.2%

1. Employers and graduate faculty differed significantly in rating the importance of critical analysis, with graduate faculty placing greater importance on this skill:

	(1= Poor, 4 = Excellent)		Importance of skill		
	N	Mean	Not at all	To some extent	A great deal
Critically analyze information - Employers	108	2.62	4.6%	28.7%	66.7%
Critically analyze information - Grad faculty	19	2.95	0	5.3%	94.7%

Supervisors of Evergreen alumni were then asked to determine which 3 of all skills listed in the survey were most important to the job or graduate program. Next, they were asked to compare the Evergreen alum under their supervision with another employee or graduate student of similar background who had been in the same or a similar position the same amount of time.

Since the numbers are small, results of this section should be interpreted with caution. However, Evergreen alumni were rated as about the same or stronger than their counterparts on all skills. Compared to peers, Evergreen alumni appear to be especially high in the important categories of speaking clearly and effectively, recognizing problems and devising solutions, and being able to work in a culturally diverse environment.

	Supervisors rating this as one of 3 most important job skills	Alumni rating compared to other employee in similar position		
	Number	Weaker	About the same	Stronger
Work cooperatively in team effort	37	13.5%	48.6%	37.8%
Recognize problems, devise effective solutions	36	13.9%	36.1%	50.0%
Speak clearly and effectively	27	3.7%	37.0%	59.3%
Work in a culturally diverse environment	24	8.3%	37.5%	54.2%
Critically analyze information	20	10.0%	50.0%	40.0%
Organize and tackle work efficiently	20	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%
Written communication	19	5.3%	36.8%	57.9%
Independence and initiative	18	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%
Creative thinking skills	15	0	33.3%	66.7%
Leadership	15	33.3%	20.0%	46.7%
Research skills	14	14.3%	21.4%	64.3%
Math skills/numeracy	13	15.4%	53.8%	30.8%
Willingness and aptitude to learn new skills	10	0	30.0%	70.0%
Give presentations	10	10.0%	40.0%	50.0%
Computer literacy	10	30.0%	50.0%	20.0%
Decision-making ability	8	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%
Negotiating skills	5	0	80.0%	20.0%

Concluding remarks: Evergreen alumni received *Good to Excellent* ratings on all job skills listed in the survey. Supervisors rated the abilities to work cooperatively in projects requiring team effort, to speak clearly and effectively, and to recognize problems and devise effective solutions as having the greatest importance. Evergreen alumni also obtained high marks when compared to their counterparts in the same position at work or in graduate programs, receiving ratings of *About the same* or *Stronger than* the comparison person on all work skills. For example, over half were rated as *Stronger than* the comparison person in the ability to work in a culturally diverse environment, among the skills rated as most important by supervisors. Results from this study indicate that Evergreen alumni are well prepared for the workplace and graduate program.

A limitation of this study: 67% of alumni surveyed who were either working or in graduate programs gave permission to interview their supervisors, probably expecting favorable evaluations of their work skills. Whether the supervisors of alumni who did not grant permission would evaluate alumni work skills differently cannot be determined from the results of this study.

Alumni Survey, 1999		Supervisor Surveys, 1999	
Completed Alumni Survey	306	Completed Employer interviews	112
Number Employed	209	Completed Grad faculty interviews	20
Number in Graduate programs	36	Total completed supervisor surveys	132 (80%)
Potential supervisor interviews	245	Refusals	11
Permission to interview supervisor	164 (67%)	Unable to contact supervisor	21