

What’s Needed at Four-Year Colleges & Universities?

Annually the Office of Research surveys transfer program alumni with at least 30 Oakton credits or an associate’s degree, and who were last enrolled one or three years ago. In 2006, 581 alumni responded to the survey, which was conducted by telephone during the summer of 2006. The 30-credit criterion (about half an associate’s degree program) ensures that the alumni surveyed were sufficiently experienced at Oakton to be fairly knowledgeable about the College.

Beginning in 2001, alumni survey respondents were asked to rate the utility of general education skills in courses after transfer. Using a 5-point scale, respondents were asked to indicate how useful these skills were in courses taken after transfer (5 = extremely useful; 1 = not very useful). Respondents could also indicate they did not apply a skill after transfer. Note the survey did not ask respondents





specifically whether a skill was required of them in courses taken after transfer.

The table below presents findings. It is interesting to find that results over the six years show declines in the percentage of respondents who said all skills were useful after transfer except for teamwork, which showed a 10 percent increase. Interestingly, these declines in usefulness ratings coincide with parallel decreases in the percentage of alumni who said that these respective skills were even used after transfer. Conversely, only teamwork skills showed an increase in the percentage of students who actually used this set of skills after transfer.

The complete Alumni Survey report is available from the Office of Research or on the OIR website at www.oakton.edu/resource/oir/resmenu.html. Click on Student and Alumni Survey Reports.

Usefulness of Skills Learned at Oakton in Courses Taken After Transfer

Percent Indicating 4 & 5 on 5-point Scale by Year of Survey
(Percentages calculated on number who rated skill’s utility;
excludes those who did not use skill after transfer)

Survey Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Pct. Change 2001 to 2006	
Speaking (presentation) skills	74%	70%	67%	72%	69%	65%	-9%	
Writing skills	69%	69%	66%	66%	71%	64%	-5%	
Teamwork skills	50%	61%	58%	69%	61%	60%	+10%	
Problem-solving skills	62%	65%	56%	65%	61%	58%	-4%	
Mathematics skills	68%	61%	54%	62%	62%	57%	-11%	
Computer skills	53%	50%	50%	59%	53%	49%	-4%	