

# 2025-26

## UNO SKILLS REPORT

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Skills That Shape Omaha. Powered by the University of Nebraska at Omaha



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA





In today's digital world, there are no shortage of options when it comes to hybrid and remote learning. Online at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) offers a unique combination of **flexibility, credibility, and quality** you can only get from a reputable four-year institution with a focus on making education accessible to all.

## 90+ ONLINE OPTIONS

UNO offers fully online and hybrid bachelor and graduate degrees, undergraduate and graduate minors, undergraduate and graduate certificates, graduate endorsements.

## NATIONALLY RANKED ONLINE PROGRAMS

UNO is ranked among the Overall Best Online Bachelor's Programs *U.S. News & World Report, 2025.*



## ACCREDITATION

UNO is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a highly respected, longstanding accreditor of post-secondary/higher education institutions.\*

\*The commission can be contacted at 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604; telephone 800.621.7440/312.263.0456; fax 312.263.7462; email [info@hlcommission.org](mailto:info@hlcommission.org).

## AFFORDABLE

UNO has many options to help offset the cost of your education, and more than 87% of UNO students receive some form of financial aid.

## OMAHA URBAN RATE (OUR)

With OUR Tuition, UNO becomes even more affordable. Significantly reduced tuition rates for students from:

- Colorado
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Montana
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- South Dakota
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming



[ [ONLINE.OMAHA.EDU](http://ONLINE.OMAHA.EDU) ]

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# INTRODUCTION: UNO 2025-26 ANNUAL SKILLS REPORT

## SKILLS THAT SHAPE OMAHA. POWERED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

The UNO Annual Skills Report is an institutional publication produced by The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub). It documents UNO's work to embed workforce-relevant, research-based skills into the student learning experience. This inaugural 2025-26 report documents UNO's efforts to build an infrastructure for skills-based learning, and establishes a baseline for future reporting. It highlights UNO's annually identified Top 10 Skills, its partnerships, digital badges, and ongoing efforts to integrate skills across academic and co-curricular programs. The report reflects UNO's position at the forefront of skills-first education in Nebraska—preparing students not only with knowledge, but with competencies that are verifiable, durable, and workforce-relevant.

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## UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP:



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Chancellor



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Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



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Associate Vice Chancellor for Innovative and Learning-Centric Initiatives

*Additional thanks to the Division of Innovative and Learning-Centric Initiatives team, faculty subject matter experts, and student contributors across campus. We are grateful for the continued support of UNO's leaders, who champion innovation, access, and student-centered learning.*

## UNO'S VISION, MISSION, CORE, AND VALUES

### OUR CORE

UNO is an urban public research university educating people of the world. We innovate for the public good through pragmatic and impactful research and discovery. We advance the social and economic mobility of our learners and serve our communities. We assume responsibility for workforce and economic development within our state and beyond. We devote each day to transforming lives.

### OUR VALUES

Excellence, Engagement, Discovery, Integrity, and Maverick Spirit.

### OUR VISION

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is recognized as the premier Metropolitan University throughout the United States and the world.

### OUR MISSION

As both a Metropolitan University of distinction and a Carnegie Doctoral Research institution, the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) transforms and improves the quality of life locally, nationally, and globally.

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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## DEAR COLLEAGUES, PARTNERS, AND MAVERICKS,

In today's rapidly evolving world, skills are more than just credentials—they are currency. As we prepare students not just for their first job, but for a lifetime of change and opportunity, we recognize that skills are at the heart of both individual growth and development of Omaha, Nebraska, and beyond.

At the University of Nebraska at Omaha, we are proud to lead the way in embedding durable, transferable, and employer-relevant skills into the student experience. Through the work of The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub), and in close collaboration with faculty, staff, and industry partners, we are designing a future where every student graduates with more than a transcript—they graduate with evidence of what they can do. This work is a direct extension of UNO's strategic plan, aligning student success and community engagement through innovation in skills-based learning.

This inaugural 2025-26 UNO Skills Report captures the momentum we've built, the lessons we've learned, and the path forward. From launching skill-badge course integrations, to activating the UNO Skills Lab, to issuing our first digital credentials via the Maverick Digital Backpack, this report showcases how UNO is aligning learning with labor market needs in Omaha and beyond.

But this report is more than a snapshot. It's a call to action. As we continue to build a more inclusive, agile, and outcomes-focused learning ecosystem, we welcome continued collaboration with campus and community partners as we expand this work across programs, disciplines, and sectors. This report outlines the foundation we have established and the strategy we will use to evaluate and scale skills-based learning at UNO in the years ahead.

Let's continue to shape a stronger Omaha and Nebraska one skill at a time.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin Bass".

Erin Bass, Ph.D.

Executive Director, The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub  
Professor of Management, College of Business Administration  
James R. Schumacher Chair of Ethics  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The 2025-26 UNO Annual Skills Report documents the first year of a comprehensive, campus-wide effort to embed, assess, and verify workforce-relevant skills through academic and co-curricular learning. The University of Nebraska at Omaha is emerging as a leader in this space, implementing an integrated, research-based model for skills-first education.

At the core of this work is the UNO Skills Framework—a six-pillar model guiding how skills are identified, delivered, and verified in ways that are both academically rigorous and practically relevant. As part of this framework, UNO released its inaugural list of Top 10 Skills for 2025-26: Coordinating, Customer Service, Data Analysis, Decision-Making, Interpersonal Relationships, Microsoft Office, Presentations, Project Management, Teamwork, and Written Communication. Each was selected based on labor market data, faculty input, and employer feedback, and is supported by a defined assessment, rubric, and digital badge.

To enable implementation, UNO built institutional infrastructure through The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub) and the UNO Skills Lab. These entities coordinate badge design, lead faculty engagement, and manage skill integration across the university. The UNO Skills Lab is developing a library of validated assessments, supporting pilot courses across colleges, and working with subject matter experts to ensure alignment.

Students engage with this system directly through their coursework. Skills are assessed through projects and assignments embedded in existing classes, with badges viewable in Canvas and shareable via the Maverick Digital Backpack. These design choices reflect UNO's commitment to reducing barriers and meeting students where they are.

Employer and community input plays a central role. The Advisory Board includes leaders from industry, education, nonprofit, and workforce sectors who provide structured feedback on badge content, market trends, and strategic direction. UNO's approach is not only grounded in academic standards but also validated through industry engagement.

This report also establishes the baseline for tracking institutional impact. In 2025-26, UNO created ten skill-badges, is integrating them into multiple courses, and launching supporting systems for assessment and visibility. The university will track badges issued, skill-tagged courses, and student engagement, with results reported annually. Looking forward, UNO's five-year strategy includes reassessing UNO's Top 10 Skills, expanding the badge library, deepening academic integration, and strengthening employer partnerships.

The 2025-26 UNO Annual Skills Report reflects a strategic and intentional effort to make learning visible, verifiable, and valuable—for students, faculty, and the broader workforce.

# THE UNO SKILLS FRAMEWORK

## A DYNAMIC MODEL FOR SKILLS-DRIVEN EDUCATION

The UNO Skills Framework is a strategic, student-centered approach designed to guide how the university identifies, delivers, verifies, and evolves workforce-relevant skills. It ensures alignment between learner needs, faculty innovation, and labor market demand, while reinforcing UNO's community-centered mission and dedication to developing Omaha's workforce.

### The Six Pillars of Our Framework:

#### **IDENTIFYING SKILLS & TRENDS**



UNO scans the labor market, employer needs, and societal shifts to identify high-impact, in-demand skills. This pillar ensures we stay responsive to economic change and future-ready for tomorrow's opportunities.

#### **ACQUIRING SKILLS THROUGH MULTIPLE PATHWAYS**



Students gain skills in and beyond the classroom through coursework, internships, co-curriculars, and self-directed learning. This pillar recognizes that learning happens across multiple contexts and the many pathways to skill development.



#### **VERIFYING SKILLS WITH DIGITAL BADGES**

To provide verifiable proof of skill acquisition, UNO issues digital badges. These stackable, portable credentials live in each learner's Maverick Digital Backpack, making learning visible and shareable with employers.



#### **SERVING STUDENTS AND LEARNERS**

Students at UNO can earn verified skills through degree programs, microcredentials, and other learning opportunities across campus. We are committed to making skill assessments and verification accessible to all learners, regardless of their program or pathway.



#### **ENGAGING BUSINESS & COMMUNITY**

Our work is grounded in strong partnerships with local and regional employers, industry leaders, and community organizations. This ensures our skills strategy is co-designed with those who hire, mentor, and support our graduates.



#### **DRIVING CONTINUOUS INNOVATION & EVOLUTION**

The framework isn't static. UNO's approach to skills is agile and iterative, incorporating feedback from faculty, students, and employers to improve programs, tools, and curriculum integrations.



# UNO'S TOP 10 SKILLS 2025-26

UNO's Top 10 Skills were selected based on a combination of labor market analytics, faculty input, and feedback from The CSW Hub Advisory Board, ensuring alignment with regional workforce needs.

# UNO'S TOP 10 SKILLS FOR 2025-26

## 1. COORDINATING

### DEFINITION

The ability to understand priorities and apply them to the organization of time, people, and resources to achieve a common goal.

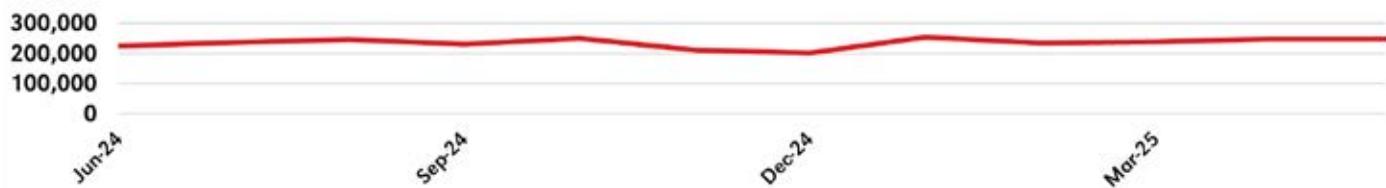
### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING COORDINATING SKILLS

- Child, Family, and School Social Workers
- Medical and Health Services Managers
- Education Administrators
- Air Transportation Workers
- Technical Project Managers

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- Children's Nebraska
- HDR
- Omaha Public Power District
- UNMC
- Union Pacific
- Conagra Brands
- Omaha Airport Authority

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



## 2. CUSTOMER SERVICE

### DEFINITION

The ability to provide assistance and guidance to people before, during, and after they utilize the company's products or services.

### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING CUSTOMER SERVICE SKILLS

- Sales Representatives
- Retail Supervisors
- Customer Service Representatives
- Healthcare Support Occupations
- Software Developers

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- GPAC
- Nebraska Methodist Health System
- Charles Schwab
- Omaha Public Power District
- Pacific Life
- Quantum Workplace
- Children's Nebraska

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



# UNO'S TOP 10 SKILLS FOR 2025-26

## 3. DATA ANALYSIS

### DEFINITION

The ability to gather and analyze information systematically, evaluate and interpret complex data, draw insights, and make informed decisions.

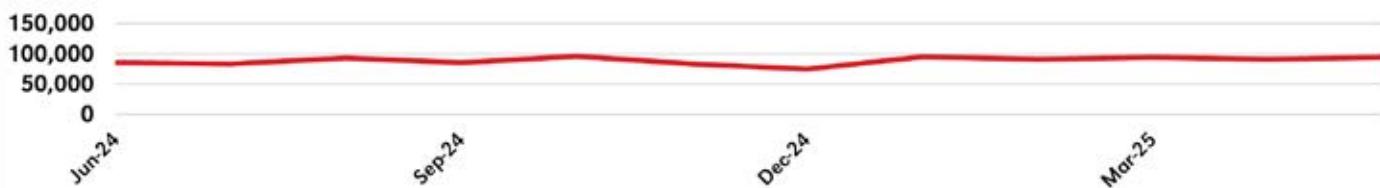
### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING DATA ANALYSIS SKILLS

- Data Scientists
- Financial and Investment Analysts
- Software Developers
- Database Architects
- Marketing Managers

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- Yahoo Holdings
- Conagra Brands
- Omaha Public Power District
- PayPal
- Deloitte
- Quantum Workplace
- United Way of the Midlands

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



## 4. DECISION-MAKING

### DEFINITION

The ability to analyze information, evaluate options, and make logical decisions that align with goals and objectives.

### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

- Social Workers
- Data Scientists
- Financial Managers
- Project Management Specialists
- Air Transportation Workers

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- Olsson
- Deloitte
- Omaha Public Power District
- Omaha Airport Authority
- Children's Nebraska
- Quantum Workplace
- Union Pacific

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



# UNO'S TOP 10 SKILLS FOR 2025-26

## 5. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### DEFINITION

The ability to communicate effectively and build relationships with others by considering others' thoughts, emotions, and perspectives.

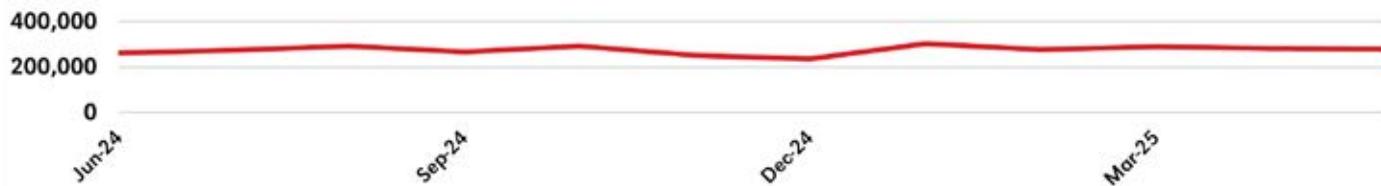
### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS SKILLS

- Sales Professionals
- Project Managers
- Human Resources Specialists
- K-12 Education Professionals
- Public Administration and Non-Profit Professionals

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- Omaha Public Schools
- Nebraska Methodist Health System
- Sedgwick
- Yahoo Holdings
- Quantum Workplace
- Nebraska Department of Education
- Omaha Public Power District

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



## 6. MICROSOFT OFFICE

### DEFINITION

The ability to use a suite of software applications developed by Microsoft for use in both personal and professional settings.

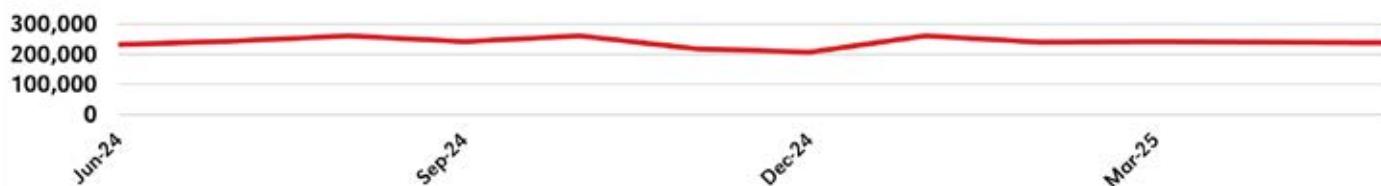
### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING MICROSOFT OFFICE SKILLS

- Accountants
- Project Managers
- Sales Professionals
- Financial Managers
- Human Resource Specialists

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- Nebraska Medicine
- HDR
- Omaha Public Power District
- Deloitte
- Sedgwick
- Quantum Workplace
- Union Pacific

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



# UNO'S TOP 10 SKILLS FOR 2025-26

## 7. PRESENTATIONS

### DEFINITION

The ability to effectively convey ideas or information to an audience.

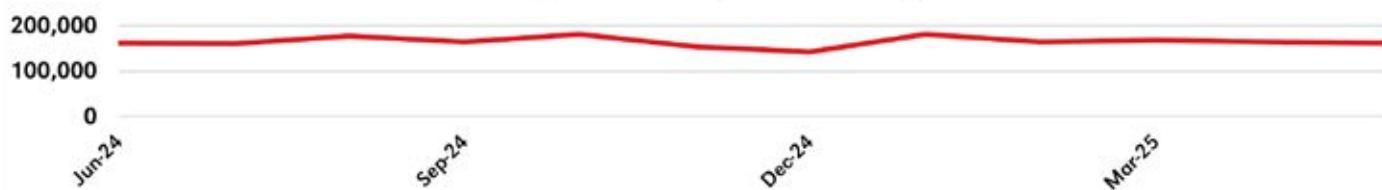
### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING PRESENTATION SKILLS

- Sales Professionals
- Project Managers
- Marketing Managers
- Financial Analysts
- Software Developers

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- Deloitte
- Pacific Life
- HDR
- Yahoo Holdings
- Omaha Public Power District
- Nebraska Methodist Health System
- Quantum Workplace

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



## 8. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

### DEFINITION

The ability to use specific knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to achieve specific project objectives and deliver value.

### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Project Managers
- Civil Engineers
- Construction Managers
- Financial Analysts
- Marketing Managers

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- UNMC
- PayPal
- Kiewit
- Omaha Public Power District
- Quantum Workplace
- HDR
- Union Pacific

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



# UNO'S TOP 10 SKILLS FOR 2025-26

## 9. TEAMWORK

### DEFINITION

The ability to contribute to a team through clear communication, adaptability, and leveraging personal strengths to achieve a common goal.

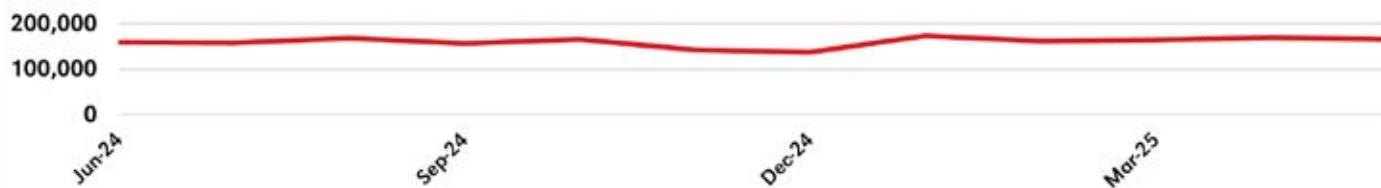
### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING TEAMWORK SKILLS

- Sales Professionals
- Medical/Health Services Managers
- Software Developers
- K-12 Education Professionals
- Media and Communication Workers

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- Nebraska Medicine
- KPMG
- Union Pacific
- Omaha Public Schools
- Deloitte
- Omaha Public Power District
- Quantum Workplace

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



## 10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

### DEFINITION

The ability to convey information, thoughts, or ideas in written form to others.

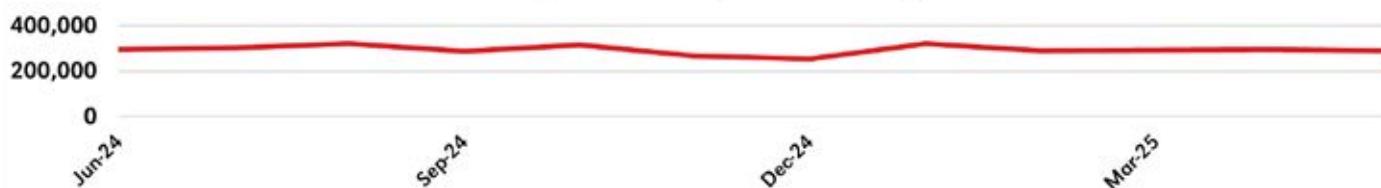
### TOP REGIONAL JOBS REQUIRING WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Project Managers
- Human Resources Specialists
- Accountants
- Sales Professionals
- Content Creator

### TOP OMAHA EMPLOYERS

- UNMC
- Omaha Public Power District
- Deloitte
- HDR
- Union Pacific
- Children's Nebraska
- Quantum Workplace

### Unique Monthly Job Postings



# UNO SKILLS SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

## ENSURING QUALITY THROUGH FACULTY AND EXPERT COLLABORATION

Behind each UNO skill-badge is the expertise of a subject matter expert (SME)—a faculty or staff member with deep knowledge of a specific skill area. These experts were selected from across the UNO community to design the assessments that anchor each badge. By tapping into our campus expertise, we ensured that every skill assessment reflects the latest research, disciplinary best practices, and real-world expectations. Additionally, all assessments underwent internal peer review and are shared with employer partners to ensure that criteria reflect both academic expectations and workplace relevance. That means each badge is grounded in valid and reliable assessments that measure the right thing, in the right way.

## UNO'S SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

### CUSTOMER SERVICE



**SHARON STORCH**

Assistant Professor, Communication, College of Fine Arts & Media

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT



**THU TRANG "JENNY" HOANG**

Assistant Professor, Management, College of Business Administration

### DATA ANALYSIS



**DUSTIN WHITE**

Associate Professor, Economics, College of Business Administration

### TEAMWORK



**ASHLEY VARILEK**

Instructor, Management, College of Business Administration

### DECISION-MAKING



**ERIN PLEGGENKUHLE-MILES**

Professor, Management, College of Business Administration

### MICROSOFT OFFICE



**MIKAELA PETERSON**

Technology Training Services Associate, NU ITS

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION



**TRAVIS ADAMS**

Associate Professor, English, College of Arts & Sciences

### PRESENTATIONS



**CASEY RIESBERG**

Instructor, Communication, College of Fine Arts & Media

### MELANIE SEITZER



**MELANIE SEITZER**

Instructor, English, College of Arts & Sciences

### COORDINATING & INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS



**RONI REITER-PALMON**

Professor, Psychology, College of Arts & Sciences



**WILLIAM KRAMER**

Assistant Professor, Psychology, College of Arts & Sciences

### ENSURING QUALITY IN SKILL ASSESSMENT

*UNO's skill assessments are developed to ensure academic integrity and alignment with workforce expectations. To verify the quality and relevance of each badge, the university follows a multi-step validation process grounded in peer and employer review.*

### ALIGNMENT TO NACE COMPETENCIES

*UNO's skills initiative incorporates the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies as a benchmark for transferable, job-relevant skills. These standards help ensure that skills assessments are valued across industries and professions.*

# BUILDING SKILLS INFRASTRUCTURE

## THE COMPETENCIES, SKILLS, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HUB

The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub) is the central driver of UNO's skills-first strategy. Created to support the integration, verification, and visibility of real-world skills across the University, The CSW Hub works at the intersection of academia, workforce development, and innovation. The CSW Hub is housed within UNO's Division of Innovative and Learning-Centric Initiatives and serves the entire campus community. It works directly with each of UNO's six colleges, collaborating with faculty and staff on workforce development initiatives. The CSW Hub also acts as a direct connection point for employers and community organizations, aligning UNO's academic offerings with the evolving needs of the regional workforce.

## THE CSW HUB LEADS FOUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:



### COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

Creating flexible learning pathways that focus on developing and mastering competencies.



### THE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Building and sustaining employer partnerships and the workforce by providing education as a benefit.



### THE UNO SKILLS LAB

A campus hub for designing, validating, and embedding skill assessments and digital badges.



### THE FUTURE OF WORK SYMPOSIUM

An annual event that brings together the UNO and Omaha communities to explore emerging workforce trends.

## THE UNO SKILLS LAB

The UNO Skills Lab is the creative and operational engine driving skills assessment at UNO. It supports the development and implementation of research-informed assessment practices, helps faculty and staff embed skill assessments into courses and co-curricular experiences, and serves as a hub for sharing research and insights on emerging skills with the UNO community, Omaha employers, and regional partners.

## IN 2025-26, THE UNO SKILLS LAB WILL:



- Share UNO's Top 10 Skills for 2025-26 with the UNO and Omaha communities based on market demand and academic relevance
- Create a library of validated skill assessments aligned to digital badges
- Pilot course integrations with faculty, targeting 20 courses over the 2025-26 academic year
- Support the implementation of the Maverick Digital Backpack
- Begin foundational research for UNO's Top 10 Skills for 2026-27

# LEADING THE WAY

## SKILL-BADGE COURSE INTEGRATION PILOT – FACULTY COLLABORATION

At the core of UNO's skills initiative is a dedicated group of faculty who are piloting skill-badge integration directly into their courses. These faculty members have collaborated with The Competencies, Skills and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub) to embed valid, measurable skill assessments that align with their course learning outcomes.

These pilots span multiple colleges and disciplines, proving that skills-based learning can be woven into courses in business, the arts, STEM, social sciences, and beyond. Each pilot serves as a model for broader adoption – helping us move from experimentation to sustainable practice.



## THE EARLY ADOPTERS GROUP – CROSS-CAMPUS CHAMPIONS

Alongside our course pilots, UNO's Early Adopters Group is a diverse, cross-campus coalition of faculty, staff, and academic leaders who are shaping UNO's Skills Framework. These champions have volunteered to test new tools, offer feedback, and share best practices for integrating skill development and assessment into existing programs. Feedback from these faculty helps refine assessment tools and badge language, ensuring that course-level implementation is both feasible and aligned with learning outcomes.



## INTERESTED IN INTEGRATING A SKILL INTO YOUR COURSE?

REACH OUT TO:

[ **INNOVATE@UNOMAHA.EDU** ]

# DIGITAL BACKPACK & TECH INTEGRATION

## HOW DIGITAL BADGES WORK

Digital badges are awarded to students who demonstrate specific skills through approved assessments. Badges are issued through a secure, University-supported platform and follow national standards for portability and transparency.



## WHERE STUDENTS TRACK THEIR BADGES

UNO students can currently access their badges in Canvas, the university's learning management system. A dedicated "My Badges" section allows students to view their earned digital badges. They can also learn more about what each badge represents and share their achievements via LinkedIn, resumes, or email.

Canvas is where UNO students access courses, turn in assignments, receive grades, and interact with instructors. Embedding badges directly into Canvas ensures skill development remains part of the everyday learning experience at UNO.

These efforts will be coordinated with administrative leaders and employer partners to maximize visibility and value for students as they transition into internships, jobs, and graduate programs.

### BADGES ARE SHAREABLE ON:

- LinkedIn
- Resumes
- Emails



## IT INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING SCALE

UNO's Information Technology Services team, in partnership with The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub), is building the infrastructure needed to issue, track, and verify badges at scale as well as maintain security, accessibility, and data privacy standards.

As skills adoption grows, our digital infrastructure will continue to evolve—ensuring that every Maverick has a reliable, streamlined way to maintain a centralized, University-supported record of verified skill development.

Looking ahead, The CSW Hub will explore future opportunities to integrate badge data with DegreeWorks and official transcripts to enhance advising, credential transparency, and employer communication.

## PARTNER WITH US TO CO-DESIGN BADGES

REACH OUT TO:

[ [INNOVATE@UNOMAHA.EDU](mailto:INNOVATE@UNOMAHA.EDU) ]

# MAVERICK DIGITAL BACKPACK STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## HOW DIGITAL BADGES WORK

Students earn skills at UNO through their regular coursework, making the process of demonstrating skills and earning digital badges both accessible and integrated with their academic experience. Skill assessments are embedded into assignments, projects, and classroom activities across a range of disciplines. This approach ensures that students do not need to seek out separate, extra programs in order to develop or verify skills—they are built into the learning they’re already doing. To support accessibility and ease of use, digital badges for skills are tracked in Canvas—UNO’s official learning management system. Students already use Canvas daily to access class materials, submit assignments, receive grades, and interact with instructors. Embedding skill tracking within Canvas was an intentional design decision to meet students where they are and encourage ongoing engagement with their own skills development.

## MAVERICKS WHO HAVE STARTED THEIR SKILLS JOURNEY:

### **MCKINLEY KALVODA**

**Student, Criminology and Criminal Justice**

“Thanks to the dedicated and insightful faculty, I understand the skills and opportunities my college provides, which will contribute to my future goals.”



### **JACK RYGG**

**Student, IT Innovation/Applied Computing**

“UNO has opened doors for me to develop skills that set me apart and prepare me for what comes next. The opportunities I’ve had here have given me the confidence to step into my career ready to make an impact.”



### **KARLIE CHONIS**

**Student, MBA**

“UNO has helped me grow as a student and a leader. Through team-based projects I have learned how to communicate effectively, take on leadership roles, and prepare for the challenges of the workforce. UNO’s focus on skill-building has given me the tools I need to thrive in my future career.”



# SHAPING SKILLS WITH INDUSTRY

## STRENGTHENING OMAHA'S WORKFORCE

UNO's skills initiative is informed by ongoing collaboration with employers, workforce organizations, and community partners. These partners help ensure that UNO's skill development efforts reflect the competencies most in demand across the regional labor market.

### EMPLOYER INPUT HAS DIRECTLY INFORMED:

- The selection of UNO's Top 10 Skills
- The design of valid and relevant assessments
- Early planning around badge utility in hiring and workforce pipelines

## THE COMPETENCIES, SKILLS, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HUB ADVISORY BOARD

The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub) Advisory Board was established to provide structured, cross-sector input into UNO's growing skills ecosystem. Advisory Board members represent industry, education, nonprofit, and workforce organizations across the Omaha region and the state of Nebraska. These individuals provide input on workforce and market trends as they experience them as well as provide input on The CSW Hub's initiatives, including the UNO Skills Lab efforts. Advisory Board membership reflects participation as of Summer 2025. UNO thanks each member for their time, insight, and commitment to building a more skill-aligned future.

## BOARD MEMBERS

### INDUSTRY & EMPLOYERS

- George Achola, Burlington Capital
- Rebecca Bardsley, Fiserv
- Chris Dill, Kiewit
- Tonya Eggspuehler, Union Pacific
- Andrea Fillaus, Union Pacific
- Jeff Harrison, Deloitte
- Mark Himes, Olsson
- Sheri Howard, Physicians Mutual
- CJ Jackson, OPPD
- Jami Kemp, Physicians Mutual
- Lindsay Odvody, BCBSNE
- Tana Phelps, CQuence Health
- Brian Poppe, Mutual of Omaha
- Jeremy Reinoehl, Tenaska
- Mike Siedschlag, Retired – HDR
- Joni Stewart, Farm Credit Services
- Dakotah Taylor, FNBO
- Cyndi Wenninghoff, Quantum Workplace

### EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Andrea Haynes, Westside Community Schools
- Kim Saum Mills, Millard Public Schools
- Dr. Jane Meza, UNMC

### NONPROFIT & COMMUNITY

- Dan Esch, Douglas County
- Erin Grace, Omaha Mayor's Office
- Ana Lopez Shalla, University of Nebraska
- Teresa Mardesen, Share Omaha
- Kellee Mikuls, Ignite Nebraska
- Albert Varas, Latino Center for the Midlands



### WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Merrick Brtek, Omaha Chamber
- Shonna Dorsey, Nebraska Tech Collaborative – Aksarben Foundation
- Heath Mello, Omaha Chamber
- Dell Nared, Omaha Chamber
- Erin Porterfield, Heartland Workforce Solutions

## INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CSW HUB ADVISORY BOARD?

CONTACT DR. ERIN BASS

**[ AEBASS@UNOMAHA.EDU ]**

# SHAPING SKILLS WITH INDUSTRY

## YEAR 1: HOW WE WILL MEASURE IMPACT

As implementation begins, we will track progress using the following metrics:

- **Total Badges Issued:** Number of digital badges awarded to learners.
- **Skill-Tagged Courses:** Courses with embedded skill assessments.
- **Student/User Growth:** Number of learners earning badges.

These indicators will help assess early adoption, inform continuous improvement, and guide communication with campus and external partners.

## A STRATEGIC VISION FOR GROWTH, RELEVANCE, AND IMPACT

Our strategy focuses on maintaining alignment with labor market needs, academic goals, and long-term workforce relevance. Over the next five years, our skills-based work will be guided by five key areas:

### ► REASSESSING THE TOP SKILLS ANNUALLY

The Top 10 Skills list will be updated each year based on labor market analytics, feedback from The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub) Advisory Board consultation with faculty and employers, and internal data on badge use and integration.

### ► ENGAGING SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Faculty and staff subject matter experts will continue to design and refine skill assessments that are academically rigorous and industry-relevant.

### ► PARTNERING BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY

External collaboration will continue to grow through co-developed badges, shared events, and cross-institutional initiatives with local employers, nonprofits, and peer institutions.

### ► CURATING THE UNO SKILLS LIBRARY

The UNO Skills Lab will maintain a growing collection of validated skill assessments and supporting materials, including rubrics, examples, and instructional resources.

### ► DEEPENING ACADEMIC INTEGRATION

UNO will expand skill-badge implementation across courses and programs by supporting faculty in embedding assessments and aligning them with learning outcomes.



## LOOKING AHEAD

This report marks the start of UNO's coordinated work in skills-based learning. As implementation progresses, we will share findings, refine our approach, and expand access. The goal is not only to track credentials, but to transform how learning is recognized and applied in students' academic and professional lives. As we grow, The CSW Hub will assess resource needs to support expanded faculty development and staff needs, technology and system infrastructure, community partnerships, and philanthropic support for sustainable implementation. Our model may also inform collaboration across other University of Nebraska campuses in the future.

UNO's skills initiative engages faculty, staff, students, employers, and community partners. The Competencies, Skills, and Workforce Development Hub (CSW Hub) welcomes collaboration with faculty, students, and external partners to continue shaping the university's skills-based learning strategy. Employers interested in integrating UNO skill-badges into internship pipelines, hiring processes, or co-developing future badges are encouraged to reach out.

## **GET INVOLVED**

THE COMPETENCIES, SKILLS, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HUB

**[ [INNOVATE@UNOMAHA.EDU](mailto:INNOVATE@UNOMAHA.EDU) ]**







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