

Validating a Student's OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal A Guide for Mentors

What is the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal?

The 21st century workplace constantly is evolving. To ensure success in their careers, students must be prepared to engage in this rapidly changing environment. Ohio businesses are seeking talented workers who have solid academic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics, as well as the professional skills required for success in the workplace. Among these professional skills are being reliable, drug free, disciplined and able to solve problems.



Ohio's education system must support students in acquiring the professional skills that Ohioans need to be job-ready. When schools prepare students for the 21st century workplace, they also build the talented workforce that Ohio businesses need.

The OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal* is a formal designation a student can earn by demonstrating the professional skills that are required for success in the workplace. The student can earn the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal by asking three or more mentors to validate that the student demonstrated the professional skills valued by Ohio businesses. The OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal distinguishes students who are prepared to contribute to the workplace and their communities.

To earn the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal, each student must complete these steps:

1. Demonstrate proficiency** in each of 15 identified professional skills.
2. Using the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal Form, record how he or she demonstrated each professional skill. A student is only required to document how he or she demonstrated each skill in one of three possible environments – school, work or community. But, the student cannot document all 15 skills in the same environment, for example, school. At least two environments must be reflected among the demonstrated skills.
3. Have each skill validated (confirmed) by at least one mentor. A mentor is an experienced advisor the student trusts. A minimum of three mentors must be involved in the overall validation process and sign the form. By signing the form, each mentor is recommending the student to a prospective employer or higher education provider.
4. The student is encouraged to secure letters of recommendation from his or her mentors. The student also may engage in career planning and career readiness activities on OhioMeansJobs.com.

How students choose mentors:

Mentors are experienced and trusted advisors who the student has worked with in a professional setting during high school. To earn the seal, mentors from different environments must validate that the student demonstrates the professional skills required for success in the workplace. *By signing the form, the mentor is validating that the student has demonstrated these skills under his or her supervision. The mentor also is recommending the student to his or her prospective employer or higher education provider.* In some cases, high school faculty may contact mentors to verify the accuracy of the form.

*Ohio Revised Code 3313.6112 establishes the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal.

****Proficient:** Has a deep understanding, can achieve a high standard routinely, takes responsibility for own work, deals with complex situations, makes decisions with confidence, and sees, overall, how individual actions influence outcomes (The Dryfus Model of Skill Acquisition, <http://devmts.org.uk/dreyfus.pdf>).

Environments and mentors:

School: The student demonstrates professional skills in a school environment during the school day or during extracurricular activities. School mentors include teachers, administrators, advisors, coaches and others. These activities are separate from work-based or community-based activities.

Work: The student demonstrates professional skills in a work environment. Work mentors include supervisors, hiring managers, experienced co-workers and others. These activities are separate from school-based or community-based activities.

Community: The student demonstrates professional skills in a community environment. Community mentors include volunteer coordinators, faith-based leaders and others. These activities are separate from school-based or work-based activities.

Professional skills:

To understand the skills that are required for success in the 21st century, the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal team surveyed the business community. According to Ohio businesses, students and applicants must demonstrate proficiency in the following professional skills to be ready for work:

- **Drug Free** - The student commits to being drug free.***
- **Reliability** - The student has integrity and responsibility in professional settings.
- **Work Ethic** - The student has effective work habits, personal accountability and a determination to succeed.
- **Punctuality** - The student arrives to commitments on time and ready to contribute.
- **Discipline** - The student abides by guidelines, demonstrates self-control and stays on task.
- **Teamwork/Collaboration** - The student builds collaborative relationships with others and can work as part of a team.
- **Professionalism** - The student demonstrates honesty. He or she dresses and acts appropriately and responsibly. He or she learns from mistakes.
- **Learning Agility** - The student desires to continuously learn new information and skills.
- **Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving** - The student exercises strong decision-making skills, analyzes issues effectively and thinks creatively to overcome problems.
- **Leadership** - The student leverages the strengths of others to achieve common goals. He or she coaches and motivates peers and can prioritize and delegate work.
- **Creativity/Innovation** - The student is original and inventive. He or she communicates new ideas to others, drawing on knowledge from different fields to find solutions.
- **Oral and Written Communications** - The student articulates thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.
- **Digital Technology** - The student has an understanding of emerging technology and leverages technology to solve problems, complete tasks and accomplish goals.
- **Global/Intercultural Fluency** - The student values, respects and learns from diverse groups of people.
- **Career Management** - The student is a self-advocate. He or she articulates strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to success in a job or postsecondary education.

Students are encouraged to ask their mentors for letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation give students an advantage as they begin the rigorous job or college application process.

*****Drug Free:** Although commitment to being drug free may not qualify as a “skill,” this quality is equally important to employers.