“While you may think that choosing the “right” major is key to getting a good job, your long-term professional success will depend far more on acquiring the right skills for a rapidly changing workplace.”

- Association of American Colleges and Universities*

The points below (1-10) are taken from the American Association of Colleges and Universities report “How Should Colleges Prepare Students to Succeed in Today’s Global Economy?”
http://www.aacu.org/leap/students/employerstopten.cfm

The answers listed under each point were collected from UMASS Amherst Sociology majors participating in the Next Steps: Life After UMASS seminar in Spring 2013. Students generated a list of skills that they felt they had acquired from their major and related coursework.

1) The ability to work well in teams—especially with people different from yourself
   • Group collaboration
   • Listening skills
   • Understanding people’s mindsets/ behavior
   • Understanding social norms
   • Ability to work with others and understand/ accept different viewpoints

2) An understanding of science and technology and how these subjects are used in real-world settings
   • Ability to use a variety of computer programs
   • SAS
   • STATA
   • Coding in R
   • Excel
   • Word
   • Social Explorer (to gather demographic and census data)
   • Powerpoint
   • Keynote
   • Pages
   • Prezi
   • Ability to navigate using multiple web browser platforms
   • GSS website

3) The ability to write and speak well
   • Debate skills
   • Presentation/ public speaking skills
   • Writing skills
   • Writing in the social sciences
   • Interpersonal skills
   • Writing research papers
   • Editing papers
   • Ability to cite work in APA, MLA, Chicago format
   • Ability to identify reliable sources of information

4) The ability to think clearly about complex problems
   • Critiquing systems and institutions
   • Understanding how inequality is structured
   • Analytical reasoning skills
   • Understanding of various research methods (participant observation, ethnographic research, survey research, media analysis, quantitative analysis)
5) The ability to analyze a problem to develop workable solutions
   - Ability to analyze data
   - Using resources to build evidence
   - Observational skills
   - Research skills
   - Collecting and analyzing data
   - Media analysis
   - Understanding/ using sociological theory

6) An understanding of global context in which work is now done
   - Understanding people's mindsets/ behavior
   - Understanding how societies are structured
   - Understanding inequality
   - Ability to go outside of comfort zone to get a better understanding of language, cultures and religion without bias
   - Understanding of social norms
   - Ability to do cross-cultural comparisons or analysis
   - Ability to connect different skills or subjects to one another

7) The ability to be creative and innovative in solving problems
   - Finding patterns within the larger picture
   - Writing research papers
   - Figuring out “why”
   - Brainstorming ideas to fix problems
   - Ability to form solid arguments and back them up
   - Innovation skills: ability to “think outside the box or from different perspectives

8) The ability to apply knowledge and skills in new settings
   - Ability to analyze people and society
   - Interviewing skills
   - Ethnographic research skills
   - Media analysis

9) The ability to understand numbers and statistics
   - Interpreting Data
   - Coding data
   - Coding interviews
   - Knowledge of design and administration of surveys
   - Ability to identify bad data or use of numbers
   - Ability to use data:
     - General Social Survey
     - American Community Survey
     - Census Data

10) A strong sense of ethics and integrity
    - Value diversity
    - Ability to handle confidential information

* [http://www.aacu.org/leap/students/employerstopten.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/students/employerstopten.cfm), accessed 3-2-13