

## **UMASS AMHERST SOCIOLOGY MAJORS HAVE SKILLS EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR**

“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)

- “Big Picture” thinking skills
- Recognizing change over time
- Analyzing Sociological Theory

**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/employerstopen.cfm>, accessed 3-2-13