

Workforce Preparedness / Workforce Alignment Study

The following is the draft scope of work to be finalized with the selected vendor.

Scope of Work

A statewide study on the effectiveness of graduates produced by the Utah System of Higher Education at the technical college and undergraduate level focused on Utah employers.

Introduction

[Consultation Company Name], hereinafter referred to as "the Consultant," is tasked with conducting a comprehensive statewide study to assess the effectiveness of higher education graduates in the workforce, with a specific focus on gathering insights from employers in key industries. This study will help identify areas of improvement and/or sustainment to provide recommendations for enhancing higher education's responsiveness and alignment with the needs of employers in Utah.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To collect and define the expectations Utah private sector leaders have of graduates from higher education institutions.
2. To evaluate the quality, preparedness, and effectiveness of graduates from the Utah System of Higher Education.
3. To understand employers' specific needs and expectations in key industries, including Healthcare, Life Sciences, Aerospace, Financial Services, Computer Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Transportation, and Construction.
4. To provide actionable recommendations to improve and/or sustain the alignment of higher education with the needs of employers in Utah.

Methodology

The Consultant will employ a mixed-method approach to gather comprehensive data, both quantitative and qualitative, which may include, but is not limited to:

1. Surveys: Developing and distributing online/phone surveys to employers within the specified industries.
2. In-depth Interviews: Conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including executives, HR personnel, and other relevant individuals from selected employers.

3. Focus Groups: Organizing and moderating focus group discussions with representatives from different industries.
4. Document Review: Analyzing existing reports, publications, and other relevant documents related to the effectiveness of higher education.
5. Site Visits: Visiting selected higher education institutions to assess on-campus career resources and practices.

Scope

1. Geographical Focus: The study will cover the entire state of Utah.
2. Industry Focus: The study will concentrate on the following industries: Healthcare, Life Sciences, Aerospace, Financial Services, Computer Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Transportation, Construction, and Education (secondary and postsecondary).
3. Stakeholder Engagement: The Consultant will engage with the Commissioner's office, state employers, public education, and higher education institutions from a workforce perspective, and relevant government agencies from a workforce perspective.
4. Data Analysis: The Consultant will perform a detailed analysis of the collected data to draw meaningful conclusions and make recommendations.

Deliverables

The Consultant will provide the following deliverables:

1. Interim Progress Report: A mid-study report outlining the progress made, data collected, and preliminary findings.
2. Draft Report(s): Comprehensive draft report(s) detailing the study's methodology, findings, and recommendations for review and feedback.
3. Final Report: The final report will incorporate feedback, present the study's results, and provide actionable recommendations for higher education institutions in Utah to improve alignment with the needs of employers in Utah.

Timeline

1. Project Initiation: [Start Date]
2. Interim Progress Report: [Midpoint Date]
3. Data Collection and Analysis: [Timeline for data collection and analysis]
4. Draft Report Submission: [Draft Report Due Date]
5. Final Report Submission: [Final Report Due Date]

Budget

The Consultant will provide a detailed budget for the project, including expenses for research, travel, personnel, and any other relevant costs.

Governance

The Consultant will work closely with the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Associate Commissioner of Talent Ready Utah to ensure project alignment with objectives and expectations.

Confidentiality

The Consultant will treat all collected data, information, and discussions with employers and higher education institutions as confidential and shall not disclose such information without explicit consent or legal requirement.

Contact Information

[Consultation Company Contact Information]

By accepting this Scope of Work, the Consultant agrees to adhere to its terms and conduct the statewide customer service study in a professional and ethical manner.

Signature: [Authorized Representative of the Consultation Company]

Date: [Date of Signature]

Survey

Surveys should contain comprehensive data, both quantitative and qualitative. The following questions are to be integrated into the study but are not meant to be an all-inclusive list. Other questions the Consultant recommends can be integrated into the study.

Select one or more of the following.

- My organization hires graduates from the state's technical colleges.
- My organization hires graduates from state institutions at an associate degree level.
- My organization hires graduates from the state's colleges/universities at the bachelor's degree level.
- My organization hires graduates from the state's colleges/universities at the post-graduate level.
- My organization participates in work-based learning with students through apprenticeships, internships, externships, co-ops, etc.
- My organization participates in Industry Advisory Councils/Committees at one of the technical colleges and/or degree-granting institutions.

Quantitative Analysis

Technical Skills

- How important is the possession of technical skills for higher education graduates? (1 = Not Important, 5 = Moderately Important, 10 = Extremely Important)
- How would you rate the workforce readiness of recent graduates from higher education for roles within your organization? (1 = Not Prepared, 5 = Moderately Prepared, 10 = Highly Prepared)
- On a scale from 1 to 10, what is the extent to which recent graduates possess the specific skills or competencies required for their roles in your organization? (1 = Lacking, 5 = Moderately Competent, 10 = Fully Competent)
- How would you rate the proficiency of recent graduates in a specific technology or digital skills critical for your industry? (1 = Inadequate, 5 = Adequate, 10 = Highly Proficient)
- On a scale from 1 to 10, how effectively do higher education institutions equip graduates with knowledge of industry-specific regulations and compliance standards? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = Effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How well do recent graduates apply theoretical knowledge from their academic studies to practical tasks within your organization? Rate on a scale from 1 to 10. (1 = Poor Application, 5 = Moderate Application, 10 = Strong Application)
- How effective are work-based learning opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, externships, co-op programs, or experiential learning opportunities in preparing students for the workforce in your industry? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = moderately effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How effective do you think higher education institutions are at staying updated with the evolving demands of your industry to ensure that graduates are better prepared? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = Moderately Effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How satisfied are you with the quality and relevance of coursework provided by higher education institutions as it pertains to the needs of your organization? Rate on a scale from 1 to 5. (1 = Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied)
- Do you have recommendations for higher education institutions to improve program alignment with the needs of employers? (1 = Few Recommendations, 10 = Many Recommendations)
- How effective is the feedback loop between your organization and higher education institutions in addressing the skill and knowledge needs of your industry? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = Effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How often have you observed significant gaps in the skills or preparedness of recent graduates? (1 = Frequently, 5 = Occasionally/Rarely, 10 = Never)
- How often do you believe there are opportunities for higher education institutions to enhance the employability of their graduates? (1 = Frequently, 5 = Occasionally/Rarely, 10 = Never)

- Over the last five years, please quantify the number of recent graduates who lack industry-specific skills or certifications important for your organization.
- Over the last five years, please quantify the number of recent graduates who have excelled in your organization and describe the characteristics or qualities that made them stand out.
- Please quantify the number of recent graduates who required additional training or certification upon joining your organization to meet industry-specific standards.
- Please provide data regarding the retention rates of recent graduates within your organization and how that may be related to their preparedness and skills.

Interpersonal Skills

- On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the importance of soft skills and professional attributes in the success of recent graduates within your organization. (1 = Not Important, 5 = Important, 10 = Highly Important)
- How would you rate the adaptability and problem-solving abilities of recent graduates when facing real-world challenges within your organization? (1 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Excellent)
- How well do recent graduates demonstrate leadership and decision-making abilities in your organization? (1 = Weak, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Strong)
- How well do recent graduates demonstrate ethical decision-making and professionalism in your organization? (1 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Excellent)
- How well do recent graduates demonstrate adaptability to different work environments and company cultures? (1 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Excellent)
- How proficient are recent graduates in project management and time management skills? (1 = Inadequate, 5 = Proficient, 10 = Highly Proficient)
- How often do recent graduates exhibit strong problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities in your organization? (1 = Frequently, 5 = Occasionally/Rarely, 10 = Never)
- Rate the communication and teamwork ability of recent graduates. (1 = Poor, 5 = Acceptable, 10 = Excellent)
- How crucial do you believe mentorship and on-the-job training are for recent graduates to transition into the workforce? (1 = Not Crucial, 5 = Moderately Crucial, 10 = Extremely Crucial)
- Rate the level of recent graduates' innovation and creativity in problem-solving within your organization on a scale from 1 to 5. (1 = Low, 5 = Moderate, 10 = High)
- In your experience, how well do recent graduates adapt to the fast pace of technological changes within your industry? Rate on a scale from 1 to 5. (1 = Poor Adaptation, 5 = Moderate Adaptation, 10 = Excellent Adaptation)

General Yes / No

- Have you noticed any specific trends or changes in your industry that affect the skills and qualifications you seek in recent graduates? (Yes/No)
- Are you aware of how to connect with institutions? (Yes, No)
- Do you know the resources available at institutions for accessing talent? (Yes, No)
- Do you use job boards on institutions' websites to hire full-time staff or to promote internships? (Yes, No)
- Do you feel like your voice is heard regarding feedback on curriculum and talent needs? (Yes, No)
- Can students translate the skills they have acquired in education to their prospective employers? (Yes, No)
- Would you hire students with micro-credentials in technical skills? (Yes, No)
- Would you hire students who completed a competency-based program? (Yes, No)
- Is higher education meeting your needs as an employer in Utah? (Yes, No)
- Should we consider including a question regarding how higher education is supporting employers in diversifying talent? For example, is higher education graduating a diverse talent pool, and if not, what system change is required to respond to the growing need and prioritization of a diversified workforce?

Qualitative Analysis

- Can you quantify the impact of specific projects or initiatives within your organization related to workforce development and education?
- How do you envision the future of workforce readiness and the partnership between higher education and employers in your industry?
- Can you describe the typical roles or positions within your organization that recent graduates from higher education fill?
- What specific skills, knowledge, or competencies do you expect from recent graduates in these roles?
- Have you observed any gaps in the skills or preparedness of recent graduates? If so, can you provide examples?
- Are there any industry-specific skills or certifications you find lacking in recent higher education graduates?
- What do you consider the most important soft skills or professional attributes that recent graduates should possess for success in your organization?
- Can you describe any successful partnerships or collaborations you have had with higher education institutions to bridge the gap between academic training and workforce needs?

- Do you believe there are opportunities for higher education institutions to enhance the employability of their graduates? If so, how?
- Can you provide any examples of recent graduates who have excelled in your organization, and what characteristics or qualities made them stand out?
- How do you think higher education institutions can stay updated with the evolving demands of your industry to ensure that graduates are better prepared?
- Are there any emerging trends or changes in your industry that may impact the skills and qualifications you seek in recent graduates? What are they?
- What advice or recommendations would you provide to higher education institutions to improve the alignment of their programs with the needs of employers?
- Are there any specific projects or initiatives within your organization related to workforce development and education that you'd like to highlight?
- Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the preparedness of graduates and their fit within your organization?