



## Executive Summary

The Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) seeks to enhance the career success of its student body by focusing on the broad-based development of soft skills (resume writing, professional attire, and interview skills) through formal curricula change and informal opportunities to learn and practice those skills. Soft skills are “the social, attitudinal, and self-regulatory competencies or traits that allow us to communicate effectively, work well with others, and persist in the face of adversity” (Hora, Benbow, & Smolarek, 2018) Soft skills also include but are not limited to abilities such as “teamwork, problem-solving, communication (formal and informal, verbal and written), interpersonal interaction, public speaking, and time management” (Low, Samkin, & Liu, 2013). The 2019 NACE Job Outlook further supports the existence of this gap in graduate and employer perspectives. According to the report, critical thinking/problem solving, teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethic, and oral/written communications remain as the top four most essential career competencies as rated by employers.

## Student Learning Outcomes

**SLO #1:** Students will acquire practical soft skills (resume writing, interview skills, and dress for success/professional attire), including oral and written communication, that enhance employability.

**SLO #2:** Students will confidently articulate career goals using discipline-specific terminology.

**SLO #3:** Students will demonstrate appropriate soft skills through informal and formal opportunities in selected courses through presentations and internship evaluations.

## Work Plan/Implementation

1. SUNO will provide soft skills enhancement opportunities through the specific general requirement and discipline-specific courses.
2. Develop a list of courses (curriculum map) where soft skills are/should be emphasized and provide training to the instructors that are reflective of promising practices.
3. The STAR (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) job interview method will be emphasized in many communication classes as practical.
4. The Office of Career Placement will coordinate opportunities to enhance soft skills including oral and written communication with other campus resources.
5. Each student will be required to maintain a portfolio of soft skills enhancement activities (resume writing, professional attire, and interview skills) including courses completed and training activities completed.
6. In order to meet graduation requirements, the Office of Career Placement must certify that the student has completed soft skill enhancement activities as part of the Graduation Exit Interview process. A line of approval will be added to the Exit Interview form.
7. In order to be certified, each student will be required to provide evidence of three soft skill enhancement activities approved by their director/department chair and the Office of Career Placement.