

14 ESSENTIAL AI “I CAN ...” SKILLS EVERY UNDERGRAD SHOULD HAVE

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As AI platforms, tools, and capabilities advance faster than ever, employers are increasingly looking for durable AI skills that ensure agility, adaptability, ingenuity, and discernment, in a fast-changing world. They want judgment about how to *use* AI rather than knowledge of specific tools, evidence of AI competence that can be shown or demonstrated in an interview, and the ability to manage, direct, and delegate to AI agents and systems.

The 14 “I can ...” skills below were developed to help undergraduates prepare for interviews, jobs, and careers, at a time when many approaches to teaching AI literacy are already out of date, or soon will be. They aren’t the only durable skills worth developing, but they’re a useful start.

The point of an “I can ...” skill is being able to show you can actually do it, and playing and experimenting with AI is a great way to develop, refine, and demonstrate each one.

1. **I can choose the right AI tool or platform** for a specific task, and explain why.
2. **I can tell AI clearly what I want, give it the context it needs**, and describe what a good result looks like.
3. **I can explore ideas through back-and-forth conversations with AI**, and push back when it fixates on my first idea or just tells me what I want to hear.
4. **I can research a topic with AI and check its work**, including verifying that its sources are real and actually support what it says, and that the facts it presents and its reasoning hold up.
5. **I can edit and improve AI-generated work**, even when it already looks polished, until it meets my standards (and my employer’s or institution’s) and the needs of the people it’s intended for.
6. **I can safely and effectively work with an AI agent on multi-step tasks**, responsibly setting what it can access and do on its own, and checking its work.
7. **I can turn a repetitive or routine task into a reusable AI workflow or assistant**, and improve it over time.
8. **I can use AI to analyze data and draw out useful insights** while checking its outputs and protecting private and sensitive information.
9. **I can use AI to turn complex information into clear summaries, visuals, and slides**, and spot where they oversimplify or are misleading.
10. **I can disclose how I’ve used AI in line with the relevant policies and the expectations** of people who use my work, and take full responsibility for anything I produce with it.
11. **I can explain what AI is good at and what it’s bad at** (including bias, errors, and risks), and how these shape the way I use it.
12. **I can use AI creatively and imaginatively** to open up new possibilities and opportunities.
13. **I can explain how I balance curiosity, care, clarity, and intentionality** in deciding when and how to use AI.
14. **I can use AI to learn how to use AI**, and keep learning as the tools change.

