

Background

In late 2018, the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC) and AlphaPlus (AP) agreed to collaborate on the development of a “Digital Skills for Postsecondary Readiness” assessment tool. The goal of the project was to develop an assessment tool that college LBS/AU programs could use (voluntarily) to help assess their learners’ digital skills readiness for transition to postsecondary studies, and to provide suggested resources to support learners’ digital skills acquisition if needed.

Because of the constantly evolving context of digital skills competence and digital fluency, the perceived requirements for postsecondary readiness are also evolving. Facilitators who choose to use this tool are encouraged to consider the emerging skills, knowledge and attitudes related to digital competency that are becoming increasingly important and varied.

Development

Work on the project began in June 2019 and continued through March 2021. Both AlphaPlus and the CSC provided a project leader, and the CSC recruited seven faculty members from their respective colleges to participate as working group members for the project.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 resulted in some redirection of project activities due to both the shift to remote delivery as well as the feedback received from the piloting of the draft tool in early 2020.

During 2020-21, the project focused on reviewing the previous year’s work and revising some components of the assessment tool, as well as producing a second version of some components so that they could be used as a “pre- and post” assessment if desired. It is important to note that the limitations of the pandemic made it challenging to conduct piloting activities with learners for the revised/second versions of the tool.

The components in the “Digital Skills for Postsecondary Readiness” assessment tool are as follows:

1. Digital Competence Quiz
2. Microsoft Word Task (Versions A and B)
3. Microsoft Excel Task (Versions A and B)
4. Microsoft PowerPoint Task (Versions A and B)
5. Self-directed Learning Resources

As mentioned above, the concept of “digital skills for postsecondary readiness” continues to change as remote/online/hybrid program delivery evolves across all sectors of education. Care must be taken to ensure that learners are aware of the context and purpose of these assessments, and results must be adequately explained.

The next section below provides some guidelines for accessing and using the assessment tool.

Guidelines for Use of the Tool

All components of the tool can be accessed here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/digitalreadiness/>

A. The “Digital Competence Quiz’

- If you wish to add the quiz to your LMS, you can view the guidelines here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/digitalreadiness/chapter/adding-the-quiz-to-your-lms/>
- Quiz questions can be revised/updated to suit more specific purposes if you are adding the quiz to your own LMS.

B. Microsoft Office Tasks (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)

Each task contains the following:

- Two versions (A and B); the same skills are assessed in each version
- Separate files for “Facilitator Instructions” and “Student Instructions”
- Excel task also contains a data file that must be provided to the student
- Checklist to provide feedback to learners for each version of the tasks

The content of any task can be modified to meet individual program needs.

Note that the Excel task is divided into Part 1 (beginner) and Part 2 (intermediate). Part 2 was designed for learners moving into postsecondary programs that require a higher skill level in Excel. The facilitator can determine if both Part 1 and Part 2 are appropriate for the learner.

C. Self-directed Learning Resources

A selection of open source resources to support digital skills acquisition can be found at <https://sites.google.com/alphaplus.ca/digitalreadiness/home>. Some of the topics addressed in the resources include the following:

- About Computers
- Cloud Computing
- Collaboration Tools
- Email
- Internet Basics
- Information Literacy
- Files, Folders and Operating Systems
- Microsoft Office
- Online Identity
- Online Security
- Passwords
- Plagiarism

Summary Chart

The following page contains a description of each component of the assessment tool.

Description of the Assessment Tool

Component	Format	Description	Versions	Marking
Digital Competence Quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed in H5P and hosted on Pressbooks - Can be migrated to an LMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes 32 objective questions covering seven general areas of competence: online security, digital plagiarism, netiquette, browser features, collaboration tools, learning management systems, and email - Not intended to assess specific skills but rather general digital knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One version only - Could be customized further if migrated to an LMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Auto-marked in the LMS
MS Word Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructions for student and facilitator provided in a Word document - Could be re-created in an e-form or LMS - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covers basic Words skills: format text, copy/paste, paginating, indenting, inserting headers/footers - Also requires creating and saving a folder/document - Task is submitted by creating a PDF and attaching it to an email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two versions available (A & B) - Both assess the same skills but use a different context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Version A: College Program Plan o Version B: Employment Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checklist provided for facilitator to complete for each version of each task
MS PowerPoint Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructions for student and facilitator provided in a Word document - Could be re-created in an e-form or LMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covers basic PPT skills; format text, insert text/images/video, resize, use a theme, use animation - Also requires creating and saving a folder/document - Task is submitted by creating a PDF and attaching it to an email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two versions available (A & B) - Both assess the same skills but use a different context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Version A: Stress Management o Version B: Time Management 	
MS Excel Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructions for student and facilitator provided in the Excel data file - Completed data file provided for facilitator - Could be re-created in an e-form or LMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part 1 covers introductory Excel skills: label & format cells, copy/paste, insert columns & rows, use auto sum/average functions, insert/format a pie chart, use headers/footers; use margin and print settings - Part 2 extends from part 1 to cover some intermediate Excel skills: insert/format a bar chart, use cell references, use IF function - Also requires creating and saving a folder/document - Task is submitted based on facilitator's preference/instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two versions available (A & B) - Both assess the same skills but use a different context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Version A: College Tuition Fees o Version B: College Program Enrollment 	