LifeSkills
Real Skills for Real Life

Format, Guidelines and FAQs

LifeSkills delivers real-world financial and practical information to college students who are about to enter the workforce — skills graduates will need to truly succeed.

While the seminar was originally designed to be presented in seven evening sessions, held over seven consecutive weeks, the program is flexible. In fact, the entire program is detailed in a template you can feel free to edit, borrow from and change until it makes sense for your college or university and your students.

Because the program is not copyrighted, you may use and reproduce the materials exactly as they are presented in this toolkit, or adapt the materials to fit your needs.

The important thing is that your institution is offering this important, real-world information to students.

Frequently Asked Questions

➢ **Whom is this program meant to serve?**

The LifeSkills program is intended for students who will soon be graduating and entering the real world — namely juniors and seniors. The information is most relevant for this demographic, but would certainly be beneficial for any student interested in taking the course. Your college or university may choose which classes or age groups to target, or open the course up to all students.

➢ **What topics does the program cover?**

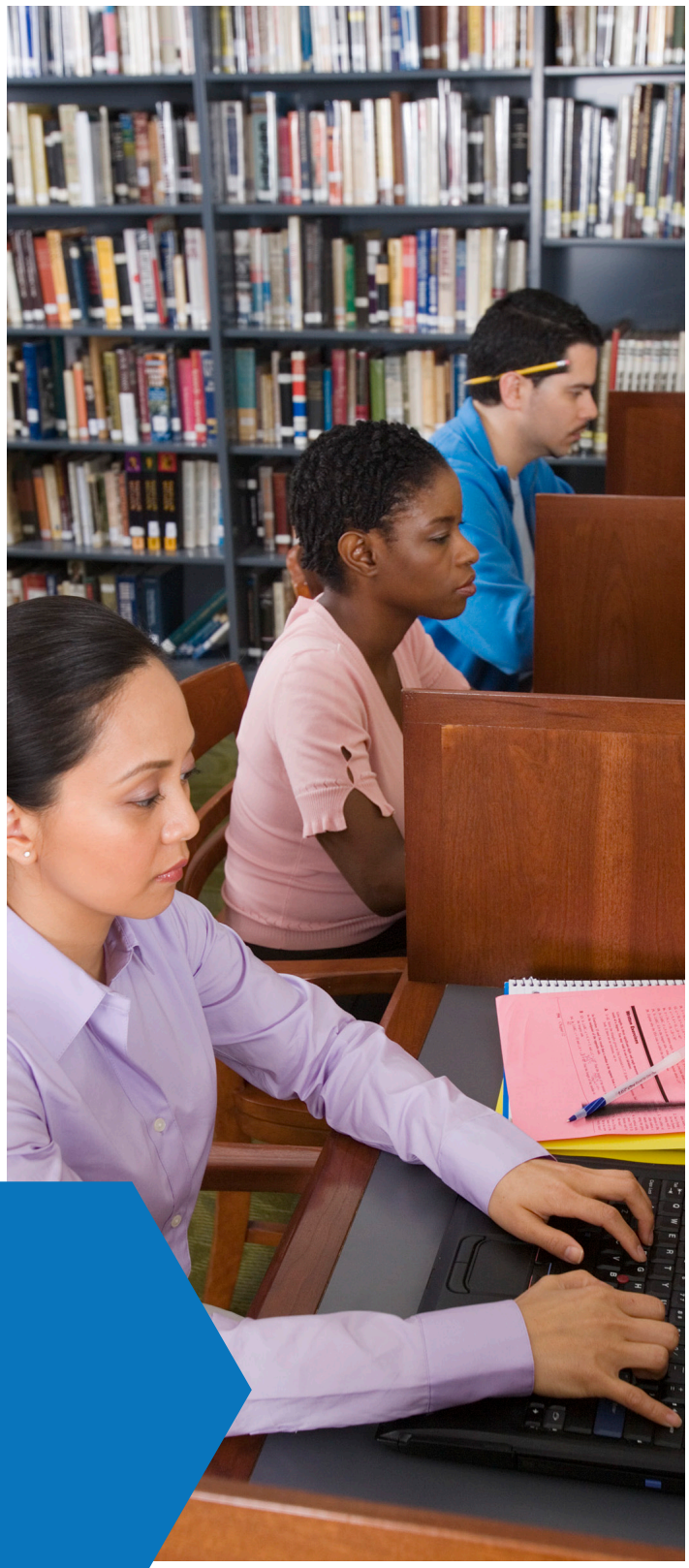
LifeSkills should cover issues most relevant to graduates — information that isn't necessarily taught in the classroom but is most critical for success in adulthood. See the "Topics" section for a list of suggestions, but tailor the program to include the topics that your students need most.

➢ **Where can we find speakers to deliver the material?**

Once you've nailed down your list of topics, search for professionals in those fields to deliver the material. Use your alumni network to begin, as graduates are often honored to revisit their campus and help current students. Many professional associations and organizations also have speakers bureaus, which will identify free speakers and coordinate the details. (Visit the VSCPA's consumer Web site **www.FinancialFitness.org** and click on **"Financial Assistance"** then **"Speakers Bureau"** to request a CPA to speak to your students.) Feel free to use the letters and e-mails in this manual to help secure and schedule speakers for your LifeSkills program.

➢ **How do we spread the word to students?**

Brainstorm various methods to get the word out to your students, including hallway banners, mailbox stuffers, cafeteria table tents, e-mails and more. The most successful form of marketing for this specific program, however, targets the parents. Send a letter from the dean and a brochure home to parents, letting them know how important this program is. By nature, parents are more concerned about their students' ability to adapt to the real world than their children — who are less familiar with the need for such skills. Most likely, you will see the majority of registrations come from parents on behalf of their children.



- **When is the best time to hold the course?**

  Avoid finals, midterms and study periods. The beginning of each semester works best, especially because summer and holiday break are ideal for program planning and marketing to parents. But again, plan to do what's best for your students.

- **What will this program cost our institution?**

  Depending on your expenses and whether you charge a registration or materials fee, the program may cost you little to nothing. In some cases, you may secure profit that can be used for subsequent LifeSkills programs. Because the costs and registration fees are at your discretion, so is the net gain or loss. See the "Budget" section for more information.

- **What should we charge for this program?**

  The cost of the program is entirely up to your institution. The included budget worksheet will help you estimate expenses, which will, in turn, give you an idea how much to charge per registrant. James Madison University (JMU), which created the LifeSkills program, charged $189, yielding $20,000 in net income per program.

- **How long does it take to plan the program?**

  As with any new program, the first event may take a bit more planning. But if you use the suggested materials in the manual, you should not need to begin planning more than 90 days out. Of course, subsequent events will likely take less time to plan, especially if your speakers agree to continue with the program. See the "Timeline" section for more information.

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- **What if we want to change a few elements of the program?**

  The basic goal of LifeSkills is to ensure graduates leave your college or university with both scholastic knowledge and practical life knowledge. The rest is up to you. There are suggested topics, materials and procedures in this manual to help you administer this program on your campus with ease. But be sure to keep your students' specific needs in mind in delivering the LifeSkills program and make whatever changes necessary to ensure the program is a success. Using the information in this manual as a guideline may save you time and money. But tailoring the program to meet your needs is also essential.

- **Do we need to use the LifeSkills logo and materials exactly as they are presented?**

  The materials in this manual have been compiled to help you administer the LifeSkills program without having to reinvent the wheel. However, the program is not copyrighted, and you should feel free to make changes to the materials and use the LifeSkills logo, or not, as you please.

- **Who can we contact with additional questions?**

  For more information, visit **www.FinancialFitness.org** or contact VSCPA Media & Public Relations Specialist Shawnte Reynolds at **sreynolds@vscpa.com** or (800) 733-8272.

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