

Careers and Employability Service Skills Dictionary

Introduction

Employers look for a wide range of skills, many of which you will be able to develop during your studies. These are often called “transferable” skills and include:

- **Communication:** ability to communicate at all levels, develop a logical argument, take account of the audience/reader, write effectively, concisely and accurately and, most importantly, to listen
- **Teamwork:** ability to co-operate and work with others, be aware of one’s own performance and the effect of it on a group, to negotiate and persuade, to motivate others, to compromise, mediate, reconcile and bring ideas together
- **Organisation:** time management, prioritising tasks and project management
- **Analysis and problem solving:** ability to ascertain facts, sort out what is relevant, decide on a course of action after considering alternatives, using resources effectively and learning by experience
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** ability to adapt to change, to take on new ideas and to be versatile

Many employers also look for a **commercial** or **business awareness** – an awareness of some of the current financial trends, an appreciation of the financial impact of certain decisions made in business, and a general interest or curiosity in how businesses work. Managing a budget, fundraising and working in a commercial environment are all ways of developing such awareness. Some employers also seek evidence of **creativity** or **enterprise** when recruiting.

People Skills

- **Team working:** the ability to work effectively in teams, often more than one team at once; to be able to re-adjust roles from one project situation to another in an ever-shifting work situation. Supportive, facilitator, organised, co-ordinator, deliverer, imaginative, delegator, open-minded
- **Leadership:** the ability to take control of a situation and to lead by empowering others to follow. Having the vision and innovation to move forward. Dynamic, motivator, team-builder, confidence booster, energetic, capable, outward-looking, accountable, visionary
- **Interpersonal:** the ability to relate to, and feel comfortable with, people at all levels and to be able to make and maintain relationships as circumstances change. Listener, adviser, counsellor, politically aware, initiator, professional, co-operative, constructive, assertive
- **Customer orientation:** the ability to establish a confident and flexible relationship with people important to the employer/company. Welcoming, friendly, caring, approachable, constructive, accommodating, tactful, diplomatic, tolerant
- **Oral/ written communication:** the ability to communicate, formally and informally, verbally and in writing, with a wide range of people both internal and external to the organisation. Educator, trainer, communicator, presenter, promoter, influencer, humorous, empathetic
- **Cultural Awareness:** the ability to speak, write, understand more than one language; valuing languages; awareness of other cultures and how they impact upon career decisions and/or work environment: specific language skills, cultural awareness, international experience, written and oral expertise, sensitivity

Self-reliance Skills

- **Self-awareness/confidence:** self-confidence, self-awareness, self-belief, self-sufficiency, self-direction and self-promotion. Purposeful, focused, reflective, perceptive, honest, self-belief, objective, realistic, balanced

- **Self-promotion:** The ability to advertise your own agenda and publicise personal strengths by selling real benefits to someone else. Positive, persuasive, pleasant, proactive, persistent, ambitious, opportunistic, promoter
- **Initiative, proactivity, self-motivation:** being a self-starter, resilient, tenacious and determined. Resourceful, energetic, drive, flexible, self-starter, self-reliant, initiative, self-disciplined
- **Networking:** For successful personal development, it's vital to build contacts throughout your working life. The process of finding people who are ready, willing and able to help you is the basis of this skill. Initiator, trustful, personable, relationship-builder, persistent developer, resourceful, respected
- **Willing to learn:** the ability to learn and continue learning throughout life. Motivated, adaptable, enthusiastic, active, keen learner, inquisitive, continual improver
- **Action planning and self-regulation:** self-discipline, time-keeping, the ability to deal with stress, to plan and prioritise your workload and to "juggle" several tasks at once. Decision-maker, planner, organised, negotiator, responsive, evaluator, forward thinker, target driven, able to prioritise

Generalist skills

- **Problem-solving/ intellectual:** the ability to analyse, critique and synthesise information in order to solve problems. Achiever, successful, results-orientated, project management, creative, practical, logical, astute, agile mind.
- **IT/ICT/computer literacy:** The ability to accept, learn and adapt to new technology and make the most of the opportunities it presents. IT skills, software packages, common sense, task-orientated, progressive, specific, office skills, keyboard skills, electronic communication eg internet, email, fax.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** the ability to respond to change, to pre-empt change and ultimately to lead change. Understanding of work based culture. Multi-disciplinary, flexible, versatile, multi-skilled, willing, obliging, adaptable.
- **Numeracy:** The ability to handle numbers includes basic maths skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, an understanding of percentages, gathering statistical data in various formats and being able to analyse, interpret and present them in a clear and accurate way. Accurate, logical, problem-solver, detailed, methodical, consistent, quick thinker, analytical, thorough.
- **Business acumen:** Use, observe and develop skills appropriate for a commercial environment. Being an innovator, and a professional with effective marketing and communication skills. Competitive, entrepreneurial, enterprising, commercial, foresight, budgeter, risk taker, effective written communication
- **Commitment:** Showing an interest and dedication to a topic, subject, value or activity. Dedicated, trustworthy, conscientious, reliable, loyal, punctual, knowledgeable, experienced.

Specialist skills

- **Company-specific:** Meeting the skill requirements of the company either on recruitment or on-the-job, being prepared to adapt and learn new skills to meet future "commercial" needs: specialist knowledge eg product or market knowledge; specialist skills eg IT packages; unique language skills eg Chinese; specialist interpersonal skills
- **Technical skills/knowledge:** an understanding of basic principles rather than large stocks of specialist knowledge. Professional, sector-based or functional skills. Journalism, research, tax accounting, counselling, creative design, economist, personnel, sales, marketing
- **Understanding commercial goals of company:** an understanding of the values of the company or organization and the need to balance needs of shareholders/owners with the needs of the market or individual. Specialist understanding of an organisations goals, priorities and future direction (combination of self-reliance, business acumen and people skills)