

Transferable Skills

WHAT ARE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS?

A transferable skill is a “portable skill” that you deliberately (or inadvertently, if you haven’t identified them yet) take with you to other life experiences.

Your transferable skills are often acquired through:

- a class (e.g., an English major who is taught technical writing)
- experience (e.g., the student government representative who develops strong motivation and consensus building skills)

Transferable skills supplement your degree. They provide an employer concrete evidence of your readiness and qualifications for a position. Identifying your transferable skills and communicating them to potential employers will greatly increase your success during the job search.

Remember that it is impossible to complete college without acquiring transferable skills. Campus and community activities, class projects and assignments, athletic activities, internships and summer/part-time jobs have provided you with countless experiences where you’ve acquired a range of skills—many that you may take for granted.

Identifying Transferable Skills

While very closely related (and with some overlap), transferable skills can be divided into three subsets:

- Working With People
- Working With Things
- Working With Data/Information

For example, some transferable skills can be used in every workplace setting (e.g., organizing or public speaking) while some are more applicable to specific settings (e.g., drafting or accounting).

The following are examples of skills often acquired through the classroom, jobs, athletics and other activities. Use these examples to help you develop your own list of the transferable skills you’ve acquired.

Working With People

| Selling | Training | Teaching | Supervising | Organizing
| Soliciting | Motivating | Mediating | Advising | Delegating
| Entertaining | Representing | Negotiating | Translating

Working With Things

| Repairing | Assembling parts | Designing | Operating machinery
| Driving | Maintaining equipment | Constructing
| Building | Sketching | Working with CAD | Keyboarding
| Drafting | Surveying | Troubleshooting

Working With Data/Information

| Calculating | Developing databases | Working with spreadsheets
| Accounting | Writing | Researching | Computing | Testing
| Filing | Sorting | Editing | Gathering data | Analyzing | Budgeting

EASY STEPS TO IDENTIFY YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Step 1. Make a list of every job title you’ve held (part-time, full-time and internships), along with volunteer, sports and other affiliations since starting college. (Be sure to record officer positions and other leadership roles.)

Step 2. Using your transcript, list the classes in your major field of study along with foundation courses. Include electives that may be related to your employment interests.

Step 3. For each job title, campus activity and class you’ve just recorded, write a sentence and then underline the action taken. (Avoid stating that you learned or gained experience in any skill. Instead, present your skill more directly as a verifiable qualification.)

“While working for Jones Engineering, I performed 3D modeling and drafting.”

NOT *“While working for Jones Engineering, I gained experience in 3D modeling and drafting.”*

“As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I developed and coordinated the marketing of club events.”

NOT *“As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I learned how to market events.”*

Step 4. Make a list of the skills/experiences you’ve identified for future reference during your job search.

ADDITIONAL TIPS TO HELP IDENTIFY YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

1. Review your list of transferable skills with someone in your field(s) of interest to help you identify any additional skills that you may want to include.

2. Using a job posting website, print out descriptions of jobs that interest you to help you identify skills being sought. (Also use these postings as guides for terminology on your resume.)

3. Attend career fairs and company information sessions to learn about the skills valued by specific companies and industries.

Written by Rosita Smith.