

HOT TIPS VII - Transferable Skills

What are these?

Employers are looking for a range of skills which demonstrate that you can do the job on offer. Some of these are demonstrated from your degree, some from relevant work experience and some from other work experience, interests and activities. These are skills you can 'transfer' into the role you are applying for.

There is no definitive list - but the skills mentioned on this sheet are the ones most employers mention frequently. When you look at application forms, you will often find questions like: 'Give an example of when you have been involved in a team. What was your role and what did you contribute?' This type of skill-based question is common and this 'Hot Tips' sheet is designed to help you to address these questions effectively.

'Top Ten Skills'

Communication - personal Can you present yourself clearly and articulately in both words and writing? Think of presentations, essay and report writing, sending emails, any telephone work you may have had.

Communication - interpersonal As well as talking to friends, do you have experience of liaising with tutors, line managers within your job, people older and younger than you? Can you negotiate? Are you a good listener? Are you able to put forward an opinion assertively and influence others?

Team Work Do you get on well with others? Good examples here would be sporting activities involving teams, doing things with a group of friends, succeeding in a work environment where you were working with a number of other people.

Organisation skills Of course, employers want to know that you can work on your own too! Think about your time at University. How do you manage to combine assignment deadlines with work/home commitments? Do you plan with lists, charts etc? Are you a 'just in time' kind of person?

Problem solving Can you think of creative solutions? Do you see issues through to the end? Would you consider yourself to be a logical person? If so, how would you demonstrate this to an employer?

Information Technology skills Include any specific I.T. Modules, CAD, Adobe etc. Demonstrate your competence with computer packages, databases, spreadsheets and other Microsoft Office tools.

Numeracy Jobs where you are handling cash. Living within a budget(!). Any Modules that include statistical analysis or data handling.

Language skills You are often at an advantage if you have knowledge of one or more languages other than your first language. Identify level of ability, for example: fluent speaking and writing, basic knowledge.

Research skills/Project management skills Especially important for Masters' applications, but useful for a number of job areas too. Your dissertation/project demonstrates your ability to plan and progress your own research. Also think about research methodology - how did you go about getting material together for the dissertation/project?

Self Management A vital skill - this assumes you reflect on things - especially if they go wrong. A typical interview question is: 'How might you have done that differently?' How have you improved your time management skills over the last couple of years? Are you a more effective communicator now than you were in school or college? What skills do you feel you need to improve upon? Another typical interview question: 'Tell me about your weaknesses' - and they don't mean TV soaps and chocolate!