

Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are abilities or qualities that you can use in any job, regardless of the industry or what title you have. These skills can be “transferred” from one job to another, which is why it is **critical** to highlight them on professional documents and during interviews. Below are some key transferable skills employers look for and examples of how to include them in your application materials.

COMMUNICATION

Strong communication is the ability to articulate thoughts, ideas, and other important information to others by speaking and/or writing.

Transferable communication skills examples:

Active listening, written communication, verbal & nonverbal communication, giving & receiving feedback, public speaking, responsiveness

Communication action verbs:

Advise, Advocate, Correspond, Describe, Document, Instruct, Interpret, Negotiate, Report, Translate, Write

TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION

Teamwork and collaboration as a professional skill means the ability to work with others toward a common goal. Effective teamwork incorporates other skills such as communication, active listening, and empathy.

Transferable teamwork/collaboration skills examples:

Relationship building, conflict resolution, knowledge sharing

Teamwork/collaboration action verbs:

Collaborate, Consult, Cooperate, Contribute, Encourage, Engage, Ensure, Guide, Help, Interact, Partner, Relate, Support

PROFESSIONALISM & WORK ETHIC

Professionalism is understanding and demonstrating effective work habits and acting in the interest of the larger community and workplace. It shows responsibility, commitment, and respect.

Transferable professionalism/work ethic skills examples:

Dependability, flexibility, punctuality, preparedness

Professionalism/work ethic action verbs:

Accomplish, Achieve, Attend, Coordinate, Engage, Initiate, Perform, Oversee, Motivate, Strategize, Train

ORGANIZATION & ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Organized employees typically meet deadlines, communicate with others in a timely manner, and follow instructions. Attention to detail means taking the extra time and care to make sure tasks are accurately completed.

Transferable organization/attention to detail skills examples:

Time management, prioritization, analytical thinking, accuracy

Organization/attention to detail action verbs:

Arrange, Compile, Consolidate, Coordinate, Distribute, Execute, Implement, Inspect, Monitor, Organize, Plan, Revise, Schedule

PROBLEM SOLVING & DECISION MAKING

Problem solving is about using knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems, analyze issues, and make decisions about the best course of action.

Transferable problem solving/decision making skills examples:

Critical thinking, research & analysis, creativity, commitment

Problem solving/decision making action verbs:

Adjust, Conclude, Convert, Enhance, Formulate, Identify, Improve, Increase, Mediate, Resolve, Restructure, Solve

TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY

Technological literacy is your knowledge of and ability to navigate different technologies. It is the ability to quickly learn and apply new tools and software effectively and appropriately.

Transferable technological literacy skills examples:

Troubleshooting, research & navigation, communication & collaboration

Technological literacy action verbs:

Build, Compute, Construct, Develop, Engineer, Install, Maintain, Operate, Repair, Replace, Restore, Upgrade

INITIATIVE

Initiative is the ability to motivate yourself in the workplace. This could be through pursuing new tasks, developing and contributing ideas, and starting projects independently.

Transferable initiative skills examples:

Goal setting, process improvement, self-motivation & management, preparedness

Initiative action verbs:

Create, Conceptualize, Design, Develop, Establish, Implement, Lead, Motivate, Originate, Start

ADAPTABILITY & RESOURCEFULNESS

Being adaptable means being able to continue working towards goals even as things change, being able to learn new things quickly, and confronting new or challenging situations. Adaptable employees are flexible and can change directions or strategies as needed.

Transferable adaptability/resourcefulness skills examples:

Flexibility, organization, creative & strategic thinking

Adaptability/resourcefulness action verbs:

Acclimate, Adapt, Adjust, Anticipate, Change, Evolve, Learn, Modify, Revise

*This content was adapted from Jefferson College Workforce Development & Employment Services Transferable Skills handout.