

Transferable Skills, Attributes and Experiences Developed and Honed in Graduate School

Marketable on-the-job skills:

- Adaptability; ability to function in a variety of environments
- Teaching, conceptualizing, planning
- Counseling, interviewing
- Public speaking
- Computer skills, information management
- Debating; ability to support position or viewpoint with argumentation and logic
- Project management, completion of projects meeting deadline; following through
- Knowledge of scientific method to organize and test ideas
- Data organization and analysis, interpretation, and synthesis
- Combing and integrating information from disparate sources
- Critical evaluation of a given situation
- Investigation of a problem, using different research methodologies
- Ability to work with committee process
- Advocacy work
- Open mindedness
- Ability to suspend judgment, to work with ambiguity
- Ability to make the best use of informed hunches

Personal Attributes

- Ability to learn quickly
- Ability to make good decisions quickly
- Being analytical, inquisitive, and logical;
- Ability to work well under pressure and the willingness to work hard
- Competitiveness and enjoying a challenge
- Ability to apply oneself to a variety to tasks simultaneously
- Thoroughness, organization and efficiency
- Good time-management skills
- Resourcefulness, determination and persistence
- Imagination and creativity
- Cooperation and helpfulness
- Being objective and flexible
- Good listening skills
- Sensitivity to different perspectives
- Ability to male other people feel interesting

What skills non-traditional career employers will be looking at?

- Negotiation skills
- Communication skills
- Teamwork skills
- Judgment
- Business acumen

- Honesty
- Work ethic
- Adaptability
- Reliability

Five Most Valuable Skills in the Outside World that are learned in Grad School:

- Ability to work productively with difficult people
- Ability to work in a high stress environment
- Persistence
- Willingness to circumvent rules
- Ability and courage to start something even if you don't know how yet

Steps to identify your transferable skills

- Make a list of all the tasks you are doing a typical day, week, month or year as a scientist (teaching, ordering supplies, creating an experiment...)
- If appropriate, make another list of what you are doing outside science, e.g.. Volunteering as a soccer coach, writing article for a club...)
- Match these activities with the list of transferable skills. Now you have a personalized, matched list of skills with examples from your own experience, both in and out of science
- Look at the wording in your list: are the identifying phrases you used too academic? Familiarize yourself with the wording of the job advertisements in the fields you are interested in
- Ask yourself: what skills are on the list that you would like to develop? How can I go about attaining them? Volunteering? Internship? Auditing classes? Taking on a special project...
- Start thinking about how you could arrange your CV to market yourself as having a set of skills, not as a scientist per se...

Adapted from "Skills Employers Really Want"; Peter Fiske 1997)