



Key Skills Employers Look For

What are key skills?

One message from employers of graduates is consistently stated - a degree is not enough. Employers are looking for graduates with both academic ability and a specific set of skills that match the skills necessary to perform a particular job. But beyond these job-specific skills, certain key skills are sought by most employers regardless of the sector or job role.

Most graduates can demonstrate these key skills to some extent and weaknesses in certain areas can be improved through training, professional development, or obtaining guidance from a Careers Consultant.

Once you understand the key skills that most employers look for, you can tailor your CV, cover letter, application and interview answers to showcase how well your background fits with employer requirements.

Key Skills Most Commonly Sought by Employers:

Communications Skills (listening, verbal, written): The ability to listen, write, and speak effectively and clearly get your point across to a range of audiences.

- **Example of written communication:** Adapting your language and tone in emails to different audiences, i.e. you wouldn't speak to your friends in the same way you would to your tutor or employer.
- **Example of verbal communication:** Explaining directions to someone whose first language is not English slowly and clearly so that you are easily understood and allow time for them to ask questions.

Teamwork: The ability to work with others in a professional manner while attempting to achieve a common goal.

- **Example:** State personal opinions and areas of disagreement carefully and respectfully and consider everyone's point of view.

Leadership/Management Skills: The ability to manage your co-workers and motivate others to participate and work to the best of their ability

- **Example:** Taking charge of a project and managing it from start to finish, including setting guidelines and outcomes and making sure that others involved are on board by building trust and respect.

Analytical/Research Skills: The ability to assess a situation, seek multiple perspectives, gather more information if necessary, and identify key issues that need to be addressed.

- **Example:** Knowing how to find the right sources to get information and identifying the most important/relevant information that will meet your needs.

Organisational Skills: The ability to manage multiple assignments and tasks within deadline, set priorities and delegate tasks when appropriate.

- **Example:** Develop schedules and timetables with clear, specific goals and deadlines and prioritise work accordingly.

Flexibility/Adaptability: The ability to adapt calmly to changing conditions and work assignments.

- **Example:** Covering for someone at work who is on holiday or ill so that work gets done on time.

Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills:

The ability to manage conflict and consider all aspects of a problem and think about possible solutions before reacting.

- **Example:** Writing a list of pros and cons and considering both sides of a situation before making a decision. Also, seeking advice from others and getting different points of view as there is often more than one solution.

Numeracy: The ability to carry out basic maths and understand data

- **Example:** Using spreadsheets to organise numerical data.

Interpersonal Skills: The ability to relate to a wide range of people and build successful working relationships.

- **Example:** Being aware of and sensitive to different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and treating everyone fairly and respectfully.

Initiative: The ability to be proactive and identify, create and seize opportunities

- **Example:** Come up with, and implement a new idea at work that saves money and/or time or improves something already in place, such as designing a new website or database.

For further support in identifying and marketing your key skills, book an appointment to see a

Careers Consultant and visit: [http://](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/)

www.prospects.ac.uk/

[your_degree_what_next_skills_gained.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/your_degree_what_next_skills_gained.htm)

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