

As a Lakehead student you are capable of many skills! You have gained knowledge from your classes, co-curricular involvement, work experiences, and volunteer activities. However, skill articulation can sometimes be a struggle, particularly with transferable skills. This document is designed to help you assess, name, and market yourself professionally with confidence, using your transferable skills.

What Are Transferable Skills?

Transferable skills are skills that can be transferred from one instance to another, whether that be work, school or social life. These skills can be developed and strengthened to attract new employers or different opportunities. These portable skills are acquired through school, internships, hobbies, employment, and volunteer experiences. Transferable skills are valuable in and out of the workplace, including your daily social interactions.

Understanding these skills is important to understanding your employability. Transferable skills are a way for you to let the employer know that you have skills that fit their workplace. It also shows employers that even if you do not have relevant experience you can still be an asset to the company.

Why are Transferable Skills Important?

Transferable skills are important because they demonstrate to your employer what you can offer in addition to your technical skills. Understanding transferable skills is important to understanding your employability.

Transferable skill development is very important for academic and career opportunities after university. Including your transferable skills in your resume, cover letter and interviews shows the employer what skill sets you bring to the workplace.

Transferable skills are relevant across all job fields. For example, jobs in the education industry require an employee who can communicate with students, parents, and other faculty members while being personable. This specific type of communication is similar to jobs in marketing; however, the skill set is slightly different. An employee for a marketing company is prized for their communication

with team members, clients, managers in addition to analytical and research skills. Though both are considered communication skills, the way in which the communication is carried out differs.

The key to transferable skills is understanding that these skills are interconnected. For example, verbal skills require both active listening and critical thinking to process information. These are two different skills that work together but still function separately.

Examples of Common Transferable Skills

- Technical Literacy
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Multitasking
- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Dependability
- Adaptability
- Detail Orientated / Organized
- Leadership

Technical Literacy

Technical literacy is your comfort and ability to navigate new technology. With the increase of technology growing in the workplace, employers are seeking individuals who are able to keep up and adapt.

Communication

Strong communication means that you are able to give or impart information to others by speaking, writing or interpreting. Communication skills are important because they indicate you know when and how to ask questions, read body language and speak to everyone despite age or status. Having this particular skill shows that you can work well with people!

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking means you have the ability to observe, analyze, interpret, problem solve and communicate effectively.

Multitasking

The ability to multitask means that you are able to organize your priorities to ensure tasks are completed efficiently. You also have the ability to focus, adapt and meet daily deadlines.

Teamwork

Teamwork means having the ability to work well with others towards a common goal. To have effective teamwork you also require communication skills, active listening and empathy.

Creativity

Being creative in the workplace means you are open-minded, able to solve problems, organized and communicate. Creativity is a valuable skill that employers look for in individuals.

Dependability

When you are dependable this means that you possess skills that make you a trustworthy employee. As a dependable employee you are punctual, organized and take responsibility for your actions. Being dependable means that you can accomplish a task in a timely manner and well.

Adaptability

Having adaptability skills show you are able to transition from one task to the next. You are able to shift and take on new tasks and adjust your goals accordingly. Having proper organization skills allow you to adapt better in the workplace.

Detail Orientated and Organization

A detail organized person is organized and vice versa. These skills mean that you are able to complete a task on time and follow instructions well. Employers can trust you to meet deadlines, keep proper records and ensure projects are completed.

Leadership

Leadership skills include traits like strong communication skills, personability, and dependability. This skill is very important because it shows the employer that you can take action, and accomplish tasks in a timely manner.

How to Articulate your Transferable Skills in a Job Application

On your resume, cover letter, or during an interview there are different opportunities for you to highlight your transferable skills. Here are some examples of how you can articulate your transferable skills in each of these areas:

RESUME:

Your resume is a summary of what you can offer to your future employer. Your transferable skills should always be included in your resume. For example:

Outreach Program Coordinator- Company ABC

Reported and assisted the Chief Operating Officer with **research** for interactive web based activities, development and maintenance of the company website. Additionally, created a four month social media plan including the content with my **team members**.

- Researching, **writing**, promoting, and conducting the museum's historical walking tours throughout the city that occur during the summer.
- Compiling a complete database of museum publications which will be used to improve the museum's online bookstore and publications pages.
- Assisting the Chief Operating Officer with developing the museum's 360 virtual reality tour to include pop-up informational components such as exhibit displays.

In this example there are transferable skills mentioned. First within the job description, where **research** is mentioned, then again at the end with **teamwork**. Within the listed duties, **communication** is referenced in the form of writing. In each case there is an explanation for how these skills were used.

COVER LETTER:

For a cover letter, focus on the skills that the employer is looking for. These will be included in the job description. In main body paragraphs of your letter, include the transferable skills you possess that the employer is looking for. For example:

*As a Research Assistant, I was able to enhance my **technical literacy, organization, research and critical thinking skills**. Through my university programs and classes, I have been able to become an independent worker, and it has also prepared me with the essential skills for **research and critical thinking**.*

Above you can see how the transferable skills were used and in what capacity. It is important to remember to not only mention your skills but how you used and gained these skills. This allows the employer to see how you have used your skills and in what context.

INTERVIEW:

During an interview, use examples of transferable skills to answer any questions when relevant. You want to show the employers active examples of when you have used these skills.

For example: *“I have had to **multitask** in my previous employment at a museum. There were many instances where I had a list of tasks to be completed and in some cases I found myself assigned more than one. In order to complete my task on time I first determined priority, to ensure I was able to complete my work in a timely manner.”*

Remember that many of the skills you already possess are transferable skills, including interpersonal skills!

Next Steps!

1. Check out our additional transferable skills resources
2. Make a list of your transferable skills
3. Review your resume and cover letter and ensure that you have included your transferable skills
4. Use the Big Interview Tool to practice your interview skills, using examples of transferable skills in your answers (www.biginterview.com).

Visit the Career Zone Website at lakeheadu.ca/careerzone for more information about our career services and supports!