

Employability skills are highly valued by employers and are crucial for finding work and maintaining employment. These skills are applicable across disciplines as well as job roles and having a clear understanding of employability skills, knowledge of how they are applied in the workplace, as well as how they can be presented to future employers can help you to:

- Build self-confidence and recognise the value you can add to the workplace
- Develop effective job application documents including resumes, addressing selection criteria and other supporting documents
- Perform well at interviews by clearly articulating the skills and strengths you will bring to the role
- Build a strong portfolio of skills and identify any potential gaps to plan skill development strategies to continue enhancing your employability.

The sections below provide you with definitions for highly sought-after employability skills, relevant sub-skills and attributes that demonstrate these skills as well as ideas of how you can gain and convey evidence for each of the skills.

Adaptability & Flexibility

Definition:

In a rapidly changing work environment, adaptability is crucial. The ability to remain adaptable involves being open to new ideas, and technologies as well as being able to adjust to changing circumstances. This skill is primarily about responding to change and uncertainty with a positive attitude, being able to adjust working styles and approaches to meet the needs of the situation and demonstrating a willingness to learn. Employers also look for resourcefulness and versatility as well as evidence of agile thinking or cognitive flexibility.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- agility
- cross-functional
- collaboration
- change management
- learning mindset
- problem-solving
- resourcefulness
- responsiveness
- resilience
- versatility

Gaining and Conveying evidence

It is important to demonstrate that have successfully adapted or remained flexible in your experiences. This can be demonstrated in the following ways:

- taking on new work experiences including volunteering, part-time work, placements
- travelling/living/working/studying abroad
- combining full-time academic study with part-time work and personal commitments
- joining a new club/team
- taking on a new role or additional responsibilities within an existing role

Examples to include on CV:

- *Demonstrated ability to adapt to changing work environments and learn new skills quickly, including [mention specific examples].*
- *Adaptable and results-driven professional with a proven track record of excelling in diverse roles and industries.*

Communication and Interpersonal skills

Strong communication and Interpersonal skills increase productivity and efficiency in the workplace. These skills are explicitly required by all employers and the ability to effectively communicate is crucial for success. Communication skills are primarily about the type of communication including both verbal and written communication, active listening, and the ability to convey ideas clearly and concisely. For example, negotiation, networking, publishing, writing, or presenting. Interpersonal skills on the other hand focus more on how well someone communicates and their ability to build and maintain positive relationships with colleagues, clients and superiors.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- building professional relationships
- campaigning
- clarifying
- consulting
- counselling
- empathy
- facilitating
- listening
- motivating and inspiring team members
- negotiating
- networking
- presenting
- representing
- report writing
- self-awareness
- teaching/training
- translating
- working with diverse teams
- cultural awareness and adaptability
- inclusivity and diversity
- writing

To convey interpersonal skills, talk about your experiences informing, briefing, orientating others, and interacting over the phone and in person with others.

Gaining and conveying evidence:

When demonstrating your communication and interpersonal skills on your CV it is important to include specific examples of when you have developed or evidenced these skills. You can do this by highlighting things like:

- gaining work experience or working part-time in a customer-facing role
- undertaking group work as part of your degree
- becoming a student mentor or course representative
- taking up a position on a committee or student club

Examples to include on CV:

- *Strong written and verbal communication skills demonstrated through [mention examples such as reports, presentations, or customer interactions].*
- *Dedicated and highly communicative professional with a proven track record of building strong relationships and collaborating effectively with cross-functional teams.*
- *Reduced customer complaints by x% through effective communication and conflict resolution.*

Creativity & Innovation

Creativity is a growing skill in employment and creative thinking can help you come up with innovative solutions to problems and stand out in your field. Those who demonstrate creativity are innovative, they generate new ideas and fresh perspectives, identify new opportunities and creative solutions to challenging problems, make improvements and think creatively to produce an effective outcome. These are vital attributes for success in the fourth industrial revolution.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- creating
- creativity
- convergent thinking
- curiosity
- design skills
- establishing

- innovation
- launching
- prototyping

When you discuss creation describe your experience composing, conceiving, and building. Creativity on the other hand includes generating new or fresh ideas/approaches to situations and it can be useful to use words like ingenuity, imaginative and artistic. Finally, innovation is more about inventiveness and originality.

Gaining and conveying evidence

To demonstrate this as a strength on your CV you need to demonstrate how you initiated something or a time when you have designed something that added value. You can demonstrate creativity through:

- Skills training, workshops and/or professional development on creativity and Innovation
- Initiating new strategies to raise money for charity organisations
- Developing a blog, website, app
- Initiating and integrating creative solutions to problems in a previous role

Examples for CV:

- *Led a dynamic team to brainstorm and implement innovative solutions.*
- *Increased social media engagement by 40% through creative content strategies.*
- *If you have a portfolio of creative work (e.g. design samples, writing samples, artwork, projects), include a link to it in your resume providing concrete evidence of your creative abilities.*

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Employers seek candidates with the capacity to think critically to solve problems to make sound judgements and decisions in the workplace. Critical thinking skills involve research, analysis, evaluation, synthesis and reasoning that support approaches to tasks and situations with a logical but questioning and open mind. Problem-solving is our ability to analyse situations, identify problems, and come up with creative solutions is highly valued. Critical thinking and analytical skills play a crucial role in problem-solving.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| • analysing | • evaluating | • questioning |
| • continuous learning | • making recommendations | • researching |
| • decision-making | • problem-solving | • risk assessment |
| • demonstrated results | | • synthesising |

To demonstrate problem-solving, you can provide examples of when you have demonstrated that you effectively addressed issues, identified solutions or worked with other team members to brainstorm ideas and suggestions for improvement.

Gaining and conveying evidence

You can provide evidence of your critical thinking and complex problem-solving skills by providing examples of when you have used these skills.

- Engaged in research for a course assignment, essay or project
- Working to resolve customer complaints in a customer-facing role
- Analysing, interpreting and evaluating data for a project

Examples on CV:

- *Strong critical thinking skills demonstrated by [mention instances where you used critical thinking to achieve goals].*
- *Adept at analysing complex issues and proposing practical solutions, as shown in [mention situations or projects where you solved problems and contributed to positive outcomes].*

Leadership & Management

Leadership and management are two distinct but closely related skills that are highly sought after in the workplace. Leadership is the ability to take control of a situation and set direction. This is done by empowering, inspiring, and influencing others while management is focused on planning, organizing and overseeing the distribution of resources to achieve outcomes. The ability to mentor, influence and motivate, as well as leadership qualities such as commitment, passion, integrity, and confidence are key to demonstrating leadership.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- accountability
- captaining
- community involvement
- confidence
- delegating
- decision-making
- directing
- empowering others
- influencing
- initiated
- led
- mentoring
- motivating others
- organised
- relationship management
- supervising
- strategic planning

Gaining and Conveying evidence

Describe how you overcame challenges, motivated a team, or implemented a successful strategy. If you have held multiple leadership positions within an organisation, highlight the progression of your responsibilities. The ability to demonstrate that you have grown as a leader is impressive.

You may have gained or could gain these skills through:

- captaining a sports team
- leading a student club or society
- taking the lead on a group project whether in an academic or work setting
- becoming a mentor for your course or department
- running for a student council position

Examples on CV:

- *Exhibited leadership qualities by [mention roles, initiatives, or teams you have led] and achieved [mention accomplishments].*
- *Led a team of 10 members to achieve a 20% increase in sales revenue.*
- When describing your experiences, try using the CAR method to structure your bullet points. Start with the challenge you faced, describe the actions you took, and conclude with the results you achieved.

Organising & Planning

The ability to organise your own time and prioritise your own workload effectively clearly demonstrates to employers that you have well-developed planning and organisational skills. However, employers will often ask for these skills when looking for the ability to coordinate other people, events or projects, to identify and set objectives, manage and prioritise resources, and monitor performance against objectives, alongside strong attention to detail and a methodical approach.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- coordinating
- continuous
- improvement
- detail-orientated
- delegation
- developed

- goal setting
- implementing
- multitasking
- organizing
- performance measurement
- planning
- project planning
- task prioritisation

Gaining and Conveying evidence

You could showcase the sub-skills and attributes above through your:

- organising a social or charity event
- making travel arrangements either for your own leisure or for a group
- planning university projects such as your dissertation or final-year project
- work experience that involved event or project management

Examples for CV:

- *Experience in effectively managing projects from initiation to completion, resulting in [mention successful project outcomes]*
- *Developed project plans, allocated resources, and coordinated cross-functional teams to achieve project goals.*
- *Identified and implemented process improvements that enhanced workflow efficiency and reduced turnaround times.*

Self-management & Initiative

Both self-management and initiative are highly valued in the workplace as they lead to increased productivity because those who can effectively manage themselves and their time are better equipped to take initiative by remaining proactive and identifying opportunities to grow and excel. Employers want self-starters who are constantly looking for ways to contribute instead of waiting to be informed of assignments and tasks. The goal is to have employees who proactively seek out ways to propel the business forward. Many employers view initiative as the ability to take ideas and run with them, as well as the capacity to persist in the face of challenges and see projects through to completion. Self-management refers to an individual's ability to control and direct their own actions, emotions and behaviours allowing them to achieve goals and remain productive. It's about setting your own goals and pursuing work with energy, drive and effort to accomplish tasks. Taking initiative results in the capacity to seek out new responsibilities and work challenges and increase the variety and scope of your job.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- generated
- optimised
- personal development
- time management skills
- implemented
- positive attitude
- prioritisation
- meeting deadlines
- resilience
- taking initiative

Personal attributes

- committed
- dedicated
- enterprising
- thorough
- hard working
- industrious
- proactive
- productive
- diligent
- enterprising

Gaining and Conveying evidence

Don't be afraid to use the skills and attributes suggested but be sure to evidence them as well. You could do this or may have done this by:

- Working independently on tasks during your studies or when doing work experience
- Effectively setting and working towards deadlines
- Recognising skill gaps and seeking out courses or workshops to close them
- Starting a project in your free time

Examples on CV

- *managed a complex workload independently, consistently meeting performance targets and reducing the need for regular supervision.*
- *Initiated and led a training program for new team members, resulting in a reduction in onboarding timeframes and improved team cohesion.*
- *Initiated cross-functional collaboration by organising a community of practice to share best practices, resulting in an increase in team productivity and improved service offerings.*

Teamwork & Collaboration

Teamwork and collaboration are vital aspects of working together effectively within a group and as part of an organisation. Effective teamwork requires team members to listen to one another, communicate clearly, and share knowledge, ideas, and information to ensure that individuals come together to achieve common goals, solve problems, and complete tasks efficiently. The ability to work collaboratively with others, demonstrates how you contribute to a team's success and resolve conflicts when they arise.

Sub-skills and attributes to include in your CV:

- being reliable
- collaboration
- contributing
- cooperation
- offering support
- participation
- teamworking
- volunteering

Gaining and Conveying evidence

Your CV can be used to demonstrate your understanding of what teamwork means by using the words above in a range of different contexts to showcase your skills.

- lead role in group work or study group sessions at the university
- active member of a sports team, band or society
- working with others to organize a volunteer project or extracurricular activity
- active contributions as a successful team member in a part-time role or doing work experience

Examples on CV

- *Proven ability to work effectively in a team environment, as evidenced by successful collaboration on [mention projects and/or team achievements].*
- *Utilised strong communication skills to convey project goals, timelines, and objectives, ensuring everyone was on the same page.*
- *Acted as a liaison between our department and other teams, streamlining communication and improving efficiency.*
- *Contributed to team projects by sharing insights and ideas, fostering a positive and productive work environment.*