

# Transferable Skills to Higher Education

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When considering a job opportunity, it is always beneficial to stop and take the time to reflect upon one's potential, and experience, in the workplace. We as individuals have so much to offer and most of the time when you read a job description, you might not check *all* the boxes. But there are so many skills that can be transferable to a new role, or if you are considering a transfer into the field of higher education.

When thinking about transferable skills a few items to consider are; what is important to the higher education field, the specific institution you are applying to, and the role you are interested in. You will want to understand what skills are valued to make sure you highlight the right ones from your background. By looking at an institution's website, you may be able to get a feel for what they value and any job descriptions for roles you are looking for may also give a few hints. In addition to that, when it comes to higher education, we know there are some consistent skills, traits, and mindsets that people look for. Based on this, we can give you some guidance on what to highlight in your resume or your interview, have you found a job that you are interested in, but are concerned to apply for because your resume does not tick all the boxes, if so, keep calm and read on!

According to a monster.com [article](#), workers “across a wide array of industries tend to value a similar range of foundational skills, including communication, teamwork and collaboration, and problem-solving, and this applied to higher education, additional skills and traits important to higher education are elaborated on below. The next time you are updating your resume to apply for a role, or, if you have already been accepted for an interview, make sure to bring these into the process:

**Adaptability** – The higher education landscape is constantly evolving, with changes in policies, technology, and student needs.

**Analytical Thinking** – The ability to assess information, identify patterns, and make informed decisions. From enrollment to the use of athletic facilities, data helps higher education plan.

**Collaboration** – Showing your ability and experience in working across departments, teams, and silos is important as there is a lot of collaboration in higher education. You also need to keep in mind that collaboration and teamwork in higher education can be more formal since it is expected, you will need to display a collegial presence to get this across to your interviewer. From planning for the next academic year to emergencies on campus, higher education has a get-it-done attitude.

**Dependability** – Ensure that tasks are completed on time, commitments are honored, and students and colleagues can rely on your work and support, follow-through is considered a requirement, not an above-and-beyond accomplishment.

**Impact Focused** – This is a mentality and a skill, but a focus on the end results of your work, and the impact it has, indicates you are a results-oriented individual, this is very important in a field that focuses heavily on the well-being of students and the impact the institution has on them, so they can be successful.

**Initiative** – This is the ability to identify and address challenges or opportunities proactively. It demonstrates your drive to contribute, innovate, and go beyond the expected responsibilities.

**Organization** – The skill of managing multiple responsibilities, deadlines, and tasks. Being organized helps you stay on top of your work, prioritize effectively, and ensure smooth operations. Many corporate organizations have deadlines, and it is not uncommon for deadlines to be pushed based on needs, however, in higher education we are dealing with cyclical deliverables based on terms, and these are not flexible.

**Passion, Motivation, and Work Ethic** – Higher education is driven by a sense of purpose and commitment to student success.

**Technology Literacy**- Many hard skill requirements, if not based on functional knowledge, e.g., HR, Accounting, etc., will be software-based be sure to brush up on Microsoft Excel, and PowerPoint.

Of course, the gap between what the hiring manager is looking for and what you have previously done or can do cannot be so broad that you lose credibility. LinkedIn recommends that if you do not meet 75% of the stated criteria for the position you should not bother to apply. However, there is a way to narrow that gap. There are plenty of workshops, skill builders, and online courses available that can help you achieve the level of knowledge you'd like to obtain. If you are truly looking for a career change, sometimes, shorter-term contract engagements can help build out the necessary experience. In responding to a job ad or crafting your resume, consider how you can give concrete examples that demonstrate these skills. Remember, you must sell yourself to the hiring manager so that your application doesn't end up at the bottom of the pile. There are many options for those looking to transfer your skills into a new role. Check out our YouTube video to [hear how one woman leveraged her skills to make a major career change](#).