UCLA Career Center

Transferable Skills for Archaeology & Conservation

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By the end of this session, you will:

- Identify skills gained from your PhD and/or Postdoc training that are relevant to your fields of interest
- Effectively communicate how the skills from your PhD and/or Postdoc training are relevant and valuable to organizations in different industries/fields.

What skills have you developed in graduate school?

What are transferable skills?

It can be helpful to think of them as professional or career skills.

Transferable Skills

"Transferable skills are talents and abilities that can be used in many different job and career paths. They can be acquired through employment, school, internships, hobbies, and volunteer experiences."

Hard Skills

Hard skills are teachable abilities or skill sets that are more easily quantified. Some examples include:

- Proficiency in different languages
- A degree or certification
- Computer programming skills

Soft Skills

Soft skills are subjective skills, harder to quantify, and are linked to how you interact with other people. Some examples include:

- Communication
- Problem solving
- Project management

Dawn Rosenberg McKay, The Balance

World Economic Forum's
The Future of Jobs 2020 Report

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Top 10 skills of 2025

- Analytical thinking and innovation
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Complex problem-solving
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Creativity, originality and initiative
- Leadership and social influence
- Technology use, monitoring and control
- Technology design and programming
- Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
- Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation

Type of skill
- Problem-solving
- Self-management
- Working with people
- Technology use and development

Source: Future of Jobs Report 2020, World Economic Forum.

Exercise

How skilled do you feel?

PhDs and Postdocs are subject matter experts *and* skilled professionals.

Subject Expertise & Skills

To find and articulate your skills, it can be helpful to think of your skills as a container and your subject matter expertise as the contents in your container.

Contents

This is your subject matter expertise. To pursue your degree, you've become incredibly versed in your field. To finish, you also become the world's expert on a (potentially incredibly specific) topic.

A lot of academic culture emphasizes its importance, but focusing too much on this can make you feel overspecialized *and* underqualified while job searching.
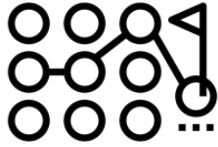
Container

These are the skills you have developed in pursuit of those contents. They are incredibly diverse (managing undergrads, languages, grant writing, public speaking, etc.) and key to academic and non-academic success, but academic culture often ignores their value.

Focusing on these skills can help you to reframe yourself as a uniquely skilled candidate for many different roles.

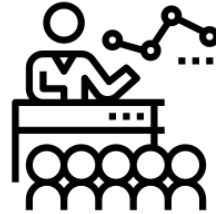What transferable skills have you developed in graduate school?

Common Types of PhD Skills

Management

- Project management
- Time management
- People management
  - Upward, downward, and/or lateral
- Research & information management

Communication

- Written
  - Scholarly works
  - Works for broader audiences
  - Editing
  - Grant writing
- Oral
  - Teaching
  - Public talks
  - Conferences

Miscellaneous

- Curriculum development
  - Training
- Research methods
- Software

How can you identify transferable skills you've developed in graduate school?

During (and before) your time at UCLA, you have developed unique experiences, expertise, and skill sets.

Exercise

How did you accomplish X?

How did you accomplish X?

- Identify a project that you're proud of. It can be a paper, presentation, event, etc.
  - Example: I'm really proud of some data visualization I did for my thesis.
- How did you do that? Break down your process into small steps.
  - Collect data
  - Clean and format it
  - Learned new visualization software
  - Used software
  - Analyzed results
  - Wrote about it
  - Got feedback and edited
  - Submitted it to my department
- What skills did you have or develop in order to accomplish that step?

How did you accomplish X?

- Collect data = People management (had to maintain flow of information between my advisor, his colleague at another institution)
- Clean and format it = Software skills
- Learned new visualization software = Quick learning/adaptive
- Used software = Quick learning/adaptive
- Analyzed results = Information management
- Wrote about it = Persuasive writing/argument building
- Got feedback and edited = Collaboration
- Submitted it to my department = Meet deadlines

NOTE: Identifying the skills we use often can be hard because they seem so normal/default/invisible to us. It can be helpful to talk through a process with a friend or colleague and have them stop you whenever you describe a step or skill that they don't have or understand.

How do I use this in a job search?

Using Skills as Job Search Terms

- Many job search engines allow you to use skills as a search term
  - Indeed is the biggest, LinkedIn can be very tailored based on your profile
- Filters are your friend
  - Advanced Search options
- Iterate and adjust your search terms
- Signing up/creating accounts
  - More tailored results
  - Automated searches/automated alerts
- **Don't** use "quick apply" and the like
- Consider industry-specific job boards/search engines

Exercise

Let's do a skills based job search!

Communicating Skills in a Resume

Job Description

- Identify the bullet points in the job description that your skills and experiences speak can speak to.

- Example: "Excellent spoken and written communication"

Your Skills

- Use language from the job description to describe your skills and experience.

- Example: "Communicated research results to diverse audiences"

The Results

- Bullet points in your resume should be <u>demonstrative</u> and <u>quantitative</u>.

- Example: "Communicated research results <u>quarterly</u> for diverse audiences ranging from <u>10 - 100+</u> people for lab meetings, department seminars, international conferences, and public outreach events"

Quantifying Work

Why?

- The average recruiter spends about 7 seconds looking at a resume. Algorithms spend way less.
- In a sea of letters, our eyes are drawn to digits, particularly if they're highlighted by a $ or %.
- Concretizes work that can otherwise feel very abstract.
- Demonstrates our contributions to organizations we have worked for in the past.

How?

- Elements of work you can quantify include:
  - Budget/Money
  - People
  - Time/Hours
  - Readership
  - Engagement
- Start keeping records now
  - Useful for resumes, cover letters, LinkedIn, etc.
  - Can be as simple as a Google Doc

Dawn Rosenberg McKay, The Balance

Job Posting

Senior Writer/Editor

Senior Writer/Editor position at a Global Health and Social Policy Center to develop research briefs, journal articles, book chapters, web/social media content, grant proposals, as well as participate in the dissemination of data, and contribute to priority research projects.

Job Requirements:

- Experience conducting literature reviews, qualitative research, or writing academic journal articles is an asset

- Excellent organizational skills, attention to detail, and ability to work independently to fulfill team goals and manage multiple deadlines required

- Ability to collaborate with diverse, cross-disciplinary team members

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Communication Experience

- Co-authored 3 papers using literature reviews and qualitative research to examine labor conditions of large-scale farming practices in China, published in peer-reviewed policy journals

- Successfully applied for and awarded 2 major grants, totaling $20,000+ to fund dissertation research, which outlined goals, assumptions, risks, timelines, budget, and other key program deliverables for a 2-year timeline

- Collaborated quarterly with team of 4 cross-disciplinary, international team members, leading to development of critical cultural competency skills

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Job Posting

Data Scientist

Data scientist at Health Analytics Company to develop predictive models from medical health records to expedite drug discovery process.

Job Requirements:

- Code writing capability in any programming language (Python, R, Java, Scala, etc.) and familiarity with relevant machine learning package

- Strong analytical skills

- Collaborative, responsible, delivery-oriented

- Excellent spoken and written communication

Data scientist at a Health Analytics Company to develop predictive models from medical health records to expedite drug discovery process.

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- Code writing capability in any programming language (Python, R, Java, Scala, etc.) and familiarity with relevant machine learning package
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- Excellent spoken and written communication

Data Science Experience
- Wrote 3 custom R and Python packages to predict genetic risk for lung cancer from blood tissue samples using novel data-mining and machine-learning models
- Initiated collaborations with a post-doctoral scholar and led team of 2 research assistants to produce first-author publication in a high-impact, biomedical journal
- Communicated research quarterly for diverse audiences ranging from 10+ to 100+ people for lab meetings, department-wide seminars, international conferences, and public outreach events

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Job Posting

Nonprofit Program Director

Program Director at Education Nonprofit to provide programmatic leadership, training, accountability, and relationship building with community partners.

Role Competencies

- Entrepreneurialism/Creativity/Innovation - Demonstrate comfort with risk- and initiative-taking in order to achieve unique and aggressive goals.
- Strategic Thinking - Take into account and analyze various points of view and pieces of data to form a perspective appropriate to a particular context.
- Collaboration/Communication - Work with diverse partners to determine and disseminate program results to funders and other key stakeholders.

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Leadership Experience
- Initiated and executed novel research project using innovative mixed qualitative and quantitative methods to quickly gather diverse data on educational outcome inequities
- Successfully applied for and awarded 2 major grants totaling $35,000+ to fund project, which outlined project goals, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, risks, timelines, budget, and deliverables over a 4-year timeline
- Collaborated with advisor, national colleagues, and community partners to publish results and recommendations in policy journals, education publications, and public-facing media

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Job Posting

Mural Institute Director

The Great Wall Institute Director will oversee the creation of a ½ mile of new mural conducting research and designing each decade to the full scale painting and will oversee community partnerships and youth engagement, supervise curriculum development and support programs at the institute.

Job Requirements/Role Competencies

- Experienced in historical research, organizing media and scholarship, and able to capture and catalog a variety of media. Familiar with timeline software and/or digital humanities technology
- Works collaboratively to develop curriculum for the youth engagement program
- Familiar with digital equipment and computers for visual art productions

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Cultural Resources Management Experience:
- Managed book-length historical research project, examining 60+ years of archival research in 10+ local history archives
- Developed local history website for Dodge City Historical Association using Adobe Creative Cloud media package to highlight major collections and a timeline for major local historical events
- Created curriculum for 3 college history seminar courses, including a research seminar exploring the history of Southern California in the 1960s

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Additional Resources: career.ucla.edu/grad

Online Resources

Check out the **UCLA Career Preparation Toolkit for Grad Students and Postdocs** on our website for guides and examples.

Explore **ImaginePhD** and **MyIDP** for assessments, resources, and career planning.

Use **VMock** for initial resume feedback.

Connect with Us

Want to talk about a particular job or do some career planning? Schedule a **One-on-One Career Advising Consultation** with Grad Career Services on Handshake.

Keep an eye out for more **Grad Career Services events** during Spring Quarter and the Summer, also on Handshake.

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Do you have any questions?

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Thank You!