

# Five Soft Skills You Develop at University

By Ella Patenall, December 10, 2021

Getting a degree certainly improves your job prospects, but it's not the only career benefit gained by attending university. As well as providing you with the technical know-how for your dream job, your degree will also teach you the necessary soft-skills to thrive in the workplace.

What are soft skills? Soft skills are transferable qualities that help you succeed whatever task you turn to, whether that's the ability to work well in a team or adapt to changes in your environment. Being able to demonstrate these on your job applications will show you've gained more from university than just a degree certificate.

Here are five soft skills you'll have developed at university which all employers would be interested in.

## **Communication skills**

As a student, you've probably had to write A LOT, especially if you're an arts student. You may also have got involved with student journalism, writing articles in addition to the essays needed for your course. Even if your course doesn't involve a lot of writing, you'll still have corresponded with tutors and supervisors via email. All of this will have greatly improved your written communication, and you should make sure to point that out to your prospective employer.

University doesn't just help you write better though, it also improves your ability to interact face-to-face with others. You'll have met a huge number of people at university, many with very different backgrounds to your own. This ability to meet other people and socialize will be invaluable when you enter the workplace.

This ability to talk to people will also have been developed at university if you've had to deliver presentations at some point during your course. Lots of employers are desperate for employees with strong presentation and public speaking skills, and so being able to give them an example of when you delivered an engaging presentation will greatly increase your chances of success.

## **Budgeting and money management**

Hopefully by now, you've gotten used to managing your money and paying rent and utility bills, as well as budgeting for food, drink and nights out. If you've had a role on a society committee, you may have been responsible for handling even larger sums of money.

All of this is excellent money management experience, which shows you are someone responsible and trustworthy. This is helpful even if the job you're applying for doesn't require you to handle money directly, as it demonstrates positive character traits which will impress employers.

## **Time management**

If you've become heavily involved in extra-curricular activities while at university, or have a part-time job, this division of your time between multiple things shows you know how to manage your workload. Employers will always value employees who can juggle multiple commitments.

Even if you were too focused on your studies for societies or part-time work, your ability to meet deadline after deadline is also a testament to your time management skills.

### **Critical thinking and problem-solving**

During your studies, you will have faced many problems that just seemed impossible at first. Whether it was a difficult essay question or mathematical problem, you will have had to think outside the box, approach the problem from new angles, and maybe carry out some more research.

This is exactly what employers want from their employees if a project stops running smoothly. They want you to be able to take the initiative, so be sure to have a couple of examples of when you overcame difficult problems if you are called for an interview.

### **Taking constructive criticism**

No one's university work is perfect, and you'll have received plenty of constructive criticism from tutors and peers over the duration of your degree. Employers want employees who are capable of taking constructive criticism and using what they've been told to improve their own work. This might seem like an odd soft skill as it's not one you can easily demonstrate, but it's worth having stories you can tell in job interviews of occasions when you were able to use constructive criticism to improve your work.