### Developing and Describing Your Employability Skills

Whether you experience diversity through ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status or something else, the soft skills you gain by managing your experience of diversity are relevant to graduate positions. Employers value diversity because it makes their teams better reflect the communities they service. To increase your opportunity of success when applying for graduate jobs it can be valuable to incorporate relevant examples into your job applications and interviews. When deciding which examples to use, take in to account the job responsibilities, the organisation and the industry you are applying to. Use business language to demonstrate how you developed the soft skills relevant to the specific workplace environment. Remember that it is not necessary to declare the details of your disability or particular circumstance to an employer, apart from in specific circumstances – see our leaflet on Disclosing a Disability for more details. In this leaflet we have included examples in square brackets of the details of a disability or personal circumstance.

The examples in the table show how diversity work can develop employability skills. Do not copy the examples, but use the format to identify and describe the employability skills you have developed through your retail experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/responsibility</th>
<th>Appropriate Terminology</th>
<th>Employability Skill Set</th>
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| Resourceful, innovative and open minded when negotiating with others as a result of disability | - Managing physical disability [spina bifida] resulted in growth of networking skills to effectively lobby and apply for government resources. | • Planning and organization  
• Initiative and enterprise  
• Communication |
| Flexible approach to work                                                          | - Developed a flexible approach to work hours to create a highly valued staff roster with employer which integrated personal needs to successfully manage a hidden disability [diabetes (diet, insulin and exercise)] with employer needs to cover out-of-hours work activities. | • Self management  
• Planning and organisation  
• Initiative and enterprise |
| Developed a new project management system                                           | -Developed a systemised approach to program management using organisational skills which were developed when managing a learning challenge [ADHD]. The system has been distributed in the workplace as an example of best practice and is currently used by many members of staff. | • Learning  
• Planning and organisation  
• Self management |
| Helped the company's Human Resources Manager access government funding for improved workplace modifications | -Through managing own onboarding process due to a newly acquired health condition [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder], developed knowledge of the government's Employment Assistance Fund which covers the costs of workplace modifications. Understanding of the process was valued by human resources who could use the knowledge to accommodate the needs of several employees. | • Learning  
• Communication  
• Teamwork |
| Created own aspirational career plan and developed social capital                  | -Strong commitment to formal learning demonstrated by being first-in-family to go to university. Process has resulted in active career planning, developing own social capital, independence and resilience. | • Problem solving  
• Self management |
| Moved from another country to Australia to complete a postgraduate qualification    | -Integrated and established independence in a country which varied from own country in areas of educational style, language, culture and economics. Developed new and effective approaches to developing high functioning teams with people who have different styles, approaches and philosophies. | • Communication  
• Teamwork |
| Effectively negotiated with specialist technical areas such as the health department | -Due to experience overcoming personal difficulties [depression], developed self awareness and the ability to solicit support from health professionals. Demonstrated emotional intelligence, gained insight and awareness of alternative perspectives. Developed strategies to maximise ability to learn in complex situations. | • Self management  
• Learning |
| Identified highest priorities of work team and made realistic commitments, taking in to account personal requirements | -Highly realistic and committed to meeting employer needs and expectations, while still meeting emotional and financial needs of family. | • Team work  
• Planning and organisation |
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| Developed creative and broad communication skills to introduce new technologies to team | -Developed confidence, communication and training skills through teaching others to work with a system which incorporates TTY typewriters and telephone amplifiers. Training programs had additional benefits including improved team cooperation and appreciation of diversity. | • Problem solving  
• Communication  
• Technology |
| Increased the tolerance and understanding of different points of view in organisation | -As first member of organisation to have particular needs [visual impairment], quickly developed capacity to prioritise, think flexibly and negotiate sympathetically. The negotiation process added value to the organisation’s capacity to utilise different perspectives and creativity. The organisation’s reputation is now regarded as inclusive, nurturing and creative. | • Initiative and enterprise  
• Communication |
| Identified and met all business needs | -Clearly and openly planned for all work tasks to be completed within organisation time commitments, while still attending to own individual needs [kidney dialysis sessions]. New work planning systems were implemented in a variety of other departments. | • Problem solving  
• Self management |
| Helped people understand cultural differences within the workplace | -Contributed to a “Bring your culture to a shared lunch” event which expanded workplace awareness and appreciation of the Australian indigenous community. | • Communication  
• Team work |
| Enhanced the company’s brand as a leader in diversity initiatives | -Successfully advocated for the company’s participation in Pride in Diversity inclusivity programs resulting in customised training for all staff in Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the workplace.  
- The company now has access to best practice, benchmarking, diversity networks is rated on the Australian Workplace Equality Index and is engaged with a cycle of continuous improvement. | • Communication  
• Teamwork  
• Initiative and enterprise |

Your Personal Attributes

In addition to the development of employability skills, working in retail can help you gain evidence of how you have demonstrated your personal attributes. While thinking of the examples showing your skills don’t forget personal attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persistence</th>
<th>Motivated</th>
<th>Reliable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common sense</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Positive self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
<td>Professional Presentation</td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty and Integrity</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Ability to deal with pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Hard-working</td>
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Further reading
See our resources on Global Employability Skills, the Employability Skills Table and resources about employability skills gained through working in hospitality, retail, study abroad, clubs and societies, volunteer and research work.

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Disclaimer: Information was current at the time of writing and is intended as a guide only  
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