

How to Evaluate Career Changers' Transferable Skills

[Career changers](#) are a valuable asset to any organisation, bringing a range of unique competencies and experiences to the table. However, it can be challenging for [employers](#) to evaluate career changers' transferable skills effectively and make the right hiring decisions. By nature, transferable skills are contextual and subjective, making them tough to measure. Fortunately, some strategies can help you with this process so you can build a diverse and talented workforce.

This employer's guide covers everything you need to know about transferable skills evaluation, including:

- What are [transferable skills](#), and why are they essential when assessing career changers?
- How to identify transferable skills in candidates from diverse backgrounds
- Ways to effectively assess career changers' transferable skills
- Tips on how to remove biases from the recruitment process

What Are Transferable skills?

Transferable skills are a set of competencies that employees can apply to various sectors, jobs, and workplace scenarios. Examples include interpersonal skills, communication, teamwork, adaptability, leadership, and resilience.

Why Are Transferable Skills Important In Evaluating Career Changers?

Assessing transferable skills is essential when [hiring career changers](#) because it allows employers to decide if that candidate has the skills, ability, and character to excel in the role, company, and field.

Since career changers tend to lack direct industry experience, evaluating their transferable skills is a good indicator of how they will perform, how quickly they adapt, and their potential.

However, considering training on [transferable skills](#) is challenging and time-consuming, employers must understand the malleable abilities prospective candidates already have.

How Do I Identify And Assess Transferable Skills In A Candidate From A Different Industry?

A common question amongst recruitment experts is: “How can I measure the level of proficiency of transferable skills in a candidate?”. It’s a good question and one that doesn’t have a concrete answer. The exact strategies you use will depend on the skills you want to assess, the career changer’s experience level, and the role they’re applying for.

Due to their nature, transferable skills are challenging to measure. That said, there are a few ways to assess candidates’ proficiency levels with transferable skills.

- **Ask [behavioural interview questions](#)** that encourage candidates to describe how they utilised their transferable skills in specific situations or contexts.
- **Conduct skills assessments** to evaluate specific transferable skills like communication and problem-solving. Add cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, and personality tests to the mix for an insightful overview of a candidate’s skill set.
- **Check references** and ask previous employers questions that give a clear idea of how proficient the candidate is in certain situations.
- **Review CVs looking for relevant experiences and achievements.** For example, look for cross-functional experiences where the candidate worked with other departments and functions to evaluate collaboration skills.
- **Use real-world scenarios** during interviews to get a clear idea of how candidates would behave in different situations and what skills they would apply.
- **Utilise different assessment methods** for a better overall understanding of candidates. Remember, everyone is different. As a result, some people will perform better in test-like environments and others in roleplaying situations.

Bonus read: [Recruiting The Career Changer: A Complete Guide](#)

How Do I Compare Transferable Skills To Specific Job Requirements And Responsibilities?

Striking the right balance between transferable skills and industry-specific experience isn't easy, but it's worth it if you want to make informed hiring decisions.

Comparing these two factors requires properly analysing the candidate's [CV](#), [cover letter](#), and employment background. Doing so gives you a clear picture of whether the candidate's transferable skills can complement or substitute direct experience.

Here are some best practices to help you.

- **Step #1:** Review the job description to pinpoint the key requirements, competencies, and technical skills needed for the role. Looking at the daily tasks and liaising with the direct manager should give you proper insight into the exact requirements.
- **Step #2:** Try to match which transferable skills fulfil the job requirements. For example, if the skill is leadership, does that mean leaders from other fields could thrive in this role? The same goes for communication; could someone with a retail background succeed in a customer success role?
- **Step #3:** Analyse how certain soft skills could transfer to the specific job responsibilities in question. Would a candidate's background as a team leader give them the skills they need to manage projects?
- **Step #4:** Using all this information, rank the most important transferable skills needed for the role and prioritise these in the next step.
- **Step #5:** During the [interview](#), focus on questions relevant to interviewees' soft skills and how they apply them in workplace settings.

You may also be interested in: [Benefits of Employing a Career Changer](#)

How Can I Prevent Overlooking Valuable Transferable Skills In Candidates Due To Biases?

Everyone has biases; it's an unfortunate and inevitable part of life. But it's essential to do everything you can to prevent these biases from affecting transferable skill evaluation. By letting biases and assumptions filter into the hiring process, you risk losing qualified applicants and building teams that lack diverse thinking.

Here are some tips on how to evaluate career changers' transferable skills without biases.

- **Step #1:** It's called unconscious bias for a reason; most people don't know they hold certain prejudices or assumptions. So, the first step is to identify your biases as a company and reflect on how to address them. You can do this by taking an [Implicit Association Test \(IAT\)](#) and working closely with [diversity, equality, and inclusion](#) experts.
- **Step #2:** Take steps to standardise your recruitment process by using objective criteria and focusing on skills and experience that are directly relevant to the job. Standardising interview questions will help you achieve this and prevent recruiters from forming assumptions about someone's ability based on personal characteristics.
- **Step #3:** Conduct blind CV reviews by removing any information that may encourage unconscious bias, such as age, gender, education, and name (which may suggest race).
- **Step #4:** Don't just focus on academic qualifications and technical skills. By considering potential and transferable skills, you even the playing field and encourage a more diverse group of candidates to apply.
- **Step #5:** Studies have shown that recruiters are likely to favour applicants from similar backgrounds. So, consider diversifying your hiring teams to ensure all candidates get a fair shot. In addition, inviting a wider group of employees to participate in the interview process can help to reduce unconscious bias and create a fairer process.

In summary, learning how to evaluate [transferable skills](#) will significantly enhance your company's recruitment process. From attracting and employing the right people to identifying and preventing biases, this is an important step in creating a more [inclusive hiring process](#).

FAQ

In this section, we answer all your burning questions about how to evaluate career changers' transferable skills.

1. What are the best platforms for employing talented career changers?

The best way to connect with skilled career changers is to partner with specialist job boards. That way, career changers know you're committed to hiring them and willing to invest time in incorporating them into your business.

[Refreshing a Career](#) is one of the UK's leading [career change jobs boards](#). Our team of experts works closely with employers to help them attract and recruit the best talent for their business. In addition to our live jobs board, our [resource hub](#) has a wealth of advice for employers on everything from [career changer employment rights](#) to providing [flexible work](#).

2. How do I communicate the value of transferable skills to internal stakeholders and team members?

You'll need to get the whole business on board to effect real change in your hiring process. If you aim to employ more career changers and switch up the skills you prioritise, that will require a massive team effort and transparent communication. Here are some best practices:

- **Highlight the benefits for both employees and the business** of diversifying the workforce, including enhanced innovation, problem-solving, and decision-making. Plus, people are more likely to get on board if they understand *why* you're implementing this approach.
- **Align transferable skills with business goals** to show employees how prioritising transferable skills will help you achieve your organisational objectives. Again, giving clear examples and use cases will make this easier.
- **Offer [training](#)** to help the workforce transfer their existing soft skills and develop new ones. The more learning opportunities you provide, the better equipped your staff will be to adapt to change. What's more, they'll better understand the value of transferable skills.

How We Can Support Your Business

With the right guidance and support, [career changers](#) are a hugely valuable asset for your organisation. Their unique set of transferable competencies and life experience brings fresh ideas and perspectives to your teams, inspiring innovation and better decision-making. As such, learning how to evaluate career changers' transferable skills is a vital piece of the recruitment puzzle. We hope this guide has given you some actionable ideas for achieving this.

Are you a [career-changer employer](#)? Our experts can help you recruit skilled career changers for your business. Here are just some of the services we offer:

- **Advice and support** - We want to support career changers as they transition to a new [career path](#), shining a light on the many [benefits of employing career changers](#). Our website is packed with resources for [employers](#), including guides on [training](#) and [building an inclusive work environment](#). Moreover, find the latest industry insights on our [weekly blog](#).
- **Attract career change talent** - Get in touch to [advertise your roles](#) on our dedicated [career change jobs board](#).
- **Find diverse talent** - Our [job advert inclusivity screening](#) tests your ad against our "Inclusive Language Checklist" to remove potentially discriminatory language.
- **Advertise your business** - Our talented team of writers works with you to create a [company profile](#) that documents your efforts as a leading inclusive employer.
- **Support career changers** - If you are a job seeker, you'll find a range of [support and resources](#) to help you with your job hunt. From [confidence tips](#) to [retraining](#) to [job application advice](#), we have you covered. You can also browse the latest opportunities on our [career change jobs board](#).

Call [03458724501](tel:03458724501) or email info@refreshingacareer.com to learn more about our bespoke packages.