

How to Talk About Your Academic Background: Transferable Skills Matrix

CV entry or PhD activity	Transferable career skills
I completed an advanced graduate degree.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to set, negotiate and meet priorities under multiple deadlines • Comfortable operating independently and as part of a team • Lab management skills (if applicable) • Establishing and maintaining collaborative working relationships • Problem-solving in evolving contexts and the ability to pivot when necessary • Collaborate and communicate with experts across fields
I wrote a 50,000 word thesis or dissertation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching, organizing and clearly presenting information • Critical thinking and analytical skills • Strong writing skills • Project management skills to plan, coordinate and deliver a multifaceted project—can also be framed as experience in directing a large-scale, complex research endeavor
I analyzed lots of data/ conducted many interviews for my research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative literacy to analyze and critically interpret data and persuasively present conclusions and concepts • Fluency with specific software, programs or databases • Awareness of and adherence to best practices in ethical research • Advanced interpersonal communication—diplomacy and sensitivity • Iterative research development and design thinking
I published papers, book chapters and presented at conferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating complex ideas effectively in a range of formats • Developing and executing effective presentations • Ability to synthesize complex concepts for a variety of audiences
I applied for grants, research awards or scholarships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with and adherence to federal or state regulations • Knowledge of foundation/grantmaking landscape • Creating, managing and administering a budget • Persuasive writing and case-making skills • Synthesizing complex concepts for stakeholder audiences • Evaluating and effectively communicating impact
I taught undergraduate classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional design • Experience synthesizing and translating specialist knowledge • Develop and implement metrics aligned with organizational goals
I worked as an academic or career advisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big-picture thinking: understanding and operating within organizational structure, relationships and objectives • Robust institutional knowledge and/or federal or state regulations • Confidentiality, sensitivity and good judgment • Customer-service oriented approach

Traci Galbaugh, Senior Director, Foundation Engagement, tgalbaugh@ucdavis.edu
 Laurel Ode-Schneider, Proposal Writer, lvodeschneider@ucdavis.edu
 Samantha Snively, Proposal Writer, snsnively@ucdavis.edu

Getting Started: Gaining Transferable Experience in Grad School

Being positioned on a university campus offers you unique opportunities to gain relevant career experience and build your resume during grad school. Below is a (by no means exhaustive!) list of ways to acquire professional experience.

- Work as an undergraduate or graduate career advisor or tutor
- Pursue part-time or hourly positions in administration and campus service units
- Participate in graduate professional development programs (e.g. Mellon Public Scholars, Leaders for the Future)
- Undertake research or writing roles at campus research, policy or advocacy centers
- Work as a teaching assistant or consultant at the departmental or university level
- Take accredited certificate programs or courses, such as the American Academy for the Advancement of Science's career courses (accessible through GradPathways Institute)
- Conduct freelance work in writing, editing, research, graphic design, and more
- Volunteer for fundraising or awareness-raising positions for organizations internal and external to the university
- Write articles or copy for strategic communications offices, departments, research centers or external organizations
- Join a departmental or university-wide committee to build institutional knowledge and gain experience shaping policy
- Participate in an internship through the university or outside the university
- Propose your own opportunities as appropriate

Building Your Portfolio and Networking in Grad School

What counts as a writing sample for a portfolio?

- Public-facing articles, op-eds, reviews
- A series of coordinated social media posts used to promote a program or event
- Grant proposals, concept papers and letters of intent
- Slide decks, data visualizations and other materials developed for presentation—especially those that translate complex academic topics to a lay or non-expert audience
- Material developed to communicate a research project to a broad audience—such as explanatory handouts, one-pagers, executive summaries, and more

How do I network as a graduate student?

- Go to beyond-ac professional workshops, networking events and career treks
- Seek out university opportunities that gather people with shared interests across disciplines—e.g. networking for women in STEM, climate advocacy days
- Conduct informational interviews with people whose jobs are interesting to you or job-shadow them, if appropriate
- LinkedIn: Practice discussing your skills and experience while building networks
- Twitter: Many professional circles use Twitter to solicit article requests, offer pitch or collaboration information and build professional networks

Traci Galbaugh, Senior Director, Foundation Engagement, tlgalbaugh@ucdavis.edu
Laurel Ode-Schneider, Proposal Writer, lvodeschneider@ucdavis.edu
Samantha Snively, Proposal Writer, snsnively@ucdavis.edu