

Skills Exercise

1. Make a list of graduate school activities

List every activity you've participated in as a graduate student (both academic and nonacademic). For example,

- Taken classes, written papers, conducted research, and rigorously trained within a specific discipline
- Served as a TA for a specific undergraduate course
- Research
- Thesis/Dissertation completion
- Campus committees, clubs, organizations
- Jobs, internships
- Wrote a grant or fellowship proposal

2. List specific tasks associated with each activity listed in step 1

Make certain your vocabulary is active. Think beyond the activity to the process you used and be thorough—it is easy to overlook tasks. For example, specific tasks for TAing a course may include:

- ordered books
- planned and organized lessons
- photocopied material for students
- established reserve materials
- prepared lectures and discussions
- presented lectures
- answered questions
- met with and advised students on their progress
- prepared exams
- proctored exams
- graded papers
- graded exams
- maintained grades in electronic gradebook
- evaluated student progress

3. Compile a list of skills necessary to complete the tasks

For example, just a few of the skills honed as a teaching assistant may include:

- the ability to coherently organize materials for others
- the ability to facilitate discussions
- the ability to objectively evaluate the performance of others
- the ability to make consistent decisions about abstract criteria
- clear communication skills, both verbal and written
- a comfortable manner of public speaking
- diplomacy
- the ability to monitor/supervise the work of others (students)
- time management
- the ability to remember large quantities of information for instant recall
- the ability to think quickly in a public speaking situation
- the ability to motivate and persuade others to participate
- the ability to read and understand large quantities of material quickly