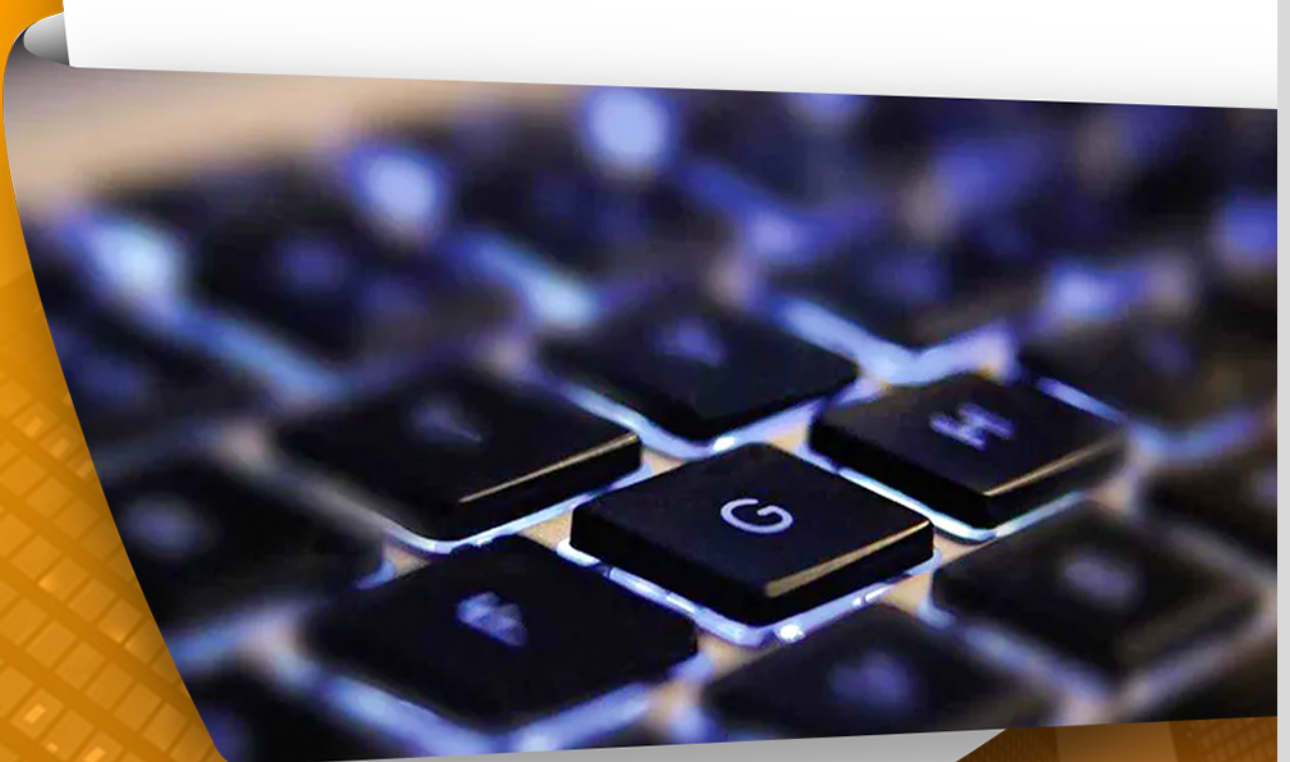


TECHNICAL SKILLS



WikiJob

Technical Skills

A **technical skill** is the ability to carry out a task associated with technical roles such as IT, engineering, mechanics, science or finance. Typical technical skills are programming, the analysis of complex figures or the use of specific tools. The majority of technical skills require experience and sometimes extensive training to master.

As job hunting becomes more competitive, graduates need to work even harder to differentiate themselves from other candidates, and acquiring technical skills is one way to achieve this.

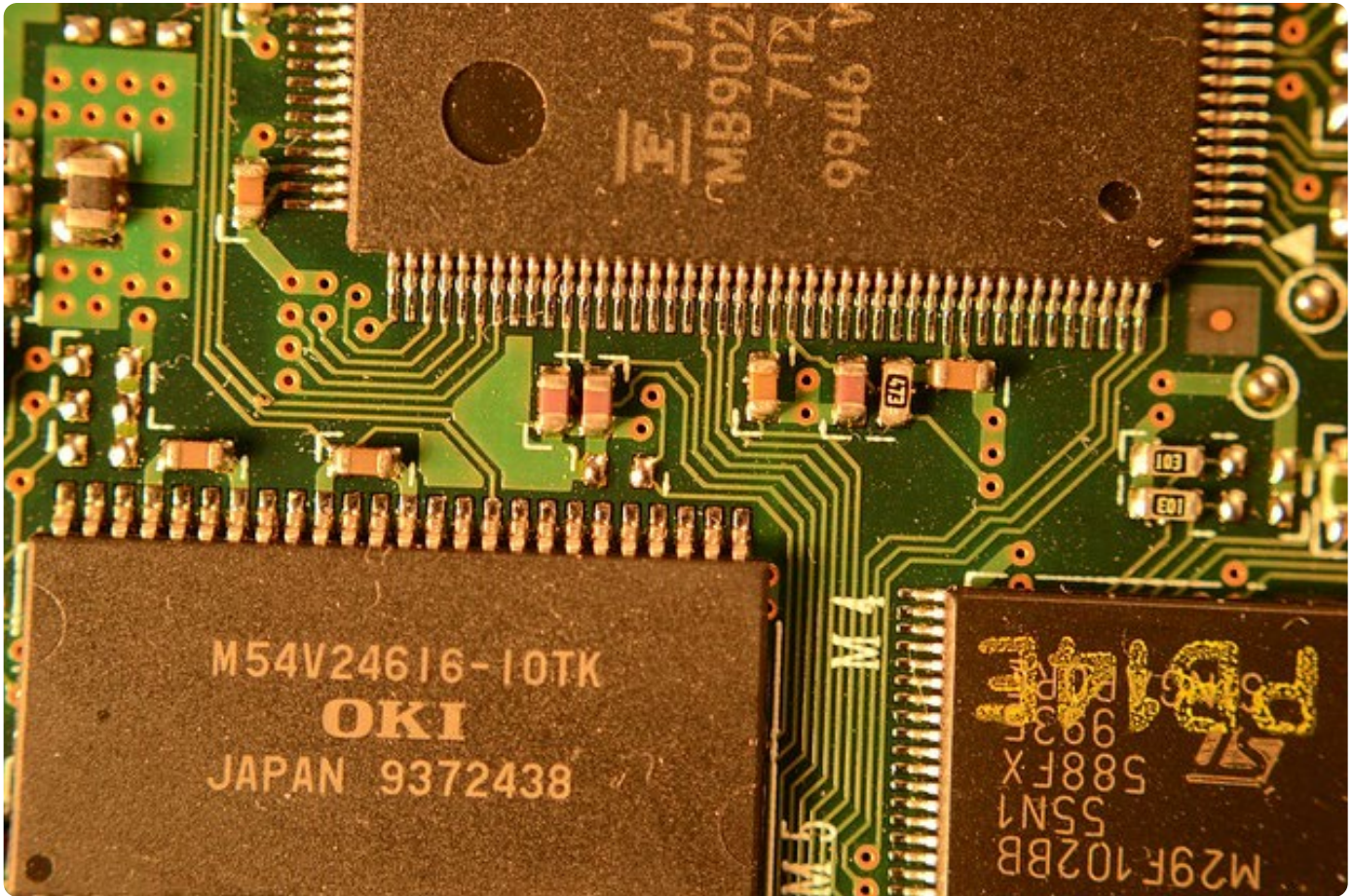
Why Do Technical Skills Matter?

Technical skills are important for a number of reasons. They can help you **work more efficiently, boost your confidence** and **make you a more valuable candidate for employers**.

Candidates who have a technical skill are often more confident when applying to certain industries than those who don't. In addition, employees with a technical skill are often better at multitasking in a challenging and complex role. With sufficient technical ability, you will be able to speak to colleagues and clients more confidently using your specialist expertise.

Graduates who take the time to learn a technical skill often receive **higher pay**. Businesses are always on the lookout for knowledgeable staff, as their clients expect to work with highly skilled teams who they have confidence in to deliver the results they need.

Technically skilled graduates can also save employers money, as they don't require so much training to get to a particular level. Plus they can prevent technical issues from occurring, increase customer satisfaction and reduce technical problems before they arise.



There's no doubt that proficiency of technical skills will make you stand out.

What Are the Key Technical Skills for Graduates?

Technical skills are found in many different industries but the most common ones include:

Programming

Programming skills are not just reserved for developers. Other IT staff, such as customer service teams or project managers, need to have a basic understanding of

programming to support customers or coordinate projects. Any graduate entering the IT industry will be more valuable to an employer if they know how to code because they can take on programming-related tasks from the outset.

Project Management

Being able to effectively coordinate resources, people and budgets as a **project manager** is one of the best technical skills that you can have. Project managers are required in every industry from construction through to digital design.

A qualified project manager will be able to deliver projects more efficiently, use resources cost-effectively and deploy the right staff to complete the right tasks. This can result in resource savings, prompt resolution of problems, anticipation of future issues and an overall improvement in the work environment. Even if you do not secure a project management role straight from university, your project management skills will still be highly valued and recognised by any potential employer.

Analysis of Big Data and Business Intelligence

This type of data analysis is crucial in many roles because it can give businesses vital information they can use to retain market share or define their competitive advantage. **Big data analysis** plays a crucial role in overall business process, which is why this technical skill is valued so highly by many employers.

Evaluating large data sets is a complex task and the results will help to identify correlations, highlight a company's most valuable customers and assess return on investment, to see where key organisational and strategic improvements can be made. Completing big data analysis correctly can thus result in more effective sales and marketing operations, increased opportunities to generate revenue and greater operational efficiency.

Information Security

In an increasingly digital world, **security** is an area of great concern among many business owners. Data breaches can have a devastating impact on a business, from loss of customers through to irreparable damage to the reputation of the company. As a result, demand is increasing for technical security specialists.

Security management is a technical skill where specialists develop the knowledge to identify loopholes in systems, pinpoint any vulnerabilities and tailor practices to strengthen the way in which information is managed. Learning information security and displaying it on your CV as a technical skill can add value to your application, particularly if you are entering an IT or data management role.

Careers Where Technical Skills Are Important

Technical skills are not just confined to technical roles; they can be found in a range of different industries and occupations including digital marketing, design and writing. For example:

Designer

With more businesses moving online, the scope for designers is huge. Designers now need to master a number of technical skills, from software such as Photoshop through to the tools they use to create wireframes. Technical skills such as a working knowledge of HTML, CSS and JavaScript are also useful.

Customer Service Representative

With more ways to contact customer support, representatives need to know how to process support tickets, talk via live chat, use a customer relationship management tool and use social media. For example, if a customer asks why they can't log in to their account, you may be expected to find out why, by navigating through the various systems or troubleshooting to resolve the service request.

Marketing Assistant

If you enter a marketing position, your job will involve much more than finding new business. Today's marketing roles require many different tasks - from developing email marketing strategies and newsletters through to overseeing SEO and monitoring analytics. Expertise in HTML and CSS can therefore be useful, as can an understanding of how servers and browsers function, and how search engines index data.

Writer

Believe it or not, writers need technical skills too. Today's writing goes much further than simply using a word processor to create a great piece of content.

Writers have to be multi-skilled, particularly in the digital world.

A writer will need a range of technical skills to understand content management systems, get the basics of search engine optimisation (SEO) and even know how to put together a website or blog to publish work for themselves or on behalf of clients.

Finance

A career in finance requires a whole range of soft and hard skills, but technical skills are now highly sought after by employers as many aspects of the job are already, or will soon be, fully automated or technology-based.

A fundamental understanding of popular accounting software, Excel, financial planning and forecasting software, and data management technology will be essential for a career in finance.

How to Push Your Technical Skills in Your CV/Resume and at Interview

If you possess them, technical skills need to be given prominence on your CV, and you should provide evidence of situations where you have used them, what you did and the outcome. Make your CV **as achievement-focused as possible**.

Describe how the technical skill you used had a positive impact on the company. As an example, this could be improved systems or processes, cost savings or increased productivity. Don't just state that you have a technical skill, say how you have used it and the results you achieved through its use.

For instance, within a skills section in your CV, you could state:

- **SEO** – Implemented an SEO strategy that increased client's website traffic by 60% and increased sales by 25%
- **Project management** – Completed company project ahead of schedule and effectively managed expenses to come in under budget by 15%

While you want to describe how your technical skills have benefited previous/current employers, you should keep the descriptions fairly short on your CV. You could expand on one or two in a cover letter if applicable. However, you will also have an opportunity to expand on your skills and explain examples in more detail during an interview.

Technical skills are a great way for graduates to give themselves the competitive edge over other candidates. Although they do take time to master and often require additional training, they are certainly worth the investment.