



# RESUME

## How Harvard Extension School Equips Students with In-Demand Skills

Harvard Extension School's director of career advising & programming helps clarify which skills employers are really looking for when hiring.

Melissa Russell

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Advancing your career in today's job market can sometimes feel like trying to predict the future.

Harvard Extension School's director of career advising & programming helps clarify which skills employers are really looking for when hiring.

Staying ahead in today's job market is more critical than ever given the rapid pace of change in technology, globalization, and evolving industry demands.

With AI, hybrid workplaces, and skill gaps expected to impact the job market in 2025, it is more critical than ever to pay attention to what's next and build the skills employers seek.

As director of career advising and programming at Harvard Extension School, Amanda Peters oversees career resources for students, most of whom are pursuing their education to advance their careers.

We asked Peters to share her insights on what the future may hold for job seekers in the coming year — and how enrolling at Harvard Extension School can help them support their goals.

## **Meet Our Expert**



**Amanda Peters**

*Director of career advising & programming*

## **Trends Shaping Tomorrow’s Job Market**

Peters is focused on how major shifts in technology and hiring practices began to change the workplace in 2024 and will continue to impact roles in 2025.

“In general, two of the biggest shifts in hiring in 2024 were related to AI, in terms of how hiring is done and the types of jobs that are out there, as well as incorporation of skills-based hiring practices,” Peters says. “For skills-based hiring, employers want to know what skills you are bringing from your education and your experience. It is more about the skills you bring and your proof of those skills and expertise than it is about having a degree.”

At Harvard Extension School, courses — designed by faculty who are experts in in-demand fields like AI, management, sustainability, and data science — cover timely topics and introduce relevant skills

## Leadership of projects or people

Written and verbal communication skills

Teamwork

Client service

Analysis and problem solving

Adaptability

How these skills drive career advancement depends on the industry, but, Peters says, “everyone seems to agree that people skills are more needed than ever, because people need to be able to evaluate and share information and decide what to do with it, and not just generate it using AI.”

Making connections and networking, learning what an organization is looking for in a leader, and speaking with people in roles of interest to learn how they got to where they are, are some ways to identify what skills are needed in a particular industry or organization.

Others include involvement in professional associations, online sources such as LinkedIn Career Explorer and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, and of course analysis of job descriptions and generation of ideas using AI, though be sure to use multiple sources to ensure accuracy.

“Communication, the ability to both write and talk to people in a way that fits with a particular culture of organizational leadership and management, is important across all jobs. A lot of it, like AI and technology in general, is going to depend on the needs of your specific organization and having a sense of where the future of that organization might go and how technical tools of various kinds are going to be vital in that field,” she says.

## Trends driving the demand for skills in 2025

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## AI-enhanced roles

Human-centric leadership

Advanced technology skills

Understanding green initiatives

As AI and digital connectivity reshape industries, AI proficiency will be as necessary as computer literacy is today. Industries will need leaders who can steer organizations through rapid digital transformation changes.

The pace of innovation will only increase, and it will be crucial to continue developing and integrating new knowledge to have a resilient career. Lifelong learning will be the watchword in the evolving professional landscape of 2025 and beyond. Adult learners will need to prepare for shifts in skill demand while balancing jobs and life commitments.

Peters recommends keeping up to date on workplace changes in part by reading industry newsletters and taking classes, and by asking for “stretch assignments” at your current job to expand knowledge and skill sets.

“I’ll never forget seeing a professor earning an HES master’s degree because they wanted to stay up to date in their field,” she says. “I recommend everyone write down what they’re learning; what are the new skills and tools they are gaining and demonstrating through classes, including through class projects. Many people, especially if they are transitioning to a new field, might have the opportunity to volunteer for a nonprofit and offer up those skills to prove their expertise, even if they just recently learned them. In our master’s programs, the thesis or capstone project is a fantastic way to demonstrate skill sets.”

**Soft versus hard skills — you'll need them both**

changes, it's going to be more about how fast you can pick up skills, how quickly you can learn and adapt. Because such a high percentage of jobs are going to change over the next five years, new roles will emerge, transferable skills are most important.”

For success in 2025, Peters says, “Participate. Stay up to date in the field, talk to as many people as possible, and ask what helps people succeed in this role. Ask them, ‘If you were me, what skill sets would you be working on, both the hard technical skills and softer skills, to be able to succeed in this position?’ This includes networking within your current company to learn this information, if you are looking at career growth there.”

According to the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#), skills and attributes employers seek on a candidate's resume include:

Problem-solving skills

Ability to work in a team

Communication skills, written and verbal

Strong work ethic

Flexibility/adaptability

Technical skills

Analytical/quantitative skills

Initiative

Detail oriented

Interpersonal skills

Computer skills

Leadership



# How You Can Build In-Demand Skills at Harvard Extension School

Harvard Extension School offers courses, as well as undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates, to equip you with the in-demand skills you will need to be successful in 2025 and beyond. All HES courses are designed with an interdisciplinary lens to strengthen key skills in today's job market, including clear and effective writing, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and strong communication.

## Engaging courses

Explore courses that offer the latest knowledge for emerging fields:

Leadership Communications

Organizational Behavior

Building Leadership Skills

Advanced Public Speaking and Professional Presenting

Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for a Sustainable Future

Leading the Artificial Intelligence Revolution

Problem Solving Across Differences

The Politics of Climate Change and the Environment

Leading through Change

Consider certificate programs in:

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## **Career support and development**

As a student, you also have access to the [Career and Academic Resource Center](#), where you can continue to develop skills through workshops and programs in:

Resumes and cover letters for working professionals

Writing skills

Navigating a successful career change

Compensation negotiation

Networking and building relationships

Career success



projects they did in class and can sell those skills, plus their past experience, which might be in a different field.”

## Prepare for Your Future Today at Harvard Extension School

Peters says students often share feedback about how HES coursework made them competitive in their job searches.

“It is not only at the end of a program; it’s often before then that they make micro steps to get somewhere closer to where they want to go. The networking, the resources, everything they’ve learned in class, the projects, all of those things are helpful,” she says.

As AI grows and takes over routine tasks, the value of human skills and expertise will increase, bringing success to those who can span the worlds of technology and human capability. Harvard Extension School is a place where you will meet faculty members with direct industry experience, find classes and programs to help you develop the skills that are in demand now and in the foreseeable future, and access the career services programs for resources to help you find success long after you have completed our programs.

**[Learn more about HES](#)**

**[5 Benefits of Enrolling at Harvard Extension School](#)**

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journey today!



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### About the Author

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Melissa Russell is an award-winning journalist and editor living in the Boston area. She has written for many news outlets as well as for websites, trade publications and other platforms.

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