

# Skills for Learning

## Guide to Employability Skills

Your time at university is designed to help you develop your knowledge and skills, not only academically but as part of a broader experience equipping you with not just skills for learning, but skills for work and skills for life.

Obviously, you will acquire a good working knowledge and expertise within your subject area, but you will also develop more generic graduate skills that are widely valued in the workplace and will contribute greatly to your success in your future career and life as a whole.

Employers increasingly expect these employability skills whether you are entering a profession specific to your degree or a more general graduate entry stream. When you begin to look for work, or even placements and internships, you will find the typical graduate job advertisement asking for a wide range of them.

As you progress through your degree, you will have many opportunities to develop these skills through both your academic study and your outside commitments, whether part-time work, caring, recreation or managing finances and general student life. The key to this is recognising what these skills are and planning ahead to ensure you graduate with the full set of competencies to get you the job you really want. This means taking the right decisions, organising yourself effectively and having the self-commitment and self-belief to succeed.

A good starting point is to think about the course you are studying, and how your assignments, lectures, essays and other academic activities help build these graduate skills.

### Gaining Skills Through Academic Study

Your academic activities at university are designed to help you develop key graduate skills alongside acquiring knowledge and expertise in your subject area. For example, all degree subjects contain an element of problem solving and analysis through a wide range of activities.

For some assignments, you may be required to fact-find or decide the best approach for carrying out research for an essay or dissertation. For others, you may need to work out the best way forward for a group project, perform a risk assessment for a practical project or solve an engineering problem. From these activities, you should therefore learn to analyse facts critically, make informed decisions and to find solutions to work around obstacles and achieve your goal.

The table on the next page gives a guide to how you can build these skills through your study activities. You will also find that good IT skills, along with numeracy and literacy, are a prerequisite for most graduate jobs

<b>Planning and organisational</b>  Time management Prioritising Setting goals and achieving them Planning: breaking things down into tasks Decision making Meeting deadlines Managing your resources: notes, online sources, journals and books, research data, references	<b>Problem solving and analytical</b>  Understanding the question Planning methodically Researching: gathering, analysing and using information Making conjectures Drawing conclusions Anticipating / troubleshooting problems Being flexible / able to adjust plans
<b>Written Communication</b>  Understanding and following written instructions Clearly communicating facts / ideas Summarising Showing awareness of intended audience Writing academically Producing reports and documents to specific formats and styles Attention to detail Using vocabulary / terminology specific to subject area	<b>Verbal Communication</b>  Articulate and able to communicate viewpoint Good listening skills Awareness of others values / beliefs Summarising skills Questioning skills Good body language Awareness of audience One to one communication skills Presentation skills
<b>Teamwork</b>  Excellent verbal communication Persuading and negotiating- ability to put across own ideas and accept/dispute other peoples Respect for alternative points of view Self-awareness and Assertiveness Ability to accept constructive criticism Time management	<b>Leadership</b>  Excellent interpersonal skills Motivate and inspire others Planning and decision making Coordinate team work Value team members and promote their development Initiative
<b>Intellectual / creative ability</b>  Critically analyse and evaluate information Develop a line of reasoned argument Use appropriate academic language Lateral thinking Open to new concepts / ideas Able to keep abreast of subject Applying knowledge in new ways Forming new ideas from current practice/knowledge	<b>Self-awareness / self-reliance</b>  Self-motivated / confident Integrity and assertiveness Networking skills Aware of strengths and weaknesses Able to action-plan and self-manage Open to new opportunities Able to handle and manage change Willing to learn



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