

Edge Hill University

# **IDENTIFYING YOUR SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

for effective job  
applications!

**CC 2**

**Careers Centre**

*'Employers are likely to be looking for graduates who can demonstrate softer skills such as team working, cultural awareness, leadership and communication skills, as well as academic achievement.'*

Carl Gilleard, Chief Executive of AGR

Updated by Jacqui Howe/ Sue Norris  
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# Edge Hill University

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## Careers Centre

### Identifying Your Skills!

Throughout your time at Edge Hill you will be continually informed about the need to acquire key skills. This process begins as you enter the University by recognising the gifts, talents and abilities that you bring to Edge Hill from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

It is important that you are able to do this so that you can identify what skills and experience you need to acquire and that you make yourself aware of all the opportunities open to you for learning new skills.

If you wish to gain employment after your degree you will find that employers want to know what skills you can offer apart from having a degree. Employers who wish to recruit a graduate will expect the degree qualification to be the baseline and then will look at what else applicants have to offer. They will want to know how you have used your time whilst at University e.g. weekends, part time work, voluntary experience – and what skills you have gained from these activities apart from your academic experience.

It is also important that your CV has substantial information about the transferable skills that you have acquired so that you are able to apply for as many employment opportunities as possible.

**However** many students find it difficult marketing themselves and become very humble when asked to sell their strengths, skills and achievements. **The aim of this booklet is to help you begin the process of building up your skills profile and putting together a CV that will help you to gain employment whilst at University or in your final year.**

The following pages will give you some suggestions about the many skills you have but which you may not have recognised before. **Identify the skills you have and then give examples of how you can support this.**

*E.g. communicating through technology – during my time at University I have effectively demonstrated my ability to communicate through a variety of IT such as electronic mail, word processing for assignments, excel spreadsheets, Powerpoint etc.*

## **Key Skills that employers always seem to ask for:**

According to a survey by the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR), the main reason why graduate recruiters don't fill vacancies is a shortage of the supply of applicants with the right mix of employability skills. Carl Gilleard, chief executive of AGR said:

*'Employers are likely to be looking for graduates who can demonstrate softer skills such as team working, cultural awareness, leadership and communication skills, as well as academic achievement.'*

To find out what employers really look for when they are hiring graduates, a major study was undertaken by the University of Sheffield. Its aim was to identify the most in-demand 'skills' required by the majority of recruiters. After analyzing over 10,000 job advertisements, researchers listed:

**Oral communication**

**Leadership**

**Team Work**

**Commitment**

**Enthusiasm**

**Interpersonal skills**

**Motivation**

**Organisation**

**Initiative**

**Foreign language skills**

## **Be Confident!**

Work through the booklet and highlight all the skills that you have. You'll be amazed at all the skills that you do have and it will lift your spirits after a bad day!

**Good luck and best wishes  
Jacqui Howe  
Head of the Careers Centre  
Updated July 2010**

## Employability-related skills:

In the report 'Future Fit : preparing graduates for the world of work'<sup>1</sup> the CBI set out a list of employability-related skills

- **Self-management:** readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning.
- **Team working:** respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others.
- **Business and customer awareness:** basic understanding of the key drivers for business success, including the importance of innovation and calculated risks – the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.
- **Problem solving:** analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.
- **Communication and literacy:** application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy – including listening and questioning.
- **Application of numeracy:** manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (eg measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae)

Underpinning each of these attributes, according to the CBI, the 'key foundation' should be 'a positive attitude: a "can-do" approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen'.

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<sup>1</sup> Future fit – preparing graduates for the world of work. CBI 2009. [www.cbi.org.uk](http://www.cbi.org.uk)

## VERBAL/PERSUASIVE

### Self-Rating

- Writing: Express myself well in written forms of communication
- Talking: Relate easily with people in ordinary conversational settings
- Speaking: Able to deliver a talk or address to an audience
- Persuading: Able to convince others to believe something that I hold to be true
- Selling: Able to convince others to buy a product that I am selling
- Performing: Able to portray ideas or stories before a group. Responsive to audience's moods or ideas.
- Negotiating: Able to bargain or discuss with a view toward reaching agreement.

*eg. Presentation Skills* "My academic programme demands that I frequently present ideas and proposals to my fellow students and tutors. This skill I am developing all the time and I thoroughly enjoy individual and group presentations."

## NUMERICAL

- Computational speed: Able to manipulate data rapidly without the aid of a mechanical device, demonstrating considerable accuracy in this process.
- Work with Numbers: Comfortable with large amounts of quantitative data, compiling, using statistics, interpreting, presenting.
- Solve Quantitative Problems: Able to reason quantitatively so that problems having numerical solutions can be solved without the aid of a computer or other mechanical equipment.
- Computer Use: Able to use electronic computers to solve quantitative problems, knowledge of programming, computer capabilities etc.

*eg. Work with numbers* "The statistics, part of my Psychology degree ensures that I am comfortable with large amounts of quantitative data and am able to interpret my findings to my colleagues."

## MANUAL/PHYSICAL

- Mechanical Reasoning: Able to understand the ways that machinery or tools operate; relationship between mechanical operations.
- Manual Dexterity Skill in using one's hands or body. Eye-hand co-ordination
- Spatial Perception: Able to judge the relationships of objects in space and visualise the effects of putting them together or turning them over or around.
- Physical Stamina: Physical resistance to fatigue, hardships and illness
- Outdoor Work: Familiarity and ability to work outdoors without encountering obstacles/knowledge deficiencies
  
- Controlling/ Operating: Skill in fitting/adjusting
- Cultivating growing things: Skill in working with livestock or botanical life
  
- eg. Physical stamina*      *"My membership of the University football team, playing and practicing every weeks ensures that keep fit and health."*

## WORKING WITH OTHER PEOPLE

- Supervising: Able to oversee, manage or direct work of others
- Teaching: Able to help others learn how to do or understand something: able to provide knowledge or insight.
- Coaching: Able to instruct or train an individual to improve his/her performance in specific subject area.
- Counselling: Able to engage in a direct helping relationship with another individual in situations where the person's concern is not solvable through direct information-giving or advice; able to keep confidentiality.
- Monitoring: Helping people identify their own intelligent self-interest
- Recruiting: Able to attract skilled competent people
  
- Initiating: Able to move into totally new situations on one's own leadership ability.
- Collaborating: Works well on a teamwork basis. Motivates fellow workers.
  
- eg. Supervising*      *"For the past year I have worked at ASDA gaining recognition for my organisational skills and achieving promotion to supervisor"*

## MANAGERIAL

- Organisation/  
planning: Able to develop a program, project, or set of ideas through systematic preparation and arrangement of tasks, co-ordinating people/resources necessary to activate a plan.
- Orderliness Able to arrange items in a systematic, regular fashion enabling items or information to be readily used or retrieved with minimum difficulty.
- Manage Details: Able to work with great variety and/or volume of information without losing track of any items in total situation; comfortable with small informational tasks that are part of the larger project responsibility.
- Decision-Making: Able to decide and carry out decisions, even when unpopular
- Crisis Intervention: Able to respond to emergencies quickly; able to work well under stress.
- Evaluation Able to use feedback for systematic review to create possible changes.

*eg. Crisis Intervention*

*“As a Student Hall Adviser, I have demonstrated my ability to respond to emergencies such as accidents, dealing calmly and efficiently with any crisis for the benefit of the students in my hall”*

## RESEARCH/INVESTIGATE

Observing

Reading

Analysing

Experimenting

Dissecting

Synthesising

Developing hypotheses

Framing questions

Using insight

Seeing relationships

Diagnosing

Measuring

Comparing

Finding patterns

Locating necessary resources

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Accounting

Cataloguing

Translating

Transcribing

Classifying

Recording

Attention to detail

Recording

Computing

Calculating

Compiling

Creating systems

## **COMMUNICATION/PERSUASING**

Negotiation, bargaining  
Teaching  
Listening  
Writing  
Creative visual images  
Representing others  
Editing  
Expressing feelings

Persuading  
Conveying information  
Interviewing  
Talking  
Using symbols  
Expressing ideas non-verbally  
Memorising

## **HUMAN SERVICES/RELATIONS**

Offering support/help  
Sizing up people  
Encouraging others  
Empathising  
Raising others self-esteem  
Sensitive to feelings  
Accepting others

Recognising needs  
Developing rapport  
Caring  
Establishing relationships  
Understanding group dynamics  
Sharing  
Guiding, counselling

## **ADMINISTRATION/DEVELOPMENT**

Allocating scarce resources  
Co-ordinating  
Inspiring others  
Enlisting the help of others  
Following plans  
Finding short cuts  
Accepting responsibility  
Setting/meeting deadlines

Delegating responsibility  
Selecting courses of action  
Sharing credit  
Supervising  
Organising  
Improvising  
Making decisions

## **DESIGN/PLANNING**

Conceptualising  
Adapting  
Inventing  
Estimating needs  
Foresight  
Creating new techniques  
Setting goals  
Developing programmes

Imagining alternatives  
Fantasising, dreaming  
Formulating/using principles  
Perceiving needs  
Visualising ideas, sketching  
Forecasting, predicting  
Composing  
Developing action plans

## **PHYSICAL EFFORTS**

Constructing  
Fixing/repairing  
Physical co-ordination  
Handling quickly/precisely

Crafting objects, using tools  
Outdoor activities  
Tending animals/plants  
Operating machines

## **SELF MANAGEMENT**

Ability to choose  
Alertness  
Astuteness  
Authenticity  
Candidness  
Concentration  
Courage, risk-taking  
Curiosity  
Diplomacy  
Emotional stability  
Energetic, enthusiasm  
Good judgement  
Initiative, drive  
Open minded, optimistic  
Patience, persistence  
Pose, self confidence  
Reliable, resourceful

Ability to make decisions  
Assertiveness  
Attention to details  
Calmness  
Commitment to grow  
Co-operation  
Adventurous  
Dependability  
Easy-going  
Empathy  
Generosity  
Honesty, integrity  
Loyalty  
Orderliness  
Performing well under stress  
Self-discipline, self-reliance  
Versatility

## **SKILLS AND HOW TO GAIN THEM**

### **Leadership**

Course board representative  
Training other staff in previous jobs  
Brownie/Scout/Guide leader  
Student Union involvement  
Sports Teams

### **Planning & Organising**

Planning fund raising events eg. Rag Week  
Role on the PTA  
Organising events such as a large surprise birthday party

### **Problem Solving**

Project on course placement eg. Setting up a database  
Solving the problem of needing to take your child into School at the same time as your lectures start  
Using the limited resources available in the budget of specific club or society.

### **Working on own initiative**

Organising work experience/shadowing in your vacation  
Recommending changes/innovations in a club/group/Society with which you are involved.  
Taking opportunities in your leisure time (if you have any) to learn new skills eg. I.T.

### **Teamwork**

Community committees/PTA events/Church groups.  
Part time job in a team of four at ASDA on produce department.  
Sporting activities  
Helping out at playgroup  
Group presentations.

## **Communication Skills**

Voluntary work on a counselling project  
Involvement in Community Action, working with Children with learning difficulties.  
Giving presentations as part of your degree course  
Part time or previous job which involves appropriate interaction with all types of people.

## **Working to deadlines**

Meeting deadlines for your course work

## **Decision making skills**

Selecting a school for your children  
Making the decision about your degree subject

## **Time Management**

Juggling your college work, home and family  
Working at the same time as studying for your degree

## **The Windmills Virtual Career Coach**

The Windmills Virtual Career Coach may also help you to identify your skills and make you feel more confident about what you have to offer. You can undertake a skills check which involves recognising your secret skills and how to provide evidence of the skills that you have to offer employers.

You can find out more about this at: <http://www.windmillsonline.co.uk/interactive/>

**SKILLS PORTFOLIO**  
**(highlight any word that describes you)**

**PEOPLE SKILLS**

<b>Teamworking</b>	Supportive, facilitator, organised, co-ordinator, deliverer, imaginative, delegator, open-minded
<b>Leadership</b>	Dynamic, motivator, team-builder, confidence booster, energetic, capable, outward-looking, accountable, visionary
<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	Listener, adviser, counsellor, politically aware, initiator, professional, co-operative, constructive, assertive.
<b>Customer orientation</b>	Welcoming, friendly, caring, approachable, constructive, accommodating, tactful, diplomatic, tolerant.
<b>Oral communication</b>	Educator, trainer, communicator, presenter, promoter, influencer, humorous, empathetic, telephone skills.
<b>Foreign language</b>	Specific language skills, cultural awareness, international experience, written and oral expertise, sensitivity.

**SELF-RELIANCE SKILLS**

<b>Self awareness/ confidence</b>	Purposeful, focused, reflective, perceptive, honest, self-belief, objective, realistic, balanced.
<b>Self-promotion skills</b>	Positive, persuasive, pleasant, proactive, persistent, ambitious, opportunistic, promoter

<b>Initiative and proactivity</b>	Resourceful, energetic, drive, flexible, self-starter, self-reliant, initiative, self-disciplined.
<b>Networking skills</b>	Initiator, trustful, personable, relationship-builder, persistent developer, resourceful, respected
<b>Willing to learn</b>	Motivated, adaptable, enthusiastic, active, keen learner, inquisitive, continual improver.
<b>Action planning</b>	Decision-maker, planner, organised, negotiator, responsive, evaluator, forward thinker, target-driven, able to prioritise

## **GENERAL SKILLS**

<b>Problem solving</b>	Achiever, successful, results-orientated, project management, creative, practical, logical, astute, agile mind
<b>IT/Computer literacy</b>	IT skills, software packages, common sense, task-orientated, progressive, specific, office skills, keyboard skills.
<b>Flexibility</b>	Multi-disciplinary, flexible, versatile, multi-skilled, willing, obliging, mobile, adaptable.
<b>Numeracy skills</b>	Accurate, logical, problem-solver, detailed, methodical, consistent, quick thinker, analytical, thorough.
<b>Business acumen</b>	Competitive, entrepreneurial, enterprising Commercial foresight, budgeter, risk taker, effective written communication.
<b>Commitment</b>	Dedicated, trustworthy, conscientious, reliable, loyal, punctual, knowledgeable, experienced.

## **SPECIALIST SKILLS**

<b>Company-specific skills</b>	Specialist knowledge, e.g. Product or market knowledge; specialist skills, e.g. IT packages; unique language skills, e.g. Chinese; specialist interpersonal skills, e.g. public speaker.
<b>Technical skills</b>	Professional, sector-based or functional skills, e.g. Journalism, research, aerospace engineering, tax accounting, counselling, creative design, economist, personnel, sales, marketing.
<b>Understanding commercial goals of company</b>	Specialist understanding of organisation's goals, priorities and future direction (combination of self-reliance, business acumen and people skills)

And finally if you feel that you would like to be more confident in your use of English, grammar, spelling and punctuation, *English for Journalists*, by Wynford Hicks is available from the Careers section on the ground floor of the LRC.

## CUSTOMER VIEWS

Your views are important to us and help us to continually improve the quality of our services.

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Thank you for take the time to complete this form.

Please return it to the Careers Centre or email your comments to

[careers@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:careers@edgehill.ac.uk)

## **Inclusive Learning**

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Opening hours:

Term-time: Monday – Thursday	9.00 am – 4.45 pm
Friday	9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Vacation periods: Mon – Fri 9.00 am – 4.00 pm  
(closed for lunch 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm)

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