

Edge Hill University

**IDENTIFYING YOUR
SKILLS AND ABILITIES**
(Employability skills)

for effective job
applications!

CC 2

Careers Centre

A few things to mull over

What employers view as the most important factors when recruiting graduates
(latest CBI figures from 'Future Fit 2010')

Employability skills eg teamworking, problem solving etc	78%
Positive attitude	72%
Relevant work experience/industrial placement	54%
Degree subject	41%
Degree result	28%
University attended	8%
Foreign Language	2%

“Universities owe it to their students and themselves to prepare students for employment ... While the onus lies with the student to research these issues, universities could do more to empower students by building key competencies and core professional skills into programmes early in their degree.”

Syed Raza, a recent graduate at Talent Recruitment and Windsor Fellow

Dr Ursula Vogler Head of HR for KPMG Austria lists a slightly different set of qualities: “We’re looking for people who want to learn, both in terms of specific knowledge and personal development... It won’t come as a surprise that we’re also looking for people who are ready to work hard, to do what needs to be done. And we expect those who work with us to be self-starters who can rely on and motivate themselves. No one is going to hold their hand.”
Top Universities.com July 2013

“Employers rate experience highly. Experience is probably one of the most important things that a graduate can bring to the table. Qualifications you can always do, there’s no time limit. If you’re older as well you can still go and get a qualification. If you’ve got the right experience then that counts for a lot.”

Recent graduate working at RBS

“Now so many people go to university you have to differentiate yourself. What can you demonstrate to employers? It’s down to the individual. Everyone’s got key competencies.”

Recent graduate working at Microsoft

“Now I’m back at university I’m getting so much more from the lectures and seminars because I can relate all the theory back to everything I experienced practically on placement.”

Student on work placement at the Grange Hotel (SME)

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 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 often require:

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

See also - Target Jobs - [The top 10 skills that'll get you a job when you graduate](#)

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 January 2014 (Clare Gilby)

Employability-related skills:

In the report 'Future Fit: preparing graduates for the world of work'¹ 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'.

Increasingly mentioned by both employers is the need for an individual to have the attributes of **entrepreneurship/enterprise:** broadly, an ability to demonstrate an innovative approach, creativity, collaboration and risk taking.

¹ Future fit – preparing graduates for the world of work. CBI 2009. www.cbi.org.uk (most recent publication as of 2014)

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 coordination.

- 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 week, ensures that I keep fit and healthy.”*

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/ INVESTIGATIVE

Observing
Experimenting
Dissecting
Developing hypotheses
Using insight
Diagnosing
Comparing
Locating necessary resources

Reading
Analysing
Synthesising
Framing questions
Seeing relationships
Measuring
Finding patterns

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Accounting
Translating
Classifying
Attention to detail
Computing
Compiling

Cataloguing
Transcribing
Recording
Recording
Calculating
Creating systems

COMMUNICATION/ PERSUASIVE

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 /RELATIONSHIP

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

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

- Paid work
- Voluntary work
- Hobbies and interests both in and out of University
- Academic studies

From the start of your degree you should keep a notebook to hand and a useful exercise would be for you to create a table of your skills and keep these regularly updated. This will help you when it comes to applying for jobs.

SKILLS	DEFINITION	WORK	ACADEMIC	INTERESTS
TEAMWORK	Work confidently and effectively with others for a common cause			
TIME MANAGEMENT	Prioritise and take control of work flow			

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

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

SELF-RELIANCE SKILLS

Self awareness/ confidence	Purposeful, focused, reflective, perceptive, honest, self-belief, objective, realistic, balanced.
Self-promotion skills	Positive, persuasive, pleasant, proactive, persistent, ambitious, opportunistic, promoter
Initiative and proactivity	Resourceful, energetic, drive, flexible,

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

GENERAL SKILLS

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

SPECIALIST SKILLS

Company-specific skills	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.
Technical skills	Professional, sector-based or functional skills, e.g. Journalism, research, aerospace engineering, tax accounting, counselling, creative design, economist, personnel, sales, marketing.
Understanding commercial goals of company	Specialist understanding of organisation's goals, priorities and future direction (combination of self-reliance, business acumen and people skills)

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

We would appreciate it if you could complete this form and tell us what you thought of the information we've given you.

Publication title :

Will this publication help you? YES / NO

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Do you have any other comments about Edge Hill's Careers Centre or the information we've given?

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

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Opening hours:

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