Careers & Employability:

Skills Assessment

This Skills Assessment has been informed by the graduate labour market and is a general overview of the skills and attributes most employers will be expecting graduates to evidence.

Use this activity to reflect on your current skills and experience, identify gaps and plan for your future development. This activity will also be really useful to review when you are preparing for any application, interview or assessment centre.

How to complete?

- Take your time completing the skills assessment - try to include as much evidence as possible.

- When rating yourself please use 1 as the least confident and 6 as the most confident. This is a tool for personal development and should highlight areas for development. Be honest with your ratings.

- You will need evidence to support your scores - when you give yourself a score think about what evidence you would use to showcase this to an employer and tick the study, employment or other tick boxes to identify the source of your evidence. You may have evidence from all three of these areas so please add as many ticks as you can.

- Write your evidence in the text box below each area - this will really help you to reflect and identify areas for development.

Interpersonal Skills

Digital Literacy

Communication Skills

Commercial Awareness

Attitude & Initiative

Leadership & Management

Problem Solving Skills

Resilience

Interpersonal Skills

How is this assessed?

These are the fundamental skills employers look for and it's on the graduate recruiters' high priority list. When you are explaining your interpersonal skills such as teamwork graduate job application form or in an interview, you will need to emphasise how your personal contribution allowed the team to reach its full potential.

Emotional intelligence is most likely to be tested at the interview and assessment centre stages of the application process. Rather than asking you for evidence, assessors will observe your reactions and attitudes to different situations and how adept you are at dealing with them.

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Teamwork • Ability to form relationships at all levels and motivate and support other team members • Willingness to ask others for advice or help when solving a problem • Ability to work fairly and productively alongside others				
Emotional Intelligence • Ability to recognise the emotions of others and adapting your behaviour accordingly • Ability to use social awareness and empathy towards others • Adapt your communication style depending on the audience				
Feedback • Accept and learn from constructive criticism • Give positive, constructive feedback to others				
Cultural Awareness • Appreciation of, and respect for, personal and cultural differences • Communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds and countries				
Equality and Diversity • Treat everyone with respect whilst valuing diversity • Challenge inappropriate behaviour and report incidents of discrimination and/or harassment • Contribute to building a culture that values equality and removes the barriers to diversity				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here...				

*This may include extra-curricular activities such as societies, sports or social situations.

Communication Skills

How is this assessed?

Your ability to communicate well will be one of the most noticeable things about you during the application process. This is why getting it right is so important. For example:

- Your application needs to be well written, easy to understand and tailored to the recruiter in question.
- At interviews you should be confident, smile and make eye contact. Shake hands and remember names (there are techniques for this). Remember that a lot of communication is non-verbal – this is one of the reasons most application processes involve face-to-face interviews at some point or other.
- If other tasks are involved, like presentations, or group activities, be aware that your communication skills may still be under assessment. Think about who your audience is and how you will be interacting with them.

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Written • Effectively communicate by email, reports, letters, web etc.				
Verbal • Ability to network easily with other people • The ability to adapt your communication skills in accordance with your audience				
Presentation Skills • Ability to express yourself clearly and concisely to a group of people • Ability to communicate clearly under pressure				
Listening • Ability to effectively listen to views and ideas from others and understand their point of view and/or request. • Demonstrate active listening skills • Ability to use positive body language				
Negotiation • Compromise and reach a mutually satisfactory outcome • Willingness to put forward and promote an unpopular view when appropriate				
Persuasion and influencing • Ability to sell ideas to others, gaining their trust and support • Use tact and diplomacy • Handle objections to your arguments				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here...				

*This may include extra-curricular activities such as societies, sports or social situations.

Attitude & Initiative

Attitude and professionalism are very important to graduate employers. Feedback increasingly shows this is an area employers feel graduates are lacking. You need to have examples ready to show your can-do attitude, drive and enthusiasm. It is worth doing some specific research into what values are most important for the employer you are applying to.

How is this assessed?

Attitude may be assessed through application questions but is most likely to be assessed at an interview or assessment centre, particularly in group tasks. Be aware of your behaviour and body language as this can create a powerful impression.

Initiative and organisation skills are likely to be tested for most roles. How good are you at breaking down tasks, monitoring progress and building in contingency plans? You may be asked at interview how you went about planning a project or event – for example a university ball, sporting event, or academic assignment; looking at what you did right and what you learned from it.

How is this assessed?

You may be asked questions about using your initiative and your organisation skills from the application stage - make sure you have examples ready to answer any competency questions.

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Adaptability • Comfortable prioritising and switching between tasks when appropriate				
Enthusiasm • Energetic and enthusiastic approach to work/tasks				
Commitment • Motivation to achieve and deliver on commitments				
Innovation • Ability to use new methods or ideas				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here...				

*This may include extra-curricular activities such as societies, sports or social situations.

Problem Solving

Examples of problem solving experience will be useful throughout the recruitment process. You will need to explain how you identified the problem, came up with a solution and implemented it. If you were forced to tackle the problem as part of a team, explain how your role was important in ensuring the positive solution, but also explain how your group worked together.

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Analytical thinker • Logical approach to analysing situations and the ability to prioritise				
Creative and innovative thinker • Ability to think creatively • Evaluate and identify solutions to problems				
Quick and perceptive learner • Understand information quickly and accurately • Quickly assimilate new ideas efficiently				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here...				

*This may include extra-curricular activities such as societies, sports or social situations.

Digital Literacy

How is this assessed?

For most jobs you will need to know how to use Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook) and a handful of websites. For more computer-oriented roles you may be required to know and be able to use one or even several programming languages. In addition, you will be expected to know how to use a range of software and online resources.

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Digital Communication • Ability to use a range of IT packages competently (word, excel, databases etc.) • Ability to learn new technology quickly and use it confidently • Ability to create and display information using visualisation tools (bar charts, infographics, heat maps etc.) • The capacity to communicate effectively and receive and respond to messages in a range of digital formats such as text-based forums, social media and online video and audio • Digital collaboration- to collaborate effectively using shared digital tools and media • The ability to collate, manage, access and use digital data in spreadsheets, databases and other formats				
Social Media • Familiar with social media • Ability to use social media effectively for marketing • Ability to think creatively for marketing and promotional ideas				
Digital Identity and Wellbeing • The capacity to develop and project a positive digital identity and to manage digital reputation • To review the impact of online activity • To act safely and responsibly in digital environments • The ability to understand the benefits and risks of digital participation in relation to health and wellbeing				
Digital Creation, Problem Solving and Innovation • The capacity to design and/or create new digital materials such as digital writing, digital code, interfaces and web pages for example • An understanding of different data analysis tools and techniques • To use digital technologies in developing new ideas, projects and opportunities • Ability to identify how IT can be applied to improve efficiency and solve problems				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here...				

*This may include extra-curricular activities such as societies, sports or social situations.

Commercial Awareness

How is this assessed?

To compete in just about any sector of the graduate job market, you need to demonstrate commercial awareness when you make applications, go to interviews and attend assessment centres. Despite being a key attribute that graduate recruiters look for, it is often reported that applicants fail to demonstrate this knowledge throughout the recruitment process…good news if you are able to demonstrate this and stand out from the crowd!

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Company Research • An understanding of the company/organisation • An understanding of your own role and how it contributes to the organisation • An understanding of key issues that may affect the organisation (could be economic, social, political or environmental)				
Market Research • An awareness of key market forces which influence the priorities of the organisation • An understanding of the marketplace, major competitors and how they differ from each other				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here…				

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Leadership

How is this assessed?

Leadership skills are highly sought after by graduate employers. Group exercises are a key tool for assessing your leadership potential but this doesn't mean that you should try to take charge of your group and attempt to lead it from start to finish. A would-be leader trying to bully a team in the wrong direction will be viewed negatively. However, it's important to speak out when you have something productive to say, or to challenge a view that you think is incorrect. It's also good to check that others in the group are in agreement with decisions and see whether they have anything to add.

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Decision Making • Make decisions and see them through				
Management • Encourage and motivate others, promote team spirit and act as a role model by leading by example • Supervise, delegate, or direct the work of others				
Initiative • Adapt goals in the light of changing situations • Adapt leadership approach to get the best out of others				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here...				

*This may include extra-curricular activities such as societies, sports or social situations.

Resilience
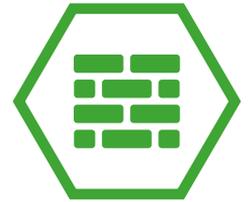
It is possible that you will be asked a question about resilience at application stage - but it is more likely to be assessed at assessment centres and during interviews.

Assessment days involve stepping into the unknown and so, even though recruiters usually go out of their way to be friendly, they are by their very nature a test of your resilience. How you deal with the unknown may be further tested in case study exercises. For example, you may be given a scenario and then, a few minutes later, you might be given some new information that could alter your decisions.

Competency	Self-rating (1-6)	Study	Employment	Other*
Adapting to change • Willingness to adapt successfully to changing situations and environments				
Positive attitude • Maintain a positive attitude to frustration/failure and perseverance in the face of obstacles				
Goal Setting • Ability to identify a set of objectives to achieve a goal and meet deadlines				
Self-confidence • Confidence in own strengths and abilities				
Self-awareness • Ability to understand own character, feelings, and behaviours • Ability to evaluate own performance				
• What evidence would you use to support your scores? Write all your examples here...				

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