

WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

When formulating objectives, you need to consider how they might be achieved, i.e. what actions need to be taken in order to ensure success. This paper provides you with some suggestions as to what you could do to further develop your skills and meet the personal objectives set during your third scheduled meeting. This list is by no means exhaustive, but intended only to stimulate some ideas.

Written Communication

- Devote time to drafting, editing and proof-reading assignments.
- Learn the 'rules and conventions' for any specific writing weaknesses, e.g. spelling, punctuation, grammar.
- Obtain relevant writing skills packs from the Library or Centre for Academic Practice.
- Read a study skills book on 'How to take effective notes' or 'How to plan an essay' and apply it to a specific assignment.
- Book a one-to-one tutorial with the Centre for Academic Practice Communications Tutor to help plan how you can improve your written assignments.
- Write articles for the The University Of Northampton student newspaper or for a Student Society or other organisations' newsletter.
- Write publicity / letters to raise sponsorship for any Student Society you belong to.

Oral Communication

- Set personal targets for participating in seminars (e.g. ask at least 2 questions, offer viewpoint at least once).
- Prepare effectively for seminars by thinking about what you have read and preparing questions and summaries.
- Obtain relevant 'Presentation Skills' packs from the Library or Centre for Academic Practice.
- Practice with OHPs or PowerPoint.
- Take note of what makes for an effective presentation in seminars and lectures.
- Set clear objectives for professional presentations.
- Get a 'Presentation Skills' video from the Library.
- Monitor and critically evaluate your use of discussion and presentation skills, including listening and questioning skills.
- Hospital / local radio presentation.
- Offer to get involved in the Welcome Team, SSI, The University Of Northampton Community Volunteers (The University Of Northampton CV) or student mentoring later in year.
- Once established in part-time job, undertake supervising / training of others.

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Groupwork

- Become a member of a student society or committee, or become a student rep.
- Participate in team sports.
- Participate in organisations / awards for young people, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award, The University Of Northampton CV, Volunteer Bureau.
- Play an instrument in a band or orchestra, or join a choir.
- Relevant work experience.
- Assessing own performance and contribution to group projects in course.
- Youth work projects, e.g. British Red Cross, Volunteer Bureau, community projects.

Note particularly leadership activities in group situations:-

- Organising student society activities or events.
- Supervising others at work or leading a group activity or project.
- Captaining a sports team.

Numerical Skills

- Analyse where numbers are used in your course (estimating, forecasting, measuring, calculating, interpreting data and graphs, tables and charts, using spreadsheets, formulae and graphical representations).
- Book a one-to-one tutorial with the Centre for Academic Practice Mathematics tutor to help you work on any specific areas.
- Be Treasurer for a Student Society.
- Work experience involving data handling / use of numbers.
- Cost and budget for a student event or activity.
- Organise payment of bills in shared house.

Self-Management Skills

- Monitor how far you meet course deadlines.
- Keep a wallchart or diary to enter all classes and coursework submission dates.
- Attend a Time Management workshop.
- Construct a weekly study timetable.
- Construct a revision timetable.
- Arrange fixtures or social / charity events.
- Plan, and keep to, weekly budget.
- Set goals for developing non-study activities.

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Information Technology Skills

- Word-process all assignments to professional standards.
- Analyse where IT is used in course and specify skills and experience in relation to software packages etc.
- Attend IT workshops to learn specific skills.
- Attend Information Skills workshops put on by the Library or IT Services.
- Use e-mail and Internet.
- Take relevant module(s).
- Learn to create spreadsheets and databases.
- Use PowerPoint for presentations.
- Present graphs and charts using IT.

Learning to Learn Skills

- Carry out a skills audit.
- Monitor your own progress by reviewing achievements, assignment feedback and setting clear short-term goals.
- Establish opportunities for improving your own learning and performance.
- Attend workshops to support study skills, e.g. note-making, report writing, essay planning etc.
- Set priorities and realistic targets.
- Manage time effectively to prepare coursework.
- Select and use different ways of learning, e.g. independent learning, directed learning, collaborative learning.
- Use initiative in searching out support and guidance.
- Take advantage of training opportunities at work.

Problem-Solving Skills

- Analyse the kinds of problems you encounter as part of your course (numerical, technical, creative, analytical, experimental, design).
- Seek help / advice from fellow students, Student Services and/or tutors in tackling specific problems.
- Take responsibility for organising an event.
- Tackle financial hardship without jeopardising academic obligations and progress.
- Reconcile interpersonal conflict, e.g. in student society / shared accommodation.
- Research, plan and find vacation work to support career plans.
- Overcome obstacles to goals.
- Start a new Student Society - or resurrect an old one!
- Use initiative / make suggestions to improve systems / procedures at work.