

Thinking about Employability Skills Developed at University

As you continue across each stage of study, you will be thinking about life after graduation, and especially your future career.

It can be difficult to translate what you have studied and all your university experiences into the language of employability. This document is intended to provide a starting point for doing so, which you can then use to begin a discussion about careers with your academic advisor or a university careers advisor.

Identify your skills, strengths, values, attributes, and competencies...

Are you a great communicator, innovator, good at solving problems, or managing projects? During your time at university you are constantly using and developing wide variety of transferrable skills. Analysing your strengths and skills, along with your motivations or values, will help you decide which careers to investigate further. Employers seek a wide range of skills and personal attributes, knowing what yours are and having examples to evidence them is an essential part of being prepared for graduate recruitment processes.

Competencies - skills, experiences and behaviours

Values - what motivates you, what do you want from your career?

Strengths - what are you good at and enjoy?

What type of experiences have you had at university, and what skills did you need to use?

Draw examples from all areas of your life including your studies, work experience, previous employment, volunteering or extra-curricular activities. Here are some common university experiences with examples of the employability skills that can be used to inform your career decision making, and to get a graduate job.

Assessments: essay writing, exams, dissertation project, research, policy brief, presentation, data analysis, group projects, etc.

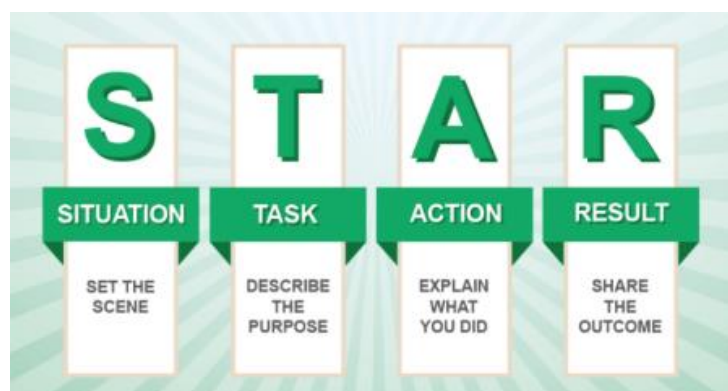
Skills gained: summarising academic arguments, editing and writing in a clear style, meeting deadlines, learning and using a language, presentation skills, deploying quantitative methods, using interpretative methods, etc.

Work Experience: a part-time job, internship, placement year, etc.

Skills gained: teamwork, time management, process innovation, being flexible, commercial awareness, meeting targets, customer service, engaging stakeholders, data processing etc.

Volunteering: clubs or societies, sports teams, charities, work shadowing, student ambassador or peer mentor role, etc.

Skills gained: leadership, interpersonal skills, relationship building, mentoring & training, teamwork, cultural awareness, decision making, influencing others, etc.



Practice Exercise: Choose an experience you have had and write a few lines which demonstrate the skills you used. Be specific and detailed – avoid general sweeping statements. Use STAR (situation, task, action and result) to structure your answers and communicate clearly and concisely. Focus mostly on your actions and results and don't forget to include what you learnt as part of the result.