

ACADEMIC GUIDANCE 1:

Guide to Minimum Key Skills Requirements for Honours Degree Graduates

2011-2012

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The aims of the Key Skills framework are

To ensure that students have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to underpin critical thinking.

To equip students with academic problem solving skills.

To enhance students' employability and lifelong learning potential.

To ensure that students are aware of and can articulate the skills they have acquired during their time with the University.

Introduction

The university has adopted a minimum specification of key skills for all honours degree graduates. There are five key skill categories: communication, numeracy, information and communication technology, teamwork and independent learning. In most of these categories there are subdivisions as shown on the following pages. Column 1 describes the subdivision and stages 1 to 3 provide a guide for staff as to how students might progress to the generalised minimum requirement (stage 3) through intermediate stages (1 and 2). Stage 1 has been designed to build upon key skills outcomes in the 16-19 curriculum. Each of the generalised statements will need to be contextualised within a discipline and simpler learning outcome statements will be developed for inclusion in programme specification. Finally, implementation notes for field teams will be added to this guide in due course.

Communication

Skill	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
a Take part in group discussion	Make clear, relevant contributions: one to one and in small groups	Make clear, relevant contributions in large and small groups, develop points and ideas	Make clear, relevant contributions and take responsibility for encouraging others to participate and contribute
b Make a presentation	Speak clearly, structure presentation so that sequence of ideas and information are easily followed	Use a variety of techniques, including images	Tailor presentation to the needs of audience (people familiar with the subject, people new to subject) React and respond appropriately to questions
c Read, select, extract and collate information from written, spoken or other appropriate sources	Judge relevance and accuracy and summarise information from a given range of sources. Identify sources	Select, extract and analyse a range of information with minimum guidance.	Select, extract and evaluate information from a wide range of sources, working independently.
d Produce written materials in a variety of formats	Ensure text is legible, spelling, grammar and punctuation accurate. Use appropriate referencing	Select and use form and style appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter	Plan communication skills, making reasoned selection of methods for achieving outcome required Communicate relevant information with accuracy, using form, structure and style to suit purpose

			Vary use of vocabulary and grammatical expression to convey particular effects
e Incorporate images in documents including tables, charts, graphs and diagrams	Identify different types of image to augment the study of a topic	Select appropriate type of image	Select and use appropriate type of image for extended piece of written work

Numeracy

Skill	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
a Collect primary and secondary data	Use appropriate methods of data collection, with guidance	Use appropriate methods of data collection, independently	Select and apply appropriate methods of data collection, effectively
b Design a suitable recording format for data collection	Recognise different formats and apply each to appropriate simple examples (with guidance)	Select and use appropriate format(s) (independently) for a given secondary data set	Select and apply appropriate format(s) for primary and secondary data sets, justifying choices
c Evaluate numerical data (including issues of selection, accuracy, precision and	Recognise different techniques of data evaluation and apply each to appropriate simple examples (with	Select and use appropriate techniques (independently) for a given set of secondary data. Include an estimation of the	Select and apply appropriate techniques for primary and secondary data sets, justifying choices. Include an estimation of the limitation of data.

uncertainty) and explain choices made	guidance). Recognise the statistical limitations of data points and data sets (primary and secondary) using appropriate guided examples	limitation of data.	
d Perform basic calculations on amounts and sizes, scales and proportions, using statistics where appropriate.	Recognise basic mathematical methods and use on given data sets (with guidance)	Apply appropriate methods to secondary data sets	Apply appropriate methods to primary and secondary data sets, justifying use

Note:

Data set = a collection of data points; data point = a single piece of information (or average of several pieces of information)

Primary = new (original) data; secondary = existing data

ICT

Skill	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
a Use ICT to present text/numerical data and images	Recognise different methods of ICT presentation and use on appropriate guided examples	Select and use appropriate methods of ICT presentation on a given secondary data set	Select and apply appropriate methods of ICT presentation, justifying uses

<p>b Produce a document that incorporates and combines different types of information (text, images and numbers selected from different sources)</p>	<p>Recognise different types of information and produce a document employing these on a given topic</p>	<p>Select appropriate types of information and produce a document on a selected topic</p>	<p>Select appropriate types of information and produce a document for your project/dissertation</p>
<p>c Search for, retrieve and store information using ICT resources</p>	<p>Recognise different ICT resources and use in appropriate guided examples</p>	<p>Select appropriate ICT resources and use on a given independent example</p>	<p>Select appropriate ICT resources and use in independent study, justifying uses</p>
<p>d Use on-line communications systems, including the learning management system, to obtain and send information</p>	<p>Recognise the different on-line communication systems within your course, school, faculty and university. Use these systems, as appropriate, to obtain basic course and module information. Devise, send, receive and respond to email with and without attachments</p>	<p>Select and use appropriate on-line communication systems to discuss academic issues with staff and fellow students. Establish email distribution lists and other appropriate advanced functions of the email system</p>	<p>Use on-line communication to establish appropriate external contacts during research for project/dissertation. Select and use appropriate on-line communications systems to discuss academic issues with staff, fellow students and external contacts.</p>

Teamwork

Skill	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Work with others	Identify, negotiate and agree targets with others Identify relevant sources, research information needed for planning purposes Identify own team skills and role within a team	Identify and agree responsibilities and appropriate working methods with others Establish and maintain co-operative working relationships, exchange feedback and agree ways to resolve difficulties Organise, monitor and evaluate the planning process and suggest ways of improving effectiveness	Review group progress, evaluate individual and collective performance Identify ways of further developing skills in working with others. Adapt strategy as necessary

Independent learning

Skill	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
a Develop research and information handling skills in relation to academic and career development	Recognise tools and search methods to identify and locate prescribed information. Develop skills to locate and select information, including careers information, from a range of print and online sources. Record identifying details of	Develop ability to identify, locate and evaluate sources of information independently using a range of local and externally provided print and electronic sources. Develop ability to refine search methods. Use research skills to identify	Independently locate, evaluate and gain access to relevant information across a range of resources. Use search skills in a variety of information contexts. Cite items and maintain bibliographic information for long term use.

	relevant items	career interests, investigate career opportunities and related labour market information Use standard format in a bibliography	
b Develop self awareness in relation to academic and career development	Identify own strengths and weaknesses in order to set targets and devise plans to meet them Develop awareness of own and other learning styles Prioritise action Manage time effectively to complete tasks	Consolidate strengths and address weaknesses	Use skills to summarise and reflect on learning and develop action plans as appropriate.
c Monitor and review own progress in relation to academic and career development	Identify sources of feedback	Continue to seek and respond to feedback	Implement strategies for job search or for seeking other opportunities. Critically reflect on all aspects of own learning and performance, including key skills development. Articulate key skills development.