## Personal and Key Skills

**Key skills** are those generic skills which everyone needs to be a fully rounded and well educated person, regardless of their academic subject.

They include written and oral communication, critical thinking, self-management skills and the ability to work with others.

UCL has drawn up a [list](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/keyskills/resources/grid.html) of skills it considers important for its students to develop during the process of their academic coursework.

You’ll need key skills in your career after university. By developing these now, you can help make the transition to employment more smoothly later on.

For more information about key skills, and a variety of useful resources about specific skills, go to <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/keyskills/>

You can develop your key skills through your volunteering and other activities – the first step is to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses, and then to use this to identify areas of personal development.

The purpose of the next exercise is to look at each key skill, and rate your confidence on one of the following four levels:

4 = Competent and able to help others (you have lots of substantial examples in different fields, and examples of passing this skill onto others)

3 = Competent without help (you have lots of examples of doing this)

2 = Able to do this with some help (you have one or two examples of doing this)

1 = Not able to do this (you don’t have any meaningful examples of doing this)

Write down your evidence for this – that is, what experiences you’ve had that make you feel that you are at this level. What, for example, would you say to an employer who asked you if you had experience in this field?

Also, think about how you might improve that particular skill. Think particularly how volunteering, or other extra-curricular activities, might be of use.

For example:

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| **ACADEMIC SKILLS** | **RATING AND EVIDENCE** | **HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE?** |
| **Problem solving**  Able to negotiate obstacles in pursuing an objective and develop effective strategies for overcoming them. | **4 3 2 1**  I was lighting director of our school play, and had to deal with a number of technical problems. For my end of year group project, we’ve encountered problems which we’ve had to overcome | * To take on a fundraising project at the homeless shelter I volunteer at. * To help volunteer society draw up their strategic plan. |

**ACADEMIC SKILLS**

4 = Competent and able to help others 3 = Competent without help

2 = Able to do this with some help 1 = Not able to do this/never had experience of this

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| **ACADEMIC SKILLS** | **RATING AND EVIDENCE** | **HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE?** |
| **Learning Actively**  Able to approach learning as an active agent, taking responsibility for the process and outcomes. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Analysing Data**  Able to filter and organise information to develop an argument and work toward a conclusion, applying numerical analysis where appropriate. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Thinking Critically**  Able to consider claims made against the evidence available and to develop one’s own view systematically. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Using Sources**  Able to locate and use appropriate books, journals, websites and other sources to gather relevant data. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Solving Problems**  Able to use systematic approaches to overcome difficulties in producing a desired outcome. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Managing Projects**  Able to plan a coordinated set of tasks and enact over time to produce a substantial result. | **4 3 2 1** |  |

**SELF MANAGEMENT**

4 = Competent and able to help others 3 = Competent without help

2 = Able to do this with some help 1 = Not able to do this/never had experience of this

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| **SELF MANAGEMENT** | **RATING AND EVIDENCE** | **HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE?** |
| **Reflection on Learning**  Able to review dispassionately one’s approaches to learning and the outcomes and progressively improve the process. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Managing Time**  Able to prioritise tasks and commitments to achieve optimum results in a designated timeframe. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Being Creative / Innovative**  Able to generate and apply original approaches to tasks and problems and produce improved outcomes. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Assessing Oneself**  Able to identify one’s own strengths, weaknesses, progress made and action needed to improve effectiveness. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Being Independent**  Able to work at own initiative with minimal supervision, taking responsibility for action and outcomes. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Managing Resources**  Able to allocate and conserve funds and other resources on a day to day basis and to support projects. | **4 3 2 1** |  |

**COMMUNICATING**

4 = Competent and able to help others 3 = Competent without help

2 = Able to do this with some help 1 = Not able to do this/never had experience of this

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| **COMMUNICATING** | **RATING AND EVIDENCE** | **HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE?** |
| **Writing**  Able to communicate in textual forms (essays, reports, journal entries, web pages etc) in an appropriate style with a clear narrative flow. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Listening**  Able to hear and appreciate the content, background and purpose of what someone else is communicating to you. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Using Information Technology**  Able to use digital technology for managing information and to mediate communication for learning and other purposes. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Presenting**  Able to speak to an audience, using visual aids as appropriate and respond to questions. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Communicating Globally**  Able to understand and manage factors affecting communication across cultures, including learning other languages. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Planning and Making Decisions**  Able to identify steps needed to work towards goals and communicate them, including means of monitoring progress | **4 3 2 1** |  |

**Working with Others**

4 = Competent and able to help others 3 = Competent without help

2 = Able to do this with some help 1 = Not able to do this/never had experience of this

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| **Working with Others** | **RATING AND EVIDENCE** | **HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE?** |
| **Working in Teams**  Able to co-operate with others, to contribute your strengths and learn from theirs with a common purpose. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Negotiating**  Able to respect the needs and interests of others when they differ from your own and to find common ground. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Leading**  Able to galvanise a team into cooperative action, to manage, guide or facilitate a group to maximise success. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Understanding Others**  Able to recognise the variety of ways in which people can think and approach tasks, adjusting your own to suit. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Assessing Self and others**  Able to assess your own performance objectively and to give and receive constructive feedback with others. | **4 3 2 1** |  |
| **Managing Change**  Able to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain focus on the group’s declared goals. | **4 3 2 1** |  |