

Skills for the Workplace

Module Assignment Guides

Module No:	BMSK4001
Module Title:	Academic and Employability Skills

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Introduction

This assignment expects you to focus on the academic and employability skills covered during the module and to examine your own strengths and weaknesses in these areas; before producing gap analyses and action plans (for academic and employability skills separately), designed to remedy any shortcomings discovered during research and reflection.

Part 1 will consist of a 2000 word (+/- 10%) report on Employability Skills and how they impact upon Managers and Leaders in the workplace.

1.0 Explore employability skills required for leadership and management level of employment.

2.0 Evaluate own employability skills to identify potential areas for improvement and plan the improvement accordingly.

Part 2 will be reflecting upon your understanding of Academic Skills and examining ways in which they may be improved.

This will also be of 2000 words (+/- 10%) in length.

1.0

Prepare an individual reflective submission demonstrating awareness of academic skills required for your learning journey.

2.0

Evaluate own academic skills to identify potential areas for improvement and plan the improvement accordingly.

Part 1: Employability

1.0 Explore the employability skills required at leadership and management level

This section will be focused on exploring the **employability skills** needed to become an 'effective' Leader or Manager.

You will need to conduct some research both online and offline (use the textbooks for the course!) to determine how the employability skills that are required by Managers and Leaders are *different* from those required by other staff. These differences may be subtle or very obvious.

You should begin by familiarising yourself with what are generally understood to be 'employability skills' and the list below of the **Top 10 Employability Skills*** (as compiled by UK Employers) is a good starting point.

SKILLS THAT EMPLOYERS WANT		WHAT THAT MEANS
	Communication and interpersonal skills	The ability to explain what you mean in a clear and concise way through written and spoken means. To listen and relate to other people, and to act upon key information / instructions.
	Problem solving skills	The ability to understand a problem by breaking it down into smaller parts, and identifying the key issues, implications and identifying solutions. To apply your knowledge from many different areas to solving a task.
	Using your initiative and being self-motivated	Having new ideas of your own which can be made into a reality. Showing a strong personal drive and not waiting to be told to do things.
	Working under pressure and to deadlines	Handling stress that comes with deadlines and ensuring that you meet them.

5	Organisational skills	Being organised and methodical. Able to plan work to meet deadlines and targets. Monitoring progress of work to ensure you are on track to meeting a deadline.
6	Team working	Working well with other people from different disciplines, backgrounds, and expertise to accomplish a task or goal.
7	Ability to learn and adapt	To be enthusiastic about your work, and to identify ways to learn from your mistakes for the benefit of both you and your employer.
8	Numeracy	The ability to use data and mathematics to support evidence or demonstrate a point.
9	Valuing diversity and difference	Knowing the value of diversity and what it can bring. Understanding and being considerate of the different needs of different individuals.
10	Negotiation skills	To take on board other people's feelings and express your own requirements in an unemotional clear fashion to achieve a win-win outcome.

Having examined the general employability skills above - including the second column describing what each skill means - you should think about any ***added extras*** a manager/leader may need to develop for each one.

For example:



Communication and interpersonal skills

The ability to explain what you mean in a clear and concise way through written and spoken means. To listen and relate to other people, and to act upon key information / instructions.

Skill 1: Communication and interpersonal skills from the list above talks about:

Having the ability to*act upon key information/instructions*.

As a Manager, you would often be the one **giving the information/instructions** and would therefore need to ensure that your instructions are clear, precise, unambiguous (it is obvious what is wanted and could not be mistaken for something else) and completely understood by your team.

The articles *Leadership Skills List and Examples* (Doyle, 2018) and *Top 10 Leadership Skills Employers Look For* (Doyle, 2019) on The Balance Careers website are also worth reading. (Links available in the bibliography at the end of this guide)



Image by Alison Czinkota. © The Balance 2018

Note

Ensure you correctly 'cite' and 'reference' any websites, books or articles that you use in this section as this will add to your overall marks.

It is very important to make the distinction between quoting the author's exact words and your own interpretation of what they said. It should be entirely clear and transparent to the reader which are your own words and which are the words of articles and books you have read.

Use the UWTSD Harvard Referencing Handbook (UWTSD, 2019) - available on Moodle and on the UWTSD website - for guidance on how to do this and how to form your citations and references using the Harvard style.

2.0 Evaluate own employability skills to identify potential areas for improvement and plan improvement accordingly.

2.1 Current Leadership skills

Having identified the sorts of skills needed by Managers and Leaders in the workplace, how do your own skills currently match up?

Take some online questionnaires and read the articles mentioned above and linked to in the bibliography to start your thought processes off.

You will be conducting a Gap Analysis of what you can already do and where the 'gaps' are which need to be filled to get you to where you want to be, using the template provided on Moodle. At least 3 objectives should be listed here – (you can add more if needed) and you should explain the table in more detail in your narrative (discussion).

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Gap Analysis Template

Objective	Current Position	Deficiency	Action
What do I want to do?	What can I already do?	What am I lacking?	How do I fix this?

2.2 Action Plan for Improvement

Finally in this Part, you should produce an Action Plan detailing how you propose to go about improving your own employability skills to prepare you for a Leadership role in the future (or to make you a better leader if currently employed as a Leader/Manager)

Objectives	Tasks	Success Criteria	Time Frame	Resources
<i>List your Goals</i>	<i>What do you need to do to achieve these goals?</i>	<i>How will you identify your success?</i>	<i>When do they need to be done by?</i>	<i>Who or what do you need to help you?</i>

You are expected to provide at least 3 actions here and put your Action Plan in the body of your assignment as it **does count towards your overall word count**.

The Action Plan itself does not need to contain a lot of detail, but you should discuss and explain your proposed Actions in this section as part of the narrative.

Part 2: Academic Skills

1.0 Prepare an individual reflective submission demonstrating awareness of academic skills required for your learning journey.

In this part of your assignment, you will need to use the employability skill of **Reflection** to look back on what you have learned about **Academic Skills** from the process of undertaking this module.

What are the academic skills that you have been learning about?

- Communicating and presenting information:
 - o Presenting information clearly and professionally in a report or PowerPoint presentation, using correct grammar, structure and layout
 - o Developing the ability to analyse facts, opinions and arguments
- Use of digital technologies to support learning:
 - o CRAAP Test
 - o Searching Effectively
 - o Using the Online Library
- Information gathering techniques:
 - o Basic Research Methods
 - o Data handling
 - o Statistics
 - o Graphs
- Researching and analysing literature and presenting findings:
 - o Researching books, journals and websites
 - o Analysing and evaluating information
 - o Harvard Referencing and inline Citations
- Organising your study effectively:
 - o Time Management
 - o Support from family and friends
 - o Overcoming barriers to learning

How do I reflect on these skills?

Use a recognised model of Reflection such as Gibbs (1988), Kolb and Fry (1975), Driscoll (1994) or Borton (1970). Any model is acceptable as long as it enables you to write a Reflective essay.

You might want to use the guide on how to use Gibbs in a Reflective essay (available on Moodle) to help you with layout and structure of your reflection.

Conclusion and Action Plan in this model will need modifying to discuss what you have learned, rather than what else you could have done (Conclusion) and what is your Action Plan going forward to remedy gaps in your knowledge (Gap Analysis) rather than if it arose again, what would you do.

2.0 Evaluate own academic skills to identify potential areas for improvement and plan the improvement accordingly.

2.1 You will need to examine where you are now in order to understand the gaps in your knowledge and discuss these when producing an **Action Plan (PDP)** to remedy these deficiencies.

2.2 You should use the **Gap Analysis** template below again as a first step to help you examine the criteria in 1.0 to discover what your weaknesses are and think about what 'actions' you will need to take to close these gaps.

2.3 You can then produce an **Action Plan** (also below again) setting out exactly how and when you are going to go about doing this. You are expected to provide at least 3 actions here and put your Action Plan in the body of your assignment as it **does count towards your overall word count**. The Action Plan itself does not need to contain a lot of detail, but you should discuss and explain your proposed Actions in this section.

Gap Analysis Template

Objective	Current Position	Deficiency	Action
What do I want to do?	What can I already do?	What am I lacking?	How do I fix this?

Action Plan

Objectives	Tasks	Success Criteria	Time Frame	Resources
<i>List your Goals</i>	<i>What do you need to do to achieve these goals?</i>	<i>How will you identify your success?</i>	<i>When do they need to be done by?</i>	<i>Who or what do you need to help you?</i>

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