| Graduate skills and values:  audit and reflection |
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Introduction

Congratulations on completing your degree from The University of Manchester! Remember, all graduates can continue to access the Careers Service for up to two years after completing your studies.

This document is designed to help you reflect on your skills and workplace values. It is useful if you are looking for a graduate job, to help you identify your transferable skills, what you enjoy doing, and what you want from your first role.

It can also be helpful if you are already in your first job, for keeping track of activities, responsibilities, and skills as you develop them. Used in this way, it can be used as a log of your experiences and learning throughout your current job, and can be revisited when applying for future roles, promotions or when preparing for professional development reviews.

How do I use this document?

This is a working document; it is designed to be updated regularly. Save it to your favourites or desktop for easy access.

If you are looking for work, it may be useful to work through the document in stages to inform your job search. If you are currently in graduate-level work, set aside a few minutes every day or week to reflect what you did and what you learned about yourself (interests, skills, preferred ways of working, etc.).

The document contains three sections, each beginning with an example to help you get started:

* Use Section 1 to keep track of your skills and examples of times when you have acquired, utilised or strengthened them.
* Section 2 can be used to reflect on what your skillset can tell you about your strengths and preferred ways of working.
* Finally, use Section 3 to consider your values and what you want out of your first graduate job. Remember, these will change and develop over time.

Section 1: Skills

Use this section to consider your skills, and come up with examples that you can use in applications and interviews.

Some common that graduate employers often look for can be found below. Write in any other skills required for the jobs you are applying for and any other skills that you have developed.

Then use the next columns to make a note of some examples of when you have shown this skill. These could come from your education, work, or placements, or extracurricular activities, societies and hobbies. Use our [transferable skills](https://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/skills/) pages to see the definitions of each skill and some examples of where you may have gained each one.

Make a note of the situation and context: when / where / with who? What was your task or responsibility? Were you trying to solve a problem, and if so, how? What was the context?

Remember, employers want to know about the actions that you took that made an impact. What was the result of your actions?

Finally, add weight to your example by quantifying it: how many (colleagues, customers, pages, tasks) / how long (distance, time or dates) / how far (distance, reach) / how much (expenses, budget)?

| **Skill** | **Situation** | **Your actions** | **Quantify it** |
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| *Organisation* | *Social Secretary of a University society, responsible for organising an end of year social.* | *I rang several venues and sent out email invites to all members, as well as promoting the event on social media* | *As Social Secretary of the UoM Hockey Society, I was responsible for organising an end of year social event. I rang 3 venues and liaised with the treasurer to find one that was within budget. I sent an email to over 50 members and alumni, and designed and coordinated a social media campaign promoting the event. This resulted in a 50% attendance rate at the event.* |
| *Communication* | *Graduate Project Assistant, responsible for the organisation of online and in-person events, including follow-up communications.* | *For the end-of year review for the Sustainable Buildings project, I was responsible for promoting the event to internal and external stakeholders via email and teams, sending out calendar invites and circulating the agenda before the meeting. During the meetings, I took notes and sent these to all attendees the next time, including a summary of action points.* | *When promoting the event via email, I adapted my communications copy to suit my audience (colleagues in my team, staff in other departments and external stakeholders). Closer to the time, I promoted the event on Teams (multi-platform promotion). My tailored and timely reminders contributed to an 80% attendance rate for the event. I also applied a high level of attention to detail when using my written communication skills to take notes.* |
| Adaptability |  |  |  |
| Analytical skills |  |  |  |
| Commercial awareness |  |  |  |
| Communication |  |  |  |
| Decision making |  |  |  |
| Flexibility |  |  |  |
| Initiative |  |  |  |
| Innovation |  |  |  |
| Digital skills |  |  |  |
| Leadership |  |  |  |
| Negotiation |  |  |  |
| Networking |  |  |  |
| Numeracy skills |  |  |  |
| Organisation |  |  |  |
| Problem solving |  |  |  |
| Research |  |  |  |
| Teamwork |  |  |  |
| Time management |  |  |  |
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Section 2: Reflections

This section is designed to help you reflect on your skills. Knowing what you enjoy and are good at can help you identify the kinds of roles that you may enjoy.

Taking your list of skills from Section 1, think about what those skills tell you about what you enjoy and are good at. For each skill, consider what you do and do not enjoy. Is there a particular aspect of the skill that affects your enjoyment level? Do you tend to enjoy skills that you are better at more? Are there certain types of skills you prefer (for example, technical skills)? Rank your enjoyment level for each skill between 1 and 5, where 1 is low enjoyment, and 5 is high.

Next, look at your skills and enjoyment levels as a whole. Are there any skills that you see on job descriptions that you do not have currently, but need to develop? One you have an idea of the skills you have, and the ones you need to develop, you will have a better understanding of how to research jobs and tailor your applications and interview practice for specific roles.

| **Skill** | **Enjoyment level** | **Why?** | **Reflections** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Organisation* | *4* | *Organising events uses other skills that I enjoy, such as communication, and teamwork, and there are measurable results.* | *I could develop my organisation skills further by doing a short online course on event planning and by using a spreadsheet to track the event management timeline when organising events for the Hockey Society. This could also create an event organisation template to follow for future events.* |
| *Communication* | *3* | *I am used to writing essays throughout my degree, so have developed strong communication skills. In work, I enjoy writing especially when I have to tailor my writing to different audiences. However, I feel nervous when communicating verbally, such as during phone calls and in meetings* | *While I’m confident in my written communication skills, I need to improve my verbal communication. I could do this by signing up for a presentation skills training session offered by my company. I could also ask my manager for an opportunity to present my work in weekly team meeting, and practice with a friend or colleague beforehand. By starting with small meetings with colleagues I am familiar with, I can build my confidence in public speaking.* |
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Section 3: Values

The final section of this document is dedicated to your workplace values. In this context, values are things that are important to you in during the start of your graduate career. Being aware of your values can help you find employers with missions and cultures that suit you, and can also help you measure your suitability to your current organisation, if you are in work.

Think about what you value most in regards to your early graduate career. For example, is it security and stability? Having the opportunity to display leadership? Negotiation, influence, chasing a sale? Pay and benefits? Having a variety of tasks? Location? Being independent or working in a team? Goals or awards? Professional development courses? Have a look at [I'm just starting to think about my career: step two](https://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/whichcareer/idontknow/start/) for more ideas of what may be important to you. Use the table below to consider what values are important to you and why.

Then, think about relevant skills. Which skills are related to each of your values? Which skills do you need to succeed? Use the skills you listed in the first part of this document, and any other skills you think are relevant.

Consider those skills. Which ones do you need to gain or develop further? How can you do this? Write down ideas on how you can develop each skill and give yourself a deadline by which you aim to complete your goal.

| **Your values** | **Related skills** | **Development** | **How? By when?** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Leadership. I have enjoyed being on the Hockey Society committee and so would like a graduate position where I have the opportunity to lead a team or project.* | *Organisation, teamwork, task delegation, commercial awareness, negotiation.* | *I need to develop my commercial awareness skills to secure a place on a graduate management trainee scheme. I could do this by joining professional bodies, attending sector events, and reading industry news.* | * *Look for a relevant industry event on CareerConnect. Attend the event and connect with the panellists on LinkedIn (by next week).* * *Register for student membership of the Chartered Management Institute (by next month).* * *Make a list of Management Consultancy graduate schemes and their application deadlines (by next week).* |
| *Teamwork. I enjoy supporting the administration and organisation of team meetings, and communicating with a range of colleagues to collect agenda items for the meeting schedule.* | *Organisation, communication, attention to detail, interpersonal skills, IT skills, accuracy, time management.* | *While I have lots of experience working with my own team, I can diversify and strengthen my teamworking skills by supporting colleagues outside of my department on different projects. I could also gain experience of working in different roles as part of a team, such as team leader.* | * *Ask my line manager for a project that I can take ownership of and lead on, to allow me to practice my leadership, task delegation and organisation skills (discuss with manager during next one-to-one).* * *Ask colleagues in other departments if they need extra help with projects (with line manager’s permission). This will allow me to gain insights into different business areas and build experience working with diverse teams and projects (discuss with manager during next one-to-one).* * *Improve my proficiency in using different meeting platforms, including Zoom and Microsoft Teams, and gain experience using team collaboration tools like Slack (do a LinkedIn Learning course by my next professional development review).* |
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