

Defining your skills

We all possess skills and knowledge that employers will value. However, it can be hard to identify these attributes in ourselves and even harder to record this on paper. Here you'll find information that can help. Employers expect you to recognise the skills that you have – particularly those that meet their needs. Typically, these include skills and traits such as:

|                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Communication/interpersonal          | Teamwork            |
| Planning and organising              | Problem solving     |
| Flexibility                          | Research/Analytical |
| Commercial awareness                 | Leadership          |
| Taking responsibility/accountability | Decision making     |

In job applications and interviews, you'll have to outline what you mean by each of your relevant skills, and offer examples of contexts in which you have developed and utilised them

**Written communication could include the ability to:**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Write clear concise & accurate reports | Produce publicity materials               |
| Draft letters & proposals              | Prepare speeches/presentations            |
| Write for different audiences          | Edit and summarise                        |
| Impart a message clearly               | Demonstrate accurate spelling and grammar |

**Verbal Communication could include the ability to:**

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Clarify issues in a logical & concise manner | Negotiate issues             |
| Give clear instructions                      | Ask clear direct questions   |
| Train or mentor others                       | Conduct interviews           |
| Listen effectively                           | Give and extract information |

**Leadership skills could include the ability to:**

|                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Inspire enthusiasm in others | Handle crises & emergencies well  |
| Take responsibility          | Initiate new ideas & procedures   |
| Motivate others              | Act with approachability          |
| Show resilience              | Coach and mentor others           |
| Delegate                     | Recognise the strengths of others |
| Encourage contributions      | Keep teams and projects 'on task' |

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**Interpersonal skills could include the ability to:**

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| Obtain information from others   | Counsel/coach on an individual basis   |
| Influence others to see your viewpoint   | Understand & use organisation politics   |
| Resolve personal conflicts with others   | Justify your actions to subordinates   |
| Build and maintain relationships   | Secure the assistance of others  |
| Gain the co-operation & acceptance of others - clients, colleagues & other professionals | Make an effective contribution as a member of a work group, team or task force |
| Represent & negotiate on behalf of an organisation                                       | Provide sound leadership & motivate staff to produce results                   |
| Focus on performance rather than personality when relating to others                     | Be socially, culturally & ethically sensitive                                  |

**Analytical skills could include the ability to:**

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| Relate practical applications to technical & theoretical knowledge | Test assumptions & revise conclusions in the light of new experience |
| Identify key components of an issue or problem                     | Recognise alternatives/ problems/opportunities                       |

**Innovation skills could include the ability to:**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Anticipate needs  | Bring in fresh perspectives & new ideas             |
| Identify/ develop opportunities to increase effectiveness | Think creatively, imaginatively & in abstract terms |

**Decision-making skills could include the ability to:**

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| Make logical & considered decisions & support with appropriate evidence or rationales | Identify & give appropriate weighting to all relevant factors |
| Ensure that decisions made are consistent with goals                                  | Argue a case effectively and take responsibility              |

**Research skills could include the ability to:**

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| Obtain information efficiently  | Access scientific literature                           |
| Take & catalogue notes  | Prepare bibliographies                                 |
| Identify & use appropriate sources of information e.g. people, literature | Design and use appropriate survey tools and techniques |

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**Planning and organisational skills could include the ability to:**

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| Establish priorities & plan and organise work according to those priorities         | Organise work either on an individual basis or as part of a work group |
| Monitor & evaluate performance & adjust to changed circumstances                    | Delegate work & allocate resources appropriately                       |
| Implement decisions   | Develop, implement & control a budget                                  |
| Demonstrate good attention to detail  | Schedule a sequence of events  |
| Gather accurate and pertinent data  | Evaluate priorities  |
| Develop time saving working procedures  | Define departmental goals within organisational goals                  |
| Co-ordinate large numbers of diverse activities or events in a short period of time | Create & maintain files, data records or financial information         |
| Gather information and arrange it in a clear interpretable form                     | Meet deadlines under pressure and work at a fast pace                  |

**Administrative skills could include the ability to:**

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|--|--|
| Follow common formats & layouts for correspondence & reports | Use appropriate office equipment as required |
| Devise & access filing systems                               | Work methodically and with accuracy          |

**Knowledge of the role could include:**

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| An understanding of terminology, principles & practices applicable to the job | Ability to follow required industrial regulatory or technical guidelines |
| Knowledge of issues, problems or necessary changes appropriate to the job     | Demonstration of organisational and interpersonal skills                 |
| Recognition of an employer's needs  | Understanding of professional development requirements and opportunities |

**Maturity could include the ability to:**

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| Work within the constraints of an organisations rules and regulations | Share & encourage the sharing of information about problems, successes & decisions |
| Work effectively & remain calm and flexible under pressure            | Seek assistance from others when required  |
| Do a thorough job with limited supervision                            | Be adaptable & make independent judgments  |



## Defining your skills

**Self-motivation could include the ability to:**

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| Set goals and reach them                           | Take the initiative and maintain a high energy level |
| Demonstrate a positive attitude to self and others | Enjoy challenges and take reasonable risks           |

For further information on defining your skills please refer to the Career and Employment Service:  
<http://careers.massey.ac.nz>