

# Building your skill set

Audio transcript

## Slide 1

Welcome to this presentation. My name is Kate and I work in the Widening Access team at UWE Bristol.

In this presentation we're taking a look at skills, and in particular considering how to identify your own skillset. This may well be something that you haven't thought about very much. As you will see during the course of this presentation, now would be a good opportunity for you to identify your skills as you explore your options to make informed decisions and successful applications.

## Slide 2

We will start by identifying the benefits for recognising our skills. You will notice that employers and university admission tutors are very interested in skills, so whichever option you are considering right now, you will need to be able to identify and articulate your skills.

I will provide you with examples to showcase your skills and then we will move on to using the STAR technique as a way to talk about your skills confidently and succinctly. Finally, I will signpost you to a useful website where you can explore your skills in more detail.

## Slide 3

We all have different skills and it's worth taking a minute to think about which skills we have. This screen gives you a picture of just some skills. You can probably think of many others. It doesn't always come naturally to think about our own skills. It's often easier to recognise skills in other people.

## Slide 4

So what are the benefits of recognising your skills? Well, on the screen you can see 3 points. Firstly, employers will ask you as part of the application process and also at interview. This isn't the kind of question that you can quickly answer, it does take some thought. Secondly if you want to apply to university then you will also need to complete a form and explain your motivations for applying. For particular courses the skills that you have are very important, for example health related courses such as nursing. Check out the course details on the university websites for more information. Thirdly and finally, talking about your skills is difficult and so that's our final benefit of identifying skills before it really matters; it gives you time to practise.

## Slide 5

Just to provide a little bit more context, here are the results of a large survey by employers for graduate recruitment.

The dark purple part of the circle shows that attitude towards work and aptitude for work are key factors when recruiting new staff. The picture is the same for employers who take on school or college leavers as well.

## Slide 6

There are lots of ways that you can demonstrate your skills. Remember, that you don't need to be perfect. Skills are something that you develop over time as you take part in different activities or tasks and have different opportunities.

On the screen you will see examples to develop skills.

It's worth seizing opportunities NOW! There are lots of great activities that you can do whilst in 6<sup>th</sup> Form or college. Don't forget your lessons at school and college naturally give you opportunities to develop skills, without you really realising.

If you are not doing much already outside of your school/college work, this is a wake-up call to start!!

The more you can do, the richer your applications and interviews become and this enhances your attractiveness to employers / universities...

## Slide 7

To reinforce previous point, and emphasise that you can develop skills from so many activities take a look at the table on the screen, and on the next slide. It illustrates lots of examples that might get you thinking about your own skills.

## Slide 8

So now lets look at how to talk about the skills that we have identified from a range of examples. On the screen you can see a typical question that can be asked on an application form or in an interview. It deliberately asks you to describe a situation and you can't give a yes/no answer.

Having a technique to use could really help you answer this type of question and that's what we will look at now.

## Slide 9

The STAR technique provides a framework so you can tell your story.

You can see on the screen what STAR actually stands for.

The 'situation' is key to the whole description. This is where the employer (whether they are reading your application or in an interview setting) understands where you were and then, when you describe the 'task', what you were trying to do.

The 'action' is the most important part of your description. This is when you can really showcase your skill, whether that might be problem solving, team work or creativity by highlighting what you did. Sometimes this is where people end the description, but the person listening or reading your application will ideally want to know what happens in the end of your story or description.

This is where the 'result' wraps up the description very neatly and proves to the employer that you can display certain skills. This doesn't mean to say that every situation has to be perfect as we know that some groups don't necessarily work harmoniously or that problems can't always be solved quickly and easily, but it's the process that you describe that it's important. Anyone reading or listening to you will want these examples to be realistic and genuine, so don't be tempted to think up an elaborate story as you may become unstuck if they ask follow-up questions!

## Slide 10

Here's another example, but this time for 'customer service' as a skill. You can see how the technique is being used and you might want to refer to this again when you are trying to use this technique to talk about your skills.

## Slide 11

Here you will see a job profile of an aerospace engineer, which is taken from the Prospects website. Looking at these profiles are helpful to identify the skills that are required for particular job roles. And then you might want to consider whether you have skills that are suitable.

## Slide 12

You can easily find out about skills in job vacancies. As I've already mentioned, employers will ask you about your skills in the recruitment process so they will want you to be able to evidence the skills that are important for the role they are advertising. You can see here the particular skills that are important in this accountancy apprenticeship.

## Slide 13

There are lots of ways to find out about skills required for a job, but perhaps it's harder to identify your own skills. One website that you might want to use is Careerpilot. It has a skills builder feature and you can answer questions like you see on the screen.

## Slide 14

It then provides you with a profile, which you can use to look at jobs and courses. This might be a useful starting point for you.

## Slide 15

Essentially, skills are a very important element for both employers and university admission tutors to determine your suitability. Being able to explain your skills, qualifications and experience is key. We have looked at the STAR technique as a way to showcase your skills, helping you to feel confident and clear when talking about yourself. This does take practice, so don't worry if it is difficult to begin with. This could be something that you use whenever you make future applications and so it will become easier. Thank you for listening and good luck as you consider your options and make decisions about your future.