

Academic Skills Audit for postgraduate students

**Centre for
Academic
Development**
Enhancing student success

What is a skills audit and why do I need to complete one?

As a postgraduate student, you will be managing your studies more independently and developing your skills to become a more independent researcher. This Academic Skills Audit is designed to help you identify your academic skills needs in your first semester at Brookes. You should try to complete it and share it with your Academic Advisor or supervisor before your first appointment. You can then talk through it together and identify areas for you to focus on.

This document is yours to keep and you will not be assessed in any way on the content. It is broken into sections so you can work through areas relevant to your needs or you may choose to complete the entire audit to identify the skills you need to develop further at this level of study. Section 3 will be relevant for all postgraduate students and you may wish to select section 1 and/or section 2 depending on your previous experience of studying.

Revisit the skills audit in Semester 2 to see how you have developed and where there are still opportunities for learning and development.

Developing your skills is an ongoing process and will continue throughout your degree. Whilst studying at Oxford Brookes, it is recommended that you use this document to review your achievements and identify areas to develop further every 6 months.

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<h1>Brookes systems</h1>	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I know how to access my student information page.			Your Studies pages
I know how to access my timetable.			Your Studies pages
I know how to add modules to my programme.			Your Studies pages
I know how to access Moodle.			Getting Started with Moodle
I know where to find the student support coordinators.			Student Support Coordinator
I know what student support and wellbeing services are available			Student support and wellbeing
I know how to find academic support if I am struggling.			Programme Advice & Support
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ dates:			

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Reading & research	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I know where to find my reading lists.			Reading Lists
I know how to use the library to find and access books.			Library
I know who my subject librarian is and how they can help me.			Library Search for your subject under Course Resources & Support
I know how to use a database to find a journal article I have been told to read.			Library
I know how to use a database to search for articles on a particular subject.			Library
I know how to evaluate sources and decide what to use for academic purposes.			Centre for Academic Development
I quickly decide which parts of a book to read.			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to read critically.			Centre for Academic Development
I can take effective notes.			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to organise my notes so I can find what I need later.			Centre for Academic Development
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ date(s):			

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Referencing & academic integrity	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I know why it is important to reference appropriately.			Academic Integrity Moodle Course You will need your student ID and password to access this resource.
I know how to reference appropriately.			Library
I know when I should quote directly and when I should paraphrase.			Centre for Academic Development
I can synthesise information and put it into my own words.			Centre for Academic Development
I know what the following terms mean and how to avoid them: plagiarism, collusion, duplication, poor academic practice, academic misconduct.			Academic Integrity Moodle Course You will need your student ID and password to access this resource.
I know which system of referencing is used in my subject area.			Library Click on your subject for more info
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area:</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ date(s):			

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<h1>Preparing assignments</h1>	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I know where to find my assignment briefs			Getting Started with Moodle
I know when my assignments are due			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to organise my time so I can balance my work across modules			Centre for Academic Development
I can find and make use of the marking criteria			Centre for Academic Development
I can plan my assignments effectively			Centre for Academic Development
I know where to go for help if I am unclear about an assignment			Course Tutors Centre for Academic Development
I know how to proofread my own work			Centre for Academic Development
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ date(s):			

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Academic writing	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I know how to structure an assignment (including essays or reports)			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to structure a paragraph			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to write in an appropriate academic style			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to support my arguments with evidence and examples			Centre for Academic Development
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ date(s):			

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Presenting or participating in seminars	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I can prepare for a seminar discussion			Getting the Most Out of Seminars
I am confident speaking to my peers in class			Getting the Most Out of Seminars
I can plan a presentation			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to present in an appropriate style			Centre for Academic Development
I can make use of appropriate visual aids if I need to			Centre for Academic Development
I can negotiate confidently with peers if planning a group presentation			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to approach and speak to my tutors/lecturers			Academic Adviser
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ date(s):			

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<h1>Submitting assignments & accessing and responding to feedback</h1>	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I know when to submit my assignments			Centre for Academic Development
I know when and how to apply for exceptional circumstances			Your Studies pages
I know how to use Turnitin			Your Studies pages
I know what the similarity score refers to			Centre for Academic Development
I know how to access assignment feedback			Getting Started with Moodle
I know how to make use of feedback to improve my performance in future assignments			Centre for Academic Development
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ date(s): 			

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<h1>Conducting independent research</h1>	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I can identify a viable research topic(s) and formulate an appropriate research question(s)			Centre for Academic Development
I am aware of how to use the review of literature to illustrate a potential gap in knowledge			Centre for Academic Development
I am aware of the range of research methods available to me and I am able to select and use appropriate methods to investigate my question			Centre for Academic Development Also look at any guidance within your programme such as a Research Methods module
I understand the importance of research ethics and how they apply to my research			Research ethics (Oxford Brookes)
I have knowledge of the theoretical frameworks appropriate to my research topic and I can use them to frame my discussion			Using theoretical frameworks [PDF]
I am able to critically analyse and synthesise a variety of sources of information to draw conclusions			Research synthesis [video] Centre for Academic Development
I can communicate the need for my research and how my work contributes to furthering knowledge in my discipline, practice, or profession			Contributions to Knowledge and the Knowledge Gap [Blog post]
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
Comments/ date(s):			

Managing a research project	Rate your confidence	Set priorities	Where can I find out more?
	Using a scale from 1 to 5 1 - not at all confident 5 - very confident	H- High M- Medium L- Low	Click on the links below for more information.
I am aware of the software options available for managing my references			Library Reference management software [UCL]
I can use IT systems for the collection and analysis of data (where appropriate to my project), e.g. NVivo, SPSS			IT Training Nvivo IT Training SPSS
I know how to get the most out of my relationship with my supervisor			Supervision [Vitae]
I have organisational strategies in place to keep track of a large body of information over a longer period of time			Centre for Academic Development Centre for Academic Development
I am able to break my project down into manageable milestones and set my own deadlines			Project planner [PDF]
<i>Add the confidence column for your total score in this area</i>			Click here to add to scores sheet
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My Skills Audit Scores

<u>Brookes Systems</u>	My score	If you scored 24 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Reading & Research</u>	My score	If you scored 30 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Referencing & Academic Integrity</u>	My score	If you scored 18 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Preparing Assignments</u>	My score	If you scored 21 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Academic Writing</u>	My score	If you scored 12 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Presenting or Participating in Seminars</u>	My score	If you scored 21 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Submitting Assignments and Accessing and Responding to Feedback</u>	My score	If you scored 21 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Conducting independent research</u>	My score	If you scored 21 or below, this is an area to be developed.
<u>Managing a research project</u>	My score	If you scored 15 or below, this is an area to be developed.

Planning My Next Steps

Looking at your answers above, write a brief paragraph outlining your strengths and areas for development. Make a brief action plan to address any areas you would like to develop over the next semester (use the questions to guide your responses):

- What are my goals?
- Why have I prioritised these?
- What is my deadline for achieving them?
- What steps do I need to take?
- How will I know if I have achieved my goals?

Staff comment/ date(s):

Revisit semester 2: Reflection on learning to date

Look back at the answer you wrote in Semester 1.

- Was your assessment of your skills appropriate?
- Did you have strengths you didn't know you had?
- Did you have any unidentified gaps in your knowledge?
- How did you work to address any areas you weren't confident in?
- What is your SMART action plan for this next semester?

Staff comment/ date(s):

Guidance for Academic Advisors & Supervisors

You may want to use this document as a springboard for initial discussions with your new advisees and as a way of helping them identify areas where they may be lacking confidence. The form is there for the students to use and keep and you can either make comments yourself, or students can summarise any verbal feedback you give them to refer to later. Ideally the form will be revisited at meetings through the first year as a way of encouraging students to reflect on their learning and continue to take responsibility for their own development