An A-Z of skills

Personal and career development involves developing your portfolio of skills. This is true whether your main aim is to improve your study skills on your course or to gain employment as a graduate or to go into research - or a combination of these goals. Recognising the skills you've got and identifying ones you want to develop more is very beneficial, during your course and as part of preparing for your future career plans.

Skills for independent learning
To help you learn effectively whilst at Imperial, these skills have been highlighted in ‘Learning to Learn’, produced by the Centre for Educational Development:

- writing, including technical writing
- information literacy
- reading
- mathematical skills
- note-taking in lectures
- creativity and problem solving
- questioning
- oral communication
- group skills
- practical skills

Source: ‘Learning to Learn’ http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/portal/pls/portallive/docs/1/7288106.PDF

Skills for research as an undergraduate and beyond
As part of your degree course, you will undertake one or a few major undergraduate projects, which involve training in skills for research. This is a list of skills identified as necessary for research in biosciences

- project management: planning, scheduling, goal-setting, time management, effective communication with your supervisor
- ability to conduct a literature review
- ability to generate and test hypotheses
- ability to design data collection protocols with appropriate sampling methodologies
- data analysis and interpretative skills
- report writing skills
- data presentation skills: oral, poster, graphical, written
- ability to analyse, synthesise, and critically evaluate different types of information

If you’re aiming to undertake a PhD when you graduate, you should have a look at www.grad.ac.uk for information on the required skills training for research students (set out in the Joint Statement of the Research Councils / AHRB). These research skills fall within the following broad areas: research skills and techniques, research environment, research management, personal effectiveness, communication skills, networking and teamworking, career management.
Skills for graduate employment
Numerous surveys have been conducted, some by the Association of Graduate Recruiters, into the key competencies sought by employers of graduates. Depending on which survey you consult, there may be slight variations. But frequently, these ‘skills wish-lists’ include some or all of the following:

- Flexibility, adaptability and the capacity to cope with & manage change
- Self motivation and drive
- Analytical ability and decision making
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Team-working ability and skills
- Organisation, planning and prioritisation abilities
- Customer focus and service orientation
- Ability to innovate / change things
- Mental and physical resilience
- Leadership ability.

(This list comes from a survey of employers and the skills above are ranked according to the frequency with which they’re mentioned by these employers – Source: ‘Guide for Busy Academics no. 3 into PDP’ produced by the H E Academy www.heacademy.ac.uk)

If you’re intending to apply for internships or graduate employment, you will find that when you make applications and attend interviews, you’ll be asked lots of questions that probe your evidence of key skills and ask you to reflect on what you learnt from your experiences so the ‘skills for graduate employment’ will be ones on which you perhaps choose to focus your personal development goals.

Skills for career management
These are skills that employers value in their employees including new graduates because these skills enable individuals to drive their own career and personal development.
It could be argued, perhaps, that these skills will also enable you to drive your career and personal development in a research or academic context as well.

- self-awareness
- self-promotion
- exploring opportunities
- action planning
- networking
- matching and decision making
- negotiation
- political awareness
- coping with uncertainty
- development focus
- transfer skills
- self-confidence

(Source: ‘Skills for Graduates in the 21st Century - Association of Graduate Recruiters):

Conclusion
If you compare the lists featured above, you’ll see some overlap and you’ll see some differences in emphasis. We’ve tried to reflect this in our choice of the ‘A – Z of Skills’. But this A – Z of Skills is not meant to be a finite list – there is no such thing.
You need to ask yourself: which skills do I want to develop?
Your answer will depend on your own personal development goals and career aims, as well as on how you assess yourself and your skills.
The A – Z of Skills aims to help you generate ideas on how to develop yourself and your skills further. This will be beneficial to you during your course and beyond, whether you’re aiming for employment or research.
Adaptability
- Able to adapt goals in the light of changing circumstances
- Openness to change and willingness to adapt
- Openness to new or better ideas of other people

How can I develop this skill?
Some students have had to adapt to huge change through coming to the UK from the other side of the world, in order to study at Imperial; students who have opted for a Year in Industry or Research have experienced change in their working environment and perhaps country too; all students have had to adapt when making the initial transition into Higher Education from school, often living away from home for the first time.
- Reflect on what you found difficult and what you learnt about being adaptable when experiencing changes like these
- Consider how you feel about and react to change. Perhaps you've planned a weekend away and things needed to be changed at the last minute. What did you do? How did you react?
- When did you have to make major changes to something you planned? Were other people involved? How did you cope?
- Next time you plan something, take into your consideration a "plan B" so that if things don’t work out according to your main plan, you’ll have an alternative plan to fall back on.
- Try initiating something new. Is there something that you've thought could be improved?
- How would you go about doing this and how can you prepare for the impact of change on you and others?
- Get into the habit of ‘positive thinking’ so that you respond to change more readily. If you find this difficult, talk to someone whose advice you trust - and seek out friends with a positive approach who can give constructive suggestions.

Business awareness
- Knowledge and understanding of an organisation’s structure, objectives, practices and processes
- Good understanding of how one’s role and division impact on and contribute to other divisions and the wider objectives of the organisation
- Awareness of contribution you make as an individual in your work to help increase profits or funding or improve the quality of service provided, depending on the sector you’re in.

Employers mean different things when they ask for business or commercial awareness; it could mean anything, ranging from an appreciation of the importance of customer service in a recent job you had to an understanding of macro-economics and the impact on ‘big business’....

How can I develop this skill?
- Read the business pages of the Financial Times or other newspapers.
- Analyse the impact on specific companies; consider how they are competing with other similar companies and what if anything sets them apart
- Read press releases on the company’s website to get an overview of what’s happening.
- Talk to people in companies you’re interested in working for, either at employer events or fairs, at conferences or as a result of networking. If you don’t know anyone working there, perhaps you know someone who might?
- Understand how political events in the world impact on specific sectors and what the consequences are.
- Learn how to explain profit and loss calculations
- on your course, think through the business issues; when undertaking projects or relevant courses, consider the applications of the science or technology, how marketable particular technologies or techniques might be and who or which sectors might be interested.
Consider getting involved in activities such as Entrepreneurship Challenge at Imperial which aim to increase knowledge of entrepreneurship, market economics, personal success skills, financial literacy and business ethics.

- Set up your own informal group or club to develop business awareness, e.g., investment club (with an imaginary portfolio).
- Think about activities you do or could do that require business skills, whether it’s selling items on eBay, offering services such as ‘private tuition’ or volunteering in a charity shop.
- Even just watching TV shows like The Apprentice or Dragon’s Den tells you something about what ‘business gurus’ value!

**Communication**

- Getting your message across clearly and succinctly, both orally and in writing.
- Ability to identify the most effective communication medium for a given situation.
- Listening carefully, understanding what’s really being said and showing you understand.
- Being aware of other’s body language and using this to interpret meaning.
- Willingness to question others to aid own and check others’ understanding.
- Willingness to express needs, views and feelings clearly, confidently and courteously.
- Ability to convey information at the right level so that it is understood by others.
- Encouraging two-way communication.
- Using structure, creating a logical argument.
- Being sensitive to the needs and level of knowledge of your audience.

**How can I develop this skill?**

- Writing up a project into a report, providing your findings and communicating your conclusions.
- Learning how to plan, structure and deliver a presentation, adapting content, style and delivery to your audience.
- Contributing effectively to a seminar discussion, listening to other’s views – even if you may not agree, hearing them out and trying to understand their point of view.
- Conveying knowledge and information using different media such as posters.
- Listening carefully to detailed instructions about using laboratory equipment when conducting experiments.
- Presenting to school leavers during an open day, finding out what they’d like to know.
- Communicating with colleagues at work whether to keep them informed of your progress and any other relevant issues, or simply to build friendly and positive relationships to foster team work.
- Practising being more assertive and expressing your needs and wants; if you feel you’re not being listened to, aim to express this openly by stating how you feel.
- Consider volunteering: Pimlico Connection, for example, gives experience in teaching, engaging the interest of young people and bringing alive your subject to them.
- Explaining complex scientific information, possibly from a project, to someone who does not know your subject, using simple language; then checking their understanding.
- If English isn’t your first language, consider how to improve written and spoken English, whether by attending a course at Imperial or joining clubs or societies to meet students from countries other than your own.

**Creativity**

- Ability to generate ideas or solutions.
- Willingness to challenge established methods, when appropriate, and initiate or participate in change.
- Ability to identify links between previously unconnected situations or problems and see ‘bigger picture’ issues or think ‘outside the box’.

**How can I develop this skill?**

Don’t assume you can’t be creative; whilst some of us can’t stop having ideas, others may have to work at it that bit harder; encourage yourself to be more creative by:

- Using techniques such as ‘group brainstorming’ where everyone in a group contributes ideas spontaneously and nothing is automatically dismissed, to generate lots of possible ideas or solution; these can then be considered afterwards ‘in the cold light of day’ and assessed for their feasibility.
- Taking time to encourage a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere when working in a group; taking time to relax and re-charge batteries when on your own – the ‘eureka moment’ could happen on a walk, chatting with friends, day-dreaming in the park - or in the bath!
- Using visual techniques such as mind-mapping, drawing, making a collage from magazine pictures, to see what ideas or
thoughts emerge and take shape
• using tools such as flow charts or Gantt charts to organise and structure your ideas and devise a plan for action
• working with a friend on an assignment or project: you can undertake the work independently and then share or discuss your ideas with a friend to encourage creativity
• Consider different angles or approaches to affect a change.
• Can something be presented in a different way?
• Might illustrating something make your points clearer than writing them down?
• avoiding an instant 'yes, but' response, when others have ideas; instead encourage them to talk through their idea more so that you can consider ideas properly and bounce off some of your own

Decision making
• Gathering and assimilating information, to weigh up ‘pros and cons’
• Evaluating options
• Anticipating possible ‘knock-on’ effects
• Recognising when decisions need to be made, to meet a deadline
• Recognising the value of keeping options open or having ‘Plan B’ options, in case things change
• Keeping an open mind – at least until you’ve made a decision – then being able to commit to a decision
• Having the confidence to take calculated risks at times

How can I develop this skill?
• Consider - when did you last have to make a fairly major decision? - perhaps when you last bought your mobile phone – what steps did you take to make a choice?
• Consider how you tend to make decisions (and the strengths and weaknesses of your approach).
• If you have made a wrong decision about something, consider what you would do differently next time.
• Try weighing up pros and cons next time you have to make a major decision, possibly in writing for example using -a management tool such as a SWOT analysis (considering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) -making a list of factors, ‘for and against’ perhaps attributing numeric values to each -drawing a flow chart or diagram to clarify what may happen when / if .... Etc

Information Literacy
• Understand how to access information, be aware of where it can be found and in what formats
• Able to construct a search strategy to gather resources
• Able to evaluate the quality of resources
• Avoid accidentally plagiarising another person’s work
• Make informed decisions about information in terms of its appropriateness and quality
• Improve learning on your course, ability to complete assignments and overall marks
• Improve overall quality of your research
• Able to apply information literacy in everyday life

How can I develop this skill?
• use OLIVIA resources in Imperial, accessible via webct.imperial.ac.uk
• use ‘Learning to Learn’ resources in Imperial, accessible via http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/edudev/teachingandlearningresources/learningsupport/learningtolearnif
• review and seek feedback on your ability to manage, communicate, exploit and critically evaluate information on your course and all projects and assignments, from your tutors
• make a note during the course of a day of all the times when you use information literacy skills, outside the academic context - in everyday life

IT (information technology)
• Competent in use of word processing, spreadsheets, databases, Internet and e-mail
• Proficient in advanced IT / computing skills such as programming, modelling or specific technical skills that may be required for specific roles (eg finite element analysis)
• Ability to select and apply appropriate tools, techniques or packages for a given task
• Willingness to learn new skills and applications as required
• Ability to identify how IT can be applied to improve efficiency and solve problems in a business or organisation
Keeping up-to-date with developments

How can I develop this skill?
- Make use of online help functions for areas of potential weakness. Use the Internet to find your answer
- Ask your peers for help or consider setting up a peer support network in your department to share problems and solutions
- Identify opportunities in your course work, or at work, to apply and learn new skills in more challenging ways
- Consider undertaking a short IT course to develop specific skills

Interpersonal skills
- An interest in other people and what is important to them
- Awareness and tolerance of the diverse needs, feelings and views of others
- Respectful and courteous approach to others and understanding of and respect for personal and cultural differences
- Displaying integrity and discretion, showing you can be trusted
- Displaying good relationships with customers, clients, managers, peers and subordinates

How can I develop this skill?
- Building relationships with friends and family as well as with peers and colleagues or academics; recognising that different relationships require different interpersonal skills
- Representing your group’s view at a departmental committee.
- Volunteering to talk to the landlord about an issue with your flat such as a repair that needs doing or for the refund of your deposit
- Persuading a trader to give you a refund for sub-standard goods.
- Negotiating a lower price if the item you’re purchasing has a minor fault.
- Dealing with customers’ complaints whilst working in a pub or in a supermarket.
- Putting yourself forward and contributing actively to the next meeting or discussion involving any group of people or friends - whether to plan a project, a holiday or the ‘shopping / cooking rota’

Leadership skills
- Taking responsibility for a group of people
- Able to inspire others, to sell ideas to others, gain their trust, their support and their ‘buy-in’
- Making decisions on behalf of a group, even if unpopular, and being prepared to stand firm to your decision, when appropriate
- Steering a group’s efforts to ensure they remain focused on the goal, monitoring progress, managing resources as well as people involved

How can I develop this skill?
- Put yourself forward and volunteer to negotiate something on behalf of a group, e.g. a group discount for a holiday, or sponsorship (in money or kind) for a club or society or to resolve an issue with your landlord.
- Become your team’s captain and take charge.
- Volunteer to be team leader for your next group assignment.
- Consider all the activities you’ve been involved in that may have developed some leadership skills already – perhaps on a Duke of Edinburgh scheme expedition or teaching a new dance to other members of the Club, or in a elected position in a Student Union society, leading a group of prospective students at an Open Day or being a volunteer teacher on the Pimlico Connection or a ‘buddy’ on your course
- Think about what went well and what didn’t go so well – how can you improve your leadership style and learn from your experience?

Negotiation
Negotiation frequently involves some or all of the following
- Finding out as much as you can about what the other person wants and needs, by encouraging them to express their point of view and listening carefully to what they say
- Understanding what's important to them and which issues are crucial (sometimes called ‘deal breakers’) as well as the issues where they may be prepared to make concessions
- Thinking laterally to identify ‘win/win’ outcomes for you both
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- Persuading them of the benefits to them, as well as to you, of your ‘win/win’ proposals
- Listening to proposals they make to you and not rejecting them outright, as they could provide a route to a solution
- Not antagonising others even if you feel pressured; remaining calm and neutral if you think they’re trying to ‘bulldoze’ you
- Standing your ground if you sense you could end up giving away too much, too soon
- Appreciating when you need to compromise – to achieve the best result all round
- Understanding how the current negotiation affects your longer-term relationship with the other person

**How can I develop this skill?**

- Working on a group project you’ve perhaps had to negotiate times to meet with a group of people and how tasks and responsibilities are to be allocated among members of the group; as the project progresses, negotiations may need to continue especially if some members, or you, are having difficulties in delivering on what you / they promised.
- Inviting a new friend out for an evening together involves discussing and agreeing aspects such as what you would both enjoy doing, where to go, how much to spend.
- Asking your boss at work for some time off to enable you to go on holiday, or have extra time to revise for imminent exams
- Asking your Personal Tutor or a Lecturer on a particular for some of their time as well as some advice or support
- Don’t forget when you’ve negotiated for a better contract on your phone or for a second-hand car or with a landlord perhaps over rent on your flat?

**Networking**

We all network every day for different reasons and in different ways; networking to exchange information and support helps us increase our employability and is a skill that will be useful throughout our future career, whether we continue on in research or find employment when we graduate. Networking involves

- Being aware of the benefits of developing and maintaining a networks of contacts for every area of your life, your course, your extra-curricular activities, your work as well as your future career – networking makes you better informed and better prepared, when exploring or reviewing career options and making applications or attending interview
- Understand importance of ‘give and take’ when networking
- Able to define, develop and maintain a support network for advice and information

**How can I develop this skill?**

Networking is something you do everyday so

- Think about who you’ve networked with recently and why – perhaps for help with a particular issue, such as tips on low cost travel; perhaps you tried to offer them something useful in return or at least show you’d be receptive if they asked for your support in future
- Consider whether you have any contacts who might be useful to talk to about career-related ideas you have, to help you be better-informed; if you don’t know anyone, perhaps your family and friends know someone – they all have friends and family, too
- If you’re working or volunteering, then your colleagues are potential contacts and they all have their own network of contacts too; your tutors are potential networking contacts.
- Consider becoming a student member of a professional organisation and attending regional meetings to develop a network in a professional area of particular interest
- Attend or even organise a talk given by an external speaker; when meeting guest speakers or representatives at Fairs, introduce yourself by saying something positive about yourself, have some interesting questions to ask them and make a note of their name and job title
- Visit subject specific conferences.
- When meeting guest speakers, introduce yourself and aim to speak with them, making a note of their name and job title.
- The saying goes that it takes six steps from not knowing anyone to finding your key contact
- Whenever you’re networking, remember that even though you’re not actually applying for a job as such, you might want to one day and it’s important to come across as polite, friendly and professional – it may help you get offers of further help, too, such as perhaps the chance to do some work-shadowing in a role you’re interested in
- Keep a note of people’s contact details and thank them for their time
Numeracy

At its most basic level, numeracy involves the following:
- ability to make simple calculations, such as adding, subtracting and working out percentages
- analysing numeric information, interpreting graphs and statistics and drawing conclusions
- identifying trends and patterns in data and graphs
- presenting information in data or graphs

Many employers, when they ask for numeracy or numerical reasoning, simply mean the above level of ability and the vast majority of Imperial students and graduates clearly already possess this. However, academics or employers mean different things when they talk of ‘skills with mathematics’, or ‘numeracy’ or ‘numerical reasoning’ and may often be referring to significantly higher levels of skill than the above. At its most advanced levels, they might be seeking the ability to use complex mathematical tools or analytical techniques or the ability to manipulate complex mathematical models on computer systems.

How can I develop this skill?
The answer depends on where you’re starting from or your current level of skill – here are just some suggestions for improving numeracy and numerical reasoning in everyday life:
- When you go out for a meal with friends next time, volunteer to analyse the bill and work out individual contributions or if you share a flat with others, check the bills.
- Put yourself forward as Treasurer of a Student Union club or society with responsibility for keeping accounts and monitoring budgets.
- Work out your tax refund from work experience.
- Analyse data sets and statistics as part of your studies.
- Double check inferences made from a complex set of tables.
- Create a fictitious investment and check your stocks and shares.
- Practice your numeric reasoning ability via our Careers website [www.imperial.ac.uk/careers](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers). This is timed and comes with feedback.
- Depending on which degree you’re studying at Imperial, you may be required or have the opportunity to develop very advanced numerical and mathematical skills (some of which may even go ‘beyond numbers’ altogether).

Planning and organising

- Able to plan an effective course of action, making best use of time and other resources
- Considering and including contingencies in plan
- Setting SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound)
- Able to monitor and evaluate progress against specific objectives
- Establishing priorities
- Ability to co-ordinate with others
- Anticipating and avoiding difficulties

How can I develop this skill?
- Set aside regular time for planning
- Getting involved in the planning of a group project – who does what and by when?
- Planning a holiday for a group of friends, taking into account budgets, timing, visas, jabs
- Organising an event for a student society – making sure everyone is clear about their tasks, the timing, and the budget
- Managing a student budget carefully to allow for entertainment, books and study materials as well as food and living expenses
- Prioritising your studies and allocating time to social and extra-curricular events.
- Planning a big task by breaking it up into smaller chunks to make it more manageable.

Problem solving

- Ability to distinguish between key facts, assumptions and issues and irrelevant detail
- Ability to identify key goals and constraints
- Ability to understand information quickly and accurately
- Logical and objective approach to information and analysis
- Appreciation of all the variables affecting an issue
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- Ability to evaluate and choose workable solutions to problems
- Willingness to reach decisions and make recommendations based on available information
- Appreciation of the effect and implications of decisions

**How can I develop this skill?**
You are using analytical and problem-solving skills every day on your course – here are just a few examples:
- Thinking of ways to improve an existing design of a machine or of a system.
- Planning out and conducting undergraduate research project
- Designing an experiment to test out particular hypothesis, or modifying the design of an experiment to ensure more accurate results
- using appropriate samples and methodologies when planning how to gather data
- analysing, synthesising and critically evaluating different types of information

You also use this skill outside your course or at when work for example:

- coming up with new and better ways of doing things at work, when volunteering or in any of your extra-curricular activities

**Self awareness**
- Able clearly to identify skills, values, interests and core strengths
- Equipped with evidence of abilities
- Actively willing to seek feedback from others
- Able to identify areas for personal, academic and professional development
- Has an underlying confidence in abilities, based on past successes
- Has a personal sense of self-worth, not dependent on performance

**How can I develop this skill?**
- Use your Personal Development Plan effectively learning from the process
- Think about what makes you comfortable / uncomfortable?
- Ask others such as family and friends, colleagues or your boss, your personal tutor or a careers adviser about how you come across. How would they describe you? Seek the views of several different people so you can get a more balanced perspective.
- What can you learn from feedback? Are there any surprises? – we all certain blind-spots and how you are seen by others may not be the same as you see yourself
- Be as positive and open-minded as you can to learn about yourself and commit to your personal development
- Recognise that everyone has strengths and weaknesses; weaknesses can often be due to external circumstances or be issues you can work on by gaining new experiences – by stretching yourself and coming out of your ‘comfort zone’, you develop new skills and increase your self-awareness further
- The Careers Service offers MBTI® workshops which are about self-awareness.
- Many careers books have chapters on self-awareness. There are a few reference copies available in the Careers Information Room.
- Use Prospects Planner, an online tool to generate career ideas - the first stage helps increase your self-awareness as you explore and ‘rate’ your skills as well as what interests and motivates you

**Self-motivation**
- High self motivation to achieve and to deliver on commitments
- Energetic and enthusiastic approach to work/tasks
- Desire to continuously learn and develop
- Perseverance in the face of obstacles
- Resilient to reasonable demands and pressure
- Awareness of how an organisation’s values and culture as well as your own role within it, impacts on your self-motivation at work

**How can I develop this skill?**
- Consider what matters to you and what would motivate you in a job? (use [www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pplanner](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/pplanner), an
Consider why you want to work in a particular job or study for a particular course? Speak with people who are doing the job already or with people on the course you’re interested in.

Do you give up easily? Try to be more optimistic and adopt a positive approach; remind yourself of times when you have persisted and it paid off.

Seek out positive people to give you support and encouragement

If something doesn’t work out, try not to lose sight of your long-term goal and consider what else you could do instead that will also get you there in the long run.

if you have a tendency to think ‘that failed because I’m a failure’, change your way of thinking to a more positive one – practice thinking this instead: ‘that was a setback which I’ll learn from; this means I’ll try to do things differently next time and perhaps even succeed’

**Self-management**

- Willingness to take responsibility for tasks and outputs, without supervision
- Willingness to take the initiative, and act without prompting
- Comfortable switching between tasks or problems when appropriate
- A planned, prioritised and structured approach to tasks
- A conscientious approach to important details
- Ability to adapt plans, priorities or views in light of new or changed information

**How can I develop this skill?**

- Have a to-do list to ensure that important tasks are not forgotten.
- Start with the deadline and work backwards with your planning.
- If you cannot manage something by a specific time, then negotiate a more realistic time frame.
- Be willing to compromise and negotiate, if work takes priority.
- Working late cannot always be avoided, but careful planning can save time.

**Team working**

- Working effectively with other people
- Negotiating to achieve outcomes that benefit everyone concerned
- Sharing information with other team members
- Willingness to help and support others
- Listening to others, respecting and valuing contributions made by other team members
- Ability to resolve conflicts within a team or facilitate when working as a group
- Motivating one self and others and being positive and enthusiastic
- Able to work in different types or sizes of teams

**How can I develop this skill?**

- Perhaps you’ve already worked in a group of people on a project for your course.
- Sharing a flat and living with other people is also a form of team working, as you’re striving for harmony within the group.
- If you’re making music with other people, in a band or perhaps in a choir, or if you’re involved in putting on a production eg dance or drama, be aware of the importance of providing mutual support.
- Do you actively play in a sports team? This could be a useful example for team working, as you’re sharing a common goal with others.
- Helping others with ideas and encouraging them.
- Keeping the group on track, being aware of time and resources.

**Technical skills**

You will be acquiring and developing several technical skills already as part of your degree - whether IT, mathematical or laboratory-based for example.

Specialist technical knowledge or skills may be sought for particular careers or for research, the level of which may vary widely depending on the role.
How can I develop this skill?

- keep a note of the techniques and tools you use on your course and the context or purpose, consider how quickly you learnt them, how long you've been using them since and which, if any, you particularly enjoy using and why
- think about how your technical skills could be applied to suit different purposes
- use online self-help tutorials or library resources to further develop particular skills and keep up to date with the latest developments.