Skills analysis

During your research years you developed a multitude of skills and expertise. This tip-sheet offers hints and tips on how to identify your skills and use them as evidence of your ability in job applications and interviews. Helping you consider the skills you have or need to acquire in relation to your career aspirations.

A skills analysis gives you the opportunity to assess your current skillset and your evidence of that skill. It also helps you map out what skills you need to develop and how you will achieve this.

1. Why do a skills analysis?

It is important to remember as a postdoc or fellow you are a highly skilled individual. When considering your next career step and applying for new roles, you need to be able to acknowledge your current skills and achievements. Consider how your skills and achievements are significant for a specific role or for your future career development.

By completing a skills analysis, you can:

- Assess your skillset against the ones required for future job roles.
- Identify gaps in your skillset and plan how you can develop current skills further or acquire new skills.
- Be proactive for your next career step and your personal and career development.

2. Individual skills analysis

Start by listing your skills and the skills you want to develop in a table (see example). Use job descriptions and LinkedIn to include skills specific to the role or industry you want to work on.

Skills Analysis Table:

Skill	Evidence of skill	Skill development	
		How	**When**

Group the skills into general themes, examples of themes could be:

- Research Skills
- Personal and Interpersonal
- Communication and Dissemination
- Leadership and Management

3. How to evidence your skills

Employers need to see/hear evidence of what you can do both at application and interview stage. Do you have what they are looking for? What are your skills?

For each skill think about a time/s where you used that skill with positive results – why you used it, how you used it and what happened because of it.

Use positive, active verbs, e.g. led, coordinated, developed, delivered in your examples.

These examples can be used in your CV, cover letter and job applications to evidence your suitability for the role against the roles required criteria. At interview use these examples when answering questions based on your past experience, strengthens and competencies.

Include **quantifiable data** where possible to support your evidence for a particular skill.

STAR is a useful tool to help ensure you include enough detail as evidence of your abilities:

Situation	*What was the context?*
Task	*What were you trying to achieve?*
Action	*What, specifically, did you do?*
Results	*What were the outcomes and impact?*

4. Skill development

If there are skills that you want to develop consider how can you develop these skills and give yourself a deadline/goal to do this by – be proactive about your development. Ask yourself:

- How can I get more experience in said skill? Are there training opportunities? Who could help me develop this skill?
- What's my timeframe to learn this new skill?
- Which skill/s are my priority? Is there a skill repeatedly mentioned in the job descriptions I'm interested in?

As a postdoc or fellow at Imperial you have 10 days development written into your contract, you can use these 10 days to develop current skills or to develop new skills. Investing in your own skills development can help you become more competitive for your chosen career path.

5. What skills are they looking for?

How do you know what skills are required for different professions and industries?

A good exercise to help you explore and understand the skills required for different professions and industries is to review job descriptions.

Regardless of your contract length and your career ambitions (academic or non-academic), look at job descriptions from areas you might be interested in. You can highlight the essential and desirable skills or criteria from these job descriptions and generate a master list of skills. This exercise helps you identify your skills (technical, research, interpersonal), but also identify skills you might want to develop.

Start now, you don't have to wait to do this exercise when you're looking to apply for a job, be proactive about your development and start considering what skills you need to progress to your next career stage.

6. Examples of skills

The PFDC team has collated a skills list from job descriptions seen via 1:1 appointments and mock interviews with Imperial postdocs and fellows – see table below. This table consists of skills and criteria detailed in the person specification section of job descriptions. Use this list as a starting point to understand the varied skills required for both academic and non-academic career paths. Please note this is only a selection of the skills which can be found in job descriptions – do your research and find out what skills are required for the roles you want to be applying for.

Adaptability	Implementing	Outreach engagement
Analysis	Independent working	Personal development
Attention to detail	Influencing	Planning
Budgeting / budget management	Initiative	Prioritisation
Business awareness	Innovating	Proactivity
Coaching	International cultural awareness	Problem solving
Collaboration	Interpersonal	Programming
Communication - Oral	IT and software	Project management
Communication - Presenting	Knowledge transfer	Relationship building
Communication - Written	Laboratory management	Resilience
Consultancy	Leadership	Science communication
Creativity	Listening	Secure funding
Critical thinking	Managing people	Statistical analysis
Customer/client service	Managing stakeholders	Strategic thinking
Data analysis and handling	Marketing products and projects	Supervising
Delegating	Mathematical modelling	Team work
Designing	Mentoring	Technical expertise
Editing	Monitoring	Time management
Effective decision making	Motivating	Training
Entrepreneurship/enterprise	Multi-tasking	Tutoring
Evaluating	Negotiating	Writing (general public)
Experiment design	Networking	Writing (reporting)
Facilitating	Organisation	Writing (scientific work)