

MANCHESTER GOLD

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Manchester Gold - Skills Portfolio

Introduction

The portfolio is designed to help you review your skills base, discover what competencies employers look for in graduate/postgraduate entrants and identify which attributes will be most relevant in your chosen career area. You can use this document in meetings with your mentor to develop a number of skills during the course of the Manchester Gold programme. It will provide a framework for meetings with your mentor, and will serve as a record you can revisit over time.

We recommend that you read through this document independently and then use it in your meetings in the ways suggested or however you see fit.

Many people overlook the experiences they've had and forget that you can gain valuable skills from apparently basic activities. For example:

1. Working in a bar

Action	Skill
Serving "difficult" customers	assertiveness/influencing/communication
Covering for the manager	prioritising/responsibility
Dividing jobs between the team	team work/delegating
Balancing your job and your studies	motivation/time management

2. University Society Member

Action	Skill
Budgeting for an event	planning/prioritising/managing a budget
Attracting new members	marketing/communicating/influencing
Organising a meeting venue	problem solving/decision making
Recognising issues to tackle	business awareness

Core Transferable Skills

The skills highlighted above include the core attributes that many employers look for in all potential recruits. To ensure your success in the job market, you need to be aware of these skills and the situations in which you have used them. Many interviews will be competency based and questions will take the form of “Give me an example of a time when you have made a difficult decision...”

One useful way of preparing for interview is to run through the core skills, thinking of a time when you have used each of them, drawing on examples from your academic career, work experience and extra-curricular activities. You can use the table below to help you complete this activity and you can ask your mentor to support help you with this and guide you as to the appropriateness of examples.

Organisational Skills

For example:

- task management
- time management
- prioritising work
- planning ahead

Example	Academic Study	Work Place	Extra- Curricular Activities
1			
2			
3			

Further thoughts...

Communication Skills

For example:

- face to face or verbal communication
- written forms of communication
- dealing with people in different roles, from different backgrounds or in different levels of seniority
- listening and being able to understand problems and points of view quickly

Example	Academic Study	Work Place	Extra- Curricular Activities
1			
2			
3			

Further thoughts...

Team Working

For example:

- supporting other members of a group in a joint task
- obtaining the commitment of others to a group effort
- honouring your commitments to a team task, rather than concentrating only on your own work

Example	Academic Study	Work Place	Extra- Curricular Activities
1			
2			
3			

Further thoughts...

Problem Solving

For example:

- Analysing information
- Conceptualising a problem
- Making accurate and realistic judgements regarding a problem
- Turning ideas into an effective solution to a problem

Example	Academic Study	Work Place	Extra- Curricular Activities
1			
2			
3			

Further thoughts...

Interpersonal Skills

For example:

- Listening skills
- The ability to negotiate effectively towards a desired outcome without conflict
- The ability to resolve conflict
- The ability to influence the actions of others, perhaps persuading them to do something they would not otherwise have done
- The ability to build effective relationships

Example	Academic Study	Work Place	Extra- Curricular Activities
1			
2			
3			

Further thoughts...

Additional Skills

It is a good idea to research the career you want to pursue in order to identify other skills that may be essential for success. We have listed some additional skills below which you could find yourself using in the workplace. You may want to choose one of two of these and develop them during the course of the programme. You have the option to score yourself out of 20 in these skills (1- lowest, 10- highest) to help you pin- point where you can improve.

Presentation Skills

/ 10

- Ability to report findings and convey information to audience
- Pitching your material to suite an audience
- Appropriate use of visual aids to support information (usually PowerPoint)

IT Skills

/ 10

- Ability to use office software such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook
- Confidence using the internet
- Programming, web development

Customer / Client Service

/ 10

- Dealing with a client problem
- Delivering an efficient, good quality customer service
- Developing a rapport with a client or customer

Networking & Information Search

/ 10

- Developing useful contacts
- Understanding which information resources are most useful for a task
- Understanding how best to use each resource (e.g. library, database, etc)

Tip: Ask your mentor to identify two skills essential in their field. Identify instances where you have used those skills (or ask your mentor for ideas of how to develop them) and incorporate those into any applications you make to that career field.

Using your skills

Below are a few questions relating to the skills you need to succeed in your job search and subsequently in your career. Read through them, making a note of any thoughts, and seeking guidance from your mentor where you feel you need it.

Which of the skills listed over the last few pages do you feel you are strong in? Why?

How do you plan to use these strong skills effectively in your job search? (You might want to gain advice from your mentor to help with this.)

Which if the skills listed above do you feel you are weak in?

How do you plan to develop weak areas? Your mentor will have many tips on how to do this.

Discussion

You may also wish to discuss the following in meetings with you mentor:

- Their career history
- Their educational and professional background
- Trends in the sector
- How they got a foot in the door of their current profession/company
- The organisation they work for, including
 - What drives the organisation
 - What is the company culture

Summary

By using this document with the support of your mentor, you should be able to identify where your skills, knowledge and experience lie. You will also be able to identify gaps and take steps to develop missing skills. Used fully, the skills portfolio will also help you to reflect on what motivates you and to recognise your successes. All of these things will be truly beneficial in your job search strategy.