**YEAR 1 Resource 2**

[**Employability Skills – what are they?**](http://www.realie.org/employability-skills-what-are-they/)

Before being able to record skills and implement ways to develop them, it is important to *understand* exactly what they are. Whilst ‘key’ or ‘transferable’ skills are often heard in relation to students, graduates and the job market, it does not mean that they are always *understood*. Whilst the Confederation for British Industry’s (CBI) definition (below) provides some clarity, it is equally important for the students to know how to articulate them. To acknowledge such skills means personal, academic and personal growth. Transferable skills are called so due to them being “capable of being carried form the educational setting to the various employment contexts into which students go after graduation” (Holmes in Fallows & Steven 2000:205).

The CBI (2007)[1] defines them as;

**“A set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy.”**

Gaining a degree in Modern Languages is not an easy task, they are described as having **“A value in their own right, not just as a skill”** (Kelly & Jones 2003)[2] and although ML graduates can rightly state that they are strong communicators, both in writing and orally, it is important for them to discern the whole range of other skills which are developed throughout their course; establishing rapport, attentive listening and accuracy, among others[3]; **“By its very nature a ML degree enables students to develop a rich mixture of employability skills”** (Harrison 2011: 2). In the same way, The National Centre for Languages (CILT), states that a ML graduate possesses a whole range of other skills, other than the ability to operate in a foreign language, which they can offer a potential employer[4]. According to a study, Class of ’99[5], skills such as writing, analysis, problem-solving and presentation skills were brought to the work place as a result of their ML degree.

Employers are looking for transferable skills, which can be applied across any sector of one’s life. The top 10 transferable skills a Modern Languages student will gain, particularly on their year abroad, are:

1. Verbal communication
2. Teamwork
3. Commercial awareness
4. Analysing & Investigating
5. Initiative
6. Drive
7. Written communication
8. Planning & Organising
9. Flexibility
10. Time management

**“The skills and qualities that students acquire during their year abroad can be defined as transferable in that they can be applied flexibly to a large number of situations, not only in the foreign culture but also in their own.”** (Dueñas-Tancred & Weber-North 1995:113)[6]

Please refer to the [Competencies, Skills and Attributes](http://www.realie.org/flipbook/)f or more information.

The [“How to…”](http://yazikopen.org.uk/realie/?page_id=72) guides contains sections on how to demonstrate these skills.

The careers section on most universities’ websites provides useful information, resources and links to help their students realise their potential; it should also contain a section on living, working and studying abroad.

The universities’ Modern Languages websites may detail what skills are gained on the ML degree course, as well as the year abroad.

[1] CBI. (2009). *Future Fit: Preparing graduates for the world of work.* Available: [http://www.cbi.org.uk/](http://www.cbi.org.uk/" \t "_blank).

[2] Kelly, M. & Jones, D. (2003) *[A New Landscape for Languages](http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/1589" \t "_blank)****.***Nuffield Available: [http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/paper/2124](http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/paper/2124" \t "_blank)

[3] Harrison, J. (2011: 6). *Advice for personal tutors*: preparing for employability-based tutorials with Modern Languages finalists*.* Available: [http://www.ucml.ac.uk/](http://www.ucml.ac.uk/" \t "_blank).

[4] White, A. (2011). *Live Q&A: Career options for foreign language speakers.* Available: [http://careers.guardian.co.uk/careers-blog/career-options-foreign-language?commentpage=all](http://careers.guardian.co.uk/careers-blog/career-options-foreign-language?commentpage=all" \t "_blank)

[5] [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/class99/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/class99/" \t "_blank)

[6] Dueñas-Tancred, M. & Weber-North, I. (1995). Profiling and Accrediting. In: Parker, G. & Rouxeville, A. *‘The Year Abroad’ Preparation, Monitoring, Evaluation*. Great Britain: Middlesex University Printing Services. p113.

**ACTIVITY**

Look at the employability skills above and give yourself a rating of 1-5 (where 1 is low and 5 is high) on these skills.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| Verbal communication |  |  |  |  |  |
| Teamwork |  |  |  |  |  |
| Commercial awareness |  |  |  |  |  |
| Analysing & Investigating |  |  |  |  |  |
| Initiative |  |  |  |  |  |
| Drive |  |  |  |  |  |
| Written communication |  |  |  |  |  |
| Planning & Organising |  |  |  |  |  |
| Flexibility |  |  |  |  |  |
| Time management |  |  |  |  |  |

Take two of your highest rated skills and try to find an example from your work or study experience which illustrates them. Briefly describe what you have done and how this relates to the chosen skill.

Skill 1………………………………………………………….

Example

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| --- |
|  |

Skill 2………………………………………………………….

Example

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Use the *How to* section of the [www.realie.org](http://www.realie.org) website to help you

<http://www.realie.org/how-to/>