

The following is an extract from the Employability and Enterprise Policy/Strategy:

The University has accepted the following definition of employability as articulated in 'Future Fit: preparing graduates for the World of Work' published by UUK/CBI (2009).

“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”.

The University has agreed the following attributes as important in the development of an employable graduate: self management; team-working; business and customer awareness; problem solving; communication and literacy; application of numeracy; application of information technology. Definitions of these are:

Self management – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning.

Team-working – respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others.

Business and customer awareness – basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.

Problem solving – analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.

Communication and literacy – application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy – including listening and questioning.

Application of numeracy – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimation and applying formulae).

Application of information technology – basic IT skills, including familiarity with work processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines.

Underpinning all these attributes, the key foundation, must be a **positive attitude**: a 'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen.

HOW WILL THESE SKILLS BE DEVELOPED THROUGHOUT YOUR ECONOMICS DEGREE?.....

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMICS COURSE

The Economics degree programme is designed to develop students' academic and technical skills and to provide a breadth of understanding that is essential for a successful career in economics and business. Throughout the degree students steadily progress in their knowledge and development of economics. In tandem with this, students steadily develop their **employability skills**.

Information technology and application of number are an essential component of an economics degree and are developed throughout the course. For example, at level 1 in the Microeconomics module, you will use elementary economic and mathematical models to explain economic arguments. This progresses to advanced level information technology skills at level 3 in modules such as Econometrics where you will plan, design and investigate a computer simulation, work with others to develop a computer based investigation and find data using both traditional and 'web' sources.

Self sufficiency or **self-management** skills are vital for the successful completion of an economics degree at Cardiff University. It will be necessary to organise your own time and submit assignments to deadline. These self-management skills will be vital for the next stage of your career on completion of your degree.

The employability skills of **communication and literacy** will be developed in many ways throughout your years of study. Studying economics will teach you the ability to develop and present coherent and discursive arguments on economic issues. You will also be required to present your work in formal oral presentations as well as to communicate ideas and principles effectively through written and oral means. Finding published data and literature to support your work will be essential. You will develop information seeking skills which will enable you to search for and select the most relevant materials, and to integrate and acknowledge those materials logically and ethically within your work.

Your **problem solving** skills will be developed in several ways throughout university. On a day to day basis, you will need to approach the daily problems of balancing life as a student with the increasing necessity amongst many for part-time work and involvement in extra-curricular activities. From an academic problem solving point of view, economics involves the development of critical thinking and intellectual problem solving. You will learn to solve problems using statistical techniques based on probability theory. In the Introduction to Accounting module, for example, you will solve problems, including the ability to manipulate financial and other numerical data, and exercise powers of inquiry and logic. Problem solving skills are highly sought after in the recruitment of graduates.

Teamworking is an essential part of any degree today. You will learn to work with others to give group presentations and tutorials, whilst seminars will involve open discussion and presentation which will also enhance these skills.

HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP THESE SKILLS THROUGH YOUR COURSE IN THE FIRST YEAR?

Self-management forms a large part of your academic study. Not only will it be up to you to meet deadlines and accept responsibility for your learning, but the Personal Development Planning Programme (PDP) is designed to assist you to develop as an independent and confident learner. It will also encourage you to develop a positive attitude to learning throughout your professional life.

Teamworking is an essential part of any degree today and you will gain experience of this in the first year, particularly in the Economic History module, where on successful completion of the module you will be able to give oral answers to specific questions and handle questioning from members of the group.

Economics involves intellectual **problem solving** and you will begin to develop this skill in your first year. On completion of the Microeconomics module, for example, you should be able to find the solutions of a simple problem under different assumptions.

During the first year you will also start to develop the essential employability skills of **numeracy and information technology**. In the Microeconomics module you will use elementary economic and mathematical models to explain economic arguments, and in the Contemporary Economic Issues module you will employ electronic communication and IT facilities effectively.

Your **communication and literacy** skills will be developed throughout your economics degree. In the first year you will be introduced to different styles of written communication and considerable time will be spent throughout your years of study perfecting this skill. Written examinations and course work will form part of your assessment throughout level 1.

HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP THESE SKILLS THROUGH YOUR COURSE IN THE SECOND YEAR?

Your **self-management** skills will continue to develop at level 2 as you build upon the economic skills of your degree. At this stage, reading outside core text books will become important and continuing to prioritise your workload and manage your time will be vital. Personal Development Planning with your tutor will help you to further evaluate your self-management skills.

Communication, literacy and teamwork skills will be enhanced via tutorials in the second year. In these small groups you will be encouraged to reflect upon your academic reading and communicate principles, ideas and theories by oral and written means to the rest of your tutorial group. Within your tutorial group you are also encouraged to appreciate alternative viewpoints from your fellow students. Essay and report writing skills will continue to be developed through completion of assignments.

Numeracy and information technology abilities are expanded significantly at level 2. For example in the Money, Banking and Finance module, students will use an understanding of the workings and theories of monetary and financial systems to assess and evaluate various policy options, as well as identify the role of interest rate theory in the formulation of current economic policy.

At level 2 you will be encouraged to start questioning what you are learning and critically analysing and reflecting upon a wide variety of sources including original research. In this way you will learn to synthesise and amalgamate information and so develop your critical thinking and **problem solving** skills. Modules such as Microeconomics Theory and Managerial Economics for example will enable you to apply logic and reason in addressing problems and issues as well as problem solve using a range of quantitative methodologies.

HOW WILL YOU DEVELOP THESE SKILLS DURING YOUR FINAL YEAR?

During your final year you will continue to develop your critical thinking and **problem solving** skills across all modules. In the Microeconomic Analysis module, you will be aware of the use of economic analysis to solve economic problems arising in the micro-economy as well as be aware of the techniques that economists use to solve micro-economic problems. Your **numeracy, information technology and communication and literacy** skills will continue to develop during your final year. The Econometrics module will enable you to effectively plan, design and investigate a computer simulation, you will also work with others to develop a computer based investigation and find data using both traditional and 'web' resources. At this final stage of your degree you will be able to sustain a critical argument in writing and communicate ideas, principles and theories effectively by oral and written means.

The **self-management** skills you have already learnt will stand you in good stead for the academic rigour of the course and for the necessary post-degree planning that will underpin all your learning.

CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS (CMS)

CMS sessions delivered in years 2 and 3 will show you how to make sense of the **employability skills** developed throughout your degree and will help you articulate these skills effectively on paper and at interview to an employer. This link between academia and employment is essential, especially for those wanting to enter employment straight after their study. The Careers Service is available to help you further with this throughout all stages of your academic degree.

The Careers Service has a full programme of fairs, employer presentations and employer-led skills session that give undergraduates opportunities to meet employers and start developing their **commercial awareness** skills. Furthermore, this insight will allow you to better prepare for the job search and application process.