

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; teamworking; business and customer awareness; problem solving; communication and literacy; application of numeracy; application of information technology.

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

Teamworking – 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.

BUT

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

A Language Degree from Cardiff School of European Studies gives you the opportunity to develop many of the employability skills which employers look for in graduates.

Single and Joint Honours Degrees are available including French, German, Italian and Spanish. Combinations are also possible with Politics, Law and other Humanities subjects.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Communication skills are at the heart of every language degree. Language modules are compulsory in every year of study for all language degree programmes. Through these modules you develop oral, aural, reading and writing skills and will have achieved near native competence in written and spoken language by the end of final year. At this point you will understand with ease virtually everything that is said in your target language; converse with ease in most formal and informal situations and understand and interpret critically most forms of written German/French/Spanish/Italian. You will be able to write convincingly in a variety of styles and registers with fluency and accuracy and translate written and spoken English, in a variety of genres, into your target language.

Language modules are taught in the target language wherever possible and in small groups which enhances your listening and **oral communication skills**. These skills are assessed via oral and aural examinations. You also develop your **written communication skills**, demonstrating ability to write accurately to communicate information, ideas, concepts and opinions in your target language.

OPTION MODULES

Each of the Language Degree programmes offers option modules on the literature, culture, history and society of the target country. These modules help you to develop cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of significant events which have impacted on the development of that country.

Through your option modules you will develop your skills of comprehension, analysis and evaluation. You will learn how to argue and rebut a case - justifying your own viewpoint - and to present arguments in a structured, logical and coherent manner – developing both your **written and oral communication skills**.

In addition, you are expected to spend time on private study which will develop your **self management** skills, your ability to work independently and your organisation skills in order to plan your work, achieve the required standard and meet deadlines.

In the 4th year, an optional Dissertation module is available for students of French or German. Should you choose this route, you will be required to undertake, with supervision, an in depth study of a topic which will develop your skills of research, analysis, evaluation and interpretation and which will further enhance your **written communication skills**. The dissertation is particularly useful for those wishing to pursue postgraduate study or a research based career.

COMMUNICATION AND LITERACY

EUROS modules are taught via a combination of lectures and seminars with an emphasis on independent study in both language and option choices. In preparation for seminars, you are expected to prepare essential reading so that you can confidently address particular questions and contribute to discussion of the issues involved. This requires thorough research as well as confident presentation skills.

EUROS modules are assessed by a combination of coursework essay, exam and oral presentation, the completion of which will develop your **written and oral communication skills**. You are required to express yourself clearly, compare and critically analyse different arguments and evaluate your conclusions. These are skills which are highly valued in the workplace.

Some tutorial and seminar work involves working in groups, for example German Language Year 1 where students learn through pair work, role play, individual and group presentations. These opportunities will help to develop your **teamwork skills** as well as your **oral communication skills**

APPLICATION OF IT AND NUMERACY

All EUROS assessments must be word processed and must be submitted electronically - which helps you to develop your **IT skills**, and your proficiency using Microsoft Word. Many of the option modules involve detailed literature research via internet search engines and via background notes on Blackboard. Information Services offer a workshop in the first year on the use of databases and other electronic information resources for language studies and non language modules, which will help develop your information retrieval skills.

Web and computer assisted language learning are built into all degree programmes and students regularly use CAN-8 VirtuaLab - an interactive, multimedia tool which helps improve pronunciation and is a tool for practising conversation, grammar and comprehension skills.

Engagement with various printed, broadcast and electronic media is encouraged. Students can make use of facilities provided in the IT Electronic Resource Centre in Park Place to view television programmes in their language of study.

The Languages degree provides limited opportunities to develop/apply **numeracy skills**.

BUSINESS AND CUSTOMER AWARENESS

Business and customer awareness is highly rated by employers when selecting candidates for graduate and placement positions. The second year module Business French: Language and Practice provides a theoretical and practical introduction to the world of business in France. The syllabus includes issues such as fair trade, globalisation and the Euro, as well as the role of banks in the global financial crisis that began in 2008. Students are also offered training in writing business letters, memos, summaries and other useful documents. This module

gives students an excellent insight into the organisation and activities of companies and their partners in the world of French business and helps them to start developing their **business awareness**.

YEAR ABROAD

The third year of all Cardiff University language degrees is spent abroad in the target country (or two countries for joint degrees). Whether you spend your time at a partner university, as a teaching assistant or on a work placement, the Year Abroad is a great opportunity to improve your spoken and written language ability, immerse yourself in another culture and gain work experience. If you choose to work as a teaching assistant on a British Council scheme, you will spend the year teaching English to native speakers of your target language which will enhance your planning, organisation, **communication** and interpersonal skills. If you choose the work placement option you gain overseas experience which is valued by many employers. Either way, the intercalary year will develop your maturity and self-confidence as well as your independence, resilience, **problem solving and self management skills**.

CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS (CMS)

CMS sessions delivered in year 2/3 will show you how to make sense of the **employability skills** developed throughout your degree and help you articulate these skills effectively both 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 degree.

The Careers Service has a full programme of fairs, employer presentations and employer-led skills sessions 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.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

As well as your languages degree, consider the skills developed through your other activities such as paid work, volunteering, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles etc.

There are a number of language related societies you join at Cardiff University including German, French and Spanish/Italian Societies. These provide opportunities for both Cardiff University students studying languages and German/French/Spanish/Italian-speaking exchange students to improve their language skills and meet new people in a relaxed and friendly environment.

Student Volunteering Cardiff offers varied opportunities to get involved in the community on a voluntary basis – experience which always looks good on future job applications.